

# Fire safety

## Ironic start to fire prevention week

By LOREN STEFFY  
Reporter

A mobile home fire in Bryan that resulted in one death Monday morning "might have been different" if an early warning device, such as a smoke detector, had been installed, Raymond Janac, Bryan fire marshal, said Monday. The fire was an ironic start to the National Fire Prevention Week which started on Monday.

Both departments are giving presentations on fire safety and conducting tours of fire stations as part of National Fire Prevention Week this week. The Bryan Fire Department is showing films at their display at Manor East Mall from noon to 5 p.m. daily. The College Station Fire Department is giving presentations in lo-

cal schools all week. "Everyone needs to have one or more smoke detectors (in their home)," Janac said.

The new regulations requiring smoke detectors in apartments have helped save lives, Harry Davis, College Station fire marshal, said.

In addition to stressing early warning devices, the departments are emphasizing common sense.

"If people just used common sense I believe we could prevent a lot more (fires)," Davis said.

Davis and Janac said cooking-related incidents are the primary cause of fires in the Bryan-College Station area. "We're dealing with a lot of young people who have never cooked before," Davis said.

Many kitchen fires are a result

of grease build-up on wires. "The secret (to preventing cooking fires) is good housekeeping," Janac said.

People need to be careful when using fireplaces for the first time in the upcoming months. Fireplaces should be cleaned every one or two years, and old dry wood should be burned when possible, Davis said.

Heating units and wiring around the house also need to be checked. Space heaters should be placed away from combustibles and only heavy duty extension cords should be used, Janac said.

Davis said the College Station Fire Department receives eight to ten calls a day requesting information on fire prevention. "It shows people are thinking about safety," he said.

## Use of kerosene heaters controversial

By KARLA K. MARTIN  
Staff Writer

The quest for less expensive fuel has spurred a revival of the kerosene heater, but despite its advances, the heater's safety still remains questionable.

In 1982, the Consumer Product Safety Commission conducted an investigation on the hazards of the kerosene heater. As a result of this research, the commission found the heaters neither outstandingly good or bad.

"We thought they could have been improved," said James Hoebel, manager of the Fire Hazards Program of the Safety Commission, "but we didn't find them excessively dangerous, either. They're relatively safe if used correctly."

Hoebel said that during 1982, there were 1,700 fires caused by kerosene heaters in the United States, with 50 deaths. The reasons, he said, are not known.

"We don't know if it resulted from using the wrong fuel, simple negligence or if it is a problem with the heaters themselves," Hoebel said. "We just have to keep making safety suggestions to the UL on what we think is the safest product."

UL (Underwriter's Laboratory) is a national testing organization which safety-tests products for the manufacturers.

Carole Feil, associate manager of public information at UL, said most authorities accept their

safety standards. For example, there is a tip-over switch that shuts the heater off if knocked over, and there are also touch guards that can prevent skin burns.

Feil said most of the problems she knows of have not been caused by fire, but by smoke and burns.

"If you put the wrong fuel in it or a lower grade of kerosene in it, it smokes," Feil said. "You've got to be careful when you're putting a fire to a combustible fuel."

The 1983 January and July issues of the Consumer Report Magazine also questioned the safety of kerosene heaters by listing the amount of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide levels put out by the heaters.

But despite these apparent dangers, the fire marshals of College Station and Bryan see no reason to avoid kerosene heaters.

College Station Fire Marshal Harry Davis said the new safety features are some of the reasons why this area has never had a kerosene heater fire.

"Until we get enough evidence saying why we shouldn't use kerosene heaters, we will continue to allow their use," Davis said.

The state of California, however, disagrees.

Herman Schierenberg, fire prevention engineer for the state of California, said California prohibits selling and using kerosene

heaters within living spaces.

"We believe they're safer than the old ones," Schierenberg said, "but they still have a carbon monoxide problem."

Schierenberg said it's mainly the human factor that caused the California kerosene heater fires, but despite the modern safety devices, there is no attempt to change California's law.

