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Administration

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I D E A S
F O R A B E T T E R
C I T Y / 1977

Selected by the Staff of The
Municipal Technical Advisory Service

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MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE, THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

in cooperation with the
TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

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F O R E W O R D

MTAS receives virtually all periodicals in the area of municipal government and also obtains many other publications in this field. These contain a "mass of information" (when trying to sift, classify and assimilate, we sometimes wish it were much less!). Materials are routed to staff members for their examination; they mark items that appear noteworthy; and the editor writes the summaries for this publication.

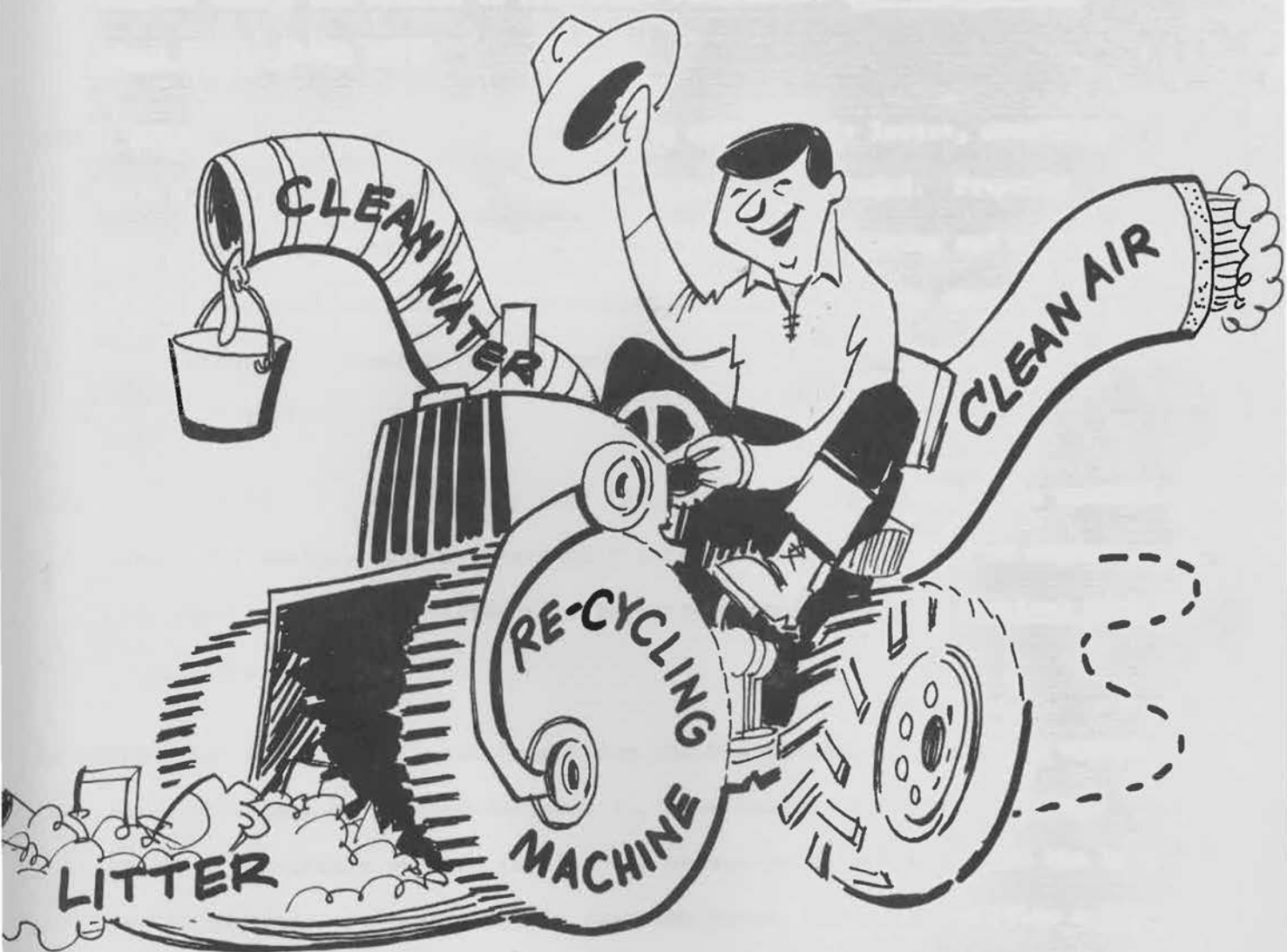
These are not necessarily "new" ideas; the term has a relative meaning. There is little, if anything, in the field that is really unique. What is new to one city may be old to another. Nevertheless, we hope that this "catalog of municipal ideas" will be useful to the officials of cities in Tennessee and elsewhere.

Additional copies are available, free upon request, to Tennessee municipal officials and at \$4.00 each to others.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Energy/Environment	1
Finance/Taxation	3
Health, Safety and Welfare	7
Housing	9
Miscellaneous	10
Personnel	13
Police and Fire	15
Public Relations	20
Public Works	24
Recreation	27
Refuse	29
Traffic and Parking	31
Transportation	33
Water and Sewage	34

Improved Environment



.... WOULDN'T THIS BE NICE?

E N E R G Y

AN ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM . . . in Worcester, MA, includes regulations for the conservation of energy by all city departments. A full-time inspector and investigator monitors compliance and assists in enforcement. An energy action group meets regularly to oversee the complete program. The city also used faculty members and students from a local college to conduct energy use studies in city-owned facilities. (New England Municipal Forum, March 1977)

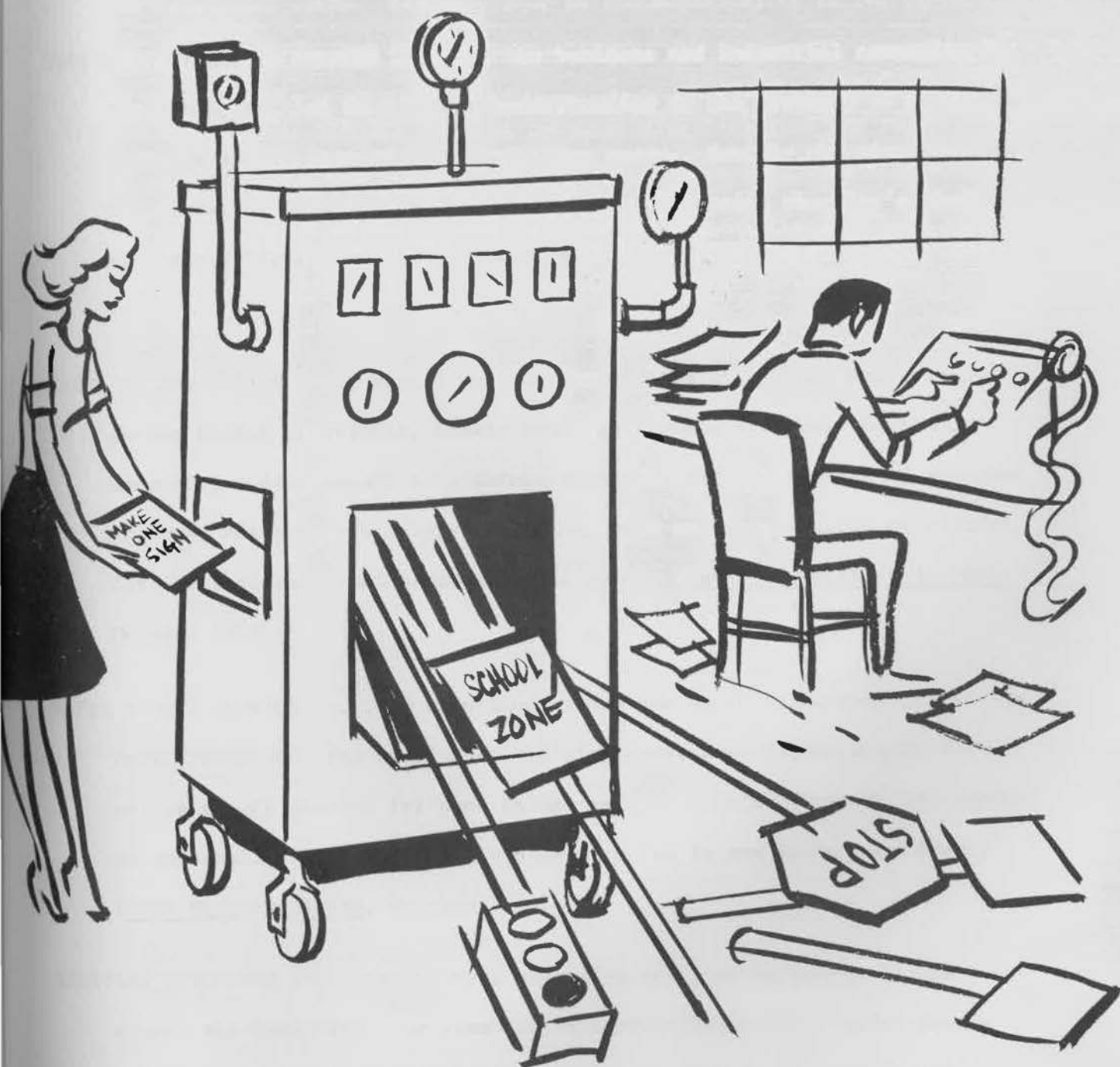
ENERGY BENEFITS OF WINDOWS . . . can more than offset their losses, according to a recent study. However, "window management" is needed. Properly used, windows can serve as solar collectors and cut lighting and ventilation requirements. Basic conservation techniques include shutters and high-performance glass to reduce heat loss. (Engineering News-Record, April 21, 1977)

