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Lobbyists attack funeral cost bill

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Consumer, labor and public interest groups charged Wednesday that "ghoulish" lobbyists are trying to kill controls over the funeral industry that would save Americans up to $300 million a year in funeral costs.

"It's time to bury our dead with decency and dignity," said Bess Myerson, former New York City consumer affairs commissioner. Some funeral directors, she said, see "our dead as their production line" and overstate their bills "beyond decency."

She appeared at a news conference along with representatives of more than a dozen groups, several members of Congress and President Carter's consumer adviser, Esther Peterson. They urged the House to reject a proposal to scrap the Federal Trade Commission's crackdown on the $3 billion-a-year funeral industry.

The FTC project, which has been in the works for most of this decade, would require funeral directors to itemize their prices, rather than quote them only in package sums.

It also would bar them from selling consumers a casket for a cremation if not required by law or from demanding embalming when it is not legally needed. In addition, the rules would prohibit funeral directors from disparaging cheaper alternatives to the traditional burial service.

Heavy lobbying by the funeral industry and other anti-FTC forces has resulted in a vote, scheduled tentatively today, that would tell the FTC to drop the project.

Rep. Bob Eckhardt, D-Texas, said "ghoulish lobbyists" from the funeral industry and "various industrial groups" are attempting to gain behind the scenes what they could not do at the FTC — even though they had a fair hearing there.

"This is the most nefarious type of lobbying," he said.

"There are literally dozens of other industries waiting to see if the amendment passes," warned Rep. Norman Dicks, D-Wash.

Rep. Ben Rosenthal, D-N.Y., declined to predict how the vote will go. "We have the commitments; we don't know if we have the votes," he said.

Myerson noted there are about 2 million funerals every year, and said, "As a result of not being informed and not asking questions, the American people pay $3 billion each year for funeral arrangements, at least $200 million of which is overpaid."

Other groups supporting the effort included the AFL-CIO, the American Association of Retired Persons, National Retired Teachers Association, Ralph Nader's Congress Watch and Common Cause.

$5.8 million to fund flu immunizations

United Press International

ATLANTA — With a possible three-virus flu season approaching, including a return of Russian influenza, federal health officials have funded a $5.8 million immunization effort to protect people in high risk groups.

The flu battle may start as early as late November, said Dr. David Brandlin-Bennett, an influenza expert at the national Center for Disease Control.

The money will be used to provide free flu shots to people with chronic illnesses and those over 65. The CDC estimates there are about 44 million Americans in these two categories, many of whom will not be reached by the modest federal free vaccination program.

Brandlin-Bennett said the $5.8 million will provide 2.6 million doses of vaccine. This, coupled with 1.4 million doses left over from a similar program last winter, will give doctors and clinics across the country four million doses to administer to high risk individuals.

The vaccine will give protection against the A-USSR or A-Brazil flu virus, the A-Texas strain and B-Hong Kong flu.

Brandlin-Bennett said the CDC, which will administer the project, has approved the immunization programs of 43 states, two territories and six cites.

Seven states — New [illegible] Virginia, Pennsylvania, [illegible] Nevada, Alaska and Idaho [illegible] clined to join the vaccinatio[illegible] "They probably had some [illegible] about the program," Br[illegible] Bennett said.

Public apathy toward i[illegible] vaccinations has been a p[illegible] since the abortive 1976 sw[illegible] immunization project th[illegible] called off because of questio[illegible] cerning the safety of the va[illegible]

"There is still some apathy [illegible] flu shots but it is difficult t[illegible] how much," Brandlin-Bennet[illegible] Drug firms, he said, "sold [illegible] vaccine last year than the[illegible] have before."

Despite declining public i[illegible] in flu vaccinations, Bra[illegible] Bennett said the outlook w[illegible] for a successful conclusion o[illegible] fort to vaccinate four millio[illegible] risk individuals this fall and [illegible]

He said people in danger [illegible] fering severe illness or deat[illegible] influenza apparently contr[illegible] have confidence in the protec[illegible] fects of flu vaccine and many [illegible] pected to get the shots.

The free immunizations [illegible] given at public health clinics [illegible] health personnel will call at [illegible] homes to give the vaccina[illegible] Free vaccine will be distrib[illegible] private physicians for their hi[illegible] patients.

