

E 16 The Seattle Times Wednesday, Dec. 11, 1974

High silver prices lead thieves to X-ray rooms

By DAVE BIRKLAND

The dramatic increase in the price of precious metals has brought a new worry to hospital X-ray rooms silver thefts.

At the end of February silver hit a high of more than \$6 an ounce after selling at \$2 to \$3 an ounce for most of last year and 1972. Hospitals are a source of nearly pure silver that has been selling recently for about \$4 an ounce.

Ballard Hospital was the most recent victim. About \$300 in silver was taken last week, according to Ted Dimitriou, chief X-ray technician.

An unknown amount also was taken about six weeks ago, Dimitriou said.

Silver is used on film in X-ray machines. As the film is processed by "fixer" the silver is washed from the film and is collected in a "recovery tank" by hydro-electrolysis. It is collected on plates called cathodes.

John Scott, chief X-ray technician, at Valley General Hospital, said the silver collected on the plates is about 92 per cent pure.

Periodically the cathodes are scraped clean by a firm that recovers the silver and remits a check for its value to the hospitals.

Valley General too has been the target of silver thefts, Scott said. At the end of November his hospital lost approximately \$400 to \$500 worth of silver, and last March approximately \$150 was stolen, he said.

Robert Flynn, Ballard Hospital administrator, said his hospital usually receives between \$1,500 and \$2,000 a year. "Not a big item," he said.

Thefts also have been reported at Virginia Mason Hospital. Mike Bradley, chief X-ray technician at that hospital, said silver was taken from their recovery tank last August "when the price was really high — over \$5 an ounce."

In the Kirkland-area, Evergreen Hospital reported silver was stolen in March or April.

Several hospitals have padlocked recovery tanks, and where padlocks won't work, chains or cables have been wrapped around the tanks.

Scott said the recovery tank at Valley General has been locked up with a chain. "There's no way someone can get in there unless they use a hack saw," Scott said.

All the technicians think that the thefts were by someone who knew his way around a hospital.

Dimitriou said whoever is taking the silver would have to know how a recovery tank works and would have to know the layout of the hospital.

None of the X-ray technicians had ever heard of this type silver thefts until the silver prices started to climb.

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Student journalists hear professional

By SVEIN GILJE

The final examination for the journalism class was to interview a veteran newsman.

During the in-class news conference, two dozen students at Highline Community College learned of John Scott's hopes for detente, the work of Radio Liberty which broadcasts to the Soviet Union and heard a lot of shop talk about journalism.

Scott, a former Time special correspondent and assistant to the publisher, appeared before the class yesterday. He is making a series of speeches in the Seattle area this week.

Radio Liberty, of which he is vice president, is playing a vital role in promoting detente, he said. In its broadcasts beamed at the Soviet Union, in the 15 languages spoken there, it encourages the hopes of Soviet citizens for detente.

Religious segments in the U. S. S. R. hope for greater freedom of worship through detente, national minorities feel it may bring greater self-determination and the intelligentsia seeks increased freedom to travel, hold meetings and read books and magazines without government interference.

Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, which for years have been financed by the United States without Congress knowing it, are now consolidating, at congressional insistence.

Senator Clifford P. Case, New Jersey Republican, blew the cover of the operation in 1971 — the fact that they had been financed by the Central Intelligence Agency for two decades without Congress' knowledge. About \$50 million had been spent each year on them.

Even so, Congress decided to continue the operations.

Radio Liberty is beamed primarily at the Soviet Union while Radio Free Europe is aimed at Eastern Europe.

"We act as a surrogate free press," Scott told the journalism class of Betty Strehlau. "We tell the citizens of the Soviet Union the news about their own country that they otherwise would not get."

"We hope this will aid detente and lessen the chances for war."

The students particularly were interested in what it takes to make a journalist. They also learned of the



John Scott answered questions at Highline Community College. —Staff photo by Larry Dion.

reams of memos, the research and editorial conferences which precede the final written word in Time.

"By Friday night the writer can start writing — and he may be told to write only two paragraphs after all that," Scott said.

Then the students turned to their own writing — the final exam paper, on John Scott.

Parking lot for car-poolers set

The State Highway Department says a paved parking lot within the Interstate 405 right-of-way south of Woodinville will be built for commuting motorists who pool their automobiles.

The \$24,000 lot is scheduled for completion next spring and will accommodate 57 vehicles.

It will be at the Northeast 160th Street interchange, also known as the Brickyard Road interchange.

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DEC. 12-15

Group asks Butz ouster; national, world food policy

By VAL VARNEY

FAST (Fight Against Starvation Today) has begun circulating petitions calling for the removal of Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz and replacing him with a person who will develop a national food policy that addresses the needs of the hungry in this country and developing nations.