Davis agreed that all the kerosene heater problems haven't been discovered yet but said some potential problems can be prevented.

"People have to use the same safety precautions as with any heat unit," he said. "You've got to keep kids away from them, don't burn them at night without ventilation and use top grade kerosene and common sense."

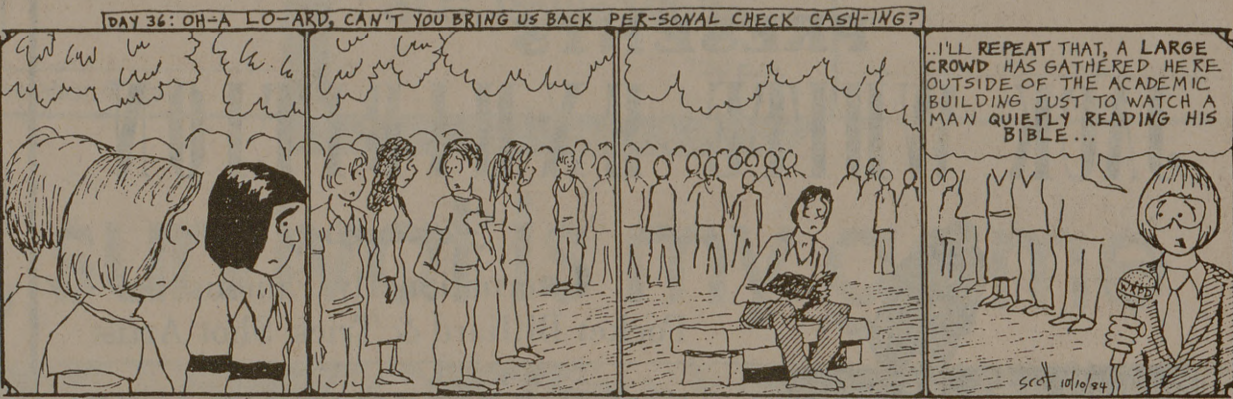
Some kerosene heater manufacturers that are tested and approved by the UL include Aladin, Toyostove, Kero-son, Robeson, Sharp, Sanyo, Western Auto Supply and Sears Roebuck & Co.

Marjorie Crouch, owner of Bryan Marine, said her store sells the Toyostove heaters.

Crouch said the price of the heaters ranges from \$99 to \$199, but the price of kerosene is only \$1.49 a gallon. She said the \$99 heater burns from 28 to 31 hours on one tank (one gallon) of kerosene and the \$199 heater burns for 13 to 18 hours on two gallons of kerosene.

## Warped

by Scott McCullar



## SHOE

by Jeff MacNelly



## Admiral: U.S. losing in technology race

By JERRY OSLIN  
Reporter

The world today is one of "economic confrontation" and the United States is losing the battle in the area of high technology, Admiral Bobby R. Inman said Tuesday night in a speech at Rudder Theatre.

Inman, former director of the National Security Agency, said Japan has moved ahead of the United States in high technology, and that the U.S. must create new technology to remain competitive.

Inman is president and chief executive officer of the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation (MCC) in Austin. MCC is a consortium of 19 electronic and computer oriented companies put together to offset the Japanese advantage in this high-technology area.

The aim of MCC is to eliminate the waste of repetitive research and to create new technology more effectively.

Inman said MCC chose Austin as its home because of favorable business climate in Texas and because of

the research facilities at A&M and the University of Texas at Austin.

"(The University of) Texas has a good computer science program but it was a little weak in its microelectronics program. Texas A&M is strong in the microelectronics area. This makes a perfect marriage," he said.

While the relationship between MCC and the universities is "informal", Inman said his company is always searching for new talent from the universities.

"As long we have top talent and a clear research direction, the companies in MCC are not going to walk away from the high-stakes, high-technology poker table," Inman said.

The impacts of MCC will be long-range, but Inman said his company has already had some positive effect in Texas.

