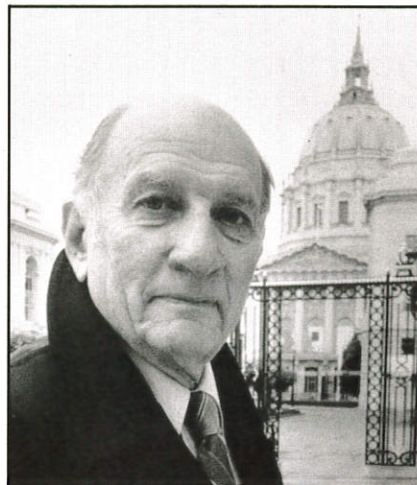


"It should be apparent to everyone these days that we're all going to have to live with a certain amount of 'pollution'."



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In March of 1989, the U.S. Government announced what most of us already knew - more than 100 million Americans are breathing air which is below the minimum standards for "clean air." It makes little difference whether we live in urban or rural areas; the air we breathe is not free of pollution.

Besides dust, our air is filled with a variety of pollens, especially in spring. Also in most cities, we find unacceptable levels of aromatic hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides from automobile exhaust, as well as fly ash and sulfates from factories and power plants.

many municipalities have resorted to incineration. This process releases tons and tons of ash as well as chlorinated waste products into the atmosphere, including dioxins, among the most toxic of all chemicals. If one lives near an industrial site, toxic materials like heavy metals may be released into the air. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does limit the amount of toxic matter that can be vented into the air, but does not prohibit its release.

Are Our Homes Sanctuaries?

Staying indoors does not protect us. The EPA has said that indoor

When dry-cleaned clothes are brought into the house, chlorinated solvents used for cleaning cling to the clothes for a period of time and are released into the room where the clothes are hung.

Our Water Has Its Own Problems

If the air we breathe is not good, the drinking water situation can be just as bad or worse. Congress passes clean water acts every year and has done so for over 10 years. Yet we are not even near achieving the goal for clean water in every tap in the United States.

Purification of water is absolutely essential to prevent bacterial, viral or parasitic diseases. The introduction of chlorine gas as a water disinfectant in 1912 has practically eliminated cholera, typhoid fever and other waterborne diseases. Today, chlorine gas is still the most common disinfectant used; however, it reacts with the normal organic matter (humus) found in water to form Trihalomethanes (THMs). All drinking water contains small amounts of THMs (chloroform is one example). These THMs are suspect carcinogens.

In addition, other organic chloro-compounds are found in most urban waters. These come from the inadvertent spilling of solvents into the ground or from leaking underground storage tanks.

An Environmental Update

By Dr. Arthur Furst

Most recently, it has been found that the black smoke particles from diesel exhausts contain nitropyrenes. These are among the most mutagenic of all materials. Even more alarming, these particles have been found to induce lung cancer under experimental conditions.

Will Our Air Become A Garbage Dump?

To destroy the tremendous amounts of industrial waste by-products and residential garbage,

air pollution may be worse than outdoor pollution. Within the house, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and even hydrocarbons can be liberated by gas stoves, wood fires and kerosene heaters. Burning foods liberate toxic materials into the air. In addition, some houses must contend with cigarette smoke.

Insulation materials and foams are often made of urea-formaldehyde compounds. Formaldehyde is a gas which is slowly liberated from these materials.

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