

## Insight Fires create awareness of problems

### Mobile homes require some lifestyle shifts

By Don Lintvet and Cheryl Burch  
Missourian staff writers

A blackened trailer shell surrounded by charred remnants of furniture is grim evidence of the speed with which a fire can destroy a mobile home.

The cause of the recent fire at Crossroads Trailer Park, which destroyed the home of Mrs. Glenda Wade and her two small boys, was a malfunction in the water heater located in the rear of the trailer, said Columbia Fire Inspector A. L. Davidson.

A similar cause was attributed to the Oct. 13 fire that destroyed an unoccupied trailer in the same mobile home park.

Fire department records for the past year show the department was called to nine mobile home fires, five of those in Crossroads Trailer Park.

The mobile home fire safety problem is not an issue peculiar to Columbia residents. It faces any mobile home occupant.

Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to fire consumption because of the nature of their construction, Davidson said.

The heat often will melt the metal siding allowing the fire to "vent itself" much faster than in a non-mobile dwelling, he said.

The mobile home industry is moving to improve the safety standards of the living units. Missouri, recently adopted a trailer construction code that outlines plumbing and electrical standards for new mobile units.

Many new trailers now are equipped with signs indicating danger areas around the furnace and water heater, said Larry Benton, a Columbia mobile home dealer.

Furnace and water heater areas now are insulated with fire retardant materials, he said.

The industry is experimenting with the fire-proof paneling and ceiling materials for mobile home construction, said Stan Baker, manager of Shady Lake Estates.

Despite industry advances, however, the majority of trailer occupants are living in units that were not built with the new fire preventive materials.

"Due to the construction and fast fire spread, it is often difficult to determine the exact cause of a fire in a mobile home," said Lt. Steve Pausell, Boone County Fire Protection District.

But many of the trailer fires can be traced to malfunctions or misuse of electrical systems, water heating systems or heat tapes, Pausell said.

Water heaters in older mobile home units are a major headache to safety officials, said State Fire Marshal Robert Morrison. Water heaters will not function without proper ventilation.

Often, trailer occupants use the ventilation closets as storage areas, which results in reduction of the available air reaching the heater, he said. And lack of circulation can cause a malfunction that could ignite stored items.

Heat tapes, electrical insulated wrapping used to prevent freezing of water pipes, can overheat and ignite any combustible material near the pipes, said Francis Black, a local trailer repairman.

"Each winter two or three trailers are lost from fire due to heat tape malfunctions," he said.

To keep trailer home occupants informed about safety aspects, one Columbia mobile home manager periodically prints a courtesy newsletter. Stan Baker, manager of Woodstock Rolling Estates includes information about heat tape use and other safety measures.

Trailer safety inspections are available upon request from the Boone County Fire Protection District, Pausell said.

Crossroads Trailer Park, the site of the most recent fire, is rented from Robert J. Tull and Perry Ewing by the Columbia Housing Authority. As a result of Wednesday night's fire, the CHA has organized a meeting with the city fire marshal and park owners to investigate possible fire hazards in the Crossroads units.

Despite industry improvements, inspection availability, and management reminders, the most variable factor in fire safety remains the individual occupants. Many of the fires in mobile homes are caused by occupant negligence, Davidson said. Smaller living space in trailers will not accommodate the same amount of furniture and personal belongings as an average size house. The accumulated items in a small space increase the potential fire hazard.

Occupants must realize that trailer living demands a "change in lifestyle," said Battalion Chief George Hughes of the Columbia Fire Department.

# Board cuts loan rate to aid economy

UPI Business Writer

The Federal Reserve Board, acting quickly in the wake of news that 6.5 million persons were out of work in December, Friday moved to stimulate the nation's slumping economy by easing credit restrictions.

Government and labor officials called for President Ford and Congress to take action to fight the recession that moved more swiftly through the economy than the administration had expected.

Ford's economic advisers had said unemployment would not reach 7 per cent until mid-1975. But 1.3 million jobs were lost in November and December, sending the rate soaring to 7.1 per cent of the work force.

Citing the "weakening in economic activity," the Federal Reserve late Friday reduced its discount loan rate from 7 1/4 per cent to 7 per cent. The action makes more money available at cheaper interest rates for business expansion which, in turn, creates jobs.

The discount rate is the rate Federal Reserve charges commercial banks for loans. Last month, the Federal Reserve lowered the discount rate from 8 per cent to 7 1/4 per cent.

The lower rate was approved for Federal Reserve banks in Boston, Philadelphia, Richmond, Cleveland, Dallas and San Francisco.

It was the Federal Reserve's second step in two days to stimulate the

economy. Thursday, it poured millions into the banking system by buying securities from dealers who place the proceeds into commercial accounts.

President Ford was described as "concerned" about rising unemployment and a spokesman said it would get worse, perhaps as high as 8 per cent, in the immediate future.

Lower Federal Reserve interest rates was one of the "emergency" steps AFL-CIO President George Meany suggested Friday to ease unemployment. Meany also said Ford should act "tomorrow morning" to release \$13 billion in impounded public construction funds and reactivate housing programs.

Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., called for an immediate \$10 billion tax cut.

Not since the recession of 1958 when unemployment reached 7.5 per cent has the jobless rate been so high, although the 7.1 per cent figure was reached in 1961, also a recession year.

The rapid rise in unemployment in the last two months pushed the annual rate for 1974 to 5.6 per cent, up from the 4.9 per cent in 1973.

In other economic developments: —First National City Bank of New York reversed a three-month trend toward lower interest rates and raised its prime rate for business loans from 10 to 10 1/4 per cent.

— American Telephone & Telegraph asked the Federal Communications Commission for a 7.2 per cent rate increase on interstate calls. AT&T said "short haul calls will be increased more than the long haul." The new rates would net the Bell System \$433 million annually after taxes.

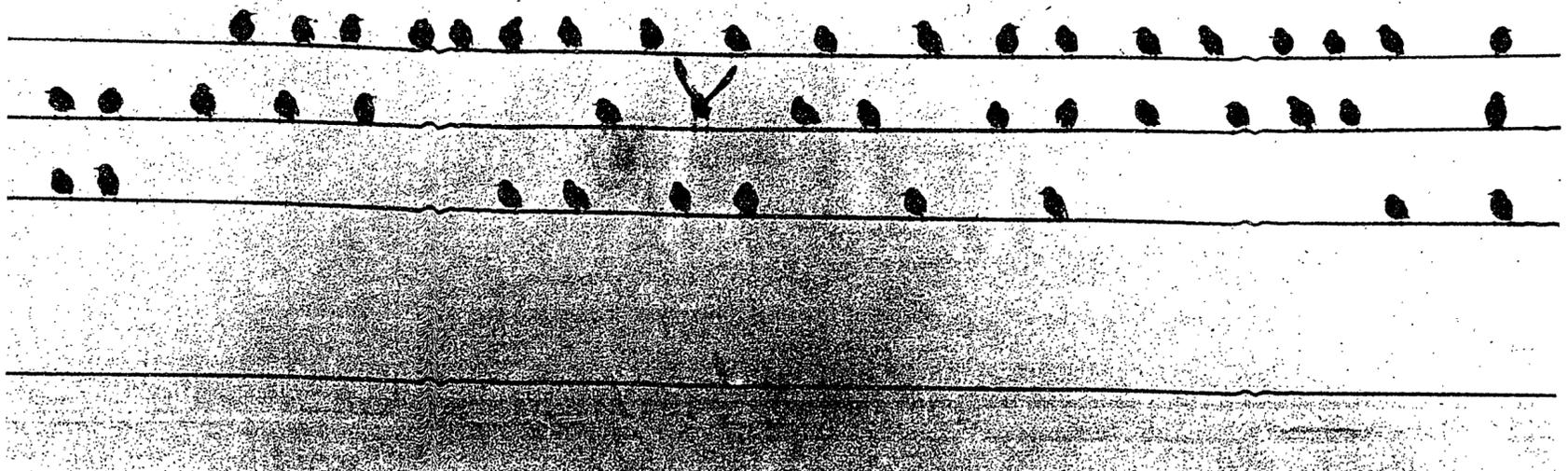
—The price of gold dropped for the third consecutive day as U.S. demand failed to materialize. It closed at \$169 a troy ounce in Zurich, \$174 in London, \$177.58 in Frankfurt and \$182.73 in Paris. Both the dollar and the pound sterling lost ground. Gold for January delivery closed at 174 in New York.

# Columbia Missourian

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(Missourian photo by Mark Petty)

## President seeking more explicit information about CIA's alleged spying on 'dissidents'

By Seymour M. Hersh  
N. Y. Times Service

WASHINGTON — President Ford plans to meet with Richard Helms within the next few days, as part of his promised review into allegations of illegal domestic spying by the Central Intelligence Agency, White House officials said Friday.

Helms, the former CIA director who has been named in published accounts as a key figure in the domestic spying,

returned to Washington Friday on what State Department officials have called a prearranged home leave from his post as ambassador to Iran.

"There's going to be no whitewash of this," one White House aide said. "He's (President Ford) going to see all the principals."

The President, who has made no substantial public statement on the alleged spying, met separately Friday with Secretary of State Kissinger, Secretary of Defense James R.

Schlesinger, and William E. Colby, current director of the CIA.

After his meeting with the President, Kissinger told newsmen that he planned to meet at the State Department today with Helms, who has been quoted as denying any involvement in "illegal" domestic activities.

In a related development, Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., who announced last Sunday that he had received independent confirmation of the spying allegations, further told

newsmen Friday that he knew of no foreign intelligence factors behind the CIA's decision to begin compiling dossiers on more than 9,000 Americans, antiwar leaders and other dissidents.

Ron Nessen, White House press secretary, declined to say whether any specific action would be taken. But he did say that the President planned to have his own report on the CIA's domestic activities completed by the middle of next week. That report, he said, "will establish the facts."

