

Fire Prevention

# Leaf-Burning: Deadly Tradition

By THOMAS FLYNN  
Syndicated Columnist

If you're old enough to drive, you're old enough to recall a delightful odor in the autumn air ... a scent that proves that things aren't always what they seem. For, as much as the smell of burning leaves brought pleasure to those of us who knew it, leaf-burning was, in any number of ways, really bad news.

Today, it's illegal to burn leaves in most localities. Here's why a once-cherished autumn tradition had to go -- and how you can help your fellow man by obeying and helping to enforce leaf-burning laws.

For starters, leaf-burning is a very inefficient form of combustion. The wetness and poor ventilation of a typical leaf pile make for a lackluster, smoky fire that produces a huge variety of partially burned by-products.

In other words, outdoor leaf burning polluted the air something fierce. So, the first consideration in outlawing the practice was ecological.

A second ecological consideration is that leaves make excellent fertilizer and it's a shame to see them go up in smoke. Many municipalities offer free leaf pickup service for homeowners who will rake them into neat piles on the curbside. They've found that, by using the leaves as a source of mulch, cities can cost effectively fertilize parks and boulevards.

But leaf-burning represented a significant fire risk,

too. First, there was the danger of a sudden gust of wind stirring up the leaf pile and scattering burning leaves all over the neighborhood, touching off house and brush fires. Fire educators spent years badgering the public to confine its leaf-burning to covered metal baskets to reduce the risk of this type of fire. But open-pile burning went on.

Another danger was that a burning leaf pile seldom showed visible flames. It just smoked. To a careless youngster approaching from upwind, it could be hard to distinguish a burning leaf pile suitable for jumping and playing in.

So, leaf-burning is largely a thing of the past in America today. And, while a bit of Americana has faded away, a source of risk has been eliminated thereby ... not a bad tradeoff. So please don't burn leaves this autumn. And don't be ashamed to discourage your neighbors who do.

A final safety note: As more municipalities require homeowners to rake leaves into large piles at the curbside, extra care is required to discourage children from playing in those leaf piles. Now and again a motorist forced to hug the curb will plow into a leaf pile which has spilled into the street.

That's no place for your child to be hiding. This column is brought to you weekly as a public service of the Chronicle and the Winston-Salem Fire Department.



## Someone You Should Meet ...

**Name:** Alice C. McIver  
**Job Title:** Sales manager and part-time radio announcer at WSMX-AM  
**Hometown:** Lumberton, N.C.  
**Hobbies:** Reading, meeting people and traveling  
**Describe yourself in one word:** "Outgoing"  
**Favorite book:** "The World's Greatest Salesman" by Og Mandino  
**Favorite Movie:** "Ragtime"  
**Persons admire most:** Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Horace McIver  
**Career Goal:** "To become a talk show host."  
*(photo by Joe Daniels)*

*(photo by James Parker)*

## NEWS DIGEST

National, state and local news briefs compiled by John Slade

### South African Activist Granted Asylum In U.S.

**CHICAGO** -- Exiled South African poet and activist Dennis Brutus was granted political asylum in the United States last week after a two-year battle that ended in a courtroom confrontation with immigration authorities.

Brutus said of the court's ruling: "I'm very pleased, of course. It's been a very long struggle and it's not ended yet."

A strong opponent of South Africa's apartheid racial policies, Brutus faced a challenge from the Immigration

and Naturalization Service (INS), which sought to deport him to Zimbabwe, where he was born. But the defense contended that Brutus' life would be in danger if he were deported.

The State Department issued an advisory opinion recommending against the INS' attempts to return Brutus to Zimbabwe or England.

INS officials said they plan to appeal the court's decision.

### Former Militant H. Rap Brown Praises Islam

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** -- Former black radical H. Rap Brown said last week at the close of the national Islamic convention that his mission is to serve Allah. "The prayer that we make is that we live as a Muslim and die as a Muslim," said Brown, who has changed his name to Abdulah al-Amin.

Al-Amin, 39, and former head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, said he now

disavows violence and that "struggle is an ongoing process."

"Allah says he has created man to toil and struggle.... In the the 60s, we became a component of that struggle, and it manifested itself in the form of a movement, dealing with a particular element of people."

Al-Amin became a Muslim in 1971.

### Cosell Apologizes For 'Monkey' Reference

**NEW YORK** -- Sportscaster Howard Cosell apologized last Tuesday on his New York radio show for referring to Washington Redskin wide receiver Alvin Garrett as "that little monkey." He says the remark was "not remotely connected to racism."

During a replay of a pass reception in the second quarter, Cosell said Washington Coach Joe Gibbs "wanted to get this kid (Garrett) and that little monkey gets loose, doesn't he?"

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, called for Cosell to

"be man enough and big enough to say 'I said it and I'm sorry.'"

Cosell initially denied making the statement, but, a day later, acknowledged that he did. He also called Lowery to apologize for using the term during the Labor Day telecast of the game between the Redskins and the Dallas Cowboys.

Said Garrett in written statement issued by the Redskins: "I did not, and do not, take exception to anything he said about me in the broadcast last night. Matter of fact, I am pleased that he singled me out for such favorable attention."

