

SUBURBAN LIFE

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RICHARD MARINUCCI

Fire tragedy rekindles safety tips

Shortly after I was appointed fire chief, I had to tell someone that one of his loved ones died in a fire. It was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do in my career.

How would I break the news? I couldn't think of a good way, so I just started with the facts. The reaction was immediate and unlike what I (or anyone) would expect. The look on the face, the sadness, the devastation, the sense of helplessness of both of us. The loss was overwhelming to me. I still have not found an easy way to do this, nor will I ever be comfortable in relaying this information. Perhaps for this reason I have become even more passionate about fire safety, fire prevention, and the need for education.

Even without a death, fire brings so much hardship to families, business owners and friends. Burn injuries do not heal and are extremely painful. Items that are burned cannot be replaced. Photographs, videotapes and other personal belongings cannot be duplicated. Then there is the inconvenience of a fire. It totally disrupts lifestyles. There is a loss of security, a sense of violation, and a powerless feeling.

Fortunately, most fires can be prevented with common sense, and in cases where fire does start, quick thinking and proper action can minimize the damage. When teaching fire safety, we usually identify all the various causes of fires and offer corrective action. We develop this list from our history of fires as well as our knowledge of fire science.

There are three things necessary to have a fire: heat, fuel and oxygen. Since oxygen is present in the air and we are seldom without it, the heat and fuel become the important part of the fire triangle. Simply, to prevent a fire, you must keep the hot things away from the things that will burn.

In a home, there are many combustibles including furniture, wood, papers, plastics and such. The heat sources would include furnaces, stoves, ovens, fireplaces, matches, cigarettes, electrical equipment, and the like. The Farmington Hills experience has shown that neglect with cooking materials is the most frequent cause of dwelling fires. Based upon this information, you can reduce the risk of fire in the following ways:

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Keep combustible material away from furnaces, stoves, ovens and fireplaces.
- Don't overload your electrical circuits and replace faulty electrical equipment promptly.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Use caution when smoking. Have plenty of ashtrays available and do not smoke in bed.

These actions will go a long way toward reducing the risk of having a fire in your home or business.

Yet, in spite of our best efforts, there will be fires. Knowing what to do and doing it quickly can save your life, reduce the chances of injury and minimize the damage.

Probably the single most important thing that can be done is to install an adequate number of smoke detectors in your home. Smoke detectors are relatively inexpensive and have proven to be quite reliable.

In Farmington Hills, the fire department seldom responds to a serious fire where working smoke detectors were present.

Smoke detectors should be placed on every level of the home, any remote areas with a heating source, and in the sleeping areas. If you sleep with the doors closed, you should have smoke detectors inside the bedrooms.

After the smoke detectors are installed, test them frequently and change the batteries once a year. Too frequently, we find dead batteries, or worse yet, the batteries have been removed. A good time to do this is when you change your clocks for daylight savings time. With working smoke detectors, make sure the entire family knows what to do if they are activated.

Talk about fire and develop a realistic plan to escape.

Finally, don't forget to call 9-1-1 as soon as you are aware of a fire. Early notification allows the fire department to respond when the fire is relatively small. This can greatly minimize the damage.

Remember, your fire department is available to help you and answer your questions. Most fire departments would be happy to inspect your home and offer you tips to be more fire safe.

Richard A. Marinucci is a Farmington Hills resident and has been the Farmington Hills fire chief for nine years.

Career turns to humor



SHARON LAMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

New venture: With titles such as "How the Animals Do It" and "The Ultimate Dumb Blonde Joke Book" to his credit, Joe Ajlouny's career has blossomed more out of chance than a finely laid blueprint.

New direction

Attorney finds happiness as author, agent



BY DIANE GALE
STAFF WRITER

With titles such as "How the Animals Do It" and "The Ultimate Dumb Blonde Joke Book" to his credit, Joe Ajlouny's career has blossomed more out of chance than a finely-laid blueprint.

The author and attorney has two businesses, one as a literary agent and the other conceiving book ideas, farming them out to client writers and selling the product to publishers.

His specialty is humor and while the titles are less than high-brow, they tell you exactly what's inside, like "101 Things Not to Say During Sex," "The Politically

Incorrect Joke Book by Four White Males," "Gifts I Almost Got You and Perfect Excuses Why You Didn't Get Them" and a collection of practical jokes to play on cats, called "Here, Kitty Kitty."

Career change

All this and more has developed in the five years since Ajlouny turned away from his job practicing law.

