

Hills man charges up battery recycling

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Oscar Cook is thinking about the kind of world his grandchildren and yet unborn great-grandchildren may have to live in.

And he wants others to consider the same. That's why recycling is so important to him. Without it, the world may not be a pleasant or safe place to live.

"I'm trying to carry the message. I'm interested in my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren — when they come. They should have good air to breathe," said the Farmington Hills resident.

Despite the national push for recycling, Cook is still watching too many people throwing household batteries in the trash. "It deserves a proper burial," Cook said.

To that end, Cook is waging a one-man crusade to encourage everyone to dispose of household batteries properly. And that's to recycle them — not put them in the garbage.

"I'd like to have people be aware it's a danger," he added.

The problem with household batteries is that they contain what are called heavy metals, such as lead and zinc. "They do not break down," said Tom Blasell, Farmington Hills public services director. "Lead in the ground water is not desirable and neither is zinc."

know your neighbor

WHEN YOU recycle batteries, they are sent to a special landfill for hazardous materials, Blasell said. If you don't recycle batteries they go right in with the regular trash sent either to a landfill or an incinerator.

To encourage people to recycle household batteries Cook has contacted several well-known stores to see if they would help recycle. And he also placed a bin at city hall for the disposal of batteries. The community's two recycling centers — in Farmington and Farmington Hills — at each city's department of public works also accept household batteries.

He also wants to contact other institutions such as the library and school district to involve others, particularly children.

"I'm trying to get it into wherever people congregate," Cook said.

Recycling isn't something new for Cook. He tried to encourage his fellow Hunter's Ridge residents to recycle. He put signs and boxes in five of the complex buildings. "I would pick up the stuff and take it over to the recycling center."

To further get his ideas across, Cook also has decorated his car in recycling quotations and emblems. And he's been writing to battery manufacturers to see if they'll take back used batteries for recycling.

"Wage war on waste — recycle it," is pretty much Cook's motto.



photos by SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

When you see Oscar Cook's car, you'll know he means business with recycling. He's particularly concerned that people recycle their household batteries to prevent them from being sent to landfills and incinerators.

A DEAD BATTERY IS A DEAD BATTERY

IT DESERVES A PROPER BURIAL

NO BATTERIES IN THE TRASH

PUT IT IN THE RECYCLING BIN

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A poster and a reused milk carton is all that Farmington Hills resident Oscar Cook needs to get across his message that everyone should recycle household batteries.

Optimists, hotel serve up dinner for abused kids

Although they didn't go home for Thanksgiving, 45 children at the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Farmington Hills still had a holiday dinner.

The Radisson Plaza Hotel in Southfield and the Southfield/Lathrup Optimist club combined forces this year to ensure that the children had a Thanksgiving dinner to remember.

In keeping with the Optimist's motto, "Friend of Youth," the club

hosts a number of programs each year for young people, including the holiday feast.

"This year we're very excited by the participation of the Radisson," said Southfield Optimists president Steven Cooper. "The Radisson is a first class premium hotel, so it adds an extra excitement for the children."

John Zilla, chair of the Thanksgiving dinner for the Optimists, and an advisory board member for the St.

Vincent & Sarah Fisher Center, said the Optimists were looking for a worthwhile project, and with his involvement at the center, he suggested the club sponsor a program for the center's residents.

The Optimists and the Radisson were both looking for a community service project when they decided to join forces. The Optimists had the project and needed a sponsor when they approached the Radisson.

TRADITIONALLY, the Radisson had donated surplus food to needy organizations after the holiday. This year they wanted to do something more, according to Tom Padgett, Radisson general manager.

"We were looking for something to do," said Padgett. "Sure it's PR value, but at the same time we wanted to share with our employees that management believes involvement in the community is important."

When the Optimists approached us, it was Bingo!

The Thanksgiving dinner was a traditional holiday meal with turkey and stuffing, prepared by the chefs at the Radisson and served in the Algonquian Ballroom.

The St. Vincent & Sarah Fisher Center is a residential facility for abused and neglected children ages 5 to 15. Many of the children are wards of the court, and cannot return home, according to Betty

Speyer, director of agency relations at the center.

"We are very grateful," said Speyer about the holiday party.

"Over 40 percent of the children are permanent court wards whose family ties are severed permanently. Many of the kids come from nothing. It was a very special day for them to see people who don't know them care about them."