## Crime Prevention

### Passenger Robs Driver, Steals Taxi

The following "Crime Box Score" is designed to keep you abreast of criminal activity in your community during the past week and to protect your family and property from crime.

#### Armed Robbery

•1000 block, Academy Street

A taxi driver was robbed by a passenger who then stole the driver's cab. Police located the cab a short time later and chased the suspect, who collided with a police car, then crashed into a bridge abutment. The suspect was arrested.

•2800 block, North Patterson Avenue

Two unidentified persons asked the complainant if they could use his telephone, then pushed him into his house and robbed him of his billfold, money and keys.

#### Murder

•900 block, East 21st Street

The complainant was shot and died a short time later in a hospital. A suspect has been arrested.

#### Common-Law Robbery

•100 block, Glenn Avenue

The victim was chased by two black males who caught him and robbed him.

#### Storebreakings

•2400 block, Reynolds Park Road

Chainsaws, weed eaters and other items were taken from a warehouse.

•2400 block, North Liberty Street

Intruders stole an assortment of beer, liquor and cigarettes, as well as a Sound Craftsman power amplifier, Mitsubishi cassette player, Numark mixer, Realistic microphone, Pioneer turntable and Mitsubishi speaker.

•3300 block, Old Lexington Road

Suspects knocked a hole in a rear wall, entered a business and stole beer, wine and cigarettes.

#### Housebreakings

•900 block, East 18th Street

A 19-inch color television and cigarettes were taken.

•1100 block, East 18th Street

A 19-inch black-and-white television and a radio were taken.

•2500 block, Manchester Street

A Fisher RS-280 series stereo was taken.

•1400 block, Sedgefield Drive

Jewelry and money were taken.

•1200 block, East 25th Street

A gold watch was taken.

•200 block, Jackson Avenue

An intruder entered through a window while the complainant was at home. The complainant fled the house and called the police, who arrested a suspect.

•1400 block, Bruce Street

The complainant, who was resting on a couch, was awakened by someone opening the front door. The stranger walked through the house, then left without taking anything.

•2600 block, Claremont Avenue

A residence was broken into and a bedroom ransacked; nothing was taken, however.

•1100 block, Woughtown Street

The suspect broke into the complainant's bedroom while she was asleep. When the complainant awoke, the suspect climbed back out of the window.

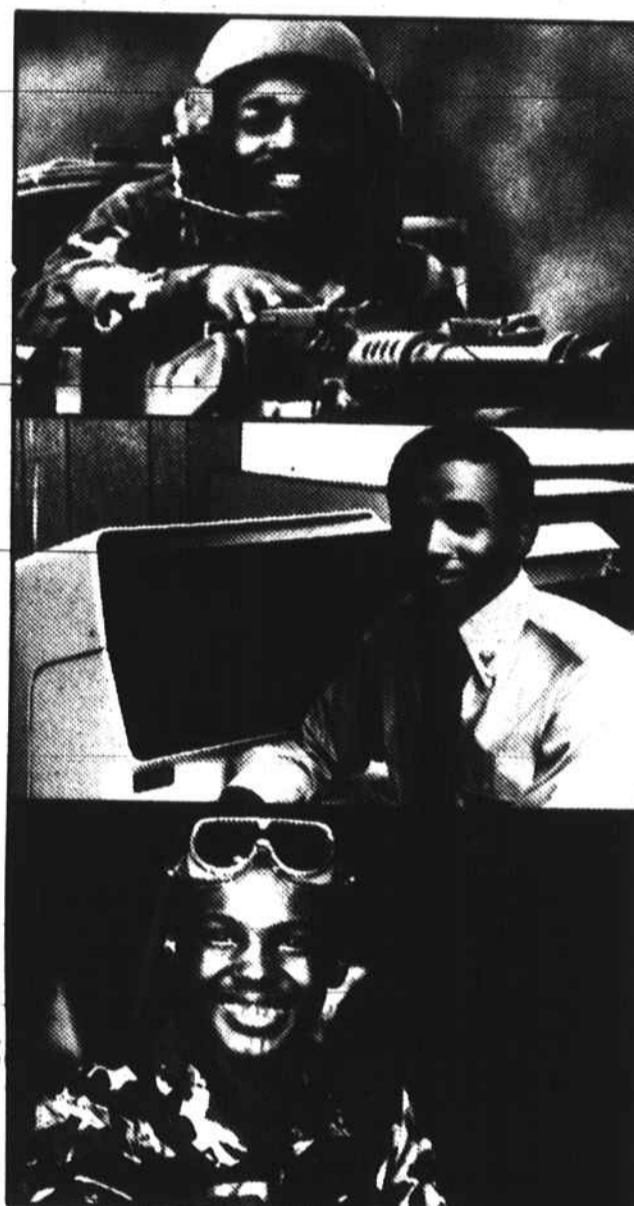
#### Organizing Against Crime

What can clubs or civic organizations do to combat crime? One major step is to adopt crime prevention as a national or local group priority by

-- choosing a staff to run the program.

-- informing members about crime and crime prevention

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