Inman said MCC would not cause any impact on Texas business for at least six years. But the Bryan-College Station area will feel impact from MCC even sooner.

## Colonel talks on defense, nuclear war

Retired Air Force Col. Don Clark will speak at Freeze Forum '84 today at 7:30 p.m. in 601 Rudder. His speech, "Nuclear Defense or Debacle?" will focus on the advisability of the nuclear freeze and on current and proposed defense systems.

Aggie Peace Action will sponsor the speech in cooperation with Brazos Valley Peace Action and Peace Links. The student organization is committed to peace and social justice through non-violent action and education, Ken Gilman, president of Aggie Peace Action said.

Clark is director of international education and lecturer in international affairs at Montana State University and an international relations columnist. He is a former advisor to the joint chiefs of staff on SALT 1 and 2 and a former assistant air attache at the U.S. embassy in Russia.

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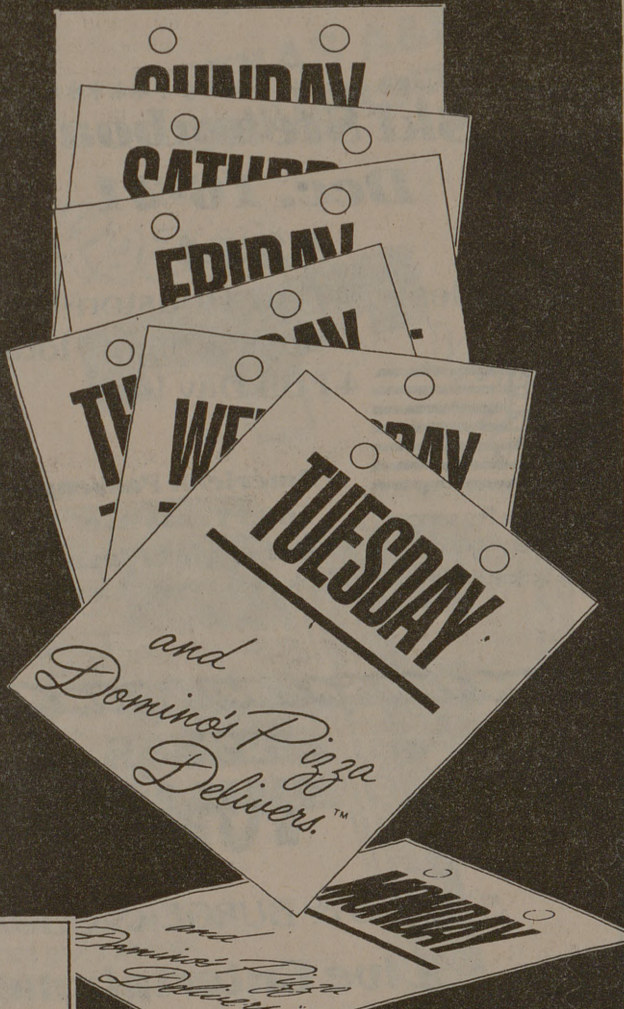
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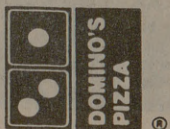
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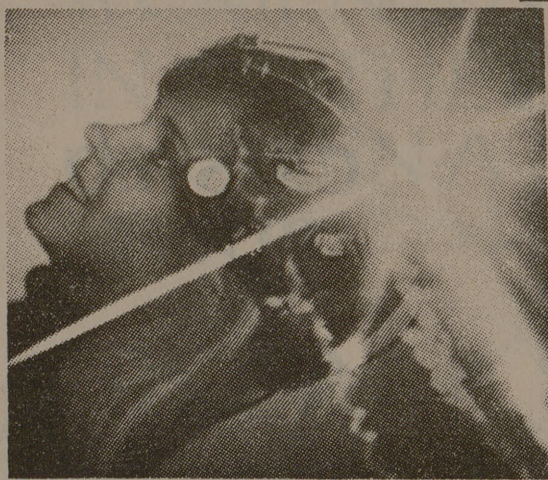
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