

## Happiness Through Health

by Otto McClarrin

**SLEEPING PILLS CONSIDERED AMONG MOST DANGEROUS OF PRESCRIBED PILLS:** Sleeping pills, which are among the most commonly prescribed drugs in the world, are also among the most dangerous. Moreover, they are sometimes both ineffective and unnecessary, a Federal study showed recently. The National Institute on Drug Abuse said that most sleeping pills have not been proved effective beyond a few consecutive nights; only one, dalmane, works for as long as 14 days. Yet the average prescription for nembatal is 42 doses; for secenal, 33 doses; and for tuinal, 40 doses.

Sleeping pills can actually interfere with sleep, the agency said. They do nothing to cure the anxiety and depression that sometimes cause insomnia, and they are potentially addictive.

Besides, insomnia seldom hurts anyone. People are apt to need less sleep than they imagine - and to sleep more than they realize. Insomniacs often complain that they "didn't sleep a wink last night," but checks have shown that many of them slept for hours. According to some researchers, these "sleepless" sleepers may dream that they are awake.

Prescription sleeping pills, the institute said, were a factor in almost 5,000 accidental deaths and suicides in the United States last year. The total is more than a third of all confirmed drug-related deaths.

**NEW TEXAS VIRUS STRAIN OF FLU IN SEVEN STATES:** Flu cases apparently triggered by the new A-Texas virus strain was reported in seven states and Puerto Rico last week by The National Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

"Influenza activity seems to be widely disseminated across the country," said Dr. Philip Graitcer, a flu surveillance officer with the CDC. He said cases were occurring in such widely separated states as Oregon and New York.

Dr. Galtcer said influenza watchers at the CEC still do not know the kind of flu that will be around this winter, or its possible extent. Nearly all of the viruses that have been identified so far, however, have been the A-Texas or A-Texas-like strain. The virus that causes the A-Texas variety of influenza is similar to the A-Victoria strain that touched off an epidemic in this country two years ago and caused widespread illness once again last winter.

States reporting sporadic cases of influenza were Hawaii, New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, Colorado and Oregon. Previous reports of flu activity came from Florida and Puerto Rico.

**WORKING POOR LACK HEALTH INSURANCE:** Although more than 90 percent of this nation's population has health insurance, between 40 and 42 percent is inadequately covered. Eight percent has no coverage, while 34 percent would find its insurance unable to defray costs of major surgery, and extended hospital stay, or prolonged nursing care. That group of Americans suffering most from deficient coverage is the working poor.

Formerly, when the nation's health system depended upon individual initiative, corporate policy and private philanthropy, virtually every poor American was in the same oarless boat up the big muddy.

Today, however, the working poor and workers for small companies are the Americans least well covered by government or by some form of insurance, either self-paid or company paid. Some 24 million of the nation's very poorest citizens - many on welfare - are covered, courtesy of the taxpayers. Medicaid, funded by the federal government, provides the essential medical and hospital care for this class of Americans.

Consider the difference one year of age makes: The 64-year-old retiree may or may not have sufficient coverage, but the 65-year-old retiree is eligible for the broad benefits Medicare provides.

## NEW DAY BEGUN

by

Benjamin L. Hooks



For the average American the mere mention of a fuel crisis brings back nightmares of 1973, when he had to spend hours in service station lines waiting for a few gallons of gasoline. For those parts of the country that suffered heating fuel shortages last winter, this second reminder of America's vulnerability to energy disruptions was especially troubling.

A good many Americans, however, are still skeptical about warnings of a fuel crisis. Many blacks, especially whose income and life styles could be hurt disproportionately more than whites, are yet to be convinced about these impending prospects of a national energy policy.

It was for this reason that the NAACP sponsored a national energy conference in Washington, DC a few weeks ago. The 400 black men and women who met and explored the ramifications of the various energy issues being considered in Congress and around the country had few doubts, if any, about the ultimate costs to society of a comprehensive national energy policy.

Their realization of the potential and harmful impact that such a policy could have on black people led them to conclude that energy is a civil rights issue. There is no doubt that energy costs will spiral in coming months; the only question is how much, how fast, and which social class will be made to pay more for the rapidly diminishing natural resources and their by-products.

Furthermore, as the nation develops alternative fuels to oil and gas--and related industries--a vast number of new jobs will be created. How will black workers and businessmen benefit from these certain opportunities?

Looking at just three aspects of the President's energy plan, it can be seen that: (1) Insulation -- The proposal to provide an income tax write-off for winterizing residences will primarily benefit landlords, not tenants, and home owners. (2) Conservation -- Blacks already are forced to use less fuel for heating and cooking by the mere fact that so many are poor. Artificial price increases to limit fuel consumption will only hurt them more. (3) Gas guzzling car tax -- A few hundred dollars a year added taxes for big cars will not bother the wealthy, but the tax will hurt the poor.

These are the concerns of the NAACP. And as W. E. B. Du Bois articulated the relationship between civil rights and the NAACP's social programs, so does the Association now relate current goals to black economic development.

Similarly, the NAACP supported the call by A. Phillip Randolph in 1941 for a March on Washington. As a result of the subsequent meeting of Randolph and NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White with Franklin Roosevelt, the President issued the historical Executive Order 8802 banning discrimination in federal employment and establishing the Fair Employment Practice Committee.

Blacks might ultimately be pushed to recreate some of the drama of that period by marching on the White House to demand heat, hot water and jobs. For the present, however, the NAACP is working to educate and alert its members and constituents to the grave implications of a national energy policy.

The Association, with the help of a national energy committee of black experts and concerned citizens, is also developing civil rights programs that will include lobbying in Washington.

We wish you and yours a happy, blessed Christmas!

## EOB Elections

Four new representatives and one incumbent will be seated as members of the Economic Opportunity Board, it was announced by David Hoggard, the Agency's Executive Director.

Elections were held Tuesday in five areas of Clark County, considered to contain high concentrations of poverty. In North Las Vegas, Lee Walker, a car salesman, received 100 of the 154 votes cast to win over 10 other candidates. Mr. Walker actively campaigned on the basis that the community had helped him become established and he wished to serve others in return.

In West Las Vegas, Bill Murphy, a Coordinator for an On-the Job Training Program of the State of Nevada, received a plurality of the 139 votes cast, to represent that area.

The only incumbent to be re-elected was Manuel Hernandez who will serve a second term representing the Sunrise/E. Bonanza area of Clark County. Mr. Hernandez is a Computer Programmer/Analyst with Nevada Power Company.

Unopposed candidates were Carole B. DePue to represent Henderson and Clyde E. Lowe to represent Moapa Valley. Mrs. DePue is a 3-year resident of Henderson who expressed a desire to be helpful to those in her community through service on the EOB. Mr. Lowe of Overton is the only senior member of the newly-elected EOB representatives. He is also currently a retired Senior Volunteer and a member of the Clark County Senior Legal Services Advisory Council.

"Both the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and its successor, the Community Services Act of 1974, place strong emphasis on democratic selection of representatives of the poor," noted Hoggard. "The local EOB is fully committed to this process and the election just completed will assure full opportunity for the poor and residents of the areas concerned to influence the character of programs affecting their interests."

## Jazz

Las Vegas Jazz Christmas Caroling Event. Musicians and Carolers on a flat bed truck went caroling around Boulevard Mall, Sunrise Hospital and North Las Vegas on Thursday. Tonight will be up and down the Strip and to "D" and Jackson streets.

Musicians: Carl Fontana, Joy Cameron, and Church McGuire.



## Joys of the Season!

THE STAFF OF THE WESTSIDE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WISHES ALL THEIR FRIENDS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

*End*  
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