

# SUBURBAN LIFE

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MIKE BLAKE

## Avoid illegal fireworks this 4th

Decades of tragic experiences teach this valuable lesson: Fireworks are dangerous. Handled by professionals, fireworks can immensely add to the enjoyment of many holidays, especially the Fourth of July.

But illegal fireworks - in the hands of untrained people, especially children - can have terrible results. Losing a finger or your sight is a tragic price to pay for a few minutes of fun with fireworks.

### Alarming national picture

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the private use of fireworks by ordinary people continues to be a significant fire problem in the U.S., causing thousands of injuries, tens of millions of dollars in property damage, and some deaths each year. The plain fact is that on July 4, fireworks cause more fires in the U.S. than all other causes of fire combined.

In 1990, an estimated 33,300 fires caused three civilian deaths, 112 civilian injuries, and \$28 million in direct property damage. In fact, the trend for the last 11 years has been generally upward. The most devastating example of property loss resulting from fireworks is more than \$1 million in damage to a district school in Washington State in 1991. Three juveniles threw "jumping jacks" fireworks into a school room through a broken window, igniting paper. The fire spread along the ceiling, moving horizontally down hallways unchecked, until a passing motorist spotted the smoke. One million dollars later, the fire was out.

Or who could have imagined, that when a group of children ignited a dry field with their fireworks, a 43-year-old Colorado firefighter would die of a heart attack, fighting a senseless and unnecessary field fire?

Locally, Farmington Hills firefighters can directly identify an illegal bottle rocket passing through an upstairs bedroom window as the cause of a \$50,000 house fire in the community. No one stops to think about the possibility of the many negatives that can result from celebrating with fireworks.

### Injury profile

In 1992, an estimated 12,900 people suffered fireworks-related injuries severe enough to require treatment in hospital emergency rooms, as reported by the U.S. Product Safety Commission. The commission reported that this was the highest total in its 20 years of data collection. Most injuries involve burns or lacerations. In a typical year, there are always some injuries involving the loss of impaired use of limbs, blindness, and permanent loss of hearing.

Most fireworks-related injuries are sustained by children, with those between the ages of 10 and 14 years old consistently showing the highest risk. For children under 10, seemingly harmless sparklers cause many injuries. Fascinated by the bright sparks, little children are likely to wrap their hands around a stick of fire that may be as hot as 1,800 degrees. And, yes, people do die from fireworks injuries. As recently as 1985, 26 people died in this way in a single year.

### Local perspective

The Farmington Hills Fire Department in cooperation with the Fire Marshal Division of the Michigan State Police offers the following advice on what are legal fireworks, and some safe practices for using such devices. The only fireworks that may be sold at the retail level and used by the general public in Michigan are restricted to the following: toy paper caps, wire sparklers (size 14 or less), fitter sparklers, toy snakes, toy smoke devices, toy trick noise makers, cone fountains, and cylinder fountains that emit a shower of sparks.

Fireworks devices other than those noted are illegal for sale or use in Michigan. For local communities, including Farmington Hills, will issue a court appearance ticket to offenders. Fireworks that send a projectile into the air (bottle rockets), spin, twirl, or that emit an audible report, are illegal. Simply stated, if it moves or goes boom, it's not safe or legal to use. The following kinds of fireworks are illegal in all states, banned by federal law. Do any of these devices sound familiar: cherry bombs, M-80s or M-100s, Silver Salutes?

### Good advice

When using legal fireworks, the following safety precautions should be followed: Carefully follow the instructions for use. Provide adult supervision for children, and never allow very young children to handle fireworks. Light only one device at a time. Ignite fireworks only outdoors and away from buildings. And never attempt to alter a device or use it in any manner not intended.

Perhaps the best advice would be to take the family to one of the many local public fireworks displays that occur each holiday season. Events like the annual Detroit/Windsor Freedom Festival fireworks display provide an injury-free opportunity to enjoy the holidays safely.

Lt. Michael R. Carr coordinates public education efforts for the Farmington Hills Fire Department. He is also involved in fire suppression and emergency medical services.