BOYS WITH BUCKETS . . . can be your best investment to keep street trees watered during dry months. Trees in sidewalk pits need water from May to August, even when it rains, according to a forestry consultant. (The American City & County, May 1977)

AN ADOPT-A-LOT PROGRAM . . . can help solve the old problem of unsightly vacant land, officials of Chicago Heights, IL, have found. The project brings together volunteers anxious to clean up vacant lots and landowners who have neglected their property over the past few years. The city compiles a list of would-be candidates willing to adopt a lot and notifies the owners to obtain permission for beautification. Agreements drawn up by the city's legal staff and signed by the owners call for the granting of an easement to enter the property for the exclusive purpose of removing trash or debris and planting grass, trees or shrubbery. The agreement will not permit the

installation of any devices or the erecting of a permanent structure. The city plans to put up signs on the lots giving credit to those responsible for the up-grading. (Illinois Municipal Review, August 1977)

Finance and Taxation



F I N A N C E

PRIVATE CAR USE . . . may be cheaper than maintaining a city fleet. An auditor's check in Cedar Rapids, IA, found that it would be less expensive to pay an employee 15 cents per mile to use his own vehicle than supply a city car if that employee travels fewer than 9,000 miles per year. (Iowa Municipalities, October 1976)

PERSONAL LETTERS TO LEADERS . . . of the business and industrial community in Pensacola, FL, led to a better understanding of the problems of maintaining services in the face of ever increasing costs. Sent by the city manager, the "personal form letter" had attachments discussing the city's financial status and highlights of the budget situation. (ICMA Nuts & Bolts, Oct. 11, 1976)

COSTS OF NON-ACTION . . . should be considered along with other costs in preparing budget priorities, Kansas local government officials contend. Governing bodies should have before them not only the expense of proposed actions, but how much deferring action, such as deterioration of streets through inadequate maintenance, would total. (Kansas Government Journal, October 1976)

MAYBE ESCORT SERVICE . . . is something cities can no longer afford to provide free. Waterloo, IA, found that the city spent over \$7,000 a year for police escort service for such things as construction firms moving awkward or abnormally large material to sites. A fee is now being considered. (Iowa Municipalities, October 1976)

RECYCLED BUILDINGS . . . can be less expensive and just as usable as new construction. New York City, for example, is converting an old foundry into a hospital at a cost of \$46 million, about \$10 million less than such a

facility would have cost to build from the ground up. It also will go into service 12 months sooner than one started from scratch. (Engineering News-Record, Nov. 18, 1976)

HIGH SCHOOL MECHANICS CLASSES . . . help Casa Grande, AZ, save money on maintenance and repair of police cars. Officers appreciate the immediate attention their cars get and the student mechanics have the benefit of working on late-model autos. The only cost to the municipality is for vehicle parts. (Connecticut Town and City, December 1976)

MORE EFFECTIVE LEGAL SERVICE . . . at substantially less cost has resulted from a new approach being tried by Liberty, MO. The presence of legal counsel at city meetings is not required and paralegal assistance is used for research. Costs have been trimmed to an average of less than \$10,000 annually. Further, the legal products are turned out faster and generally with more thorough preparation. The paralegal is a trained legal technician capable of doing research necessary to the operation of a small municipal government, working under the direction of the city's attorney. (Missouri Municipal Review, November 1976)

SENDING POSTCARDS . . . instead of sealed letters has saved Lewiston, ID, more than \$600 in postage and materials during the past year. The city uses the cards for mailing brief, nonconfidential messages such as public meeting notifications. (North Dakota League of Cities, December 1976)

COMBINING NEGOTIATION AND BIDDING . . . for a bond sale helped Lexington, VA, save money. The bidding and sale were executed without an official statement or a bond rating. Instead, three financial institutions familiar with the city were invited to bid on the bonds. They were provided with full information about the city's finances at a meeting between the potential bidders and city officials. The successful bidder was asked to sign a

disclosure statement attesting to the adequate opportunity it had been given in researching Lexington's finances. The city estimated this procedure saved about \$25,000 in administrative, legal and financial services. (Virginia Town and City, March 1977)

CITIZENS CAN RENT . . . city-owned equipment in Clarinda, IA, provided it can't be obtained otherwise at economical rates. Rental charges are determined after surveying private rates and uniform equipment manuals. The equipment is operated and supervised by city personnel who are paid for their labor by the renter. It is not available at times that would interfere with city work. (Iowa Municipalities, March 1977)

COSTLY LEGAL ADS . . . run in compliance with revenue sharing requirements have been eliminated in Amherst, MA, in cooperation with local newspapers. The town was able to convince the newspaper editors that the budget was "news-worthy." The budget summary was printed, along with the public hearing notice, as "news." As a result, the town obtained coverage in more publications and presented revenue sharing information in greater detail at no cost. (MFOA Newsletter, May 1, 1977)

NOSTALGIA CAN MEAN MONEY . . . if you have enough imagination. When new rust-resistant steel cables were installed on the Golden Gate bridge in San Francisco, the city sold, as collectors' items, 15 miles of the original suspender cable. Each four-inch section, painted the original international orange of the bridge, brought \$35 from collectors. (The American City & County, October 1976)

BUILDING TRASH DUMPSTERS . . . is saving Anadarko, OK, money. After changing to a dumpster collection system, the city initially purchased commercially made containers. However, city employees designed a dumpster which they feel is better than a commercial one and that can be built at about half the cost.

The containers being made by city employees have such special features as relocated caster wheels to make the dumpster more stable and more holes in the bottom to allow liquids to drain off and retard rust. The dumpsters can be built for less than \$90 each. (Oklahoma Cities and Towns, May 26, 1977)

A CITIZEN GIFT CATALOG . . . gives Honolulu, HI, residents information on suggested items they could donate to the city and procedures for making such contributions. Aimed at individuals and community and business associations, the brochure contains gift ideas ranging from \$5 plants to \$40,000 lighting fixtures, as well as information on how to make ordinary contributions. (The American City & County, February 1977)

A GOLF SURCHARGE . . . is a practical way to finance long-range improvements for golf courses, according to the American Society of Golf Architects. Denver, for example, has a surcharge of 75¢ for 18 holes for residents and \$1.25 for non-residents. All funds go into a golf expansion program. (Park Maintenance, August 1977)

FEEDBACK FROM BIDDERS . . . is helping Plainfield, NJ, obtain more competitive bids and make more effective use of advertising. A feedback sheet accompanies all solicitations for bids. From the information returned on the sheet, the city learns where prospective bidders most frequently find out about requests for quotations on various services and products and why many fail to submit bids. (Virginia Town and City, September 1977)

USING RECYCLED OIL . . . to operate city vehicles has saved San Diego approximately \$20,000 in one year. The city also realized almost \$1,600 from the sale of used oil. The recycled oil is obtained from a nearby refining corporation. (The American City & County, November 1976)