Members of FAST announced yesterday that the petition campaign will continue until January 15, when the petitions, with hopefully some 3,000 signatures, will be sent to President Ford.

The petition also calls for making more food available for famine relief by urging Americans to eliminate food waste, switching from grain-fed beef to grass-fed beef and decreasing the use of commercial fertilizer on non-food producing land.

FAST members said the savings could be used to carry out Senate Resolution 329, which calls for an increase in the Food for Peace purchases and support for agricultural development in poor nations to avert future famines.

The group was formed last May.

Jim Leonard, a FAST coordinator, said the government should take a lead in creating a food reserve as a buffer against famine.

"We recognize that the United States can't feed the world by itself but we are a rich agricultural nation and we could increase our food production," he said.

Leonard and other members were questioned at a press conference over whether they were making Butz a scapegoat by calling for his removal and asked if their proposals weren't a utopia.

Leonard replied that it is the function of citizens to set goals of policy.

Jim Mundt, a FAST coordinator, said "we are looking for positive leadership and direction and Mr. Butz has not provided this."

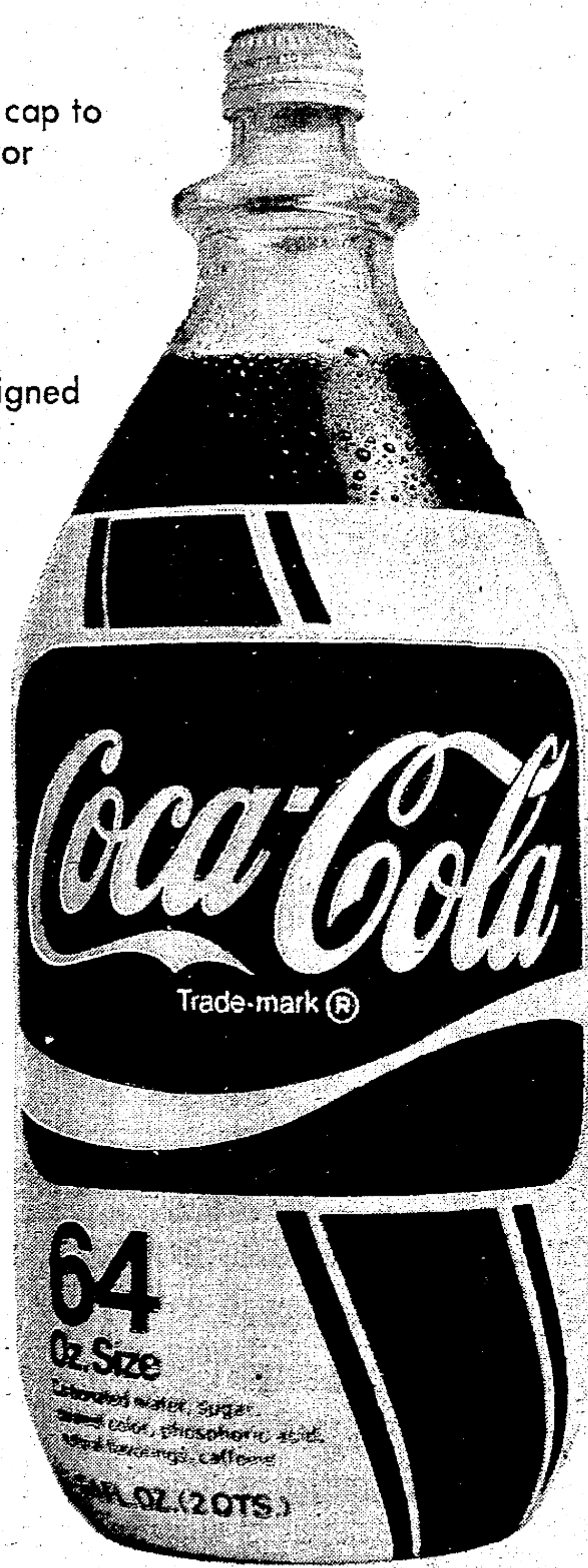
The petition drive is under the auspices of the Washington State Council of Churches.

Liquor board revises ruling

OLYMPIA — (AP) — The Liquor Control Board has changed its rules to allow persons under 21 to work as cashiers in licensed places if they don't serve alcoholic beverages themselves.

In a resolution "clarifying" previous rules, the board said persons 21 or older must continue to serve beverages in places with A, C, D, and H licenses, but persons younger may take payment where payment is made separate from service.

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