



Titanic, tree lights, dining

There are three thoughts I want to share.

First, there is a children's book about the Titanic, "Polar, the Titanic Bear," written by a woman named Spedden. It tells of a little boy's lost, stuffed polar bear and how it was returned to him.

Secondly, thank you to the family who put lights on three or four small pine trees on the west side of Route 30, between the Rohrerstown exit and Prospect Road. They brightened my travels.

Lastly, on April 25, between midnight and 1 a.m., my sister-in-law and I were eating at Columbia Diner. When we finished, the waitress said our meal was paid for by a veteran. The treat was such a surprise.

We'd like to thank the veteran for our dinner and for serving our country.

Jane Spedden, Columbia

'That word' goes way back for me

To the readers who wrote to express their disapproval of the repetitive use of "that word" in the Fulton Theatre's recent production of "August: Osage County," let me assure them that my late Aunt Sarah would have heartily agreed.

As I sat in the audience hearing the cast's frequent use of that word as verb, adjective and

noun, in my mind, Aunt Sarah's scream came back to me from decades past, "What did you just say?"

I was her 7-year-old waif of a nephew who had been pressed into her charge to be raised into some sort of respectable adulthood. And "respectable" she was. A righteous lady of quite straight and quite narrow beliefs.

I had just come inside from playing with the kid in the apartment below ours after he had added that word to my vocabulary. I merely wanted Aunt Sarah to define the term. She declined to do so, but instead admonished me to never use that word again, as long as I lived!

Actually, my playmate had not only defined the term for me in detail, but also educated me as to its anatomical workings. But none of it made sense to me, and I only wanted my aunt to confirm or deny its existence.

Through the years, it has occurred to me that many other non-utterable words describe things whose existence in reality is hard to grasp. The Bible is full of such things.

My Sunday School teacher, Mr. Gantner, taught that we are not to use the name of the Lord in vain ... meaning, I guessed, when we are angry. When he was frustrated he might say "Oh, Lord!" But if he lost his temper would probably never use the names of the two hard-to-define beings covered by that title.

It was OK to yell the name of that place up in the sky where good people go, but not the name of the place "down there" where we'd wind up if we were bad. We also weren't supposed to say

the word denoting how we get sentenced to that netherworld.

Physicians can easily describe but not comprehend all the parts and functions covered by that word, but probably still utter it when they're having a bad day on the golf course. Ministers struggle to explain a lot of the sacred terms in the Bible, but would probably have shocked Mr. Gantner's ears if he had heard what many of them would say if they missed a putt for a birdie.

Aunt Sarah walked out of the theater when Clark Gable said the final words in his script in "Gone with the Wind." But that was OK. She had already seen and enjoyed all of the movie.

Paul Long, Manor Township