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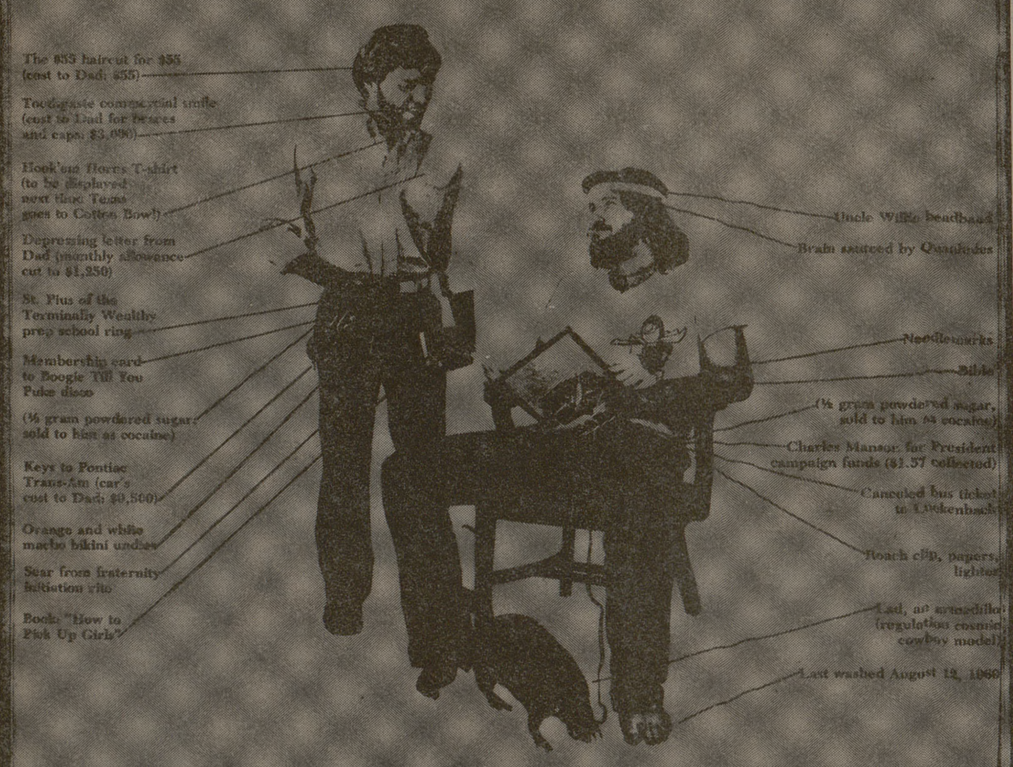
The original "Are You a Teasip?" poster —

teasip, Type 1 (tee-sip, tayp wun): n. *Fratticus ratticus*: A member of a Greek-letter social organization at a 40,000 student junior college in Austin. Found in pretentious houses occupied by others of his species, in the vicinity of rich women, near the mailbox (waiting for checks from Dad), and discos (places of purported music and dance). Mating call: "Oh Skippy, *should we call on some young ladies tonight?*"

teasip, Type 2 (tee-sip, tayp tew) n. *Hookamus hippius*: One of 40,000 students at a junior college in Austin, readily identifiable by his long, unwashed hair, bloodshot eyes, and mating call: "*Oh wow, bad vibrations, man*". Diet consists of yogurt, alfalfa sprouts, beer, apricot nectar, and dangerous man-made chemicals sold by prescription only.



Are You a teasip?

Thousands of people were relieved a few years ago when they found, by comparing symptoms with a poster issued by National Lampoon magazine, that they were not nurds.

But now a new danger has been recognized. Without knowing it, you may be a teasip. Check yourself against the characteristics pointed out here.

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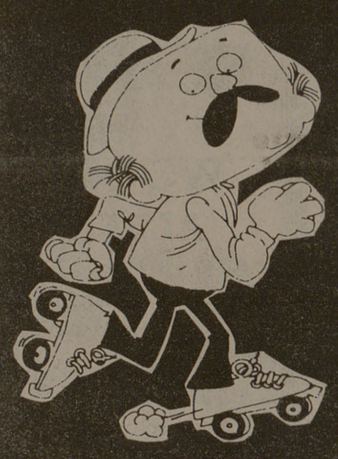
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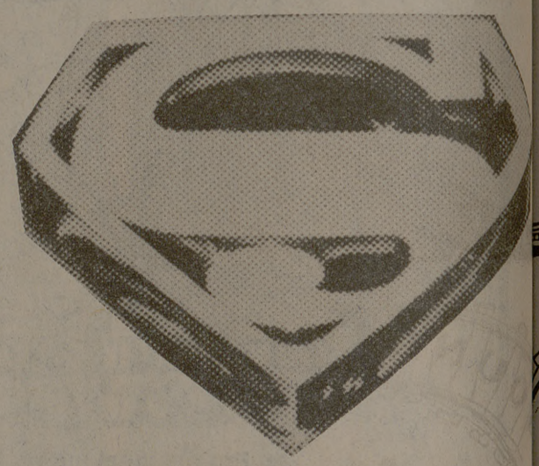
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