editorial opinion

Dan McCosh writes

'Respectable' protests

"Onoh, we're going to picket?
Horey, you're going to have to buy
me a new dress."
This lady was in our PTA, and she
had been there before.
We have a guy who is so fast staplng up a picket sign the staple companies send out engineers to watch,
Mainly he wears rumpled shirts, because he has a constant shortage of
shirt cardboard, which is his favorite
for a lightweight sign.

We get a little light on slogans. If somebody can put together a couple of catchy phrases on the issue at issue we usually fill in with a pile of standards – stuff like "Quality Education"; "Community Control", etc.

Just about anything with "the people" somewhere in the second line usually fits.

Maybe 10 years ago the same group would be getting the cupcakes ready for the sale.

There is nothing like the feeling of comaraderie and self-expression that comes with a good demonstration. If it can be pulled off without charging lines of cops. secret films, rock throwing and angry jeers, it's a good place to meet the neighbors.

At least one group of pickets went through the whole routine, organizing, meeting at the school administration building, calling the media, etc. But a school administrator, who had been through this before, invited them

THE HAND THAT rocks the cradle carries a picket sign too.
A lot of people who used to cluck their tongues over cups of tea are out on the streets. There were two or three in the past week or so in Farmington, protesting zoning and lunches. It's sort of like seeing long sideburns on a banker, as something associated with anti-establishment polities gets absorbed by Middle America. all into his office for a chat. The spirit of Harry Bennett is dead.

"Who, me picket? No, I've never been invited to one." an acquaintance formerly active in school affairs said. It is good form to use a thip piece of wood on the sign, to keep from looking antagonisic. It is bad form to use pre-printed signs, like typing yourname on a Christmas card.

Dress is optional. A more beligerent posture is demonstrated by close-order marching. An informal, scattered group generally appears less bostlie.

The cause must be judged on its

bostile. The cause must be judged on its merits demonstration expressed a variety of grievances, including threat-end dismissed of a popular teacher. There was a series of unpopular moves by an unsympathetic administration. One of the last straws was an attempt to demy permission for the annual cupcake sale.

Jackie Klein writes

Add this to your misery

Tired of wallowing in Watergate, skyrocketing interest rates, inflation and the Tipers finishing last?

Let me take you away from all this as we escape into the magic world of the hospital.

Let me make this perfectly clear. At this point in time I cannot tell you how to curb inflation and fatten up the skeleton economy. But on the subject of hospitals, I am an undisputed expert.

surgery. I do not want your pity. To the best of my recollection and in the short run, it could have been worse. When I figure out how I'll write another column.

ANYWAY, I CHECKED into the ANYWAY, I CHECKED into the world of the sick on Aug. 6. My room was ready, but there seemed to be a shortage of sheets. My husband offered to buy some at K-Mart and the murse gave him an order for 12 dozen sheets and matching pillow cases—

white.
One of the nurses, who must have been on probation for shoplifting, swiped some linens from a cart that was on its way to the maternity ward. I immediately thought about "Two on a Mattress," a new mother and her swellfur infant. One of the nurses, who must have been on probation for shophifting, wisped some linens from a cert that was on its way to the maternity ward immediately hought about "Two on a Nattress." a new mother and bergalaling infant.

I was finally settled snug in my bed death from surgery.

in a room designed for a Pygmy with no family When I had company. I sat no the chair went they lounged on my wall-to-wall better they lounged on my wall-to-wall odd octors that would have made the watergate committee seem like deaf mutes. At least I 4 different people asked me my age and I gave I different answers.

They kept asking about pre-existent illnesses. Those are the diseases that aren't covered by Blue Cross. If I had known that then, I wouldn't have bothered town of the most marked by the most marked to be more impressed with beri-beri.

After an hour, everyone in a white cost began to look alike. I swear I told the same story to the same medical FBI agent a dozen times.

The next day was an 18 hour lapse. The next day was an 18 hour lapse. All I remember was the doctor telling the surgical nurse to get some needles. "I just graduated from mursing school and I don't know a needle from my elbow," she replied.

The anaesthesiologist who talked me out. He was there all right, but he was giving lessons to his assistant and I was operating room cadaver.

JUST BEFORE I drifted off, I won-

Since I'm insured at the office, it's possible my family can only collect if I pass away with my fingers caught in the typewriter.

