

Motor fuel use down in Missouri

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Motor fuel use dropped in Missouri last month and overall consumption so far this year also is down, according to the Missouri

Department of Revenue. The department said motorists burned 243 million gallons of fuel in July, a 24 percent drop from the 249 million gallons used in July

1981. For the first seven months of this year, motor fuel use is down 11 percent compared with the same period last year.

Looking for clues to teen suicide

By DANIEL Q. HANRY
Associated Press Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Vivienne Lonnis was a bright, pleasant-looking 14-year-old, the product of a comfortable home, private schools and loving parents. Four days before Christmas, she tied a rope to a water pipe in the basement of her home and hanged herself.

Why? The question fascinated Dr. John E. Mack, a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School and Cambridge Hospital who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1977 for his biography of T. E. Lawrence.

Several years after Vivienne's 1973 suicide, Mack discovered that one of the teenager's teachers had gathered a remarkable collection of her diaries, poems and letters.

So he set out to uncover the depression, doubt and the disappointments that drove the girl to seek escape. In the process, he hoped he would learn something about the pressures that end in the suicides of some 2,000 teenagers in the United States each year.

Mack says children never commit suicide without giving clues, no matter how subtle. Parents, friends, teachers and physicians should look for signals. Among them:

- A sudden change in habits, such as taking drugs or not eating.
- Bogus complaints of physical problems,

such as stomach aches.

- Increased philosophical preoccupation with death.

- Feelings of worthlessness or discouragement.

- Withdrawal from childhood friendships.

"If you're looking at yourself as worthless and useless, chances are you will see the world outside you also as hopeless, disappointing, filled with overwhelming problems and intolerable," Mack said.

In collaboration with the teacher, Holly Horkler, Mack has produced the book "Vivienne: The Life and Suicide of an Adolescent Girl."

"There's no single conclusion to the statement 'She killed herself because'" Mack says. "One has to look at all the determinants that coalesce to result in a suicide."

Vivienne grew up in Melrose, a suburb north of Boston, one of three children of a Unitarian minister. Almost from the start, she was a touchy child, easily bruised by little slights and hurts and unusually sympathetic to the pain of other people's disappointments.

At school, Vivienne was a bookish child, distant from classmates. Her mother dressed her in old-fashioned, homespun clothes. She was the butt of playground jokes.

In the sixth grade, she was enrolled in the Cambridge Friends School, a small, liberal school founded on Quaker principles. Here

she began to write, something she did well.

In stacks of eloquent poems and journals, she set down her feelings about love, life and herself. And she wrote about the most important friendship of her short life, her infatuation with a teacher.

The notebooks are filled with references to the rigid standards she set for herself, what psychiatrists call her ego ideal. It is something all adolescents go through, to some degree.

"It's the way we would ideally wish ourselves to be," says Mack. "You find in Vivienne's writings a great emphasis on the ideal and finding perfection and being unable to tolerate compromise."

Vivienne — friendless, insecure, painfully shy — latched onto John May, a Californian in his 20s who was a sixth grade teacher. May worked at building her confidence. He told her she was beautiful, sensitive, bright and a gifted writer.

Vivienne wrote poems for him to read; she told him her deepest thoughts.

"When I really feel out," she wrote him, "I think to myself: 'I'm no good. I'm not slender, I don't smile a lot, I'm not outgoing, I'm not even halfway pretty! But then I remember what he said about my being beautiful inside and out!'"

When Vivienne started eighth grade, May moved back to California. She was shattered.

Her writings grew more tortured; she dwelt on death. Everything seemed wrong.

The social problems of the early 1970s weighed on her.

"The shattering failures of our generation are the raw, daily, vivid, technicolor fare, undiluted, of young teenagers now," Mack says. "We know from Vivienne's writings that she was particularly sensitive to the social and political problems around her — Nixon, Watergate, pollution, the treatment of prisoners."

She flirted with suicide, but her attempts seemed childish, and her parents did not take them seriously. She gave them few clues about the depths of her unhappiness.

In July, five months before her death, she wrote a poem called "Dream of Reality":

What is it?
The stillness of wisdom?
The patience of doom?
That drives you to mount
That coal-black stallion?
Why is it
That you suddenly know
With certainty
That you cannot stay astride?

In early December, she wrote to May: "If I didn't have to worry about Mommy and Daddy, I wouldn't bother finishing this letter before I hung myself."



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Flophouse tenants file suit; claim illegal convictions

CHICAGO (AP) — About 400 people who lived in two former Child Care flophouses,

project. Their lawyers seek \$10,000 for each client for the "men-

The suit, filed on Monday by the Legal Assistant Foundation, charges that the evic-

The suit charges that Mayor Jane Byrne; Gilbert J. Cataldo, the city's housing

residents since they were evicted. Edward Lacko, 54, a seven-year resident of the

he finally found a bed at a Salvation Army center. Federal regulations, re-