Health, Safety and Welfare



HEALTH

A PET CARE CLINIC . . . was helpful to owners and a good communitiy relations project for the New York City parks, water resources and fire departments. Focusing on the proper way to care for pets, the Canine Clean-up Carnival in a city park included demonstrations on the proper way to bathe dogs, flea control, ear and eye cleaning, brushing, and ending bad breath. (Shoptalk, September 1976)

Housing



H O U S I N G

FIX-A-GRAM FORMS . . . play a major role in a program of preventive maintenance for public housing in Clifton, NJ. Two versions of the form are distributed to all residents. One lists 17 items such as hazardous sidewalk conditions, street and sign repairs, substandard buildings, etc., the location and date filed. The other includes 14 common maintenance problems that develop in multiple dwelling units, such as broken windows or leaky faucets. The latter form, listing the complaints, is to be delivered to the superintendent. If a response is not received from the landlord within 10 days, the housing department is notified for appropriate action. (New Jersey Municipalities, December 1976)

APARTMENTS IN A FACTORY . . . can be attractive. Hoboken, NJ, has transformed an abandoned plant into a moderate income housing complex. The once-drab brick building now contains 173 modern units, all with outside views because of the L-shaped design. Even the factory's smoke stacks have been utilized: they are the centerpiece of a spacious, attractive playground for youngsters. (New Jersey Municipalities, December 1976)

DON'T MIX AGE GROUPS . . . in a single housing area unless you want to contribute to the crime rate, according to the findings of a study funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Going against a popular philosophy that considered mixed age groups ideal, the study shows that the elderly are victimized at a greater rate when they live in buildings where there are one-parent families with teen-age children than in any other type of housing. (The American City & County, September, 1976)

A VACATED SCHOOL HOUSE . . . has been converted into attractive, moderately priced rental apartments for Gloucester, MA, senior citizens. The downtown-area school, built in 1889, was abandoned when people began moving out of

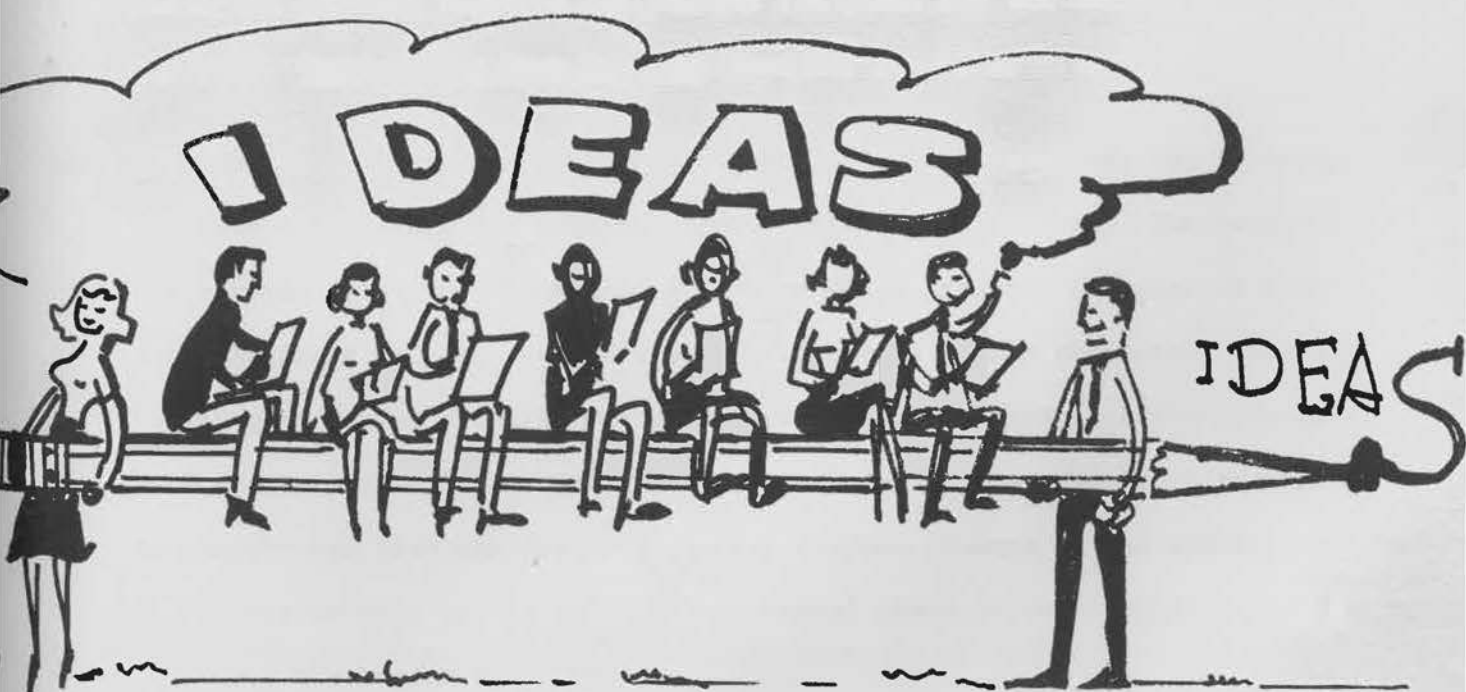
the center city. Several nonprofit and governmental agencies were involved in planning the conversion. (NSPRA Paragraphs, February 1977)

HOUSING REHABILITATION . . . is costing Phoenix, AZ, less than usual through a new concept. Federally-funded public service employees, working under professional supervision, provide the labor for refurbishing eligible homes. A non-profit corporation operates the program and finances building materials with federal community development block grant funds. (City of Phoenix Monthly Review, April 22, 1977)

A TEENAGE ESCORT SERVICE . . . is making life in high density public housing areas safer in Nashville, TN. Young people from 15 to 18 years old are employed by the city to provide protection for elderly residents, especially at Social Security check time. The program is federally funded. (The Nashville Banner, June 8, 1977)

A HOME HANDYMAN PROGRAM . . . in Pawtucket, RI, is enabling elderly and handicapped homeowners to make low cost, minor home repairs. A variety of elderly craftsmen, such as plumbers, electricians and carpenters, are employed by the city to perform work on homes owned by senior citizens or handicapped residents. In many instances, the work would not have been completed because of the age or physical condition of the owner. The craftsmen are retired or semi-retired professionals who work on a part-time basis. Requests for assistance are placed with the city's housing specialist, who visits the homes to determine eligibility. If the request is approved, an elder craftsman is scheduled to perform the minor repair. The homeowner is responsible for purchasing all materials used on the job and a portion of the cost of the labor, depending on ability to pay. (New England Municipal Center, Municipal Forum, No. 4)

Miscellaneous



M I S C E L L A N E O U S

THROWING DOWNTOWN PARTIES . . . can get suburbanites used to coming back to that area. The Cleveland, OH, Growth Association sponsored a series of 14 Friday night parties at a downtown minipark. The idea was not only to give people a good time but a reason to stay downtown after 5:00 p.m. Most of the refreshments and entertainment were donated. One thing to keep in mind: make any such project simple. Ideas begin to bog down in elaborate planning committees. (Ohio Cities & Villages, October 1976)

TRENDY GLASS NOISE BARRIERS . . . being erected along a major highway near Paris are not only attractive but less expensive than any other type. Made of glass and aluminum, the wall is placed as close to the guard rail as possible, usually just outside the limit of how much the rail will "give" when hit by a car moving at maximum speed. Sound insulation is achieved by sealing the spaces between panes with silicone and placing neoprene between glass and aluminum supports and between the glass and the concrete base of the wall. (Engineering News Records, November 25, 1976)

SELL RESTORATION . . . in abandoned downtown buildings. Cleveland, OH, is using a former dress store for displays about restoration programs. The center was a focal point for a month-long program which included a series of box-lunch seminars for downtown office workers, tours aboard chartered buses of buildings in areas proposed for restoration or preservation, and a bicycle tour of the industrial riverfront property which the city hopes to redevelop. In conjunction with the festival, social studies classes in the public school system were provided with audio visual presentations. (Ohio Cities & Villages, October 1976)

RETRIEVE LITTER AND MOW . . . at the same time and save money and effort.

