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Dr. Aaron Reneau, OD



Frankly Speaking –

Smoke and Smog Inhalation

by Frank Jordan

The number one cause of death related to fires is smoke inhalation (airway or pulmonary parenchymal injury). Smoke inhalation occurs when you breathe in the products of combustion during a fire – the harmful gases, vapors and particulate matter (soot, etc.) contained in smoke. Combustion produces these gases, vapors and particulate matter that result from

burning, or the rapid breakdown of a substance by heat. The exact composition of smoke produced by any individual fire cannot be predicted because of different temperatures, the products being burned in the fire and the amount of oxygen available to each individual fire.

Smoke inhalation typically occurs in residential or forest fires. Note that cigarette smoking causes similar damage on a smaller scale over an extended period. The primary source of injury in the upper respiratory tract is heat, but within the lung it is the deposition of particles, derived from the products burning, together with toxic gases given off by the fire.

How Smoke Inhalation Damages the Body

The harmful materials given off by combustion injure the airways and lungs by: (1) heat damage; (2) tissue irritation by irritant compounds and (3) oxygen starvation of the tissues defined as asphyxiation. Remember that smoke inhalation victims may not show injury symptoms until 24-48 hours after the inhalation event. Also, children under age 11 and adults over age 70 are most vulnerable.

The degree of heat involved in the fire creating the smoke is directly related to the seriousness of potential damage from smoke inhalation. According to W.R. Clark Jr., “The mortality rate of smoke in-

halation victims without a burn is less than 10 percent. With a burn, the mortality rate is 30-50 percent, suggesting that thermal injury or its treatment is responsible for further lung damage.”

The primary source of injury in the upper respiratory tract is heat, but the thermal injury does not usually extend beyond the bifurcation or forking of the trachea (commonly known as the windpipe). Within the lung the particulates, or particles of matter resulting from the combustion, combined with the toxic gases, cause the majority of damage in what appears to be a response to stimulation of the inflammatory response.

Smog particulates can create a similar irritation, but are derived from other environmental particulates such as auto emissions and industry pollutants. Unless this particulate matter is removed, the continued presence may lead to damage and an impaired respiratory function.

The primary function of the leukocyte immune cells known as alveolar macrophages in the lungs, is to engulf and dispose of any matter entering the lungs not produced by the body (non-self) – a process described scientifically as phagocytosis. The function of these large white immune cells is part of the innate immune response of the body. For the body to be able to fight back successfully against the soot,

carbon and other particulates from the smoke inhalation and smog, these macrophage cells, or immune soldiers, must be in peak condition and not be suppressed or damaged.

If suppressed or damaged, the immune response cannot naturally dispose of the invasive and damaging pathogens in an orderly manner and the signs and symptoms of smoke inhalation, including asthma and severe respiratory problems, can occur.

Chemical asphyxiants from a fire can produce compounds that damage the body by interfering with the oxygen use at the cellular level. Carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide and hydrogen sulfide are all examples of such chemicals. Why is this so important? If either the delivery of oxygen or use of oxygen is inhibited, cells will die. Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of death in smoke inhalation for this reason.

Frankly Speaking, what is known as simple asphyxiation refers to combustion using up all oxygen near a fire, which then leaves no oxygen to breathe. When you have no oxygen to breathe for even a brief period, lung and respiratory damage can occur and, if for an extended period, you die. Asphyxiation is recognized by shortness of breath, blue gray or bright-red skin coloration and in extreme cases by loss of consciousness or breathing.

OBITUARY

• MARGARET WARD

Margaret Lynne Tims Ward, known to all as Lynne, 58, passed away on May 1, 2026, near George West, Texas. Lynne was born on January 4, 1968, in Liberty, Texas, to Donald Elliot Tims and Pauline Davis Tims. She graduated from Liberty High School in 1986 and went on to get her degree from Lamar University, while working her way through college. Lynne spent a large portion of her career in the



title and real estate businesses. Through her work she made many lifelong friends. On December 5, 1998, Lynne and her husband Charles M. “Chuck” Ward were married in New Orleans. Lynne had a creative spirit and found great joy in sewing, crafting, and floral arranging. She also loved spending time outdoors, especially fishing, photography, and traveling to new places. Nothing made Lynne happier than gathering with family and friends for cookouts, sharing laughter, good food, and cherished memories. Her annual “girls’ trip” with old high school

friends was also a highlight of each year. In addition to her parents, Lynne was preceded in death by her brother, Don Tims. Survivors include her beloved husband, Charles M. “Chuck” Ward; her son, Joshua Davis “Josh” Ward; her brothers, Paul (Karen) Tims and Chet Tims; her nieces, Kelli (Janet) Tims and Courtney Tims; and several other great nieces and nephews. A Celebration of Lynne will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 25, 2026, at the Liberty City Hall Annex in Liberty, where all are invited to attend.

