

Open house teaches children fire prevention

Kids who know fire safety can often avoid tragedy

WE'VE ALL seen the news footage on TV: the smoking shell of a house, the horrified neighbors, the weeping parents who have lost their children to a fire in their home.

How do these tragic fires start? Very often, fires that kill children are started by children themselves. Every year in the United States, several hundred children die in fires that they or other children started.

Most of the children who start fires are simply playing with matches or lighters out of curiosity. They're fascinated with fire. They're imitating grownups without knowing how dangerous a single match can be.

"Big Fires Start Small: Keep Matches and Lighters in the Right Hands." That's the theme of National Fire Prevention Week Oct. 8-14, sponsored by National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) in conjunction with local fire departments, including those in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Farmington Hills Fire Department's fire prevention open house on Sunday included a children's fire safety magic show, a kitchen fire demonstration, a vehicle rescue demonstration, a fire truck display, firefighter dressup and Stop!

Drop! and Roll! practice.

ACCORDING TO THE NFPA: Most children can all too easily get matches or lighters in their own homes. Most children are curious about fire, and that curiosity sometimes costs them their lives.

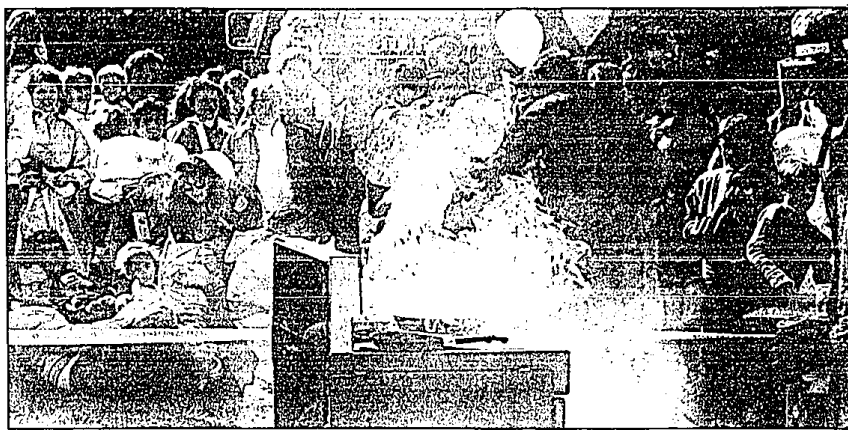
Matches and lighters should always be kept on a high shelf that children can't reach. As young children learn to walk and climb on furniture, you may need to find a new place to keep matches and lighters safe.

Lighters pose a special danger to young children. Lighters are attractive and, in some cases, may be easier for young children to light than matches.

Children who live with smokers are especially at risk, because smokers often keep matches or lighters readily available — where children can reach them, too. With smokers in the home, be doubly alert to keep matches and lighters out of children's hands.

Every child should be taught that matches and lighters are tools, not toys. Adults use these tools for specific purposes: lighting the stove, lighting a campfire, lighting a candle.

Begin early to teach children that a fire started by one match can destroy a house or kill someone. Make



The crowd moves back a moment after firefighter Jim Cheyne pours water on a stovepot grease fire at Sunday's fire department open house in Farmington Hills. It was a demonstration on what not to do with a grease fire.

clear that this is the reason only adults may use matches and lighters.

AT THE same time, you can begin to teach children how to be fire safe. Teach them to be watchful when people smoke in the house. Teach

them to make sure that ashes, matches and butts all go into the ash tray.

Kids are curious, agile and smart. So even young children will sometimes get their hands on matches you thought they could never reach. This is one reason it's so important not to leave children alone or unsupervised. It doesn't take long for a deadly fire to start.

You can make your children even safer in your home by installing smoke detectors to wake you in case of fire, and by practicing a family escape plan that will help them escape in time.

A small number of children who start fires do it intentionally. Generally, young people who show this dangerous behavior also have other problems. They may be angry over a divorce or other crisis in their family life. They may be seeking revenge. They may be using fire to send a desperate plea for attention.

Whatever the reason behind it, fire setting can cause tragedies. If you suspect someone of setting fires,

contact the local fire department. There are programs to help youngsters like these and to prevent a tragedy.

