

Emending the suphuric prose, the gist of The Skipper's observation on that statement was that the money expended on the "study" would have been a thousand times more useful if it had been applied to the core of the pollution problem.

We had to agree, but elsewhere in his comments we found this little gem that seemed to put the whole thing in perspective. Wrote The Skipper:

"Out of a nation of birds watchers and girl watchers, they think they're going to make a nation of head watchers?"

A nine-month research project in the Amazon Basin is due to end this month when the ship *Alpha Helix*, a 133-foot, 300-ton vessel with more than half a million dollars worth of scientific equipment aboard, returns to La Jolla, California.

The expedition was directed by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and supported by a six hundred thousand dollar grant from the National Science Foundation. Biologists, physiologists, biochemists, ecologists and physicians from universities in Brazil, Norway, France, Britain, West Germany, Canada, Japan, as well as this country, participated.

Among the discoveries so far reported: from underwater recordings, a zoologist discovered that a species of fresh-water dolphin makes noises like those of a sperm whale. Clear barks and yelps were heard. Previously, it was thought that fresh-water dolphins were silent as opposed to the highly articulate salt-water dolphin.

A German scientist, Dr. Hubert Markl of the University of Frankfurt, experimented with the dreaded piranha to discover what causes them to attack. A report we read stated that Dr. Markl used "plastic models of both smaller and larger river creatures" and that from his experiments the doctor concluded that "piranhas hesitated to attack anything larger than themselves and that the scent of blood was only a minor stimulus."

It all left us wondering if blood smeared on a plastic model just didn't have the same appeal as the blood of a newly killed animal we once saw devoured in a matter of minutes by a school of piranhas.

*Pleione*, 72-feet of fine lines and honest craftsmanship was filled with fifty-two thousand pounds of concrete and sunk into a three hundred foot hole near the eastern end of Fishers Island, New York, to sadden those who watched and many who didn't. She was a New York Fifty, one of nine such yachts built fifty-four years ago for big boat one-design racing from the designs of Nathanael Herreshoff. She was one of the last of the great racing schooners.

She was sunk on the orders of her owner, the late Joseph V. Santry of Marblehead, Massachusetts.

Code flags signalling *Bon Voyage* fluttered from the rigging of another old schooner, the *Brilliant*, which stood by. A wreath was floated over the spreading ripples by Waldo C. M. Johnston, director of the Marine Historical Association's Mystic Seaport at Mystic, Connecticut, where the lovely old girl had spent her last seven years on display.

"Mr. Santry did not want her to fall into other hands," Johnston said. "His wishes were that she be given a sailor's burial, her Valhalla. His widow wanted us to carry out those wishes. It was the love of a great sailor for a great ship."

Alice Springs, a town almost in the heart of Australia's great desert outback, was not to be outdone by Newport, Rhode Island.

Almost one thousand miles from the sea, and in an area where water is one of the scarcest commodities, Alice decided to run its own "Australia's Cup" in the bed of the dry Todd River. In fact, the annual madcap regatta attracted a record crowd of some six thousand people for "rowing" and "sailing" events decided by crews in bottomless boats running a course in the sandy river bed.

The "Australia's Cup" for twelve-square meter "yachts" drew two entrants: *Sir Bob* (Sir Robert Menzies, former Australian Prime Minister, is the husband of Dame Pattie Menzies, for whom the 1967 Australian America's Cup challenger was named) and *Insipid* for which no explanation is necessary. Accountably perhaps, there was no entry named *Damn Pity*.

*Insipid* was manned by an all-American crew drawn from personnel building a nearby space research station and took the honors of the day, and immediately called for a succession of lay days, to which the Australian crew unhesitatingly agreed.

Apparently, the river bed was the only thing that was dry for two outdoor bars sold more than two thousand twenty-six ounce bottles of beer on that day.