Mighty Androscoggin Sampled

By RANDY CURTISS

On Wednesday April 22, while countless millions celebrated Lenin's Birthday, the United States with President Nixon's endorsement was honoring "Earth Day" so called to highlight the problems of air, water, and land pollution in this country.

Massive rallies took place across the continent and Congress adjourned for the day so politicians could speak on this most uncontroversial of topics. Here in Brunswick a last minute "event" was hurrledy organized on the banks of the Androscoggin and even though there had been no previous publicity, some fifty people, mostly from the town with a few students and college faculty, showed up to watch State Representative Mrs. Coffey from Sagadahoc fill six flasks with the polluted river water.

Five of the flasks were to be mailed to the major polluters of the Androscoggin and the sixth was sent to the Maine Water Improvement Commission at the State House in Augusta to be analysed. Those responsible for much of the pollution include the Brown Paper Mill in New Hampshire, which is the largest polluter of the Androscoggin; the Oxford Paper Mill, largest in Maine, and the International Paper Company in Jay and in Livermore Falls. The Bates Company, which is the leader of the textile pollution, and Hilcrest Poultry, the largest poultry polluter, both in Lewiston, were sent similar flasks.

Mrs. Coffey explained that rivers are rated by the State according to their degree of pollution and with "D" being the lowest legal limit, Mrs. Coffey feels that the Androscoggin is illegally below that and always has been since the rating has been in effect. Therefore she intends to press charges if the State continues to do nothing after analysing the water sample she is sending them. Those companies at fault should have been receiving heavy fines all this time if the river is indeed below the legal pollution limit. No one took them to court however, and as it stands now, if the classification remains the same, they technically have until 1976 to clean up their wasteful ways.

It remains to be seen how effective blonde, petite Mrs. Coffey can be and how much support she can get in her singlehanded campaign; but it is not very encouraging when no demonstrations whatsoever are planned in the State's own Capital of Augusta where the important decisions are ultimately made and no official recognition is given to this "Earth Day" by any group on the Bowdoin campus where academic concern for our environment is supposedly high.

but please don't drink the water.