

# Commentary

## Guest columnist

# If not checked, some heating systems can be dangerous

By **TERRENCE SCANLON**

Hardly a week passes over the fall and winter that you don't read or hear of a house fire or accident somewhere, someplace, involving a home heating system. Some scenarios seem to repeat themselves more often than others: an improperly vented chimney from a wood stove triggers a wall fire...firemen suspect a portable electric heater was placed too close to bedding material which caught fire...carbon monoxide kills a family as a result of an improperly vented gas heater.

With the home heating season already underway in many regions of the nation and soon to start in others, homeowners should be aware of the hazards associated with furnaces, space heaters, wood stoves, kerosene heaters, portable electric heaters, and even fireplaces and chimneys.

There were some 192,000 residential fires in 1984 from heating equipment, involving 700-plus deaths, 2,500 injuries, and property losses of \$600 million. One wonders how many fires, deaths, and injuries could have been prevented if those homeowners had taken the normal precautions at the start of the heating season.

Here is a thumbnail checklist for home heating systems to help you through the winter safely:

- Find your owner's manual for the heating system and read the section devoted to maintenance. It will provide valuable hints on period inspections and problems likely to arise.

- If possible, have a heating contractor inspect the main heating system for mechanical and other hazards. Make sure the chimney or flue is also inspected, because most fall check-ups do not include this.

- Precautions should be taken with wood- and coal-burning stoves at the outset of the heating

season. If you are purchasing a new stove, make absolutely sure that the stove, chimney connector (stovepipe), and chimney are installed correctly, according to your local building code. Existing chimneys and chimney connectors should be inspected for structural damage, creosote soot buildup, and possible blockage.

- If you routinely use a space heater to supplement home heating, make certain you follow the basic precautions: don't put the heater near drapes, furniture, or other flammable materials...keep a window partly open and the room well ventilated if you are using an unvented, fuel-burning space heater, to prevent carbon monoxide buildup in the house...never operate the heater overnight in the room where you are sleeping. A good starting point for a safe heating season is to read the owner's manual again.

- If you have recently converted from oil to gas heat, have the chimney inspected; if the furnace has just been checked, call the contractor to see if the chimney was inspected, too. Routine chimney inspections will detect any blockages which could create carbon monoxide health problems for you and your family.

- Never, never use gasoline in a kerosene heater, use only grade 1-K kerosene.

- Useful safety information on various home heating systems is contained in a number of fact sheets published by CPSC: No. 92, Coal and Wood Burning Stoves; No. 98, Electric Space Heaters; No. 34, Space Heaters; No. 79, Furnaces; No. 97, Kerosene Heaters; and a pamphlet on smoke detectors. Single copies are available by writing CPSC, Washington, D.C. 20207, or by calling CPSC's toll free Hotline at 1-800-638-CPSC.

(Terrence Scanlon is a member of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207.)

# Wiesel selection is triumphant

By **FRANKLIN H. LITTELL**

The selection of Elie Wiesel for the Nobel Prize for Peace is another triumph for human rights advocates. It is also another validation of the importance of teaching the Holocaust and its lessons. It is also, of course, a time of rejoicing for the Jewish people - especially for other Holocaust survivors - and for all who have experienced the Holocaust as a watershed event in human history. Finally, it is also another authentication of America's role as a haven for the homeless - what the Bible calls a "City of Refuge" - in a brutal world.

Just a few weeks ago, at the time of the Centennial of the Statue of Liberty, Elie Wiesel was one of a select group of "new Americans" who received from the President of the United States a citation and a medal for what he as a newcomer had contributed to his country of choice.

He recently became one in another select group - one of a number of Nobel Prize winners who came to the United States to find the liberty and dignity to which the human person is entitled and which enhances his creativity.

Elie Wiesel first became famous in Europe and America for the writings based upon his experience as a youth during the Nazi slaughter of the Jewish people. He survived Auschwitz, but not before he had seen his mother and sister and father turned over to death in Hitler's "final solution to the Jewish problem." His autobiographical book "Night" contains the most powerful crucifixion story in 20th century literature.

What does it mean that the major interpreter of the Holocaust receives the Peace Award? For one thing it stands as an answer to those who deny the Holocaust its integrity and meaning, either because they are neo-Nazi "historical revisionists" or because they think it a "dark chapter of human history" that should be buried and forgotten. Twenty years ago there were

many individuals and organizations, Jewish as well as Christian, who wanted to suppress the story and divert attention from it. Today there are thousands of high school and college classes on the story of the Holocaust and its lessons, and every year the Days of Remembrance are observed at the White House, by the Congress, by all 50 governors, and by all mayors of major American cities. We have come to understand that this watershed event cannot be suppressed, cannot be denied: its stories must be told and its lessons drawn, by Jews and Christians and gentiles - indeed by all persons of conscience, and in all civilized countries.

