

Topics

Elegant Dirt

Park Avenue Green

Green is the color of spring, even in New York. But the shade of city green varies with the neighborhood. Soon the grass will brighten in Central Park and appear in vacant lots, and ailanthus shoots will grow miraculously from cracked concrete. Traditionally, West Side grass — in the center islands that run the length of Broadway — is scruffier than the East Side grass of Park Avenue's islands. But this spring, the greening of Park Avenue will require special help: the islands are covered with a bumper crop of litter and canine waste.

The proper and privileged people of Park Avenue, rather than pick up after their pets on the street, have turned the islands into a dog run. At first, the dog walkers crept across to

the islands surreptitiously, at night. Now they go in broad daylight to practice an Upper East Side version of air-mail garbage, or drop-it-and-forget-it. It can't be blamed on lower-class culture shock. The shock is the view from upstairs windows. The residents are fouling their own street. Summonses are in order — or spring on Park Avenue may be a little late, and drab.

Turkish Delight

We sometimes forget that the energy crisis is worldwide. People everywhere have been forced to consider how to conserve fuel and how to pay for what they use. One obvious way is shared facilities. Here in the States there has been much talk of the need for mass transit, and there has

been limited car pooling. But in Istanbul there is pooling of another kind: Turkish baths are in vogue again.

The baths, *hamams*, had been losing ground to the individual tub. But people who've found it too costly to heat their private water have turned back to the baths. Attendance is said to be up 50 percent at the expensive ones, 125 percent at the cheaper ones. Undoubtedly, too, the *hamams* satisfy whatever nostalgia there may be for the Ottoman past.

Californians in their hot tubs may feel they're doing their part for sharing if not for nostalgia. But the most meaningful way for Americans to pool their energy-saving efforts is plainly in transportation. Mass transit may never achieve the comfort of an ottoman. But group riding, if not group bathing, is something to get steamed up about.