

Fire Deaths...

By WILLIAM R. DEIZ

Last Friday, October 23, two small brothers died in a fire as they played with matches in an upstairs bedroom of a Southeast Portland home. Their ages: 2 and 3 years old.

Firemen who responded to a telephone call from a next door neighbor, had the blaze under control within minutes of their arrival. The neighbor's efforts were instrumental in getting a 17-year old baby sitter out of the house, and the firemen's immediate response was sufficient to confine the fire mostly to the upstairs. But in the interim, two small children perished—as they hid from the flames in a closet.

As one photographer who later saw the bodies remarked: "The kids didn't appear to be burned, their little lungs probably couldn't get enough oxygen. They must have been overcome by the smoke and fumes."

There is nothing novel nor unique about this story. It happened to two other children in Portland last June, it happens somewhere in the city each year.

But the hard facts are that the deaths can be prevented.

Each year the Fire Bureau issues appeals to parents to be aware that children, practically ALL children, WILL PLAY WITH MATCHES if they can get their hands on them. Most kids are lucky. They either can't find any matches to play with, or if they do, they don't start fires. But then there are always the not so lucky.

The appeals take on a particular urgency during Western Oregon's perennial rainy season, when children are forced off the sidewalk and into the house. Adults, who may have been a little lax about leaving spare matches around during the hot weather when kids were spending most of their time outdoors, should take particular



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stock of the situation during the Fall and Winter.

Many people forget just how dangerous fires can be. There is the obvious danger from the heat; but there is also another danger, often more insidious from carbon monoxide fumes—an invisible, but deadly, poison released when something burns. And when a fire is extremely hot—as was the case of the fire last Friday—the flames feed on all available oxygen in order to keep going, and this, of course, includes the oxygen we breathe.

When, time and again, you see the tragic things fires can do, you begin to develop a healthy respect for them. But most people aren't often exposed—personally—to fire's ravages.

Take a look at your household, especially if you have small children, and see just how safe it is from unexpected fires—fires that can and ought to be prevented.

Listen to the free safety advice given by the Fire Bureau, and for Pete's sake, keep those matches out of the reach of small hands; and if you don't have a fire extinguisher in working order, get one.

Breakfast with PACE learns from others

By FATHER GORDON DICKEY

Valuable information can be obtained through the "Police-Community Relation Breakfast" on Wednesday mornings at Centenary-Wilbur Methodist Church. According to Rev. Harper Richardson, an excellent program of crime prevention comes out of the experience of Monterey Park, California. Their program of citizen participation in reducing crime is called, a PUBLIC ANTI-CRIME EFFORT or PACE.

"The goal of this community effort," according to Rev. Richardson, "is the protection of life and property, and the prevention of burglaries and thefts." What brought this city to the PACE Program was the choice of doubting the police manpower, or to involve citizens in securing their own community.

Monterey Park was divided into thirty-one reporting districts. A daily record was kept of all offenses committed, persons arrested, what accidents occurred. Each district then had a picture at any time of the type of crime occurring and their frequency in each district.

At district meetings, citizens

were asked to react to the kinds of service rendered by the Police Department.

Quarterly, the crime statistics were reviewed and analyzed. Attention was then directed to areas where additional citizens support in the prevention of crime was needed.

Strategy of citizens' groups placed emphasis on selected kinds of crime, and to work to reduce their incidence. Auto thefts, night time burglaries, assaults, etc. Each was concentrated upon in turn.

One of the features of the Monterey Park Program is to teach householders security measures. The importance of lighted areas was discussed; the effectiveness of the dead bolt and chain was stressed. What to do when you have a prowler in your home was discussed; what neighbors can do for each other when away from home was described. What is happening across our land are new concepts of police work. People are coming to see that law enforcement carries with it aspects of problem solving. We need more effort on the prevention of crime, peace-keeping through problem-solving.

Grand Master Visits



Most worship Grand Master Elijah Graham, center and R.W. Grand Secretary James L. Wasson of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Oregon Incorporated have just returned from Great Falls Montana, where they paid a visit to Northern Light Lodge U.D.

The Northern Light Lodge U.D., a military Lodge, rolled out the red carpet. Dinner was served at the Holiday Inn. After the meeting with the craft, most worshipful Master of the military Lodge, Willie H. St. Clair retired from the military Lodge and of service to his country and Maxton Veal was appointed Worshipful Master to lead the Military Lodge.

Real Tragedy of Uncle Tom

Ellis H. Casson
Assistant to the
Superintendent,
Portland Public Schools

History-like God-works in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

A clear and present example of this is found in the branding of some blacks by others with a mangy accusation of "Uncle Tom." The equivalent of such branding among Christians would be to call one a Judas; among American patriots, a Benedict Arnold; among slave rebels, a house nigger.