The Peace award is the citation that went to Bishop Tutu of South Africa, Lech Walesa of Solidarity, and Martin Luther King, Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Each of them has insistently directed our attention to major issues that many want to avoid. Elie Wiesel has earned the Peace award, with his vigorous advocacy of the claims of the disinherited and exploited and oppressed - the "boat people," refugees from Central America, Jews in the Soviet Union. My most recent personal experience was to join with him in a Memorial Day for the Gypsy Victims of Nazi Genocide. And in February there will be held under his chairmanship a major international conference on "other victims" of the Third Reich.

But Wiesel, for all that he is suffered, is moved by the spirit of love and reconciliation - not by hate. He has been a leader in German-American reconciliation efforts, and a whole section of the West German parliament sent a petition supporting his nomination for the Nobel Prize. He is a spokesman for new life and new beginnings - for Israel, for American-German reconciliation, for Soviet Jewry, for refugees from despotisms and dictatorships in many parts of the world. He is our America at her best!

(Franklin H. Littell is author of a column entitled "Proclaim Liberty.")

# Something to think about

Dying is a natural result of the human condition. It comes to all of us, sooner or later.

We take care of ourselves to prolong life as long as we can. When the end comes, however, we hope and pray that it will be peaceful.

We spend our days trying to live as dignified a life as possible why then do so many of us end our lives helplessly hooked up to monstrous machines which keep our bodies functioning long after we ourselves have the ability to do so? This is the ultimate indignity.

We should be allowed to pass into God's kingdom in our own bed with our loved ones near by. The extraordinary measures used by medical science to artificially prolong a life that has ceased to have spiritual mean-

**Toby COLEMAN**



ing makes no sense.

Some states have taken the enlightened view of legalizing the Living Will which allows a person to forbid the use of these extraordinary measures in sustaining his or her life after all hope of survival are gone. We in Pennsylvania must also consider this approach.

Death is something we all face, but so many of us refuse

to even think of it. A lingering death is tragic for the dying as well as for the living who care for them. This is one area where science has no place.

Since dying is such a natural process, let men leave it up to God. He gives life and He takes it away.

It's something to think about... (Toby Coleman, a Back Mountain resident, is a columnist for The Dallas Post. Her column appears regularly.)

# Program offers new opportunity

Qualified high school students are offered an opportunity to spend an academic year or summer holiday in Scandinavia, Germany, France, Switzerland, Britain, Holland, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada (French or English speaking) as part of the ASSE International Student Exchange Program.

ASSE families abroad are carefully screened to provide a caring environment in which students can learn the language,



Dallas Post/Charlot M. Denmon

## Planting tulips

Brownie Troop 654, Dallas, planted tulip bulbs last week in front of the Back Mountain Memorial Library in observance of the 75th anniversary of Girl Scouting. Participating in the community service project were Brownie Scouts, Kristin Nackley, Jamie Slocum, Beth Ann Wagner, Brianne Castigan, Kerri Brown, Sirka Howes, Carrie Fetterman, Amanda Ahmad, Susan Buckley, Tammy Pelton, Alison Rothstein, Janet Mannear, Kristen Van Scoy, Nicole Nackley, Ann Lynn Mizeko, Holly Pelton, Abby Ahmad, and Taffy Van Scoy. Cheryl Wagner is the troop leader.

# Letters

## Parent upset with bus driver

DEAR EDITOR:

I would like to know if the Dallas School Board knows what type of school bus drivers they hire.

On November 11, 1986 my children's bus was involved in an accident due to the slippery roads. The children on the bus were told to walk to the next bus stop to wait for the next bus.

After waiting in the heavy snowfall, they were finally picked up, but the bus had trouble on the inclines because of the slippery conditions of the road. The children were dropped off near the Echo

Valley Trailer Court off of Harris Hill Road. They were told to walk home. We live in the Fernbrook area in Dallas, so you can imagine the walk my children had. My children called me from the trailer park so I walked up to meet them. (I do not own a car due to financial reasons.)

