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Scribbled On A Reporter's Pad



AND THAT IS THAT

My new picture brought a phoned query from a friend to the effect, where had I dredged it up, and it looked like I must have been about 20 years old when it was taken.

"Sorry, chum," I retorted, "it's a color snapshot my sister took earlier this summer."

My favorite of all my pictures remains the one that has been pulled because it got too dark, and the original is missing. Both were candid, snapped by my sister, neither retouched. (You don't retouch snaps.) As for the favorite, it showed maturity with all lines apparent and my hair was worn pulled back, which I can't do again until the side curls grow out. As for the lines, the new picture just isn't quite as sharp. But at least you can see I am happy in my work.

THIS TIME IT'S ENDANGERED STRIPED BASS AND SALMON

If you have been buying commercially distributed striped bass and salmon, better get busy checking.

It seems that the Hudson River and Lake Ontario bass and salmon have been found to contain frightening amounts of a toxic chemical, referred to as PCB which means polychlorinated biphenyl, used since 1930 in the manufacture of plastics, paints, electrical transformers, printing ink, caulking compound and hydraulic fluids, and banned in both Britain and Canada.

More than five parts per million makes food unsafe.

As much as 350 parts per million have been found in some of the fish being warned about. Some of the toxic fish have been found near General Electric plants, according to a report in the N. Y. Times.

Monbanto Chemical, the only domestic manufacturer of the chemical has been asked to supply a customer list of PCB purchasers.

Check of drinking water supplies in the area also is underway, and Poughkeepsie, N. Y., pumps its drinking water directly from the Hudson River and, according to PCB authorities, no known water-purification process can remove PCB.

Last year 1.3 million pounds of striped bass were taken from the Hudson River by sportmen and commercial fishermen.

It also is feared that northern pike, large and small-mouth bass, yellow and white perch, and white catfish taken from the water there have unhealthy PCB concentrations.

In Japan in 1968 1,000 persons developed a skin disease after eating rice oil contaminated by PCB, and 16 deaths were attributed to it.

PCB has been found in turtle eggs, milk of pregnant women and chickens fed on fish meal. It withstands temperatures up to 1,600 degrees Fahrenheit, and has been found in cardboard boxes with contamination traced to printer's ink. Fish-eating mink with only very minimum amounts ingested, have failed to reproduce and have had a 71 per cent mortality rate.

There's more, but that should be enough. Except that it is described as "ubiquitous" substance (everywhere) and "persistent, once it gets into the food chain."

Just where the fish taken out of the Hudson River and Lake Ontario have been shipped appears anybody's guess. You can check with your grocer. He's likely as much concerned as you are.

MORE TIME TO BE BORED WITH SELF AND ENVIRONMENT

I'd like to add I spent some time recently checking with a very well informed area executive asking all kinds of questions about dangerous chemical additives in food, one in particular.

His stand was that we get this cancer-producing chemical in "such extremely minute amounts" it couldn't really amount to much.

As more and more of these warnings emerge, I keep wondering just how long this civilization can exist with the increasing number of these various dangerous additives in these amounts "too minute to cause us any worry."

I also have begun to wonder if it has any relation to my increasing disinterest in food as such. I've almost lost my taste for meat. My brother-in-law says it's because the animals today are being grass-fed instead of grain-fed.

I'm not inclined to agree. It could, I suppose, be subconscious concern with all the additives. But we get them in vegetables. Try reading labels on some of the canned goods. And our cucumbers and green peppers are sprayed with wax, our oranges, lemons and apples are sprayed with dye (which means the day of grating orange and lemon rind for flavors is gone), and apples must be washed in another chemical, as well as most vegetables. You can get that chemical at the health food store in the Mall and it is supposed to be non-harmful.

It you look a bit further, you will discover more of this pollution which has been added to sell food, not to make it more healthful.

So then you finally read there are certain vitamins which will pull some of these and other dangerous chemicals out of the body, including the bi-products of atomic radiation. But why wants to be always supplementing?

On the other hand, so long as the American housewife is going to continue to demand prepared foods which can give her more time (to be bored with self and environment), she and her family are going to pay the price.

And since the supermarket is dependent upon her dollar the grocer has no alternative but to make sure she's getting what she will buy. Ever think about that?