"There's a lot of drudgery and dealing with hopeless problems in law," said Ajlouny, a 1978 graduate of Birmingham Groves High School.

"Every document represents some people's hopes, fears and expectations and it's difficult to satisfy people. There's a lot of demands placed

on people. I always liked practicing law to sinking in quicksand."

Shortly before Ajlouny earned his journalism degree from Wayne State University, he got a job as a copy editor for an art print and book publisher. Meanwhile, he began attending evening classes in law. He received his law degree in 1983 even though he had no intention of practicing law.

That changed, however, when he was hired by a Southfield attorney looking for an assistant.

"I took the job, because I was making a lot more money as an associate attorney," he added.

Comic strip success

The same year he became an attorney, he was also involved in writing a comic strip, "Party Ranks," a satire on life in the Communist Party in what was formerly the Soviet Union. The comic strip was picked up in syndication

by newspapers all over the world with tremendous popularity in Europe.

"Party Ranks" also became the seed that would develop into his companies, said Ajlouny, sitting in the basement of his Farmington Hills home, which also serves as offices for JSA Publications Inc. and the Joseph S. Ajlouny Literary Agency.

"I had no idea I would be inundated with submissions from all over the world asking me to help them achieve the same success I achieved with 'Party Ranks,' Ajlouny said.

"I started getting tons of mail," he added, speaking as incense burned in the center of the room lined with ceiling to floor bookshelves and several posters, including one of Larry, Moe and Curly.

See LAWYER, 2C

Proposing marriage - it can happen in a limo

BY ETHEL SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

That romantic moment when a guy pops the question, "Will you marry me?" may take place in a limousine the gentleman has rented especially for the occasion.

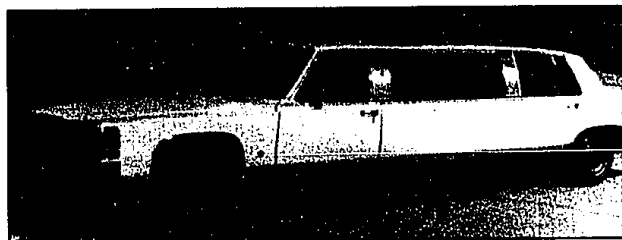
Susan Jarvis, whose Aristocrat Limousine Service is based at the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills, said this method of proposing is becoming more popular. In 1993, five men used her limousines to ask a woman to marry them.

Jarvis explained that when the guy calls to rent the limo, he eagerly tells her all his plans. Sometimes the limo is just part of the picture, taking the couple to the setting where the proposal takes place.

"One fellow had a limo pick up the gal from work," Jarvis said. "He took her to Shain Park in Birmingham, where they went for a walk, and he asked her to marry him. She said yes."

Jarvis said the couple then went out for an early dinner. They had the limo for five hours. The groomsman at Franklin Church was the scene of a marriage proposal for another couple this year. The boyfriend picked the girlfriend up at her house in his own car, then drove to the gazebo, where he proposed. He wanted the limo kept out of sight until after his proposal, when it suddenly appeared, and the couple drove away in it. "They had a late lunch," Jarvis recalled. They had a three-hour rental, and there was champagne and glasses and little napkins with wedding bells."

Robert McEachern of Rochester Hills proposed



High style: Renting a stretch limo is an elegant way to celebrate a special occasion. This one is from Aristocrat Limousine Service in Bloomfield Hills.

to Laura Glikay of Farmington Hills in an Aristocrat limousine last October. Now they are making plans for their wedding in October 1994.

"I told her a co-worker was having a casual house party. Later, I said it was changed to a semiformal cocktail party," McEachern said. When the limo pulled up at his house, Laura was elegantly dressed for her surprise. They drove to the Rattlesnake Club in Detroit and after dinner went to Windsor. He proposed in the limo. "Against the backdrop of the Detroit skyline on the waterfront," McEachern said.

Couples often use limousines in their wedding parties, and when couples have a baby, the father

may arrange for a limousine to take him to the hospital to bring the new mother and baby home.

"The proud father, the baby and the mother get in the car. They're all nestled in the back. It's really neat," said Aristocrat's Jarvis, adding that the limo service takes a picture and sends a copy to the family.

A Bloomfield Hills resident, Jarvis recently moved her business from Farmington Hills to the Kingsley Inn, and does a lot of work for Kingsley clients. Corporate clients may prefer a sedan, while other customers usually prefer one of the

See LIMOUSINE, 2C