Blessed be the hand that prepares a pleasure for a child, for there is no saying when and where it may bloom forth.

— Douglas Jerrold

Instead of loving your enemies, treat your friends a little better.

— Edgar W. Howe

A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.

— St. Francis of Assisi

THE GREAT ASBETOS RIP-OUT
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required by model building codes in specific areas of buildings where protection against fire was essential. Asbestos has no fewer than 3,000 uses and is currently used in hundreds of products, ranging from vehicle brakes to building panels to water and sewer pipes to protective aprons and gloves.

Although it has been known for decades that asbestos exposure can cause disease, it wasn't until the 1960s that it was conclu-

"...widespread removal of asbestos could qualify as the greatest regulatory scandal in American history."

sively documented that asbestos can cause lung cancer and mesothelioma (a cancer of the lining of the lungs) in shipyard workers. Between these diseases, asbestos is estimated to cause between 3,300 and 12,000 deaths in the U.S. each year, with a lag time of often 30 or more years between exposure and the actual development of disease.

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), which took effect December 14, 1987, orders that every public and private school building in the United States be inspected for asbestos. The act, which had the backing of lobbyists from the National Education Association and numerous other teacher organizations and a host of other

"Comparing exposures of persons in asbestos occupations to those who are simply occupants in buildings with asbestos is very tenuous."

groups including the Sierra Club, Audubon Society, U.S. Catholic Conference, Service Employees International Union, and the U.S. Public Interest Group (established by Ralph Nader), is the most stringent ever devised. This is because it includes not only asbestos that is potentially friable, that is, readily crumpled by hand, but also asbestos fibers that may be firmly imbedded in walls, floors, and ceilings. Friable asbestos-containing materials that are "significantly damaged" or have the potential for significant damage are to be abated, either through encapsulation, or, far more often, through removal.

The cost of removing asbestos is nothing short of staggering. Sprayed on for about 25 cents a foot in the 1960's, it can now cost $25 more a foot — $50 in New York City — to remove it because of all the safety precautions that must be taken to protect the remover and occupants of the building. Already, the school system of San Francisco has spent $16 million to abate a single high school. The National School Boards Association has estimated total U.S. school abatement costs in excess of $6 billion.

Still, school abatement costs are but the tip of the iceberg. A similar program for all public and commercial buildings would cost $51 billion, according to EPA. But according to environmental industry analyst Stephen L. Schweich, the EPA figure doesn't take into account all buildings that end up being abated, and actual direct abatement costs could be around $100 billion. Peter MacDowall, a widely respected industry consultant and analyst, and Ehud Mouchy, writing in the June issue of *Asbestos Issues*, estimate total abatement costs at

"A number of expert governmental and scientific bodies have concluded the risk of disease from exposure to asbestos in buildings is close to zero."

(Gulp!) $2 *trillion* over the next three decades, a figure which includes not only the direct cost of abatement as the EPA's does, he told me, but lost wages due to displacement and other incidental factors.

One firm purchased a mall near Denver for $53 million in 1985, believing it to be asbestos free. Two years later, when it decided to renovate, it found the mineral throughout the ceiling. Health officials ordered the mall shut and the inventory of 100 stores was carted away and buried. Between the removal, lost rent, and payments to storekeepers, total costs: $17 million.

Yet, while it is incontrovertible that constant exposure to high levels of asbestos dust can cause serious medical problems often leading to death, low level exposure is

"...using one of the lower abatement cost figures of $100 billion, we would find each life saved costing over $30 million."

an entirely different matter. Comparing exposures of persons in asbestos *occupations* to those who are simply *occupants* in buildings with asbestos is very tenuous. Asbestos workers in the 1940's and 1950's were generally exposed to concentrations from 100,000 to 1,000,000 times higher than those which would be present in a building using asbestos insulation.

A number of expert governmental and scientific bodies have concluded the risk of

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"We do not choose to be born. We do not choose our parents. We do not choose our historical epoch, or the country of our birth, or the immediate circumstances of our upbringing ... But within all this realm of choicelessness, we do choose how we shall live: courageously or in cowardice, honorably or dishonorably, with purpose or in drift ... We decide. We choose. And as we decide and choose, so are our lives formed."

— Joseph Epstein, editor of "American Scholar"

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME?
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be needed — ten years, fifty, one hundred?

The transition will not be easy. Fundamental change is always resisted. Many blacks and their liberal white supporters will deplore the loss of any of the existing cushions, but this just might be a spur of achievement to those who have so far depended on these very supports.

The dismay at the recent decisions of the Supreme Court, rectifying some of the smaller reverse inequities in the civil rights law, is one indication of resistance to the above proposal.

A panel of leading scholars, convened by the National Research Council, has concluded that the economic and social gains made by black Americans beginning in the 1940's has effectively stopped in the last two decades. We must ask if the acceleration of social programs during this period, programs such as the one which gives welfare to single mothers, thus speeding the departure of fathers and proliferating the single parent "family" may not have brought about this result.

That underprivileged groups can prosper without the type of supports discussed is at-

"Yet we still cling to "affirmative action", quotas, busing, and a go-easy policy on qualification for academic achievement and job capacity."

tested to by history. In some countries, as slavery was abandoned, a form of serfdom took its place. No one was "owned" but the individual was completely economically dependent on his employer and often laws as well as this dependence prevented him leaving the service or the locality. Something of this situation obtained when the Chinese were imported as laborers to work in building our western railroads. They were indentured servants in a strange land with a strange language and completely dependent on the good will of their railway construction employers. They received a salary, to be sure, but it was almost completely absorbed by the expenses of clothing and other amenities furnished by the bosses.

However, when their term of employment ended those Chinese who did not return home took their places in the American economy without favoritism or privilege. Today, the Chinese in America, while largely remaining in their own communities, and while technically a minority are not so considered except for purposes of an ethnic

"That underpriveleged groups can prosper without the type of supports discussed is attested to by history."

head count.

A similar outcome took place in the island of Mauritius, a one crop economy — sugar. This was worked by the blacks until the halt to slavery in 1933, when the blacks "sat down" and would do no more work. The authorities of Mauritius imported indentured Indian workers under terms similar to those of the Chinese, above. Today Indians comprise three fifths of the population of the island and 100% of its government.

The farseeing element of the black leadership should embrace this proposal; should welcome it as sloughing off the last remaining remnants of second class citizenship and of reasserting the statement of our Declaration of Independence that "All men are created equal."

FSLIC FIZZLING OUT

Bill Dannemeyer
Member of Congress, California

No sooner had President Bush signed into law the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery and Enforcement Act on August 9, than the Chief Economist of the newly created Office of Thrift Supervision James R. Barth hastened to say that the cost of the bailout could be considerably higher than the $166 billion envisaged by the Act for the next ten years. Savings and loan institutions are still piling up losses at the rate of $14 billion per year, and this may well increase if interest rates rise again or if the economy goes into recession.

Certain things must be said which were not said in the debates as Congress rushed through the mammoth bill to resuscitate

"Evil is the government which deliberately engages in the debasement of its own currency."

FSLIC, the government-owned and operated deposit insurance system for the thrift industry, which has been brain-dead for years.

The savings and loan industry had a great mission in this country. It was to gather

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