Davenport, IA, found it could do this by mounting a plastic bucket, such

as service stations use for washing car windows, next to the tractor operator's seat. A standard litter retriever, purchased from a national company, is mounted on the opposite fender. With this equipment, mower operators can easily reach down with the retriever and pick up litter instead of grinding it into small pieces. (Park Maintenance, October, 1976)

VANDAL-RESISTANT RESTROOMS . . . have been designed by Fremont, NB. The concrete block flat-topped, square structure has a storage room between the two restrooms. Features include glass block at window locations and use of prison-type stool fixtures with no separate seats and wall-mounted push buttons for flushing. Only the inner storage room contains any exposed piping and valves. Lighting fixtures are recessed in the poured concrete roof and controlled by a timing clock in the storage room. Steel doors which lock from the inside provide privacy. (IBG Newsletter, Volume II, No. 1, 1977)

REDUCE DOWNTOWN LITTER . . . by making night collections in the central business district. This cuts down on windblown paper, according to a study conducted in New Brunswick, NJ. (New Jersey Municipalities, June 1977)

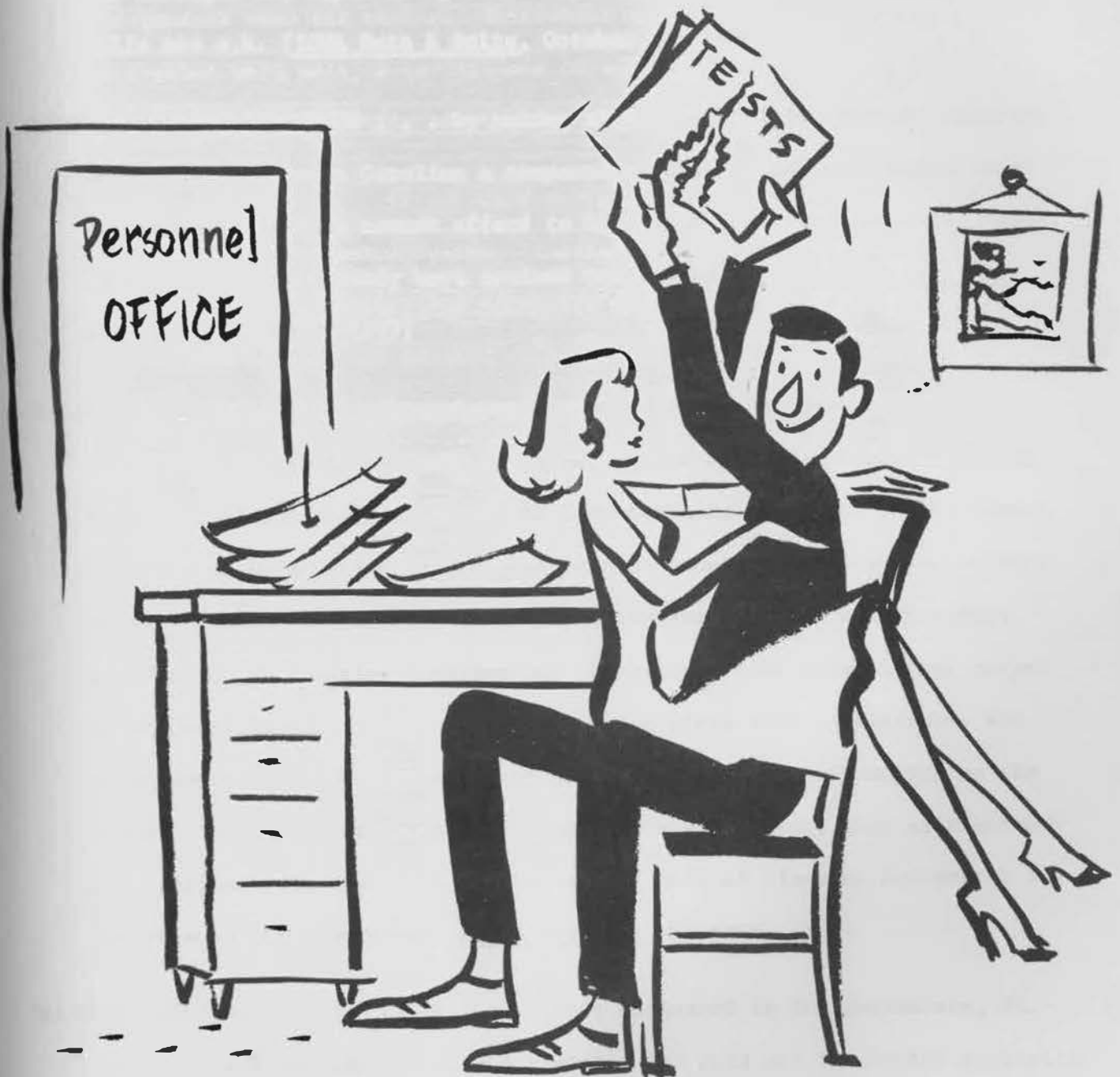
AUTOMATIC CALL ROUTING . . . after-hours in Raymond, WA, permits immediate action on emergency requests and eliminates calls to city officials not responsible for taking action. A telephone answering device records all non-emergency calls for response the next morning and routes real emergencies directly to the city superintendent. (The American City & County, February 1977)

DEPARTMENT COLOR CODING . . . can make it easier for citizens to find their way around in government buildings. Each administrative department has its own color scheme, differentiating each area from its neighbor. (The American City & County, February 1977)

OFFICE CLEAN OUT DAY . . . can keep you from becoming buried under unneeded paper. Set aside one day every six months for the whole organization to clean out its offices. Ask workers to dress casually. Provide a box lunch. Give each department a list of what records have to be retained, how long they must be kept, and which department retains which records. Workers can easily figure out what can be thrown away, filed away or sent to another office. (Pennsylvanian, July 1977)

A CITIZEN DISPUTE COURT . . . in Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County, TN, diverts family or neighborhood disputes from formal court hearing procedures. Many of the cases have no clear solution but it is reassuring for people to get the problems off their chest in an official atmosphere. Not only are these types of squabbles removed from the crowded criminal docket, but no criminal record results from the charges. A general sessions court judge presides and regular court room procedure is followed. (The Nashville Tennessean, August 14, 1977)

Personnel



P E R S O N N E L

AN OPEN LINE . . . to the city manager is available to all employees for two hours daily in Glendale, AZ. A tape recording device with a direct dial number was installed in manager's office for use by city employees. The tape can handle up to two hours of messages each evening. Every morning all messages are typed and given to the manager for review. Anonymous calls are o.k. (ICMA Nuts & Bolts, October 11, 1976).

IMPROVE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS . . . by taking advantage of local private industry expertise. In South Carolina a cooperative program has been established for communities that cannot afford to hire labor relations experts. Many local industries already have trained staff people. (The American City and County, January 1977)

CUSTODIAL MANUALS . . . teach employees to work smart, not just hard. The custodial manual, if properly prepared, can be used as a textbook for in-service training programs or can be self-teaching. Include in the manual sections on orientation to the organization's policies and rules; safety; an introduction to cleaning techniques; routine cleaning instructions; information on cleaning hard surface floors and floor maintenance; carpet maintenance instructions; care of sensitive areas such as restrooms and water fountains; the importance of periodic cleaning; information on the proper maintenance of areas not found in every building, such as stairways and elevators; instructions on the use and care of cleaning equipment; and the role of the supervisor. (APWA Reporter, February 1977)

TRAINING WATER MAINTENANCE CREWS . . . isn't haphazard in St. Petersburg, FL. Selective job reorganization and training has paid off in greater productivity. The program was designed to offset such common complaints as lack of recognition, low pay, low status, lack of tools, poorly maintained equipment,

insufficient program planning, and a poor safety record. Goals for the training program included cross training of employees, improvement in safety records, improved equipment maintenance, employee recognition, better pay, and improved service to the public. Employees were divided into six functional groups and specific work tasks and levels of achievement were developed for each position. Workers are rotated between crew assignments each six months. Successful completion results in reassignment to another work unit, a certificate of accomplishment and a one-step pay raise. (The American City and County, September 1976)

MAKE SAFETY PLEASING . . . if you want employee cooperation. Kansas City, MO, uses an incentive award system. Instead of forcing safety through training regulations, posters and excessive discipline, the employees chose program activities and decided to be divided into competitive teams. (The American City and County, May 1977)

