

TOWER OF BABLE

by Mark Kaplan & David Hann

If you happen to be one of those nay-sayers who complained when a block of homes East of South Park was replaced by the new City-County Judicial building, hold on to your hats. The County is now preparing to erect a 180-foot tall self-supporting radio tower in the middle of the parking lot to the South of the building.

Not appearing on any site plans or drawings for the building, the tower was slipped through the back door in late May, by a piece of City and County manuvering almost unheard of until now. Though originally opposed to such a structure looming over South Park, City Hall bowed graciously to County Commissioner Peter Whitenight's pleas for the tower, in light of a proposed, now confirmed, compromise.

For months, the City had been rying to get the County to abanon a rural road North of the airort in the floodplain North of the river. Looking to serve the through the business community, dwell-heeled KU Alums, the City planning greatly extended runys which would necessitate the osing of the road. The County, the other hand, nervous over the three-year-old plan to build radio tower, took note of the ential for trade-off-- and

acted accordingly. Soon, the business community will have its coveted new airport, and the County will have its new communications tower. Yet, in spite of the controversy, the cause behind the tower dilemma has not been publicized.

tower. This room, which was included in the original plans for the building without explaning

that a 180-foot tower would come later, is to shield radio equipment from radiation in the event of a nuclear war. The tower is

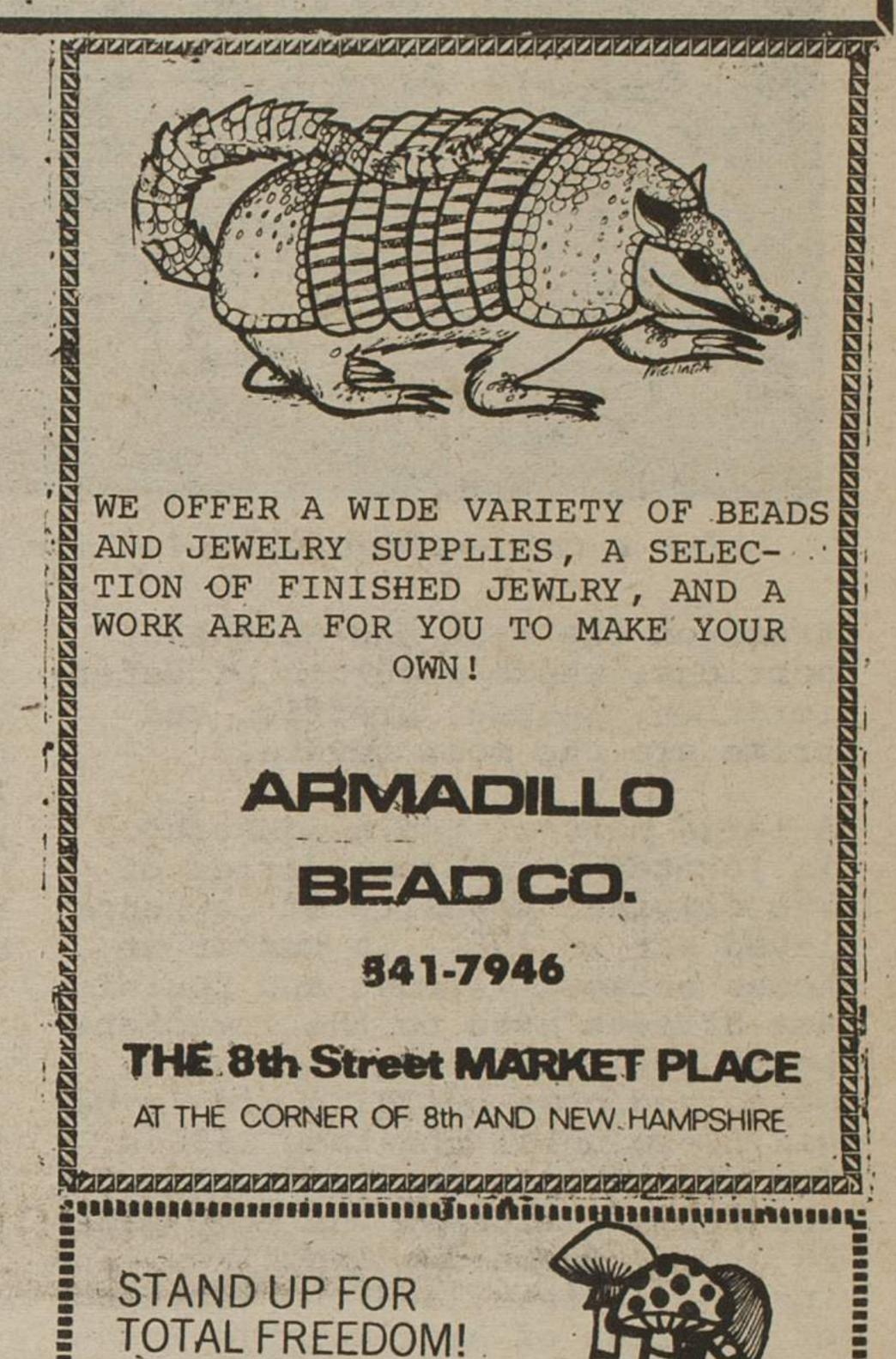


Don't be fooled by this peaceful park visage. Nuclear oblivion could be just around the corner. Fortunately, Lawrence will now be well prepared--comunications-wise.

