

number turns out to be bogus. Getting a sleeper car but not checking any luggage is on the list.” Without access to travelers’ booking information, how would the cops know any of this information?

The American Civil Liberties Union worries that the police are targeting minorities (which the cops of course deny). Still, sometimes they target the wrong minorities. Carlos Hernandez, a former Newark policeman, knew his rights when he found officers inspecting his sleeper cabin on July 22, 1999. The cops told him they wanted to search his luggage because they had been tipped that he had a large amount of narcotics. “I’ll bet my kids’ life they looked at the train’s manifest, saw a Hispanic riding first class, \$694 round-trip ticket, and they just wanted to shake me down,” Hernandez told *The Star-Ledger*, noting that the police broke the law by entering his cabin without a warrant and without his permission. “You went into my cabin, that’s burglary,” he said.

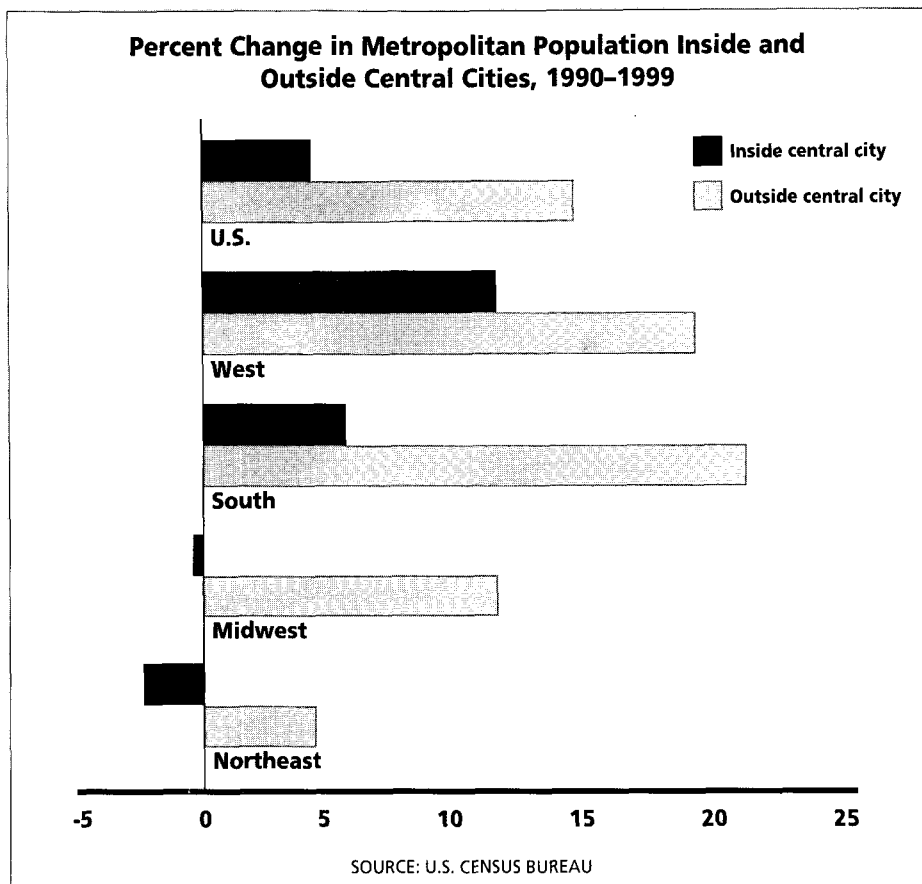
It certainly is, except when the burglars have badges—and conductor’s watches.

DATA

Pleasant Valley Sunday

By Nick Gillespie

As the U.S. Census Bureau releases data from its 2000 tally, there’s good news and bad news for America’s cities. Among the good: Some 80 of the nation’s 100 largest cities gained population between 1990 and the end of the century, showing that urban life still has appeal for many, especially recent immigrants. City population grew by 4.1 percent overall. Among the bad: That figure was dwarfed by growth in metropolitan areas outside central cities, also known as the suburbs, which boomed by 14.2 percent. Plastic they may be, but people want to live there in bigger and bigger numbers.



Betty Crocker’s Crystal Meth

By Sara Rimensnyder

“Most people, unfortunately, don’t know anything about how methamphetamine is made.” That’s for sure. But it’s surprising to hear such a statement coming from an agent of the Indiana Drug Enforcement Association: Gary Ashenfelter, speaking to the Associated Press.

Ashenfelter was commenting on Indiana’s new plan to

curb meth production. In stores across the state, police officers are taping up posters listing the ingredients needed to make the drug, also known as crystal, ice, and perhaps a dozen other names. You might think that such a poster could create a fresh crop of trailer-park chemists. But that’s not the plan. Cops are hoping that shop clerks will report customers making “suspicious” purchases of a variety of typical supermarket items.

You see, like lemonade, meth is cheap and easy to make—but a great deal more profitable. Ashenfelter says the production and use of methamphetamine has climbed wildly in Indiana in recent years. In 2001, he predicts, Indiana



police officers will bust 800 labs.

The informational poster now in Indiana stores lists—cover your eyes—such everyday ingredients as acetone, coffee filters, cold medicine, drain cleaners, lithium batteries, and lye.