Police and Fire



P O L I C E

OLDER VOLUNTEERS . . . can be valuable assets to police departments. The sheriff in Maricopa County, AZ, uses retired persons in their 60's or older for such activities as conducting safety patrols on lakes and along rivers; helping to recover persons who have drowned; handling traffic and crowd control at major gatherings; effecting transfer and transportation of prisoners; serving as members of disaster control, paramedical and health service units; and counseling jailed offenders on personal or family problems. (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, August 1976)

A FIREBOX SURVEY . . . can cut down on false fire alarms. Bayonne, NJ, conducted such a study and was successful in reducing the number of false alarms. The survey pinpointed fireboxes used most often for prank calls. These were turned around so that they--and the person using them--were highly visible under street lights. (New Jersey Municipalities, May 1976)

A BOMB-THREAT PLAN . . . which has been explained to all employees should be developed by every public agency, the FBI believes. Included should be a bomb-threat call report form to be kept near office telephones. The form helps the person receiving the call to obtain such data as language used, any facts about the bomb, and information about the voice on the phone and any background noise which might be helpful. (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, November 1976)

FIGHT MARINA FIRES . . . with a floating fire pump. Sausalito, CA, has equipped a special fire truck with a floating pump which can be used at marinas, docks and other shore-front areas that have only limited or no access to fire hydrants but where plenty of water is available. The 48-pound pump can throw an 85-foot stream. It is provided with 100 feet of 1-1/2-inch light weight hose. (The American City & County, January 1977)

SOME WHITE PAINT . . . can reduce illegal entries into buildings. Fort Madison, IA, experienced a 50 per cent drop in such crimes after painting the rear of buildings in the business district white to aid police surveillance of alleys. (Iowa Municipalities, February 1977)

STOLEN AUTOS . . . are detected in Jersey City, NJ, through a new gimmick. A color-striped decal is placed in the rear window to signify the sex and, roughly, the ages of the persons who drive the car. The decal also has a standout capital letter showing which section of the city the owner lives in and an identifying number corresponding to one on a card, at police headquarters, giving the owner's name and address. If the person behind the wheel seems to be too far out of line, police can quickly check with the stationhouse by radio. (New Jersey Municipalities, December 1977)

CITIZEN HAZARD REPORTS . . . are helping to reduce traffic accidents in Los Angeles, CA. Residents, who are more familiar with the neighborhood than police officers, are asked to report such problems as tree limbs blocking stop signs, crosswalks in need of markings, busy intersections without signals, and streets that have unrestricted parking and need widening. Reports may be phoned in to a desk officer at the station. The complaint will be followed up and the citizen is kept posted as to its status. (The American City and County, November 1976)

COMMUNICATION BY CABLE . . . is an important part of the Hampton, VA, police department's community relations unit. With the assistance of the local cable television station, the unit prepares and presents a weekly half-hour program on crime prevention techniques and other information about police activities. Many of the shows feature reenactments of actual

events or incidents. These are filmed at locations throughout the city to help viewers feel they are "on the scene." Everyday police activities such as handling drunk drivers or irate citizens have been emphasized in several programs. Police officers selected for acting roles are all amateurs who have shown an ability to speak confidently and naturally when "on camera." (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, January 1977)

PERSONAL PAGERS . . . allow police personnel in Evanston, IL, to remain in contact with each other even when they are outside their vehicles. The tone-only pagers, which cost under \$200 each, are controlled by a decoder which can be connected directly or remotely to any city radio system. (UTS Briefs, October 1976)

BOOKMARKS ALERT SENIOR CITIZENS . . . to a crime resistance program in Wilmington, DE. Listed on one side of the bookmark are tips to help reduce the chances of readers becoming victims of street crimes. The other side contains a phone number which they can call for further information. (FBI Law Enforcement Journal, March 1977)

RECOGNIZING NATURAL COVER . . . can save lives in police work. Atlantic City, NJ, has established a "combat confidence course" designed to help officers immediately recognize such natural protectors as mailboxes, fire hydrants, telephone poles, and their own police cruiser. The course, part of the city's training program, better equips officers for street duty by increasing their skills and mentally preparing them for a shooting situation. The city also has noticed a sharp rise in morale since the special firearms range was installed. (FBI Law Enforcement Journal, April 1977)

POLICE SERVICE AIDES . . . are increasing community involvement in crime prevention programs in Worcester, MA, as well as saving officers' time. The PSA's

are unarmed, uniformed civilians who respond to calls that do not require the presence of an officer. In addition, they assist officers and perform communications and clerical duties. To distinguish them from police officers, PSAs wear a different uniform and those on patrol drive specially marked vehicles. Most of their activities involve report-taking for auto theft, malicious mischief, auto accidents and larcenies. (New England Municipal Municipal Forum, March 1977)

EMERGENCY INFORMATION . . . available from a data processing system in Tokyo, Japan, speeds the dispatch of firefighting vehicles and ambulances and provides instant status reports on available medical facilities. The fire and ambulance communications total system (FACTS) stores information on assignment and activity on all engines, ambulances and other emergency vehicles. It also keeps tab of available beds and operating vehicles at the city's hospitals. City residents have access to the system. By dialing a widely publicized phone number, they may obtain information on the availability and location of hospital emergency services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (The American City and County, May 1977)

INSTALLING SMOKE DETECTORS . . . saves homeowners' money and possibly lives in King County, WA. The program is a joint effort by fire officials and members of an insurance group. Policy holders who install the detectors get a 2 per cent credit on their premiums and can receive up to a 30 per cent discount on the purchase of an approved device. Fire departments inspect home installations of detectors to make certain they are put in properly. And they will return a year later to check again. (The American City & County, April 1977)

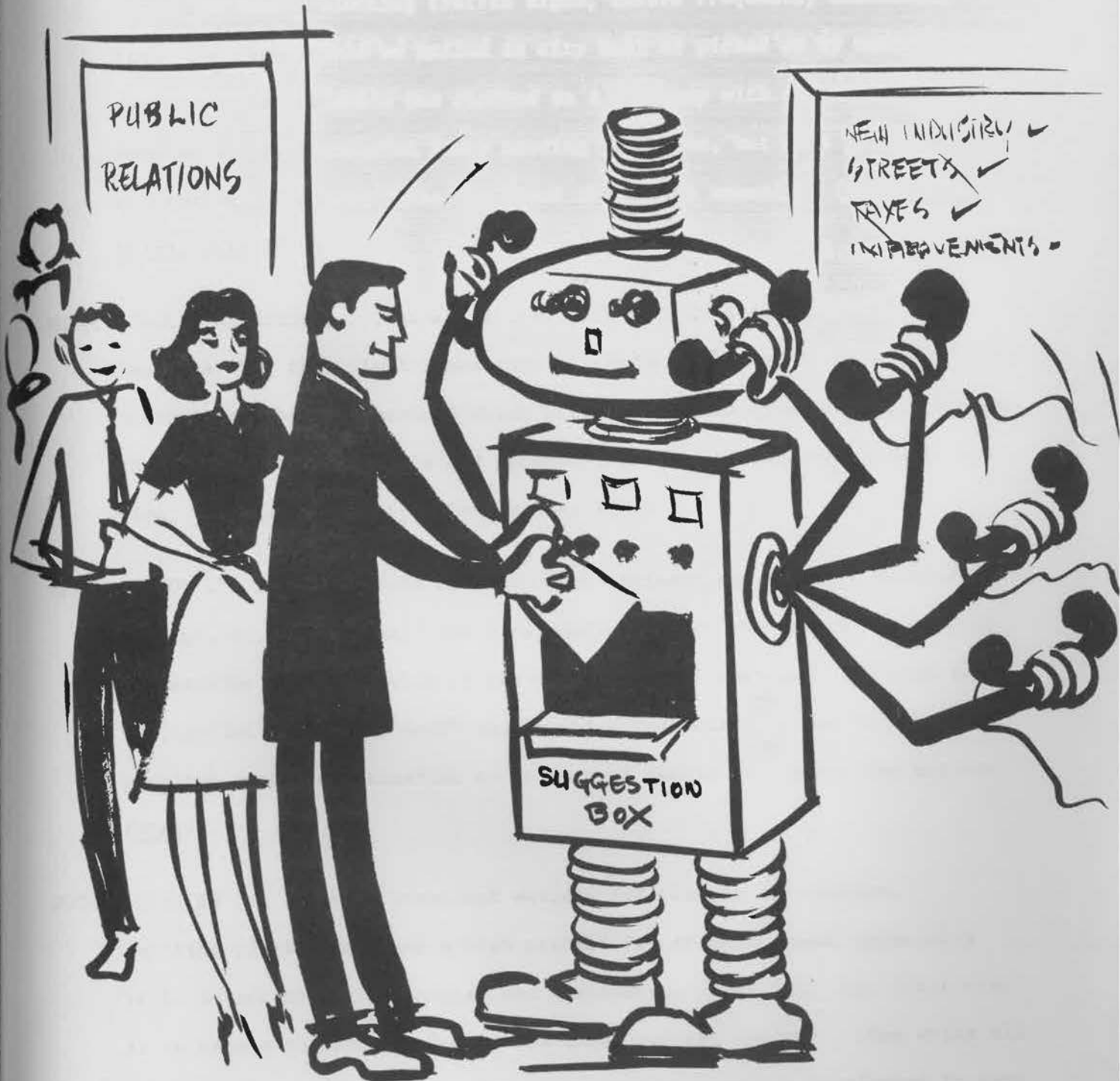
FIRE RESCUE DECALS . . . provide information about all occupants of a home, including pets, in Missouri. Distributed by the Humane Society of