But remember that the vast ma-

ajority of fires started by children aren't intentional. They are accidents that can be prevented if we keep matches and lighters out of children's hands.



At Sunday's fire department open house, Eric Allen, 9, of Farmington Hills, acquires a fire hose with the help of Al Judge, a Farmington Hills high school teacher. Judge, a Great Lakes International Fire Apparatus Association member, owns the 1946 Chevrolet pumper to which the hose is attached.



Firefighter Corby Bartsch helps Mattew Stefanski, 2, of Farmington Hills, get out of the boots during firefighter dress up at Sunday's fire department open house.

Hills radio station fined over controversial song

AP — The Federal Communications Commission will fine a Farmington Hills radio station for playing an allegedly indecent song during daytime hours — the only time protected against such material.

The commission said rock station WLLZ-FM played a song with an overt sexual theme at about 9 a.m. on Jan. 21, 1988.

The station will pay a \$2,000 fine unless it shows the FCC "within 30 days why it shouldn't be penalized."

WLLZ is owned by Legacy Broadcasting of Detroit. A call to the station was referred to general mana-

ger Kevin Smith, who did not immediately return it.

FCC rules say indecent material may not be broadcast when there is a reasonable risk that unsupervised children may be in the audience. The commission, based upon Supreme Court rulings, defines indecency as "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs."

The commission previously has

tried to establish a "safe harbor" for indecent programming from midnight to 5 a.m., when children were considered unlikely to be listening, but a court struck down that rule last summer. The court said the commission could ban indecent speech only during daytime hours.

That moved Congress last year to pass a law extending the ban on indecent broadcast material to 24 hours, but the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington stayed implementation of the law in January pending an appeal by broadcasters and First Amendment advocates.

Lanto ends course of study

Bruce Lanto of Thayer-Rock Funeral Home of Farmington has completed a series of post-graduate lectures and instruction in the aspects of mortuary science and funeral practice.

Offered by the Dodge Institute for Advanced Mortuary Studies of Cam-

bridge, Mass., the series covered topics including: post-death counseling, children and death, alternative services, the aspects of funeral planning (including insurance and trusts) as well as public relations and speaking.

As the insurance/trust counselor for Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Lanto feels strongly about the im-

portance of continuing education.

"It allows me, and other professionals like me, to keep up to date on how to best serve our communities. How we can provide the best resources and the most accurate information that is available," said Lanto.

Illegal alcohol sales targeted

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SINCE THE city's 1988 check, officers visited businesses each spring to check liquor licenses and to talk with managers and owners about procedures. In July, Lauhoff sent a letter to the businesses advising them of the upcoming visits and saying that the department would be us-

ing cadets as decoys. "The department believes this to be a check and balance," Lauhoff said. "This is the test that tells the owner and manager what their employees are doing."

"We would encourage these businesses to live up to their responsibilities. They're going to risk losing their licenses."

Lauhoff said the LCC has worked much more closely with law enforcement agencies in recent years. It is looking at violations with a "stricter set of rules."

"A lot of it lies right at the feet of the people who sell alcohol," he added. "They need to accept that responsibility."

Football program raises concerns

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other and support the coach for the balance of the year," Potter said.

BUT THE school board had told parents that Potter was to be their main contact, and that he was ultimately responsible for the football program.

Potter said he has delegated the football responsibility to Dixon, though he admits he is, indeed, responsible for the school's sports programs. Potter considers himself, first, the school's "instructional leader," he said.

deterioration of the football program is causing morale problems at the school and is affecting that program. Siskosky said the many years of poor football seasons are viewed by some as a joke. "We don't feel it's a joke," he added.

Dixon has been invited to meet with the Football Backers, who get together on Tuesdays, once or twice each month. "We want to stay in close contact with the administration," Siskosky added.

He would like to see something happen at least by the end of the school year, when coaches begin a summer of training and working

with the athletes.

FARMINGTON HIGH parent and activist Tina Jensen believes, despite promised action, that the situation is "very unfair."

"We don't want just anybody. We want the best, and of course, we want a good teacher, too. I just hurt for the kids and hurt for the program."

Acting superintendent Michael Flanagan said the district is making every effort to hire both good teachers and possibly football coaches when there are openings at the high school.

EEK!

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