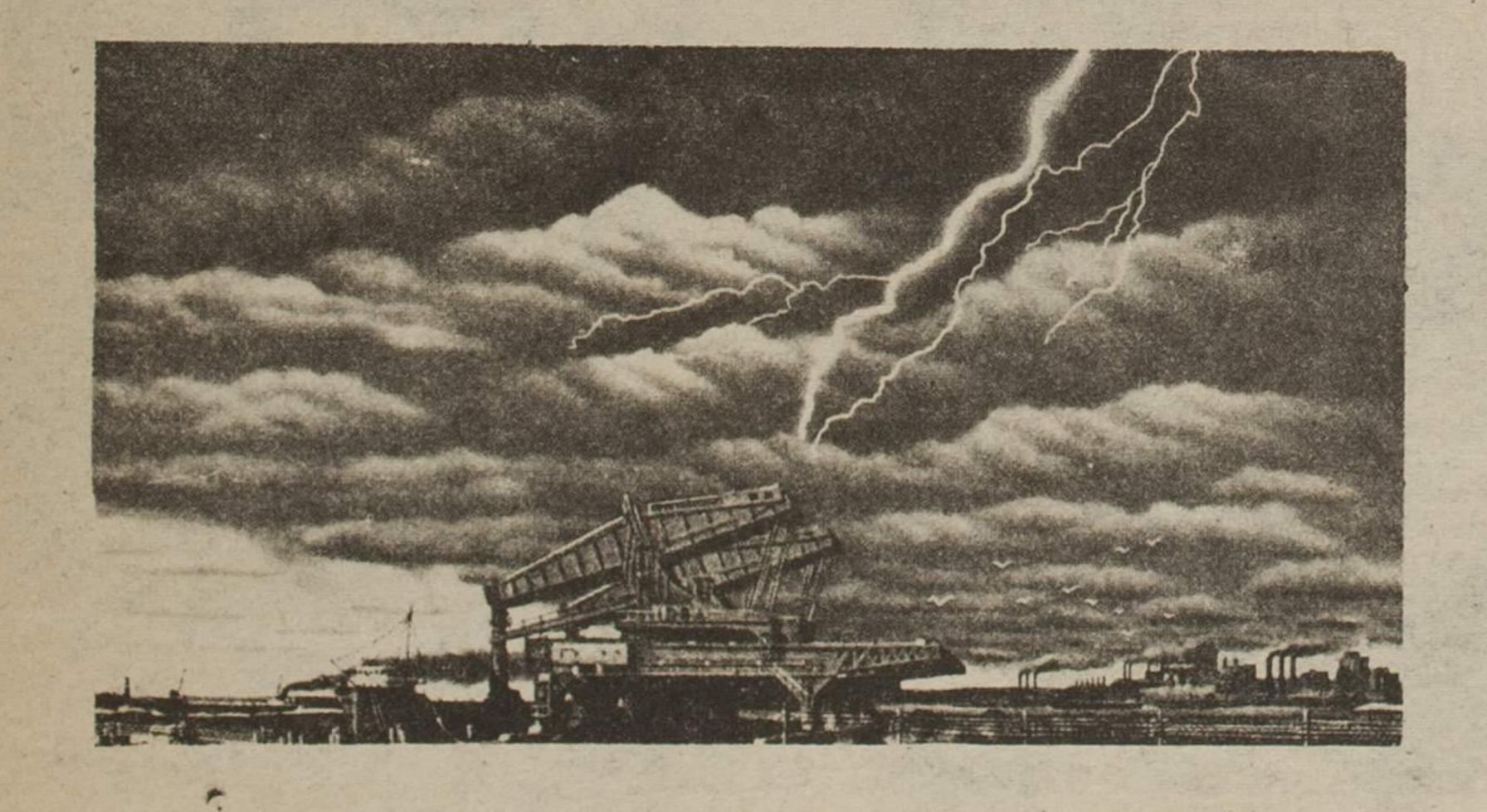
The reason the tower cannot be modified or moved without great expense is that a lead-lined room, built into the City-County Judicial building, must be near the

not capable of "rounding out" the communications network for the county, as once claimed, because it is not tall enough. The community of Baldwin is excluded because the 180-foot height of the tower, combined with the 840foot elevation of the Park, is still not high enough to compensate for the higher elevation of Baldwin. It would seem that those persons who desired an emergency transmitting and receiving tower would have wanted a tower with capability for transmitting and receiving over a county-wide area.

The South Park Tower is another example of decision-making by the County and City based on too little information and inadequate consideration by the parties involved. If a heightened consciousness of our citizenry here is a desirable goal, then many of us will now have a new symbol to point to.







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