Ely Air Lines –

Did Johnny Draw This Map?

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Linda: Every airplane has its sweet spot in the atmosphere. The Elyminator likes to traverse the sky at around 8,000 feet, but we’ll take her anywhere between 1,000’ and 13,000’. Up high, we get better performance and burn less fuel. Down low is the scenic route. And who doesn’t love a scenic flight?

From 13,000’, we can make out towns and farmland, but not every window or every cow. We can’t see state lines. (Except over Texas, tucked in between the Red and Rio Grande, the Gulf of America and Toledo Bend. Less fortunate states don’t enjoy such obvious boundary markers.)

Then there is Baarle, where the map looks as though a cartographer sneezed over a pile of confetti and glued the pieces down wherever they landed.

Baarle is one community with two names and two nationalities: Dutch Baarle-Nassau and Belgian Baarle-Hertog. It contains 22 pieces of Belgium surrounded by the Netherlands. Inside several of those Belgian enclaves are seven smaller pieces of the Netherlands – borders within borders within borders.

There’s no airport in Baarle, but the place appeals to the map-loving pilot in us.



We like to describe an aerobatic roll as, “Now you see brown, now you see blue, now you see brown...” For Baarle, our ground version is, “Now you’re in Belgium, now you’re in the Netherlands, now you’re in Belgium...” And you may only be playing hopscotch.

When I was young, my cousin Johnny invited me to play 52-card pickup. Johnny is a lifelong prankster, and in one swift toss, I learned the rules.

“There. Fifty-two cards. Now pick them up,” he laughed after flinging the deck across the room.

Baarle’s map looks as though Johnny had a hand in it, but the arrangement was no prank. In 1198, the Duke of Brabant transferred the lands of Breda to the Lord of Breda, then granted most of it back as a feudal holding. The duke retained several income-producing parcels. Over the centuries, additional sales, exchanges and agreements scattered prop-

erty ownership further. The lands belonging to Brabant eventually became Belgian Baarle-Hertog – “the duke’s Baarle.” Those associated with Breda later became Dutch Baarle-Nassau.

Seven centuries later, the old property lines suddenly carried international consequences. During World War I, Germany occupied Belgium while the Netherlands remained neutral. German troops could not enter the Belgian enclaves without crossing Dutch soil, so those tiny fragments became protected pockets for refugees and resistance activity.

Today, white crosses and metal studs trace the border across streets, shops, and even homes. A front door could actually be in two countries. Walk around the block and you may become an international traveler several times before your coffee gets cold.

At altitude, the Baarle’s borders are invisible. But beneath an airplane are stories eight centuries in the making and an example of how lines that separate us often have histories far more tangled than the landscapes they cross. We discover some of history’s most complicated and fascinating stories hidden beneath our wings.

ElyAirLines.substack.com



BAARLE ON GOOGLE EARTH

Spellman to discuss his Spindletop work at SHC, Aug. 6

LIBERTY - The Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center (SHC), part of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), presents an evening with author and historian Paul Spellman discussing his work, Spindletop Boom Days, at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 6. As part of the event, Center staff will offer a special viewing of historic images and records related to the oil industry in Southeast Texas. Spellman’s book will be available for purchase with the opportunity for the author to sign copies for guests after his talk.

Using first-person narratives, Spellman recreates the daily life of those involved with the discovery of oil at Spindletop in 1901, a moment that echoed throughout Southeast Texas and the nation. Spellman explores the industry innovations and human experiences resulting from the area’s oil boom, including stories of characters such as former Texas governor Jim Hogg and oilmen Walter and Jim Sharp, David Beatty and Joseph Cullinan.

Dr. Spellman is retired after 33 years teaching Texas and American history at the college level. He has degrees from Southwestern University, University of Texas-Austin, Southern Methodist University, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and his PhD from the University

of Houston. He is a member of the Texas State Historical Association and the Texas Historic Commission, the Fort Bend Historic Commission and the Western Writers of America. He has published 15 books and numerous articles on Texas

history.

This event is free and open to the public at the Sam Houston Center, located at 650 FM 1011 in Liberty. No registration required. Contact the Center at (936) 336-8821 or samhoustoncenter@tsl.texas.gov for more information.



PAUL SPELLMAN



Liberty

Church of Christ



Bryant Perkins,
Minister

Join us this Sunday for Bible Classes for all ages at 9 a.m. and stay for Worship at 10 a.m.

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We meet Sunday night at 5 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

• • •

We meet at 3201 North Main Street and have a parking space just for you.

We'd love to see you soon. We've saved you a seat!

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