DATE   March 3, 1961
TO      Judson Voyles, Branch Librarian  Bay Shore Branch
FROM   Blanche Collins, City Librarian
SUBJECT

* Quote from Fortune Magazine:

"Fun With Water

Finally, let me salute the fountain - - - for a real transformation of - - - spots into places of delight, of joy, wonder, surprise and beauty. The sound of them exerts a magnetism irresistible to people."

* So it must be true

Blanche

BLANCHE
To: Blanche Collins
From: J. Voyles—Bay Shore

I agree with you and Fortune about the aesthetic value of fountains. My feeling that we should modify our pool in some way is not based on doubts about its beauty. I think you will agree, however, that an order of French Fried potatoes (see attached diary) does take the fine edge off the beauty.

Actually, I hope very much that we can get the fountain back in operation and keep it going. We must clearly realize, however, that there will be continuing problems and expenses not envisioned by Fortune magazine, our architects, or us when the pool was planned.

The little group of vandals who are evidently determined to keep the pool out of operation now will sooner or later grow up, and might even be caught by the police. But there will be more next year, and the year after that; there are always a few around.

The first thing we have to do, therefore, is to ask the city plumbers to replace the now missing vent pipe with a vandal-proof one (I am assuming one can be devised). I have already talked with Frances about this (it was while Alice was gone).

Another good move might be to replace the present nozzle with one which sprays some substantial part of the pool with a finer pattern of water—including the section where the overflow pipe is.

The French fried potatoes, remains of hamburgers, cigarette butts etc., can be cleaned out at frequent intervals. We don't know for sure what will happen when the bathing season starts, but we should decide now what our policy is to be.

Should we let people wash their feet, and children play in it,
or should we try to keep them out?

Personally, except for the haunting fear that a toddler will drown in it, I don't mind the kids splashing about. It exerts, after all, as Fortune says, a "magnetism irresistible". The only trouble is, the pool is so near the door that the clothed as well as the unclothed may get splashed.

Anyway, as soon as we get a new vent pipe we will be back in business.
REFLECTING POOL DIARY

WHAT WENT ON BEFORE

During the early part of February, the overflow pipe was stopped up twice. The first time the pranksters used paper towels, so that I was able to pull them out without much trouble, though the water was cascading down the terrace steps and into the gutter before we discovered it.

The second time, the perpetrators, learning from experience, used toilet paper and packed more in farther down, evidently with a stick. They had created a plug about two inches thick of paper which had melted together, so that it came out only in shreds and particles. Both times, the pipe was plugged up in the evening while the library was open.

In addition, plants were pulled up and thrown into the pool on four occasions, though this was done after the library was closed.

After the second plugging, Mr. Weiner took the overflow pipe, put a cap on it and bored a number of small holes around the circumference of the pipe for the water to flow through. While it would still be possible to stop it up by plugging each hole, it would be a much more lengthy operation.

NOW FOR THE DIARY PROPER

Saturday, Feb. 18. About 11:30, noticed that pool was full of French fried potatoes.

After lunch, went out to rake up potatoes, found four little girls, shrieking with joy, splashing their feet (bare) among the French fried potatoes. As I hard-heartedly drove them out I was, somehow, utterly charmed to see one scampering off with a strip of potato sticking up from between her toes.

Tuesday, Feb. 23. Sometime during the holidays, the overflow pipe, complete, was forced out and taken away. Plants were pulled up and thrown into pool.

END OF DIARY PROPER. TO BE CONTINUED WHEN WE GET A NEW OVERFLOW PIPE.
Monday, May 15:

Found About 500 uncooked peas (the kind used in pea shooters) in the pool.

The new crookneck overflow pipe could not be removed without a pipe wrench, which we do not have yet. We tried picking up a few by hand, but they slip and slide away from the fingers. Same with the spoked paper picker-upper.

At length we decided to leave them there while we sent a desperate appeal to Main for the loan of a \( \frac{1}{2} \)-inch pipe wrench.

Saturday, May 20.

Noticed that the peas in the pool had begun to sprout. Remarkably fast germination, as some have root tendrils over an inch long, and several had tiny leaves aiming for the surface.

Monday, May 22

John Laco, unable to bear the idea of a stand of peas in the pool any longer, borrowed a pipe wrench from a neighbor and cleaned the pool.
April 10 (evening): Outlet stopped up with toilet paper.

April 17 (evening): Outlet stopped up with toilet paper.

May 1 (evening, and to anticipate next month) Outlet stopped up with paper napkin.

The new crookneck pipe makes it impossible, or at least very difficult, to stuff paper far enough down into the pipe to require the services of a plumber. So far it has always been possible to get it out with the fingers. This is fortunate, as the pipe wrench we have requested, to remove the pipe when the pool needs cleaning, has not yet come.

Paper towels and paper napkins come out rather easily - the towels all in one piece, the napkins in fairly large pieces. The toilet paper comes out a pinch at a time, disintegrates in the water and is rather hard to rake up. However, except under close inspection, it can pass for the petals of some unspecified white flower, so the effect is not too bad.
June 1, 1961. Afternoon

Five boys, ejected from the library for chasing each other through the stacks, went to the reflecting pool sloshed water all over each other and the terrace, splashed water all over the glass doors, and managed to throw a few cupped handfuls of water into the lobby before I got to them. They retired in high triumph.

June 27, 1961

3:00 P.M. Three five-year-olds (1 boy and 2 girls) having a fine time in the pool. The boy was sitting by the fountain with his thumb over the nozzle, spurtng water all over the terrace. With his feet and his other hand, he was madly churning, so that the whole pool was a white froth. He looked ecstatic, but I chased them out.

3:05 P.M. Chased three ten-year-old girls out of the pool.

3:10 P.M. The three five-year-olds came back. Chased them away.

Did not get much reference work done between 3:00 and 4:00.
Thursday, 13 July

A six-foot surfboard has been quietly floating on the surface of the pool all day. Not knowing where else to put it, I left it there. It was still there, Mrs. Went tells me, when she turned off the fountain at 9:00, but was gone Saturday Morning (the 15th) when we came.

A dull month in the reflecting pool, all in all.
No new phenomena has come to staff attention. Bathers continue to wash their feet in the pool, at such a rate that the bottom is covered with sand two days after it is drained, flushed, and cleaned. Once I traced a trail of wet footprints from in front of the magazine shelves, at the far end of the reading room, all the way back to the entrance, out the door, and into the pool.

A patron of ours, however, reports a new use for the pool. He lives nearby on Bay Shore Avenue, rises early, and goes for a walk on Second Street. Three times in the past three weeks, he reports, he has seen a man of about 60 drive up, sometime between 5:30 and 6:00 in the morning, park in front of the steps to the terrace, bound out of his car wearing swimming trunks, trot up the steps and into the pool, splash himself thoroughly and vigorously, step out of the pool, towel himself briskly, then get in his car and drive away.