

Power playoff

Some cultures believe hell is a cold place. And it seems that if predictions of an energy shortage prove true, Americans might get a taste of such a hell this winter.

The Joint Economic Committee of Congress warns that cold weather plus a shutoff of Middle East oil could toss the country "into an economic crisis...unparalleled since the Great Depression."

The Midwest already faces some problems. This year's bumper crop will require greater consumption of liquefied petroleum. Many farmers, particularly in Illinois and Indiana, have been told by LT distributors that they only can guarantee half the gas needed to harvest and dry crops. An added complication is that this gas is the same used to heat many rural homes.

So far, no allotment program has been established to control the use of this fuel. But the Nixon administration has done something. It has called for a loosening of environmental control standards so that lower grade oil and coal can be used to meet energy needs this winter.

Such a step contradicts the nation's environmental interests. The burning of lower grade fuels as allowed by the looser standards would be detrimental. Many such fuels contain great amounts of sulfur, which, when burned, give off excessive carbon dioxide, a pollutant associated with lung disease.

The 1970 Clean Air Act requires that these

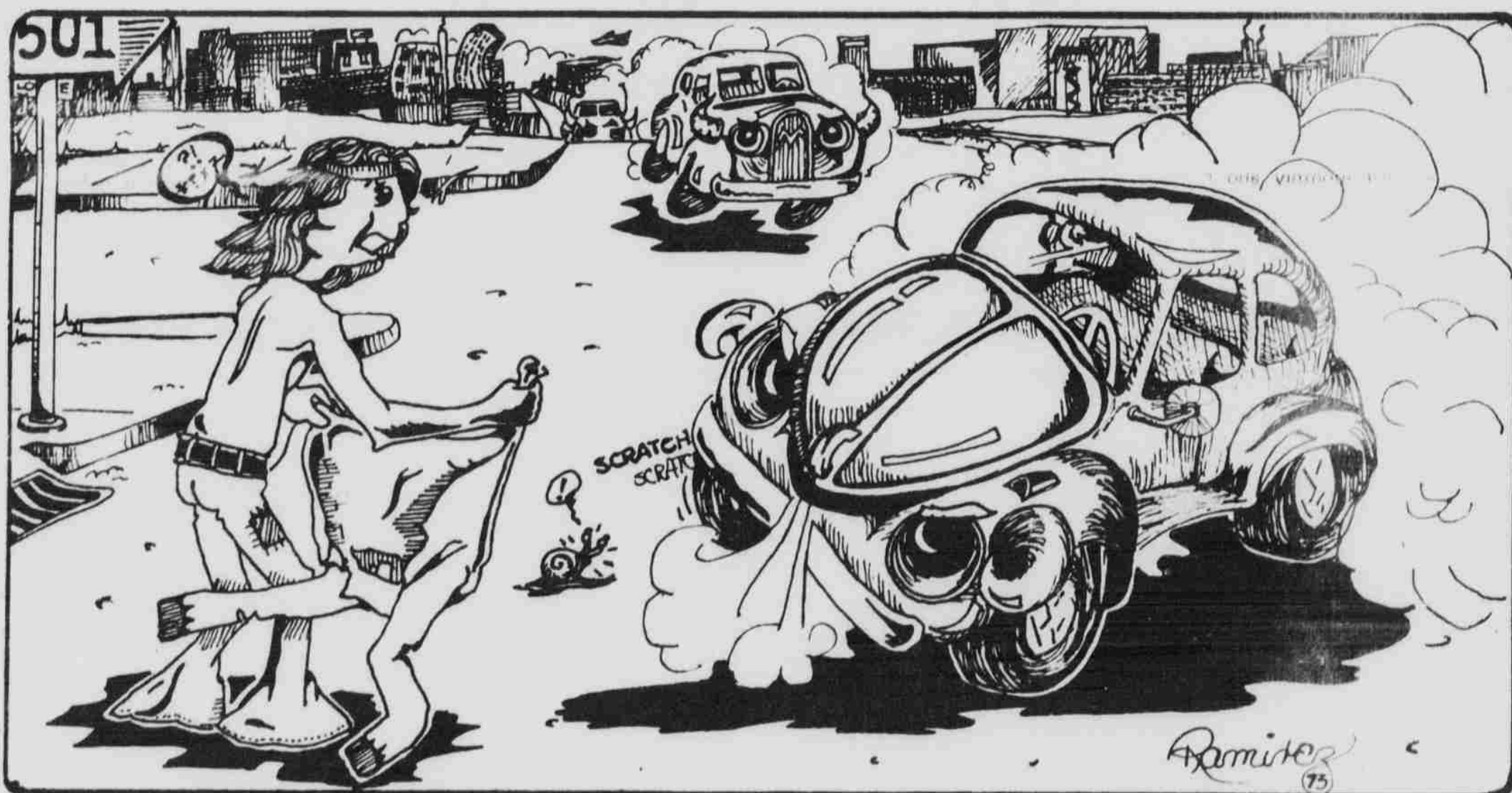
carbon dioxide levels be reduced so that by 1975 they are not harmful to people's health. Many cities and states have established and begun enforcing these standards. Nixon now has destroyed years of work with a single sentence. Instead of calling for lower pollution standards, the President ought to have demanded a fuel allotment program to assure conservation of our natural resources.