Padgett said he would like to make this an annual event.

Research all options before buying alarm

By Kim Kemskie
special writer

If you are considering an alarm system for your home, you should take some time to research the options available to you.

Homeowners often find that there are a number of things they can do to improve the security of their homes without the continuing expense of an alarm system. Alarms can offer additional security for your home, but should never be used as a substitute for good locks and lighting. Keep in mind that an alarm can only signal an intrusion. It will not keep the intruder out.

The police department offers free home security surveys to any Farmington Hills resident. The surveys are conducted in your home by appointment.

A crime prevention technician or officer will walk through your home with you and point out areas of vulnerability while making recommendations for most effective security improvements. Most are things that you can do yourself for low or no cost. We will also make recommendations on alarm systems if you wish.

THE TWO BASIC types of alarms are the local alarm and the monitored alarm. The local alarm sounds a siren or bell when activated that will alert the homeowner or neighbors to call police. A monitored alarm sends a signal through the phone lines to a 24-hour central monitoring station, which will verify the alarm and contact police.

When shopping for an alarm, contact several companies to appraise your security needs. Insist on a written proposal and a copy of any contract you would be required to sign.

The contract should list all points of protection and itemize all the

equipment to be installed. Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approval of equipment will assure some degree of reliability. Ask about continuing maintenance of the system whether you buy or lease equipment.

Check the company's reputation by contacting the Better Business Bureau. The best way to find an alarm company is to talk with friends and neighbors who have alarms and ask about their experiences with the company.

When you go through the expense of installing an alarm, also plan to incorporate a fire and smoke detection system. An automatic shutoff is required by ordinance, meaning that any bell or siren is required to shut off automatically within 10 minutes of activation except for fire alarm systems.

A FARMINGTON HILLS ordinance (C-20-88) requires that any resident who has an alarm installed in their home or business must file a registration form with the police department. The registration should include the name and phone number of at least one person, within a 30-minute response time, who can be contacted in case of an emergency to deactivate the alarm or secure the premises. A nearby relative or neighbor should be instructed on the operation of your alarm system so that it can be reset if your alarm activates while you are away.

If the police department responds to your home more than once during any calendar year, you may be billed up to \$100 for each response. If that bill is not paid within 30 days, up to \$25 per alarm response will be charged as a late fee. If you're having trouble using your alarm, the fees can add up very quickly.

The best way to avoid response fees is to have every family member



receive training on the proper use of your alarm system. If you have cleaning or service people come into your home while you're away, they should also be taught to use the system.

User error is one of the main reasons for false alarms. Another is inadequate maintenance of the system. Have your alarm company check your system regularly and any time you have an unexplained false alarm.

With or without an alarm system, we recommend that you have a security survey conducted of your home. You can make an appointment by calling the crime prevention section at 473-9640.

Remain alert to possible criminal activity in your subdivision and call the police immediately to report any suspicious persons, vehicles or circumstances. Join your subdivision's Neighborhood Watch program, or start one up, and get to know your neighbors. They can be your best defense against a criminal attack.

Kim Kemskie is a crime prevention technician with the Farmington Hills Police Department.

ST. JOHN

SPRING/SUMMER

COLLECTION

SHOW

Tuesday, December 3
10 a.m.-5 p.m., Rochester
Wednesday, December 4
10 a.m.-4 p.m., Birmingham
Friday, December 6
10 a.m.-5 p.m., Livonia

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professional, daytime
and leisure wear

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knits St. John

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and sportswear. Even

denim jeans and

T-shirts

Charities seek donations for needy

Starting today, food and household items will be collected by The Community House in Birmingham for two area charities.

Lighthouse in Pontiac is requesting new clothing, packaged underwear for adults and children, diapers, toiletries and items such as blankets, sheets, towels and curtains.

"Everyone who comes through our

doors has serious needs," said Charlotte Jones, community outreach director of Lighthouse.

FOOD ITEMS are also needed by the Cass Corridor Youth Advocacy Program include flour, rice, sugar, instant potatoes, spaghetti and sauce, tuna, peanut butter and jelly, canned fruits and vegetables, soups and hot chocolate, program director

Jim Fraser said.

About 200 families need baskets this year, Fraser added.

Items will be collected — until Dec. 18 — from 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday. The Community House is at 380 S. Bates, between Townsend and Merrill.

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