

opinion

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"Did I tell you that I'd learned how to Xerox my face?"

Remember, only you can stop toxic seepage

by Dick West
United Press International

WASHINGTON — I was reading the other day about the great success of Smokey Bear, the U.S. Forest Service's fire prevention symbol, and it occurred to me that maybe that's what the Environmental Protection Agency needs.

I'm not suggesting Smokey be transferred to EPA or anything like that. Everyone knows that bears don't inhabit toxic dumps. Besides that, ol' Smokey, who always has a ranger's hat sitting on top of his head, would look pretty silly in a decontamination mask.

Still, there is no getting around Smokey's achievements in preventing forest fires. Since 1945, when the cartoon figure was first seen by the public, he is credited with saving some \$20 billion worth of timber.

Meanwhile, I'm sure you have noticed, the forest service has been relatively untouched by any of the firestorms of controversy that have been searing EPA this year.

If EPA had a Disney-like creature as a mascot, perhaps its critics would be similarly pacified. It's just a question of hitting upon the right character to carry the message that adequate disposal facilities are necessary to prevent poisonous waste discards from contaminating the atmosphere.

I've given this matter a lot of thought and I've concluded that EPA's answer to Smokey Bear should be a chickadee.

Canaries, you know, already have a historic association with pollution. The little birds have been used in times of war

to detect poison gases, and miners have taken them down in the shafts to test the underground air.

A chickadee presumably is as sensitive as a canary. If one keels over from lack of oxygen, it can be assumed the air is unfit for human beings to breathe.

Ok. If you buy the concept of using a chickadee as EPA's symbol of lethal leak prevention, all that remains is to pick out a catchy name — something cute, but at the same time appropriate, that will do for dumping grounds what Smokey has done for national forests.

I also have given this matter a lot of thought, and the name I am prepared to recommend is Sully Chickadee.

In verb form, sully is synonymous with defilement. But the word also has been widely used as a nickname. Hence, it has the same dual connotation as Smokey.

Another favorable factor is availability. Animators in Hollywood already have produced Tweetie, a lovable cartoon canary that could serve as a model for Sully Chickadee.

Tweetie has a charming speech impediment — sort of a cross between a lisp and a sputter — that I would suggest retaining, along with its theme song.

Get the picture? An EPA artist draws Sully in a fetching little hood and dioxin-proof uniform. Then the bird trills: "I taught I taw a toxic dump ateeeping up on me.etc."

If only EPA had had something like that going for it, the clean-up program might not be in such a mess. And neither would the environment.

Dinner for two the EPA way

by Art Buchwald

Rita Lavelle, recently discharged as head of hazardous waste at EPA, has turned over her appointments calendar to congressional committees. Many entries indicate Ms. Lavelle had lunches and dinners with company officials of chemical companies who were under investigation for dumping toxic wastes.

According to EPA, Ms. Lavelle may have ignored a long-standing policy at EPA against meeting, much less breaking bread, with potential defendants in agency enforcement matters.

Reporters who checked the people listed on the calendars were informed, almost unanimously by Ms. Lavelle's hosts, that no business concerning hazardous waste and their companies was discussed.

Most said the dinners were only held to "get acquainted with Ms. Lavelle and to discuss chemical matters in general."

Unless someone can come up with other evidence, I believe them.

I prefer to believe a typical dinner with a chemical executive went something like this:

"That's a very attractive outfit you have, Miss Lavelle. Is it polyester or

orlon?"

"Thank you. No, it happens to be acetate."

"Your hair is beautiful. What kind of spray do you use?"

"I use a non-aerosol spray that doesn't contain chloroflourocarbons. I'm very concerned the mixture of nitrogen emissions and carbon dioxide could produce a catalytic reaction that might affect the ozone. Shall we order? I'm famished."

"Of course. What is your pleasure?"

"Perhaps some fish, providing it comes from an area that has not been polluted by methylene chloride or benzene."

"Good. I'm sure we can find something on the menu. Hmmm, the oysters sound very good."

"I don't eat oysters. They tend to bioaccumulate PCB in their tissues."

"How do oysters do that?"

"I can't discuss it any further. We have several cases pending against PCB polluters that we're trying to settle quietly."

"All right. How about a Dover sole from England?"

"That would be nice. It's out of my jurisdiction."

"How do you feel about love, Miss Lavelle?"

"That's a very personal question."

"I didn't mean love, as in the Love Canal."

"Ugh. Do we have to talk about the Canal while we're eating?"

"Forgive me for bringing up talk about the weather."

"I can't talk about the weather. I'm doing a study on companies responsible for acid rain, and I'm not allowed away their trade secrets."

"Have you seen any good lately?"

"I saw the 'China Syndrome' while we're involved with nuclear waste. I'd rather not say I liked it."