The children had to walk in unfit conditions and watch out for cars that were sliding on the roads, not to mention the blinding snow and cold temperatures. Why were the students left off the bus so far away from home? The bus drivers should have asked where all the stu-

dents were from. Why were they told to walk home if it were too dangerous to drive? Where did the bus go after it dropped the children off? If the bus drivers are responsible for the children to and from school, why leave them off and tell them to walk home when some of the students weren't even from the area of that bus stop.

Wise up school board and bus drivers! Maybe, next time, it will be one of your own children or grandchildren who will be involved in this type of situation, then see how it feels. What if one of these children were hit by a sliding car???

A CONCERNED PARENT

# He praises female politicians

DEAR EDITOR:

Very little has been said in news articles and editorials about women candidates elected to the State House of Representatives in the recent election. But three new women candidates were elected to open seats to bring the total of women to 14 or 7 percent in the House.

This figure in itself may not seem earth shattering, but it will represent the largest number of women to have ever served at one time in the House. Progress is slow but percepti-

ble.

The new breakdown of nine GOP women State Representatives and their five Democrat counterparts for 1987-88 session shows the slow but continuing entrance of women into the political process at the state legislative level.

After the 1984 election when a woman was nominated for Vice President and another here in Pennsylvania for Auditor General, attention to the advancement of women into the political process seemed to take a back

seat in 1986 to the negative campaign ads.

But women are edging their way into the General Assembly, and this is good for the people of Pennsylvania.

As Chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, I am an advocate of getting GOP women to come forth and stand for election for public offices at all levels of government where candidates are needed.

**KENNETH E. BRANDT**  
CHAIRMAN  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN  
POLICY COMMITTEE

# Park employee thanks Post for help

DEAR EDITOR:

I wish to express my appreciation for the publicity on this year's free Public Interpretive Programs at Frances Slocum State Park. Many of the program participants informed me

that they learned of our programs through the press releases in your newspaper.

I'm looking forward to further communication concerning next year's free Public Interpretive

Programs at Frances Slocum State Park.

**ANGELA WASSEL**  
PARK NATURALIST  
FRANCES SLOCUM  
STATE PARK

# Holtzman enjoyed working with media

DEAR EDITOR:

Just a note to say it was a pleasure to work with you

during the campaign. These two years have been a wonderful experience that I will always

cherish and remember.

With warmest regard,

**MARC HOLTZMAN**

# Library news

By **NANCY KOZEMCHAK**  
Library Correspondent

The Back Mountain Memorial Library has received a donation of a new game called "School" for the children's room.

Dave Jones, a teacher in the Dallas Intermediate School invented the game and it is now available for purchase at many retail stores. This game, donated to the library by Mr. Jones, has proven to be one of the most exciting children's games on the market today. It is a fast-paced action game, loaded with fun and laughs.

The object is to score 100 points before your opponents. Each player starts at the school entrance and proceeds around the board stopping at such places as cafeteria, library, gym, playground, school bus and principal. There are cards to draw with instructions, and a spin-space which requires a chance on the spinner. The game is for ages 5 to adult, from 2-6 players and fun for the

entire family. The game is receiving much attention in the children's room.

We do seem to have a lot of trouble with the name 'Back Mountain.' Some people just don't think Back is the right name. We get mail from library supply houses, catalog suppliers and literary publications with the name, Black, Dark, Mack and Bark. Even when we use our letterheads and type our name, Back Mountain, the mail still comes through with these odd names.

We are pleased to see people reading our newspapers in the reference room. Along with the daily papers; the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and the USA Today are being read extensively. These newspapers are kept current and are on file in the reference room.

I drove into the parking lot at the library on the day of our first appreciable snow fall and there was only one other car in the lot. He had to be an avid reader and a constant user of the library. His license plate

reads, "BOOKS - 3".

A sincere thank you to John Henninger of Shavertown. He stopped in the other day and brought us another large lemon from Florida. We might make a large pitcher of lemonade. This is the second year in a row that we have received this gift. Thanks, Mr. Henninger.

While glancing through the June 1985 copy of Reader's Digest, I ran across a few pages containing Sniglets. The definition of sniglet is any word that doesn't appear in the dictionary, but should. These are really funny and we all enjoyed a good laugh. One that we all seem to be aware of is Strumble, that invisible object you always pretend caused you to trip, when it was actually your own stupid clumsiness; and Wondracide, the act of murdering a piece of bread with a knife and cold butter.

(Nancy Kozemchak is the assistant librarian at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. Her column appears regularly in The Dallas Post.)

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