Missouri, the red and white stickers have spaces to designate the number of people, dogs and cats, and other occupants in each house. (MTAS)

VOLUNTEER INTERPRETERS . . . aid the police in Charleston County, SC. A list of foreign-speaking residents is maintained by the department, which compiles it through personal contacts and by advertisements in local newspapers, magazines and other media. The individuals who serve are available whenever requested on a 24-hour basis. The list has been provided to other local and federal law enforcement agencies, the port authority, hospitals, churches, and other groups. (FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, June 1977)

RECYCLING A HOUSE . . . into a "mini" fire station has allowed Boulder, CO, to reduce both costs and response time without having to hire additional firefighters. The mini station is staffed by two firefighters and houses a pumper truck. (Colorado Municipalities, September/October 1977)

Public Relations



PUBLIC RELATIONS

MAPPING OUT PROBLEMS . . . listed by citizens helped officials in Anniston, AL, adjust city services as needed. The program worked this way: After a preliminary information build-up, the local newspaper published a checklist so readers could indicate locations of such problems as pot-holes, shrubbery blocking traffic signs, refuse frequently scattered, etc. The forms could be mailed to city hall or picked up by newspaper carriers. Each problem was plotted on a city map with colored pins, showing not only isolated items needing attention, but also patterns of trouble. The city plans to repeat the survey annually. (ICMA Nuts & Bolts, July 1976)

MOBILE PUBLIC HEARINGS . . . have elicited much more citizen input in Mesquite, TX, than similar hearings at city hall. A mobile van goes directly to the neighborhood which will be affected by a project. Aboard the van are city officials and personnel who can answer questions at the site. (The American City & County, May 1976)

REACHING OUT . . . to residents can keep both citizens and the city informed. Raleigh, NC, uses a small brochure, enclosed with the monthly water bill, to describe a city service or provide timely information. Included in the leaflet is a "feed back" coupon which residents can use to mention problems that need attention or to suggest future topics for the series. (MTAS)

DOCTOR OFFICES . . . can be excellent outlets for citizen information. Anything placed there has a high probability of being read, especially if it is attractively designed and interestingly written. The first step is to secure the cooperation of the local medical society, then write all doctors, from general practitioners to dentists, asking permission to send

information pieces. (APWA Reporter, June 1976)

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE WELCOMED . . . in an unusual way in Iowa City, IA.

During the registration process at the local university, the city staffs one of the tables. Housing inspectors, police officers and volunteers from various board and commissions are available to answer questions and provide information and maps about the transit system, recreation and human relations program, pets, the library, parking regulations, etc. They also receive complaints from students about housing deficiencies.

(ICMA Nuts & Bolts, October 11, 1976)

KEEPING CITIZENS INFORMED . . . can help with enforcement of municipal noise

control ordinances, Sioux City, IA, has found. Before beginning an extensive enforcement campaign, the city gave wide publicity to two weeks of free noise testing before any summons were issued. In addition, residents were fully informed about the reasons for the campaign. (Iowa

Municipalities, July 1976)

NEWSY ELEVATORS . . . play a major part in a New York company's information

program for employees. A daily news sheet, "What's Up?", is posted in all elevators of the headquarters building. It contains material on changes in personnel policies, employee programs and important information about the company's business. (Public Relations Journal, January 1977)

A VIP LIST . . . of 200 influential people receive a summary of all decisions

of the Roanoke, VA, school board. Because of the size of the list, the district can cut postage costs by using bulk rate and at the same time

keep more people informed of activities. (NSPRA Paragraphs, February 1977)

STUDENTS PREPARED THE ANNUAL REPORT . . . and learned more about their city in the process in Bloomfield, CT. Senior art students did sketches and designed the report cover and English students wrote the text.

(Connecticut Town and City, April 1977)

REALTORS WENT TO CLASS . . . in St. Petersburg, FL, to learn about city operations and services available to residents. Covered in a half-day seminar were license and inspection functions, the city's capital improvement program, crime prevention, planning, public works, and finance. The seminar was designed to give the real estate agents information they need when dealing with prospective clients. (ICMA Nuts and Bolts, June 20, 1977)

A NEIGHBORHOOD NOTEBOOK . . . helps residents of Dallas deal with close-to-home problems. It has been distributed widely to citizens interested in neighborhood maintenance and improvement but who don't know how to accomplish it. The book begins with a comprehensive "how-to" section on physical maintenance of the home. It moves on to a section on solving common neighborhood problems, such as cleaning up trash and improving block security. The third section deals with organizing the neighborhood for action. Another section, called "consuming city services," is a primer on the city itself: who to call for what and how city hall functions. The fifth section is on improving the neighborhood as a whole, including information on zoning regulations. The final section covers the historical designation process. (Nation's Cities, May 1977)

AN ACTION CENTER GETS RESULTS . . . for residents of Oklahoma City. But the center not only aids residents: it also assists the city departments. When several calls come in about the same situation, such as a lot overgrown with weeds, the center sends only the first request for assistance to the affected

department. When the response comes back from the department, all other residents who called about the same situation are advised about the action being taken. Department officials do not have to spend valuable staff time responding to the same questions over and over. (Oklahoma Cities and Towns, April 14, 1977)

INVOLVE THE PUBLIC . . . in public works projects to build support for needed programs, hold up warning signs on others, and to make certain that engineering and scientific factors are not ignored or played down. An advisory group of informed citizens can help a public works administrator cope with pressure groups that will be for or against different projects. Such a group should include persons nominated by professional societies. Outside nominations will generate the independent comments needed to avoid any "steamroller" attacks. (The American City and County, October 1976)

USE CABLE TELEVISION . . . to keep residents up-to-date on what's going on in city government. Each day, in East Lansing, MI, residents "on the cable" can see what's happening in their school district. Included is a summary of the last board meeting, the school calendar, the lunch menu, and anything else the district wants the community to know. The program appears on the channel assigned for community use, with material originating from the district office. Key to preparation is a "character generator," a type-writer-like machine which can transmit 16 separate typed "pages" or messages that run continually and may be updated each morning. The equipment costs approximately \$5,000. (NSPRA Paragraphs, February 1977)

Public Works



P U B L I C W O R K

- STUDENT SIDEWALK CHECKERS . . . help Fond du Lac, WI, keep track of needed maintenance. The city has been divided into 15 sections. The inspectors cover them one at a time on an individual basis, using a form prepared by the public works director. As the students walk along, they watch for hazardous and potentially hazardous conditions. Then they prepare written reports on their findings. A rating system has been established to make the results more useful for the city, classifying problems according to the seriousness of the hazard. (The American City & County, August 1976)
- AN ABANDONED STORE . . . in downtown St. Petersburg, FL, has a new lease on life as the Municipal Services Building. The facility does not replace City Hall but is an extension of it. City officials decided to renovate the existing structure because of the sizeable savings realized in redevelopment of an older building as compared to new construction. (The American City & County, September 1976)
- BUMPY RAILROAD CROSSINGS . . . have been smoothed with prefabricated panels that cost about the same as the wood planks they replaced in Oklahoma City, OK. Removal of the old crossing and installation of the polyethylene surface required only two days. The reconstruction project utilized 45 center panels and 90 approach panels, butted together and resting squarely upon the ties. The result was a smooth, uniform grade crossing surface. (The American City & County, September 1976)
- RESIDENTS MOW CITY PROPERTY . . . and earn some extra cash in Dallas, TX. Under an experimental project the city has begun contracting with private citizens and small businesses for minor maintenance work at parks and along median strips. Contractors provide their own equipment. Most of the contracts, in the \$600 to \$7,000 range, are awarded on a bid basis. (ICMA Nuts and Bolts, March 28, 1977)

A SUPERMARKET-TURNED-LIBRARY . . . in Gardner, MA, provided the city with an efficient, consolidated facility without the cost of a new building.