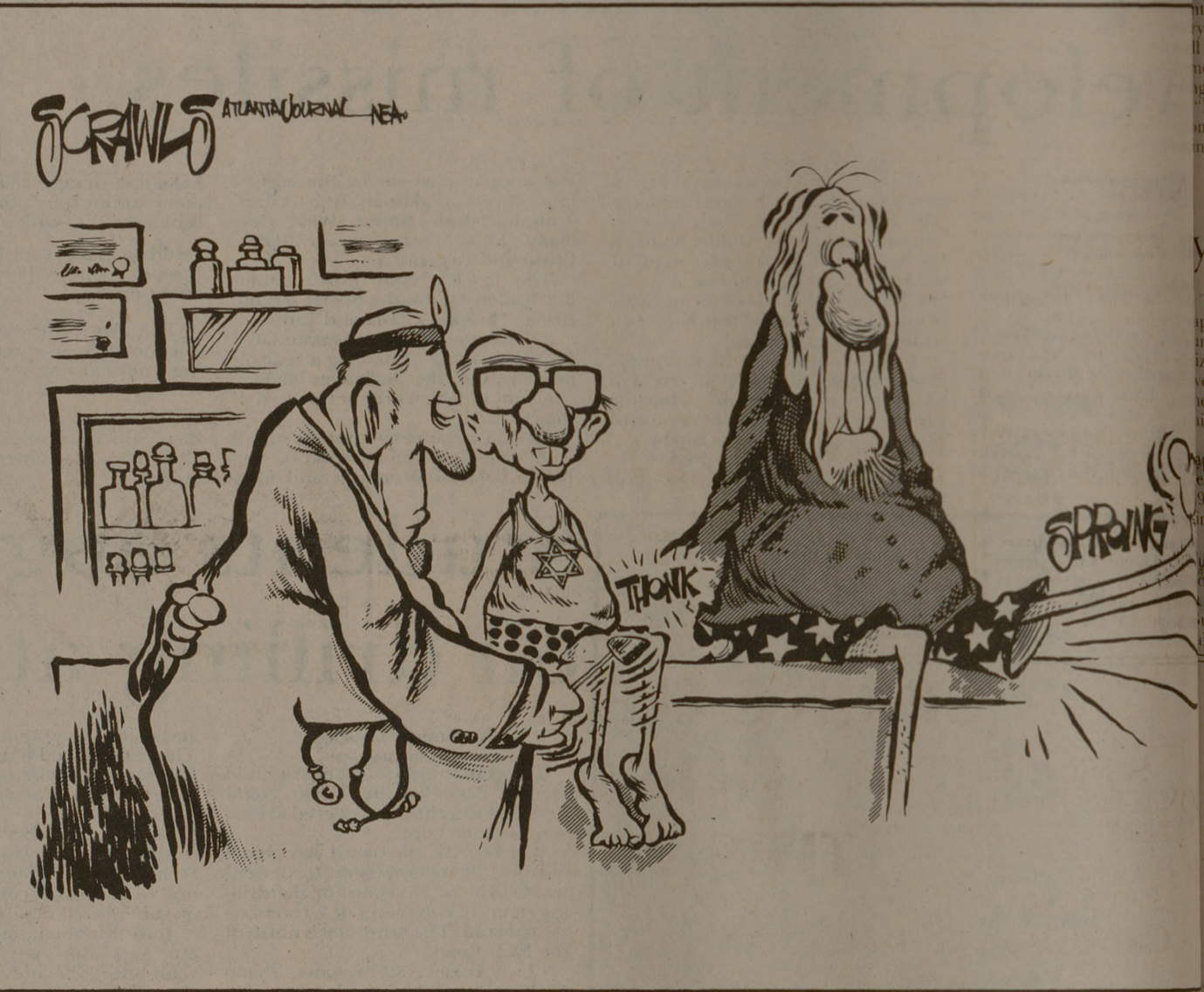
"I can understand that. The purpose of this dinner is just to get acquainted with you and become your friend. How's your sole?"

"Delicious. We don't have complaints about sole. Our biggest waste problems have to do with shellfish."

"Well it's been a wonderful dinner, Miss Lavelle, and you're a delightful companion. I'd take you out tomorrow with my lawyers."

"Stringfellow Acid Pit problem?"

"I know."



Letter: Notification law rehashed

Editor:

Several people have written to express their views on the parental notification rule. The majority seem to be against it, their argument for the most part being that minors are going to have sex anyway, so we must work from there. The conclusion seems to be that parental notification will only aggravate the problem of teen pregnancy.

Why, in a society where minors are, for the most part, dependent on their parents, not allowed to vote, not allowed to drive until sixteen, and not supposed to buy alcohol until at least eighteen, do we feel that they can handle the responsibility of their sexual activity? For the most part, minors are under the authority of their parents in every situation. Susie has to bring a note from Mom to excuse her absence from school, but if Susie needs contraceptives, Mom doesn't need to know. Susie is mature enough to be responsible in this case, even though she is not old enough to drive or vote or buy alcohol.

Let's take another look. Maybe Mom and Dad do know best. Really, parents can't all be ogres who satisfy their desire for power by controlling our lives. Some of them may actually love us and desire what's best for us. But rebellion is encouraged, the family is eroding, teens are getting pregnant, and we've resigned ourselves to their sexual activity. The only answers provided seem to be taking control away from parents, either in the form of not notifying them if their children are obtaining contraceptives, and/or educating minors about sex and contraceptives (in the schools, of course, not the homes). I'm not blind to the fact that parents make mistakes too. But how can the answer be to take away their freedom and right to have a say in the lives of their children?

The problem cannot be blanketed. We are talking about individual parents who want to know what's going on in their children's lives, and individual teens who are being bombarded with different standards of morality from all sides. The one

thing that I know helps people on an individual basis is the love of Jesus. External rules, programs, and laws are necessary for order, but change are what will change lives.

Tracy R.

Berry's World



"Oh, yeh? Well, I say television does NOT contribute to a violent society."

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