ANN HEALEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Cutest baby contest: Carousel Kids owner Sandy McClelland is opening her shop to a popular Farmington Founders Festival event, the "Cutest Baby Contest."

## Calling all parents

### Children's clothes shop has cute-baby contest



Here's a chance to prove your child is the cutest. A children's clothes shop in Farmington is sponsoring a "Cutest Baby Contest" during the Farmington Founders Festival.

BY DIANE GALE  
STAFF WRITER

So, you think your baby is the cutest ever.

Well, here's your chance to prove it. Carousel Kids in downtown Farmington is sponsoring a "Cutest Baby" contest during the Farmington Founders Festival, July 14-16. The baby must be under 24 months to be entered.

Submit a framed five-inch by seven-inch or eight-inch by 10-inch picture by July 8 at the store. Pictures will be on display in the shop.

Each vote will cost \$1, and the children with the most votes win. All proceeds will go to the Children's Leukemia Foundation.

Also, the first-place winner will receive a \$50 gift certificate, and the second-place winner will receive a \$25 gift certificate.

"I wanted to do something for the Founders Festival, and I came up with this," said Sandy McClelland, Carousel Kids owner.

The store, which opened last fall, offers mostly new clothes and accessories for infant girls through size 14 and boys through size 7. There's

also a small area in the back for resale items.

A buyback policy allows customers to purchase any new clothing item and sell it back to McClelland when their children outgrow it, provided it doesn't have tears, stains, wear marks, missing buttons or other major flaws.

Customers bring items back with the sales receipts and sell them back to McClelland for 10 percent cash of the original price, or earn 15 percent of the original price for a store credit on new, non-sale merchandise.

While parents are at the checkout, their children are entertained by a fully functional 135-gallon antwater fish tank right at their eye level in what would have been a display case.

Some of the fastest-selling items

are christening outfits and communion dresses.

Beyond clothes, McClelland also offers items in Beatrix Potter; Shining Time Station; Bradley porcelain dolls; and other collectibles that even include handmade Barbie outfits and modern-day paper dolls using outfits with Velcro on wooden dolls. She plans to add dance outfits to meet the need of children in area dance schools.

"I always thought there was a need for this here," said McClelland, a 27-year-old West Bloomfield resident.

McClelland left her job as a mechanical engineer because "I hated it and it was boring."

"I'm not married and I live with my parents," McClelland said. "I thought, 'If I'm ever going to do it, now is the time.'"

## Artists value lessons from children's work

BY DIANE GALE  
STAFF WRITER

Artists and children learn some interesting lessons from each other when their work becomes intermingled at The Art Gallery.

T.A.G. in Farmington Hills is sponsoring "A New Way of Looking, '94," where artists take a youngster's work and create an accompanying piece. The exhibition runs through July 17 at the gallery at 30905 Orchard Lake Road in Orchard Place Mall.

Some of the 80 artists, from almost every metro Detroit suburb, included Matt Corbin and Sabrina Nelson both from Detroit; Sasell Gardner and Susan Kramer both from Highland Park; and Barbara Beckwith from Royal Oak.

Students from 35 metro area schools, including some in Farmington and Farmington Hills, participated. Most schools sent two pieces to be represented in the exhibit.

"I love the work of children and wanted to display it in the gallery, but I also wanted to involve our own gallery artists and other Michigan artists, according to Elaine Redmond, who saw her idea for the exhibit come to life last year when T.A.G. sponsored the first children's show.

"This had to be a unique show, one that involved a whole community of 'Makers,'" Redmond said.

It gives elementary children a chance to see the possibilities inherent in their work and at the same time inspired TAO members and guest artists. Older artists were invited to travel new roads and possibly think about something familiar in a different way - through a child's eye.

"A New Way of Looking, '94" includes almost every medium imaginable - photography, collage, mobiles, computer interpretations, ceramic, pas-



ANN HEALEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Transformed art: Helene Lewicki stands near her painting, "Lake Michigan," which was inspired by Amanda Dabo's work. The youngster is from Pleasant Lake Elementary School.

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