The former supermarket was chosen because it was near the central business district and highly visible to residents, its architecture was suitable for the new use, and purchasing the structure was much cheaper than building a comparable new library. (New England Municipal Center Municipal Forum, March 1977)

A LOAD-BEARING LAWN . . . is now available from concrete suppliers. It looks like a lawn but is a reinforced continuous concrete slab with geometrically spaced cavities for the planting of grass. Originally introduced in the United Kingdom in 1971, the new pavement has been used for such things as emergency access roads for high-density apartments and offices, off-road parking for shopping centers, rest areas and median crossovers for highways, and soil stabilization for embankments as well as airport parking areas and trailer parks. (Concrete Construction, April 1977)

PATCH DAMAGED PAVEMENT . . . in any type of weather with a new kind of magnesium-phosphate concrete material. The quick-setting patching concrete requires only water as an additive. It can be used for damaged bridge decks and other concrete pavement where the work must be done quickly with long-lasting results. When properly applied, the mix will self-level and provide a skid-resistant surface. Depending on the temperature, it will set in 8 to 16 minutes. (The American City & County, December 1976)

A FORMER TRAIN DEPOT . . . has found new life as a senior citizen's facility in Middleton, WI. (The Wisconsin Municipality, April 1977)

WASHING GRAFETTI . . . from masonry and other porous surfaces is simple in Worcester, MA. Paint and other markings can be effectively removed with

the use of a high-pressure water jet. The jet penetrates well into the sub-surface of rough material and has force enough to flush out most foreign matter. Detergents or solids can be blended with the water to achieve even quicker results. The initial cost of the water-jet equipment is under \$2,000. Using this technique, one man in one day can clean an area that previously took a two-man crew a week utilizing a hand-scrubbing method. (UTS Briefs, October 1976)

THERE'S NO TREE LOSS . . . from street construction in Anaheim, CA. The city includes a tree relocation clause in bidding documents. Stringent specifications, to which contractors must conform, are outlined when bids are solicited. Included is the size of the tree box or ball to be used, and a stipulation that the contractor box the tree at the original site and take it immediately to a designated relocation site. Parks Division employees dig holes for the trees before they arrive and are at the new sites to supervise the transplanting. (The American City & County, April 1977)

A STEERABLE ASPHALT CUTTER . . . is now on the market. The cutter, which can be pulled instead of pushed, swivels behind the grater moldboard. Result--a clean, straight cut with no tearing or ripping of pavement. The manufacturer claims one operator can cut three miles of asphalt two inches deep in less than an hour. (MTAS)

SAFER BIKING . . . is possible with a new snap-in device that prevents bike wheels from dropping into basin gratings. (Public Works Manual, 1977)

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Parks and Recreation



R E C R E A T I O N

THINK ABOUT COSTS . . . before you begin planning new tennis court construction.

The U.S. Tennis Court and Track Builders Association estimates that \$10,000 to \$15,000 should be allocated for each new court. This also covers the cost of fencing, nets and net posts. Included in the study should be a thorough investigation of the merit of the different kinds of tennis courts, surfacing products and their installation costs. (Park Maintenance, August 1976)

PRIVATE SECTOR GIFTS . . . can be a valuable source of revenue for park and recreation area development, according to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Albuquerque, NM, has a highly successful "Gifts for Parks" program through which individuals or groups can give money or land. Donations are tax-deductible. The city circulates attractive brochures which spell out what types of improvements are needed and approximate costs. (ICMA Nuts & Bolts, Oct. 11, 1976)

AN INEXPENSIVE FIRE RING . . . for camping areas can now be purchased from any cement plant. Actually drain spaces, they weigh 300 pounds, are easy to clean, and can't be moved by the camper. (Park Maintenance, November 1976)

ATTRACTIVE LITTER CONTAINERS . . . can be made from empty 30-gallon plastic drums discarded by industrial chemical suppliers. After the tops are cut out with a jig saw, the containers are washed and neutralized with detergents and soda. Finally, with a little paint and plenty of imagination, decorations are added. The cost of each container: zero. (Park Maintenance, February 1977)

PROGRAMS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL . . . are emphasized in the recreation efforts of Cortez, CO. Included are sailing lessons, backpacking trips, camping, and

bicycling with overnight camping. The programs use the geographic features of the area and are less expensive than traditional parks and recreation activities. (Colorado Municipalities, March-April 1977)

A CHILDREN'S GARDEN . . . is an unusual feature of the San Antonio, TX, botanical center. Designed to compliment the city's school program, the garden provides an area where youngsters can plant, care for and harvest vegetables. There is also an outdoor classroom for lectures and nature study. (The American City & County, May 1977)

HANDICAPPED ADULTS . . . do park maintenance during the peak summer use period in Klamath Falls, OR. Under the unusual arrangement, the city contracts with a local non-profit agency for the maintenance work. The agency provides work opportunities exclusively for physically and mentally handicapped adults. City officials estimate the project could save as much as 13 per cent of the amount normally budgeted for maintenance work each year and the program participants have the chance to do meaningful, productive, paid work. Because of the larger crew size, it is also anticipated that the quality of service provided will be improved over the previous practice. (ICMA Newsletter, Aug. 15, 1977)

Refuse



R E F U S E

PACKER TRUCK SAFETY GUARDS . . . protect motorists from objects ejected accidentally from the hoppers. Developed by San Diego, CA, the shields are actually heavy rubber mud-guard curtains hung behind the moving blade of packer trucks. Total cost was approximately six hours labor and \$20 in materials. Since installation of the shield, the city has cut its hopper ejection accidents from about one a week to zero. (Solid Waste Systems, August/September 1976)

DO-IT-THEMSELVES TRASH COLLECTION . . . is working in Cortez, CO. The experiment involves leaving a city dump truck overnight in residential areas when requested. The city picks up the truck in the morning and takes the trash to the dump. (Colorado Municipalities, January-February, 1977)

GOOD REFUSE COLLECTION ROUTING . . . doesn't require expensive computer time. Beaumont, TX, has developed a route study system and analysis which has resulted in increased efficiency while decreasing personnel. The form itself will vary from city to city, depending upon the information needed. But Beaumont's survey has pinpointed several areas which deserve special attention. First, the heading (date, route number, etc.) must be filled out correctly. Second, the surveyor must keep track of the garbage collected in small segments. This will allow management to make route changes with minimum effort. Finally, make certain the surveyor signs his form. At a later date you may need to ask questions about the route. In addition, Beaumont did not use regular department personnel. Part-time people were employed and were required to have at least one year of college. This insured that capable, intelligent (and impartial) personnel would be conducting the survey. Finally, a specific time should be determined to run the survey and develop a schedule (summer is

best). After the data sheets have been compared, a collection standard can be set. (The American City & County, September 1976)

REROUTING CUTS COSTS . . . of garbage collection in Raleigh, NC. By eliminating the need to double back along routes and requesting crews to take lunch and rest stops within their route, truck mileage and gas consumption have been cut in half. The cost of tire replacement has dropped 63 per cent and maintenance and repair costs have gone down 60 per cent. (The American City & County, January 1977)

