

# Around the Commonwealth

## Daughter lights up the holidays

AVELLA, Pa (AP)--A college student home for Thanksgiving set the family house on fire after not being allowed to go to a bar, killing her father and seriously injuring her mother, police said.

Melanie Vicheck, 19, was held today at the Washington County Jail. According to a state police arrest affidavit, she was intending to kill her mother Patricia, 54.

But it was her father, 63-year-old Edmund Vicheck, who died in the fire before dawn Wednesday.

Miss Vicheck and her mother had been arguing frequently recently because the mother did not want her daughter going to a nearby bar, the Country Cafe, according to an affidavit filed with District Justice Jay Dutton.

State police alleged that Miss Vicheck sprayed a can of WD-40 lubricant around the basement and living room of the Vicheck house in Avella, about 25 miles east of Pittsburgh.

A chemical-sniffing dog detected the solvent, police said.

Police said Miss Vicheck had been planning the fire for about a week and bought the WD-40 on Monday, the day before her

father drove her home from Clarion University.

Dutton said Vicheck admitted to police that she used matches to start fires at several spots in the house. Neighbors reported hearing an explosion at about 3 a.m. Other neighbors reported hearing a "whooshing" sound.

Vicheck rescued his wife by dropping her from a second-story window and died later of smoke inhalation, county coroner Tim Warco said. Neighbors said they believe that Vicheck returned to the house to try to find Melanie.

Patricia Vicheck, burned and disoriented, ran to a nearby house, asked a neighbor if her husband and daughter had escaped the fire and fell face first on the floor.

"I was just saying that her mother was so worried about her, and she had other plans for her mother. That's just what I was thinking, so I might as well say it," said the neighbor Libby Campanelli.

Miss Vicheck had driven away in the family car, according to the affidavit. She returned to the house at 9 a.m. and was taken to a state police post for questioning.

Mrs. Vicheck remained in serious condition Thursday night at Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh. She was treated for burns, a broken wrist and back and knee injuries.

Miss Vicheck was charged Wednesday night with criminal homicide, arson, aggravated assault and risking a catastrophe, police said. A hearing has been scheduled for next Wednesday at Washington County Common

Pleas Court.

"I just don't understand why. Her mother and her had problems, but nothing this bad," said Tina Roth, a friend of Miss Vicheck. She said Miss Vicheck adored her father.

The couple had three other children, none of whom was at home at the time of the fire.

## Deadly doughnuts kill bear

LAKE HARMONY, Pa. (AP)--A 494-pound black bear collapsed under bright floodlights and onto a pile of doughnuts, the alleged victim of lawbreaking hunters.

Two men were arrested Tuesday by Kidder Township police as they tried to remove the animal, but wildlife authorities wouldn't say if they were responsible for baiting and shooting the bear.

The bear apparently was lured with doughnuts into a trap and then killed by rifle shots to its throat and chest at 8:15 p.m., according to Richard E. Karper and Joseph Wenzel, the Pennsylvania Game Commission officers investigating the incident.

It was a male bear, between four and 10 years old, Karper said.

Bear hunting season began Monday and ended Thursday. It

is illegal to bait animals and hunt at night.

"These two officers are conducting this as a murder investigation," said commission spokesperson Jack Weaver. "This is murder of wildlife."

John L. Joyce, 53, and Robert F. Gerber, 70, both of Jim Thorpe, were arrested for trying to take the bear. Both could be fined \$1,000 and could lose their hunting licenses for five years.

## Just called to say 'I love her'

WASHINGTON, Pa (AP)--A man who escaped from a jail to see his girlfriend called the warden while he was on the run to try to explain himself.

Washington County jail warden Joe Pelzer advised Jack McCartney, 28, to give himself up.

But McCartney did not. He was caught Thursday morning in an abandoned duplex near his girlfriend's mobile home in Washington. Sixteen hours earlier, he had broken through a plasterboard wall in the county lockup's minimum security wing.

"He didn't take a swing at anybody, but he offered some resistance," police lieutenant Stephen Svitek said. "Because we knew he was a runner, we had about six guys around the

house."

McCartney was serving time for a parole violation following drunken driving and vehicular homicide convictions. He is now charged with escape.

He felt an urgent need to see his girlfriend to discuss a problem the couple was having, officials said. Pelzer said McCartney was distraught when he called.

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