The seeming thrust of Nessen's remarks was that the President was not planning to accept a CIA report on the spying, prepared and submitted 10 days ago by Colby, at its face value. "I think the Colby report did contain facts," Nessen said in response to questions, "but obviously the President wants to pursue the matter further."

The New York Times reported Dec. 22 that the CIA had violated its charter by mounting a massive intelligence operation against the antiwar movement and other dissident groups during the late 1960's and early 1970's. The paper's sources also said that a number of break-ins, wiretaps and other crimes were committed within the United States by CIA personnel in operations dating back to the 1950s.

## Kissinger: 'Oil-by-force Ford's idea'

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said Friday he was reflecting President Ford's views when he mentioned the remote possibility of using military force against Middle East oil-producing nations to prevent "strangulation of the industrialized world."

The White House, however, refused to say whether Ford agreed with Kissinger. Press Secretary Ron

Nessen said only that Ford understood the statement as a "highly qualified answer to a hypothetical situation."

Kissinger made the comment in a year-end interview with Business Week magazine. Asked if he had considered the possibility of using military force against the Middle East oil producers, he replied:

"A very dangerous course. We should have learned from Vietnam

that it is easier to get into a war than to get out of it. I am not saying that there's no circumstance where we would not use force. But it is one thing to use it in a dispute over price, it's another where there's some actual strangulation of the industrialized world."

Kissinger was approached by reporters at a signing ceremony for the 1974 Trade Act Friday and asked to elaborate on his remarks.

"Oh, look," he said, "I reflect the views of the President. I don't make major statements of foreign policy that do not reflect the views of the President."

He stressed the United States would consider use of force "only in the gravest emergency."

Nessen said he did not know whether Kissinger had cleared his remarks with the White House before the interview, but he said Ford "has nothing to add."

"The President has read the interview and the President understands the secretary's answer as a highly qualified answer to a hypothetical situation involving only the gravest kind of emergency for the industrial world," he added.

Nessen said the main thrust of Kissinger's comments on the Middle East oil situation was that the United States "is not seeking confrontation with the supplier nations. The United States is seeking cooperation."

## Petitioners want more funds for library

By Jan Winburn  
Missourian staff writer

A petition drive to place an operational levy increase of five cents for the Columbia Public Library on the April 1 city election ballot will begin Monday, Library Director Gene Martin said Friday.

"The major portion of our income comes from taxes on assessed valuation," Martin said. If the levy is increased from the current 20 cents on \$100 assessed valuation to 25 cents, allowed by recent legislation, "it would provide enough money only to maintain present operator for a period of time," he added.

The Daniel Boone Regional Library's estimated 1975 revenue is about \$596,000. Martin could not estimate how much of this goes to the Columbia Public Library. The anticipated

revenue from the tax increase if the petition and tax vote are successful is between \$50,000 and \$55,000, Martin said. This amount would go to the Columbia Public Library.

To avoid a \$22,000 deficit caused by staff salary increases, reduced revenue sharing funds and increased utility rates, the Columbia library Board of Trustees was forced to make major cuts in the library's 1975 service program.

Cutbacks in the budget effective Jan. 1 included reducing the staff by seven and stopping the bookmobile service in Columbia and its immediate suburbs. A major cut in operation included closing the library at 5 p.m. on Fridays, which began at 6 p.m. Friday at 5 p.m. and

until noon on Thursday as part of the cutback.

Additional cuts were made in furniture expenses, personal cars used for library business, the printing of brochures and pamphlets and the purchase of display materials.

"Under present economic conditions, restoration in 1976 of services cut back in 1975 will be impossible. In fact, if additional income is not forthcoming in 1976, further cutbacks will become mandatory," Martin said.

If the increase is adopted, the taxpayer would pay an additional 50 cents annually for each \$1,000 assessed valuation. For example, an individual whose property is assessed at \$5,000 would pay an additional \$2.50; one

whose property is assessed at \$10,000 would pay an additional \$5.

About 1,000 signatures are needed for the levy increase to be placed on the ballot in April.

"Signatures of 5 per cent of the voters who voted for the governor in 1974 are needed," Martin said.

Persons eligible to sign the petition and vote on the levy increase are those residing within Columbia's 1965 boundary. They would be required to pay the city tax. Persons in areas annexed after 1965 pay a county library tax.

Chairman of the petition drive, Dr. Calvin Woodruff, 910 Wayne Road, says the League of Women Voters, the Friends of the Library and the

Columbia Public Library Board of Trustees will participate in the drive.

"Quite a few people will be participating," Woodruff said. "Some will be carrying petitions on a neighborhood basis and others will carry petitions where they work. In about two weeks, we plan to be set up in shopping centers to get those people we miss at home."

Woodruff said the deadline for the petition is March 1.

Mrs. Samuel Kerr, a member of Friends of the Library, said the members plan to help in the petition drive. "Our aim is aid the library in any way we can."

Last year, Friends of the Library purchased cassettes for the library. "We try and provide the library with items they are unable to afford," Mrs. Kerr said. "We plan to help in the drive because the library is badly in need of the funds."