CITIZENS PLAY "TRASH BALL" . . . and keep their community cleaner in Scranton, PA. The "Trash Ball Clean Up Campaign" utilizes 100 litter containers placed at strategic locations throughout the downtown. Residents and visitors are encouraged to "shoot" their throwaway items into the containers, not onto streets and sidewalks. (American City & County, February 1977)

Traffic and Parking



T R A F F I C

BULLET-PUNCTURED SIGNS . . . are being put back in service in Solano County, CA, through the use of nonmetallic patches of scrap sheeting. Repairing the signs damaged by target-hunting rifle shooters has saved the local government the cost of purchasing several hundred new markers over a six-year period. (Rural and Urban Roads, December 1976)

DEVELOPERS PAY COSTS . . . of traffic signals required by new subdivisions and commercial centers in Concord, CA. City officials believe all residents should not have to share the expense of improvements which primarily benefit only those in the developments. (The American City & County, October 1976)

IGNORING PARKING TICKETS . . . in Buffalo, NY, brings unwelcome publicity to violators. The parking violations bureau of the city publishes the names of persons who owe the city at least \$1,200 in fines. (The American City & County, January 1977)

"FREE-PAY" METERS . . . are bringing shopper smiles in Peoria, IL. The meters, installed in the downtown area, allow 30 minutes of free parking at the turn of the lever. The parker can buy another 1-1/2 hours by depositing the necessary coins. The results have pleased merchants and the city has not lost any revenue. (The American City & County, May 1977)

"ONE-WAY" SAVES FUEL . . . when applied to city streets, according to the Federal Highway Administration. The agency reports that a change to one-way streets makes traffic signals more responsive to actual demand, decreasing fuel consumption. (The American City & County, May 1977)

BREAKAWAY SIGN SUPPORTS . . . used in Clark County, NV, are not only safer for motorists but cut costs of initial installation and permit reuse of

the knocked-down support. The sign holder falls free of a vehicle and causes no damage, letting motorists retain car control. The sign also can be returned to service undamaged. (Rural and Urban Roads, July 1977)

Transportation

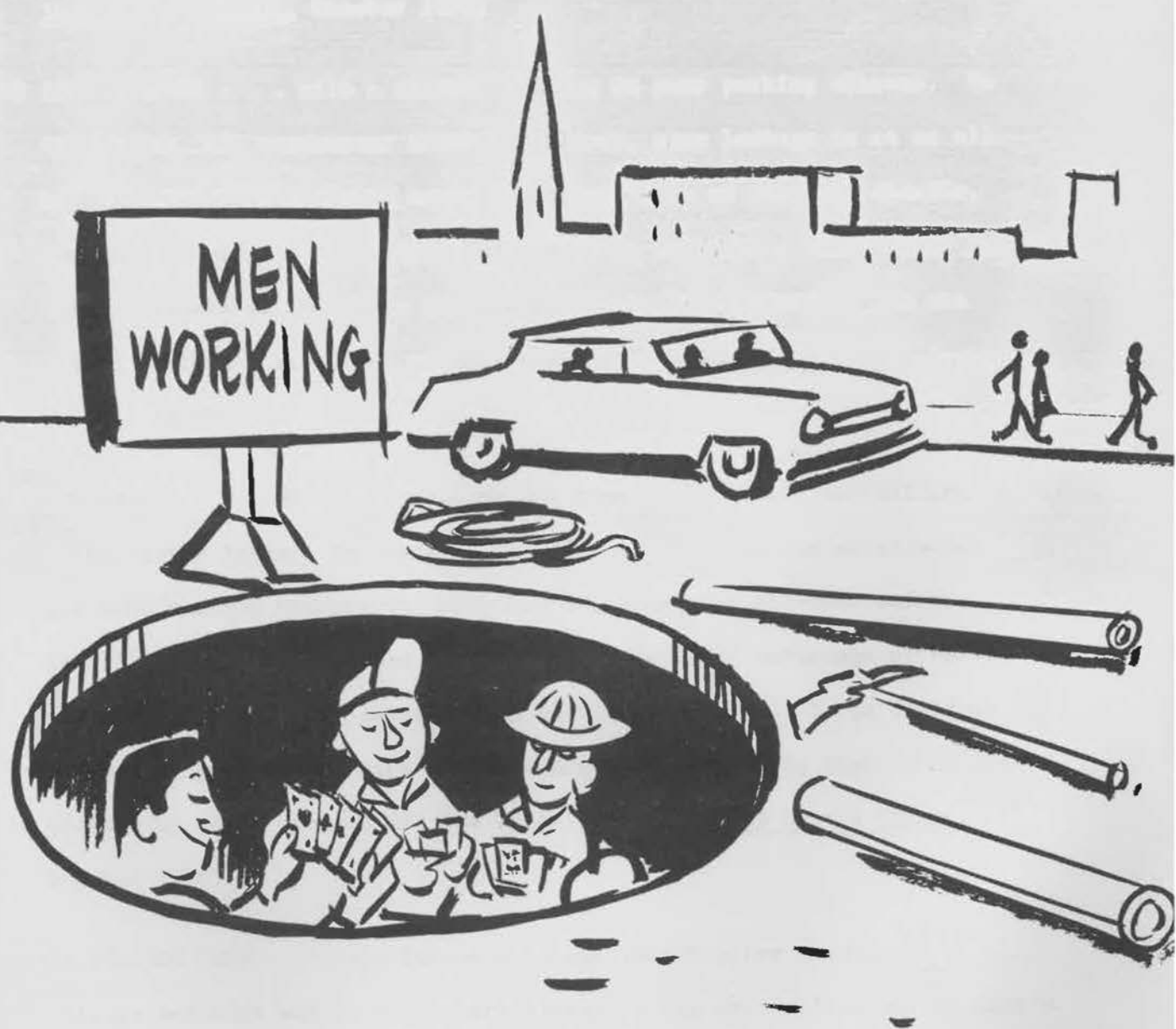


T R A N S P O R T A T I O N

A COMMUTER ROUTER SERVICE . . . in Buffalo, NY, makes it easier for residents to get where they want to go from where they are. The transit company will send, on request, a timetable and map indicating routes, transfer points, and exact fares based on the address and stated destination of each applicant. First-time riders also find that the routing package contains essential hints for the novice public transit customer. Newspaper ads carry a coupon for readers to clip and mail to register for the service. (The American City & County, February 1977)

STUDENT-BUILT BUS SHELTERS . . . in Vienna, VA, is saving the city money and providing valuable experience for the youngsters. A prototype shelter was first designed as a special project in the high school maintenance and repair shop. After incorporating design changes suggested by citizens, the students built four on-site units where maximum riders would be served. Made of redwood with a cedar shingle roof and plexiglass protection, the shelters cost only \$325 each for materials and labor. Comparable commercial ones would cost approximately \$3,500. The town council donated \$100 to the high school for new tools in appreciation for the students' work. (Virginia Town and City, September 1977)

Water and Sewage



W A T E R

A MULTIPLE-DUTY SEWER CLEANER . . . is possible if you write the specifications right. In Vero Beach, FL, the specifications were prepared in such a way that the sewer cleaner works for other city departments. The parks department uses it with a gun with interchangeable tips to spray insecticides on trees. When the city hall needed a paint job, the unit stripped the paint from the concrete building quickly and economically. (The American City & County, October 1976)

STOP PUMP LEAKAGE . . . with a special coating on pump packing sleeves. In Cincinnati, OH, wastewater treatment plants, pump leakage is at an all-time low because a special ceramic coating, made of titanium dioxide, was used to prevent dripping. The powder is fed into a flame spray gun, which converts it to molten particles. These are projected onto the sleeve to form a resistant ceramic coating. (The American City & County, January 1977)

TEST NEW SEWERS . . . with low pressure air immediately after backfilling to detect early leaks. To check on the integrity of the installed material and construction procedures, also run a preliminary air-test before backfilling. This combined procedure has the added advantage of teaching crew members to be careful when backfilling so that large boulders are not dropped on the pipe and to check the pipe to see that it is not cracked by being dropped off the truck. (The American City & County, October 1976)

A WATER STORAGE TANK . . . doubles as a garage facility for Bloomingdale, IL. Village vehicles and equipment are stored in the one-million-gallon tank's 52-foot diameter base. (The American City & County, January 1977)