

# Stoves, fireplaces cause pollution — expert

BY RANDY FRICKE

Burning wood in residential fireplaces and in wood-burning stoves causes indoor as well as outdoor pollution, according to Richard Laws, an air pollution expert. Laws is an air pollution control engineer with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department.

Laws says that a wood-burning stove in a newer, air-tight home could be unhealthy. Since stoves starve or dampen the air during combustion, they will emit harmful gases, Laws said.

He said carbon monoxide is a common odorless, colorless gas emitted from wood-burning stoves. He said some aldehydes and nitrogen oxides are indoor pollutants from wood-burning stoves.

According to Laws, wood-burning stoves burn more efficiently and produce more heat than do fireplaces. However, Laws says fireplaces pollute less indoors than do stoves. He said that fireplaces use more air and burn cooler than stoves.

Laws said that wood smoke coming from chimneys has many pollutants. He identified these as hydrochloric acid, benzofuran pyrene (an ingredient of cigarette smoke), sulfur oxides and polycyclic organic compounds. He said the polycyclic compounds cause cancer.

Laws points to an Associated Press news article in his file which makes a statistical comparison of wood stoves versus oil furnaces: "A modern wood stove produces 500 times as much carbon monoxide, 1,500 times as much particulate matter and 750 times as many hydrocarbons as an oil furnace to heat the same space, according to a 1980 study at Long Island's Brookhaven National Laboratory."

Laws mentioned that chimney fires usually result from the lack of regular cleaning.

Hardwoods such as hickory, oak, ash and elm are better than softwoods for fireplaces and stoves, Laws said. They are more compact and burn more efficiently than do softwoods, and give off fewer pollutants. Softwoods such as pine, fir and cedar produce more emissions and more smoke, according to Laws. Smoke from softwoods give off resins and creosote, which line the walls of chimneys and smokestacks. Laws said that this is the material that catches fire.

Laws said Lincoln does not have a serious

pollution problem yet, based on preliminary results of a survey conducted in the Colonial Hills subdivision. The survey showed that the wood burning in that subdivision was largely recreational, not a main heat source. The survey was conducted in April, chiefly to gauge the amount of wood being burned. Laws said that Colonial Hills has about 855 fireplaces, according to an informal count. Sixty-two of those homes were surveyed in this area.

Laws said that his office investigates smoke pollution complaints. In 1980, Laws

said, his office had nine complaints. The number of complaints dropped in 1981 because of the mild winter, he said.

Laws said that other parts of Lincoln may have more serious wood burners, but surveys have not been conducted in those areas.

Laws said that the Environmental Protection Agency is now developing a new air quality standard called "inhalable particulate." If EPA adopts this standard, his office must take air samples, he said.

## Old UN-L computer system turned off

After 14 years of service, Dr. Don Nelson, professor of electrical engineering and computer science, turned off the IBM 360-65 computer system.

The computer system was wearing out, said Ernest Kovaly, computing services director. It was breaking down repeatedly, Kovaly said. The system used considerable power and air conditioning to operate, Kovaly said.

Use of the systems has increased 57 percent during the past two years, Kovaly said, and he expects the use to continue to increase.

"It has served the University well," Kovaly said.

The computer system will sell for between \$10,000 and \$15,000 for the metals, Kovaly said.

The system on May 13, was switched over to a MP IBM 370-158, which can support 256 terminals. The new system increased reliability and within the number of dollars available,

Kovaly said. Computing services received \$1.4 million from the legislature to pay bills and pay for the new computer system, Kovaly said.

The 370-158 computer system is in Nebraska Hall. Terminals connected to the computer are in Ferguson Hall, College of Business Administration, Bancroft Hall, Nebraska Hall, and Miller Hall on East Campus. The computer is used by students and the administration for assignments.

## David City couple gives school \$3,000

Three thousand dollars has been given to the School of Journalism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to enrich the quality of the school's program, said Neal Copple, dean of the school. The money was donated by Jack and Betty Tarr of David City. Tarr publishes the David City Banner-Press.

## Man's robbery story admittedly was hoax

A man who reported that someone attempted to rob him a week ago told Lincoln police this week that the story was a hoax.

The man reported on Wednesday, June 9, that he was walking on 11th Street between I and K streets when a Mexican male approached him, said Lt. Lyle Roberts, Lincoln police public affairs officer.

The man told police that the robber showed a knife and demanded money, Roberts said. The man said he kicked the robber in the chest, which knocked the robber down, then he hit the robber twice in the face, Roberts said.

The man said the robber then ran south on 11th Street, Roberts said.

The man was late getting home and needed an alibi to give to his wife, Roberts said.

The county attorney's office is considering charges against the man for filing a false report, Roberts said.

## Mushroom, fairy ring problems for lawns

The time of the year and the wet weather have combined to contribute to two unsightly problems for lawns — mushrooms and fairy ring.

John E. Watkins, extension plant pathologist for the University of Nebraska, has tips for those wishing to rid their lawns of the pests.

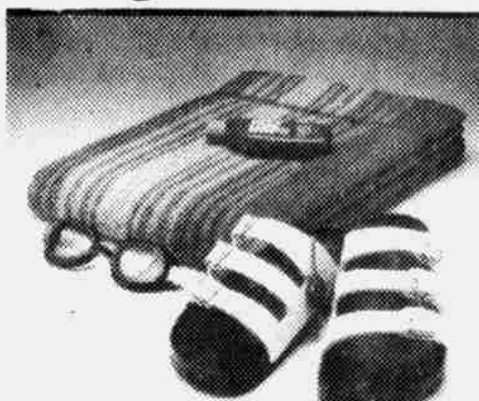
Mushrooms, which grow from an underground network of fungus threads and feed on decaying organic matter, pose a potential hazard to children and pets. Certain species are poisonous and some emit offensive odors.

Control of mushroom growth is impossible until the substance upon which the mushrooms are feeding is either decayed or dug up, Watkins said.

Fairy ring is formed by an underground network of fungus threads that make a dark green circular band of grass four to 12 inches wide, the grass in the center of the ring dead or dying.

Pumping water into the center of the ring with a root feeder helps promote turf recovery. Elimination of the ring requires treatment by someone experienced in soil treatment, Watkins said.

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