

Noise pollution called hazard

ST. LOUIS — Smelly air and filthy water are obvious pollutants. But excessive noise generally is considered to be only a nuisance. Yet health hazards from prolonged exposure to loud noise are just as real as the problems caused by air and water pollution. Jerry Schweiker, an engineer specializing in noise control, wants the public to listen to advice about noise.

"Noise levels keep increasing with the growing population and with growing industry," said Schweiker, a founder and past president of the Midwest Noise Council.

"It's the third pollutant, but except for people who live near airports and places like that, they don't notice the effect it has on them." Council members range from health professionals to industry representatives. Their services include public seminars and consultation with groups and industries trying to work their way through the maze of governmental regulations on noise control.

Public awareness of the longterm effects of noise is growing, Schweiker said.

"When we first began being concerned with it, it really threw industry at large," he said. "They didn't know anything about noise. Most plants dealt with general safety, but noise was something they didn't think about."

The current fight over noise control, with industry on one side and the EPA on the other, is over acceptable levels of noise in the workplace. EPA officials want to reduce the current standard of 90 decibels to 85 decibels for eight hours.

Unions also are fighting for the 85 decibel level, and they want industries involved to take responsibility for engineering noise dampeners into their plants rather than requiring workers to wear ear protectors.

Schweiker explained the noise levels this way: a park setting might have noise measured at 40 or 45 decibels, while normal traffic might be the level to 50 decibels and noise at a busy intersection may be as high as 60 or 65 decibels.

Heavy manufacturing produces sound measurable at around 90 decibels, he said, a point at which normal conversation is difficult with someone standing six feet away. Noise at a rock concert or a disco may exceed 105 decibels.

After 20 years of daily exposure to 90 decibels, Schweiker said, about 3 percent of workers begin losing their ability to hear high frequency. The higher the level of noise above that point, the higher the percentage of persons with hearing problems.

His concern is not with quibbling over a difference of 5 decibels one way or the other, because he said the measuring instruments are not that sensitive. Schweiker and other members of the Midwest Noise Council just want to see progress toward controlling noise.

Meanwhile, he wants people to know that noise can hurt as much as dirty air and water.

"Noise is a localized problem, but it's like hearing a dripping faucet. The sound might not be so bad, but after a while it can drive you crazy."

Hopson hearing still on

The resignation Wednesday of Fred Hopson as A&M Consolidated School District superintendent will not affect a Texas Education Agency hearing scheduled for March 13.

Hopson resigned, effective March 1, to take a job as superintendent of the Leander Independent School District. Leander is north of Austin.

The A&M school district received confirmation Thursday from TEA that the hearing will be held concerning the \$54,400 that Hopson was paid upon termination of his contract.

"The case has already been docketed, so it will be heard unless the parties bringing the suit don't say any different," said Margaret Cog TEA staff attorney.

College Station resident Oran Jones, who requested the appeal, said he still wants TEA to go ahead "mainly because I was not arguing about Hopson's termination; I was arguing about the expenditure of the funds."

Board members agreed in a re-

negotiated contract in November to pay Hopson \$54,400 — \$34,400 to represent his annual salary and \$20,000 for damages as a result of early termination.

The money is now in trust in a College Station bank. Hopson will not get it until 1984.

The board terminated Hopson's original three-year contract in November, citing "disagreements in policy and policy implementation." The renegotiated contract was to expire on June 30.



Battalion photo by Colin Crombie
Dancers of the Kafkaz Dance Ensemble kick their heels last night during the OPAS presentation of A Festival of Russian Dance. These Kafkaz, or Caucasian, dancers are here dancing the "Adjarian Dance 'Gandagan'."

Dancers delight Aggies

By PEGGY C. McCULLEN
Battalion Reporter

Seven of the 15 Soviet Union republics were represented by the Kafkaz Dance Ensemble last night in Rudder Auditorium when a kaleidoscope of dancers delighted a full house with their native dances.

Swirling figures garbed in a rainbow of colors kept the stage alive for two hours. As agile men leaped weightlessly from the stage floor in pursuit of the beautiful village girls, the orchestra played faultlessly.

Native instruments made of wood and drums played by the dancers

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themselves added gaiety to the festive numbers.

Thunderous applause followed each dance. When men bearing swords sent sparks flying, orchestra seat occupants sat low in their chairs.

The excitement never ceased and the smiles never faded. A soloist from Siberia mimicked a fisherman happily dreaming of finding his fish in the pond. Indeed he did — a lovely blonde maiden.

An unforgettable sight were the seven Armenian drummers who placed their instruments on the ground and danced "en point" while exhibiting incredible stunts of walking and spinning on the knees, Russian splits, and no-handed cartwheels.

The company received a standing ovation and two curtain calls. OPAS, you did it again.

Scientists dive to study Monitor

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Using sophisticated diving and underwater archaeological equipment, scientists will make more than 30 dives to the wreck of the USS Monitor to see if it can be raised.

The government-sponsored investigation of the wreck of the Civil War-era ironclad ship will be conducted during a three-week period in August to decide whether salvage would be safe and feasible.

"Although it is far too soon to decide whether or not the Monitor can safely be raised, the expedition will provide valuable additional information to help us ultimately make this decision," a government spokesman said Wednesday.

The remains of the Monitor were discovered in 1973, under 210 feet of water 16 miles off the North Carolina coast. It sank in 1862 while under tow off Cape Hatteras.

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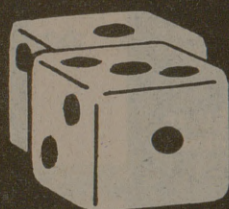
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