Ah, what fond memories I have of that year I spent in the hospital one week. I remember the nurse who woke me at 3 a.m. to take my temperature. She was in such a hurry to go off her shift, she never bothered to read the thermometer.

I recall crossing my fingers hoping I wouldn't get sick on the weekend. Even hospital nurses work a five-day week.

I remember my first m."

Even hospital nurses work a five-day week.

I remember my first walk when I coudn't straighten up. The nurse told me it was in my head. I asked her how she would feel with 105 stitches slashed along her abdomen like the Magnot line.

They put me on a light diet because of the gas pains. For lunch I got bean soup, corned beef, broccofi, and cu-cumbers and onions. I wondered what the regular diet was and I soon found out. It was plain lousy.

I could go on and on about my private nurse who ordered three desserts, four appetizers, and two beverages for me. I was curious until I discovered it all disappeared when she took her lunch break.

She would give me a hypo and start telling me the story of her life. Believe me, short of a coma, it was blessing to be semi-conscious! of the living. I hope you will show me

the living, I hope you will show me mercy. Like poor old Nixon, I've suf-fered enough.

Carl Stoddard writes

The city's last freeway

No one expected the fuel crisis to end the way it did. But in 1997, petro-leum products simply ran out. Of course, trickles were still coming ip here and there, but for the average person gasoline was just a memory.

The government helped industry make a remarkable change - over to use a different kind of power-human waste. And more remarkable still, the power proved clean, efficient and in an endless supply when connected with mass transit systems. Houses were heated by solar energy. Back in the early 70's they said it couldn't be done. But the human-waste power plants ran so cleanly that the smog disappeared and the sun power came streaming through.

ONLY ONE PROBLEM remained here in this northern suburb. What to do with all the roads and freeways? The mass transit systems took up relatively little space and underground shuttle systems in the subdivisions (developed during the change-over period) made the roads virtually obsolete. City councilimen proposed changing the roads to blike paths. But it was pointed out that bites didn't need that much space. The sidewalks would suffice.

One of the older councilwomen sug-

gested that many of the local roads and streets could be used for horse-back riding.

A bonus to this plan, she noted, was that some of the by products of the horses could be fased to help power the waste-powered mass transit sys-tems.

tems.

The idea was an immediate success and a city ordinance was passed, recognizing horses as the official benefactors of the half-forgotten highways and streets.

However, a problem soon cropped

up.

Horses were not doing well on the pavement. A number of veterinary experts asked city council to tear up the pavement. They claimed the horse could travel better on dirt roads.

THE COUNCIL agreed and sent the city's highway department out to begin tearing up the roads.
Of course, the tearing up was expensive, so people who lived along the roads being demolished were assessed the cost

roads being demolished were assessed the cost.

Some of the old timers complained that they were still paying assessments for having the road paved. Still, the road ripping up went on.

Eventually, most roads were ripped up, and trees were planted along the narrower and muddier roads.

Only a few of the back roads, those seldom used, still had paving.

er to get rid of. Tennis clubs, shuffle-board associations, basketball teams, and skate board leagues had pur-chased sections of the abandoned high-ways for recreational uses. It took much tough fighting in Lan-sing to get the road improvement plan approved and much money to buy the rights from the recreation associ-ations.

rights from the recreation associations.

Then, after the sections had been purchased, the road people learned that they must get approval from environmental agencies. This proved difficult as the environmental people kept insisting that the horses were health hazards.

BUT PROGRESS had its way, and the freeways came down and were re-placed by dirt roads. Finally, only one freeway remained.

The highway people made it their number one priority. Still they meet strong resistance from people who lived along the edges of the peaceful concrete river.

Even today, that freeway still stands amid a continuing battle among ecologists, homeowners and the highway people.

But predictions are that within six years, 1-696 will finally come down and the Detroif area will at last have an across town route.

Harmington Ohserver Eccentric

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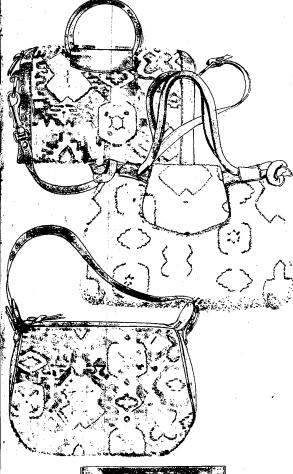
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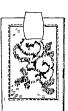
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