Clearing the Air

By Jeff A. Taylor

New Delhi’s 13 million souls and its claptrap vehicle fleet of 2 million help ▶

◆ In Davidson, North Carolina, police officer Scott Searcy searched a woman's car after noticing that it contained a publication whose cover featured a photo of a marijuana plant. He thought it was *High Times*; in fact, it was a local weekly that happened to include an article about police using helicopters to find pot. "He acted properly," insists Assistant Police Chief Butch Parker. "He had reasonable suspicion, and we do too." The search turned up nothing illegal.

◆ In response to an Internet campaign urging Aussies to list their religion as "Jedi" on the census—on the grounds that if enough people do this, the government will allegedly have to recognize the *Star Wars* order as a legitimate religion—the Australian government has warned citizens that providing false information on the census is a crime. But how will they prove someone isn't really a Jedi?

◆ Chinese customs officials have confiscated 16,000 copies of a book of photographs of Bill Clinton with world leaders and famous personalities. Seems that one of the photos shows him shaking hands with the Dalai Lama.

◆ A British court has found Steven Thoburn guilty of selling bananas by the pound; he now faces a fine of up to \$1,500 for each offense. Under European Community rules, all goods except draft beer must be sold in metric measures.
—Charles Oliver

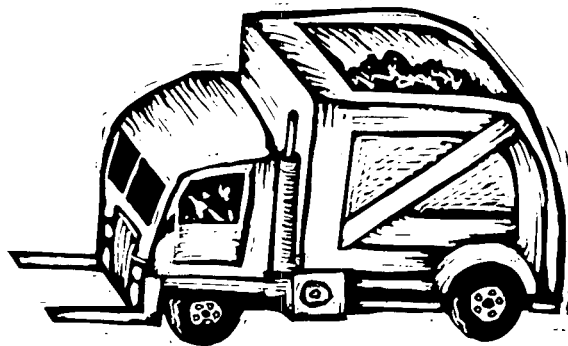
produce some of the world's most horrid smog. Two years ago, India's Supreme Court decided that it could fix that. It decreed that public transport vehicles in the city must use compressed natural gas (CNG). The deadline for the switchover was April.

So New Delhi's air must be much improved by now? Not exactly. When the deadline hit, mobs of jobless bus workers burned five buses and damaged another 39. Generic rioting broke out. A bus fleet of 13,000 was cut to 1,400. The city ground to a halt.

The court responded with a 10-day extension, giving the city government a little more time to issue temporary operating permits to vehicle owners who'd placed orders for CNG vehicles or conversion kits but didn't have them installed yet. But the court can do nothing about the cost. Some \$114 million must be spent buying new buses, refitting old ones, and finding ways to deliver the new fuel to would-be users. Only 43 gas stations in New Delhi can now sell CNG, and everyone knows that isn't enough.

"I spend at least four hours every day now waiting in queues," Naresh Chand, 60-year-old owner of a new CNG-compliant auto-rickshaw, complained to *The Washington Post*. "My earning has dropped from \$6 a day to \$2 now because of these queues. What do I feed my family? First I have to live. I will think about clean air later."

That, in handy capsule form, is the issue. How do poor countries move to create what are in effect luxury public goods, like clean air? A toughie to be sure, but edicts from on high usually do more harm than good.



Waste of Energy

By RiShawn Biddle

When Foster Wheeler Corp. secured financing for its \$400 million trash-to-energy plant in Robbins, Illinois, the engineering concern barely contained its joy. "This will be the most modern waste-to-energy installation in the world," it raved in a 1994 press release. Seven years later, the plant is in bankruptcy. Foster Wheeler lost \$261 million on the misadventure. Investors who bought \$321 million in bonds will be lucky to get back just 35 to 45 cents on the dollar.

Another eco-bust: the BCH waste plant in Bladen County, North Carolina. Built by a group that included three local governments, the plant was shut down after its equipment failed. Banks that lent \$70 million retrieved just 4 cents on the dollar.

You can thank government for these uneconomical exercises. In the '70s, politicians in love with alternative energy fashioned laws to force garbage haulers in certain areas to participate and pay above-market trash disposal fees.

In 1994, the Supreme Court ruled in *Carbone v. Town of Clarkston* that governments could no longer win customers at gunpoint. The result: 37 waste-to-energy plants have been shut-

tered since 1993, according to Government Advisory Associates, a Westport, Connecticut, consulting group. Taxpayer bailouts keep the rest—about 100—afloat. For instance, when the McKay Bay waste plant in Tampa, Florida, couldn't pay off debt service or for upgrades, the city issued \$193 million in bonds to save it.

And waste fuels live on. The federal government gives a tax credit of 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity produced from poultry and wood wastes, and five senators have proposed extending the credit to other biomass fuels. California has granted \$57 million since 1998 to 28 firms, and the feds spent \$95 million on waste-to-energy research last year.

They haven't reached any breakthroughs yet. Turning smelly garbage into clean energy may sound terrific, but in practice, it turns out—ironically—to be wasteful.

Brussels' Broad Brush

By Charles Paul Freund

Seems the sun never rises over Europe anymore but that the new day isn't accompanied by new rules to live by. Parisians have awakened to learn that much of their beloved cheese failed to conform to new European Union microbe norms. Londoners have risen to find that