One of the wisest men in Des Moines tells me that he has kept track of the 50 principle things he's worried about in the last ten years, jotting 'em down at the bottom of the pages in his diary in green ink. He finds that not one of them actually happened, but they bothered him just as much as if they had.

— Harlan Miller

THE GREAT ASBETOS RIP-OUT
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disease from exposure to asbestos in buildings is close to zero. These experts include Hans Weill, M.D. and Janet Hughes of Tulane University, Richard Doll and Julian Peto of Oxford University, the Ontario Royal Commission on Asbestos and the United Kingdom Advisory Committee on Asbestos. Most recently, reports have appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and from the Harvard University Energy and Environmental Policy Center which indicate that the threat of low level asbestos exposure has more to do with hype amd hysteria than health.

"The cost of removing asbestos is nothing short of staggering."

The Harvard Study, based on a symposium held last December and released August 10, found that the "lifetime risk of premature death due to indoor environmental tobacco smoke (i.e.,living with a smoker) or living in a house that has radon is two to four hundred times greater than the projected risks of dying from exposures to asbestos at concentrations" to which schoolchildren in schools with friable asbestos would be exposed. Death from smoking is 20,000 times more likely, death from being run down by a motor vehicle while walking is 290 times more likely.

By EPA's own estimate, the abatement of all public and commercial buildings in the country would prevent only 3,300 deaths a year over the next 25 years. That might sound like a lot, but if we were to put a price on preventing 3,300 deaths a year, using one of the lower abatement cost figures of $100 billion, we would find each life saved costing over $30 million.

All of this assumes that there is a net benefit in saved lives, even if that benefit is small. In fact, the dangers of asbestos abatement are such that it is false to assume that any lives are being saved at all. The blunt reality is the more asbestos removed, the more people die from removing it. First are the removers. Under the old Occupational Health and Safety Administration standards, an estimated 64 out of a thousand asbestos removers would die from lung cancer from their occupation. Under the new standard, this has been lowered to six per one thousand. Yet, many removal jobs are done without government knowledge and assuredly without adhering to the expensive OSHA standards. In 1986, EPA admitted

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FSLIC FIZZLING OUT
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funds for the benefit of the homemakers, and to reward the savers whose thrift made the American Dream a reality. There is no question that, under a regime of stable prices and interest rates, the savings and loan industry could fulfill its mission and flourish.

But a funny thing happened to the American Dream before it could become a reality for this generation of homemakers. In March, 1968, in an unprecedented fit of absent-mindedness, Congress abdicated its

"...under a regime of stable prices and interest rates, the savings and loan industry could fulfill its mission and flourish."

constitutional monetary powers. It eliminated the gold reserve requirement for the Federal Reserve notes, thereby letting the genie of inflation out of the bottle. The reason given at the time for this mindless act was to prove to the world that the dollar was every bit as good as gold at $35 an ounce, and that the commitment to honor the claim of foreign governments on America's gold would not be clouded by "obsolete" domestic gold reserve requirements. When three years later, in 1971, President Nixon "temporarily" shut the gold window, no further reference to the solumn pledge to honor foreign claims on America's gold was deemed diplomatic. The cork was blithely thrown away, and with it our chance that the genie of inflation might be put back into its bottle.

The intervening years have clearly justified the most pessimistic predictions of the monetary scientists, who warned of a tidal wave of paper currencies which was to engulf the world. The regime of low and stable interest rates was overthrown, and replaced by the regime of high and volatile interest rates. Prices took their clues from interest rates as they started soaring and girating. While high prices robbed the wage-

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THE TEN PILLARS OF SOUND MONEY AND CREDIT

With this issue, we are enclosing a copy of the 9th Pillar, **Marginal Productivity of Debt.** For new readers, however, we are enclosing the 2nd Pillar entitled, **Free Coinage.**