The problem is not the short-term inconvenience, as Nixon has said. The Chase Manhattan Bank, in a study released earlier this year, said the U.S. energy demand will double by 1985. Even the Alaska pipeline will not meet this need. After the pipeline is completed, the U.S. within a decade will need another 11 billion imported gallons of oil a day.

An allotment program, if enacted, might do more than conserve our natural resources. It would help show the nation how much energy it actually needs. The U.S. now consumes three times as much energy as Western Europe and Japan without a comparably higher standard of living.

These facts point toward a waste unequaled throughout the world. An allotment program must be implemented immediately. Under such a program, the nation might learn to live without waste. And that should be a goal even greater than getting through the winter.

Michael (O.J.) Nelson



Man meets auto in the 10th St. arena--Ole!

The western frontier of UNL includes several parking lots and the infamous 501 Bldg. It is cut off from most of the campus by a multi-lane black-topped barrier called 10th St. Within the width of this no-mans land, a desperate struggle between man and machine takes place daily.

Though the origin of this daily conflict on 10th St. has been lost in obscurity, it has grown to be a major sport for both spectator and participant.

The first few times you witness the spectacle, you probably will spend most of your time watching the pedestrian. It will help your appreciation of the sport to be acquainted with a few of the pedestrian's fundamental maneuvers and strategies. Strategy basically can be divided into two areas: "group action" and "solo."

The main premise of group action is, "You can't hit us all." An example of this method, the "moving mass," has achieved international popularity in such competitive areas as Mexico City, Rome and Pamplona.

The "moving mass" depends on persons bunching up at one edge of the road. As numbers and courage increase, the mass of humanity grows. The auto's defeat is sealed once it is forced to a complete stop.

This "group maneuver" is called the "seymore ladder." Once the cars are

stopped, the moving mass begins stretching out as pedestrians walk at varying speeds. The result is a chain of persons stretched the length of the street. It particularly is effective if there is a reserve of persons waiting to cross the street, thus lengthening the period of obstruction.

Though not so spectacular, the "solo" has a haunting artistry all its own. The contestant must rely more on mental intimidation than on the physical/mass intimidation of the group. The novice

john michael
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often uses simple ploys, such as pretending not to see the charging auto, or the ever popular Big Grin approach, which especially is effective with females.

A good soloist knows his terrain, the numbers of lanes he must cross, the direction of traffic, how to use the island and when to retreat. These are not easy lessons to learn, and there are few things more pathetic than to see a young challenger panic and run from the field with the auto at his heels.

For those who do make it past those first harrowing days, the ultimate goal they aim for is the perfection of the "slow walk." You will not soon forget this pass if you are lucky enough to see it done well. It includes a slow step, head held high defiantly, and a cold, haughty stare straight at the oncoming car.

Yet this is not to say that man always wins, or that autos are weaklings. Many cars are unbelievably brave, and even the wisest autofighter will step back and let a dump truck pass. But the cars' bravery is what makes man's victory so much more glorious.

Some people complain about 10th St. They say it's not fair, that it's cruel to the auto. But these games are not meant to be a fair contest. Rather, they are a tragedy, with a predestined outcome. The games strengthen students both physically and mentally, increasing their courage and self-confidence.

Yes, there has been talk of eliminating the games, rerouting the 10th St. traffic or erecting pedestrian ramps. And to those who advocate these solutions, I can only say: "Why, in our sterile, humdrum world, would you contrive to remove this one last bastion of courage and bravery?"