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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "TOXIC GARBAGE: CONTAMINANTS IN THE AIR" NCBC  
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# The Times-Picayune The States-Item

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## YOUR OPINIONS | Letters

### Toxic garbage: contaminants in the air

**New Orleans**

Your Aug. 11 front-page story, "Toxic soil will burn at base in Gulfport," includes at least one very misleading statement that deserves attention.

At issue is an Air Force project (with federal Environmental Protection Agency approval) to burn soil contaminated with Agent Orange in a mobile incinerator at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport. Maj. Jim Heaberg, the Air Force spokesman, is quoted thus: "What comes out the stack is basically carbon dioxide and water. There are no traces of contaminants."

I located Maj. Heaberg at Tyndall Air Force Base near Panama City, Fla. A very helpful gentleman, he allowed that his statement was based "on good authority" and that he could "only pass on what I'm told."

I pointed out to him that incin-

erators are not atom smashers, and that if you burn a chlorinated product, which Agent Orange is, you get chlorine atoms out in some form. And as far as I know, having studied the issue, there's yet to be a system devised that doesn't put a good deal of those chlorine atoms out the stack and into the air.

They may go out as hydrogen chloride and contribute to acid rain. Or they may recombine with some of the carbon free radicals to form dioxin, one of the deadliest compounds known.

I certainly appreciate the need to find a way to dispose of our toxic garbage, but we have to be careful that our cures are not as bad or worse than the diseases.

Maj. Heaberg promised to get technical assistance for some of my questions and get back to me. On Aug. 21, my answer came. Mostly he told me that everything is "EPA approved" and that I

should therefore not worry. I have dealt with the EPA too long to have such faith.

Then, after a brief description of the monitoring procedures that will be followed during the test burn, the major said: "During the actual run, for 90 days approximately, no monitoring will be required, once the equipment has proven successful and safe."

Astonishing! I'm sure Rollins, the notorious hazardous waste incinerator now under fire near Baton Rouge, would love to operate under such a system.

Though this "will be the first time the process has been used," according to your story, we're going to assume that everything runs perfectly after we go through a test burn? God save us. And "no traces of contaminants"? Don't you believe it.

Jerry Speir

NATURE  
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## Spy

Justice invest case a Jerry Whit Vukasin's in prison, w not be elig a fine of \$41 by the Sovi

A 1972 S effect of pr espionage. is the harsh Julius Rosen executed in the Soviets. Mr. Whit harshest o radioman w almost 10 y his spyma extraordin information He provid equipment enabled the easily as th revolving-d

## Save our playgrounds

**New Orleans**

I am writing out of concern and disappointment over the closing of so many city playgrounds.

This is a serious problem. Children don't understand budget deficits — take the supervisor off the playground and that's the bottom line to them.

It is ironic that the philosophy of some of our City Council members is pay-to-play, as at Cuccia-Byrnes-Carrollton Boosters and Lakeview Booster-Milne Playground, where you have to pay a fee to play. This would not work in the poor areas of the city such as Central City, Gert Town and so many others where families are very poor and unemployment is high.



A Shriner's parade in New Orleans

## Injustice to Shrinedom

**Metairie**

The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel describes the Shrine as "one of

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