The irony is that when Harriet Beecher Stowe introduced the character in 1852 in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," she invested him with such nobility and sympathy that millions of people the world over were won over to the great antislavery cause.

The original Uncle Tom refused to become a field driver for the hated slave owner, Simon Legree, because he could not bring himself to whip other slaves. For such refusal, Uncle Tom was mercilessly beaten. Following the beating, Legree ordered him to proceed with the flogging of Cassie, a proud and defiant woman slave, but Uncle Tom replied:

"I'm willin' to work night and day while there's life and breath in me, but this yer thing I can't feel it right to do; and mas'r I never shall do it--NEVER."

Although bitter abuse is heaped on blacks who are real or imagined racial defectors termed Uncle Toms, nobody seems to remember that the real villains of the novel were Sambo and Quimbo, brutal black slavedrivers used by Legree to push the slaves to unendurable limits in the cotton and cane fields on pain of torture or death.

Mrs. Stowe's character, Uncle Tom, was based on the early life of a slave named Josiah Henson, born in Port Tobacco, Maryland in 1787. He escaped to Canada where he became a well-known Methodist minister. In 1858, Henson returned from Canada and met with a group of black abolitionists where they discussed among other things, the feasibility of publicly urging the slaves to rise in armed insurrection. He is known to have opposed the move on the grounds that the slaves had no weapons with

which to fight. He is recorded as having said, "When I fight, I want to whip somebody."

Today's perverse usage of the term, Uncle Tom, has meant rejection for a long list of distinguished black spokesmen and personalities. The confusion is further compounded by black militants who lump everyone over 30 in that same ignoble bag.

Among those who have been so dubbed are: The late Dr. Martin L. King, Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, Ralph Bunche, Adam C. Powell, Joe Louis, Ray Campanella, Jackie Robinson, Louis Armstrong, the late Nat King Cole, and others including this writer.

Probably the most tragic consequence of this kind of buckshot branding is that it robs the black community of a prime condition that is indispensable to its own progress: unity in its own ranks. This, of course, poses the question: Unity for what purpose?

That purpose should be the elevation of blacks to equality in every facet of American political, economic and social life.

Apart from fragmenting the community, charges of Uncle Tomism usually miss the mark, anyway, because no black spokesman has the power to alter present black-white relationships. At best, he or she can only articulate requirements of the black community and, to the degree it is united, advance them.

This truth is well-known to the white power fraternity. In fact, that fraternity knows it much better than blacks precisely because whites are accustomed to the exercise of power and, thus, are able to checkmate in advance plans put forward by blacks in a number of different ways. One important way is to keep them fighting among themselves over who is the biggest Uncle Tom which, of course, takes all the heat off the white fraternity.

A hard reality that blacks must face, given the present power relations, is that the whites who have power make or break black leaders in the United States as they do pretty much anything else. Black spokesmen are tethered to the white power centers, directly or indirectly, by myriad lines and connections—economic, political, social, historical and cultural—that have him tied to "the man"

in fair weather and foul.

When the black spokesman seeks to do his thing outside the established lines, then he is moved against. And the evidence in overwhelming. A Dr. King is murdered, a Malcolm X is gunned down, a Muhammed Ali is toppled from his championship, a Paul Robeson is black-listed, a W.E.B. DuBois is exiled, a Bobby Seale is gagged, and Josephine Baker is silenced.

More than a decade ago, Louis Armstrong was assailed as a top Uncle Tom because of his "eyeballing" antics on television. But when Satchmo trumpeted his anger over the treatment of "nine black kids at Little Rock, Arkansas" by telling the government to go to hell and refusing to be part of a goodwill troupe abroad, he protested effectively in a way that some of his detractors couldn't have done.

Many a Black Militant, who a few years back shouted his contempt at Dr. King as an Uncle Tom, today in retrospect see the questions quite differently. The evidence demonstrates that most black leaders have helped in the forward thrust of black people.

Jim Brown, the great black former professional football player, once said it well:

"We need everything we can get going for us."

The very nature of the black condition and the gap between the general development of Negroes and that of whites, dictates two clearly emerging imperatives:

(1) That black leaders will inevitably continue to be produced in greater numbers and be tested and developed in the crucible of impending confrontations.

(2) Consistent with the political history of the country, the black movement will find allies among a wide strata of the white population that will be forced to see—sooner or later—that its own self-interest is more closely connected to that of the blacks than to the increasingly arrogant power centers.

Such are the great questions that should preoccupy every thinking black today. Never mind the name-calling.

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