

Point of View

Protecting Your Children Against Firework Hazards

CHILD WATCH

By Marian Wright Edelman

July 4th, our nation's birthday, should be a time of fun and celebration. But for Mary Jones, an eight-year-old girl, it quickly turned into a horrible experience. A spark from a sparkler she was holding caught her dress on fire, causing second and third degree burns to her leg.

Unfortunately, Mary's was not an isolated case. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 1985, 10,300 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries related to fireworks. Over half the injuries were burns, many involving the head and face. Forty-two percent of the victims were under 15-years of age.

Many of these incidents, especially those affecting children, tend to involve fireworks and fire crackers commonly sold in stores, such as Roman candles, party poppers, sparklers, and the like. Only 14 states completely ban all of these devices.

But even if you live in a state where fireworks are sold in stores, you can still take some simple steps to help protect your children from harm this Independence Day. The CPSC offers the following guidelines for parents:

Never allow younger children to play with fireworks. No firework is a safe toy for a young child, not even the sparkler, which burns at high temperatures. Little

children cannot be relied on to understand the danger involved or to act correctly if an emergency develops.

Only allow older children to use fireworks under close adult supervision. Running or horseplay should be forbidden during use, as they increase the danger of an accident.

Before fireworks are used, follow a few basic precautions. First, read and follow all warning instructions printed on the label. Second, light the fireworks in a clear area away from houses or flammable materials such as gasoline cans. Keep a bucket of water nearby in case of emergency or to douse fireworks that do not go off.

While using fireworks, be as cautious as possible. Be

To Be Equal

LIBERTY'S BIRTHDAY

By John E. Jacob

The Fourth of July Statue of Liberty centennial should be more than a media event buried under a mountain of hoopla, glitz, and commercialism.

Instead, it should be a time to reflect on the symbolic meaning of the Statue which holds aloft the flame of liberty, while at her feet are the broken chains of oppression.

Such considered reflection would lead us to think of the distance we have yet to travel to fulfill the Statue's promise. Even as millions

yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

In fact, many of those who came to our shores came involuntarily, could not breathe free, and were in bondage.

But symbols like the Statue of Liberty do not bear such close historical inspection. They drive their power from their intent and for their ability to personify people's dreams and wishes. So the Statue's symbolism remains strong, even as its bright promise has too often been unfulfilled.

And as America celebrates

Clark becomes one of the first dozen immigrants to receive the Medal of Liberty.

Dr. Clark, the psychologist and civil rights theorist, has left a powerful imprint on America and has been responsible for helping to bring the nation a bit closer to the ideals expressed by the symbolism of the State.

We must refuse to cede the symbols of liberty, freedom and equality to ideologues of the right, as happened some years back when they appropriated the flag.

The national anthem, the flag, and the Statue of Liberty are symbols of freedom that belong to all of us — rich and poor, white and black. And I don't want

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John E. Jacob

flock to the celebrations in downtown New York and its harbor, many thousands in the city sleep in the streets and suffer hunger.

On the Statue's base are the words of the poet, Emma Lazarus:

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses

sure other people are out of range. Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container. If a firework turns out to be a dud, do not try to relight or handle it. Just soak it with water and throw it away. Unused fireworks should be stored in a cool dry place or according to special storage directions.

Finally, be sure you supervise the ordering and use of mail-order "make-your-own" fireworks kits. Some kit contents can produce dangerous, explosive devices.

I hope your family will follow these steps and have a safe, happy 4th of July.

its immigrant heritage it must be reminded that many of the ancestors of its citizens came to these shores against their will, in slavery's chains, to work the fields and build the roads that made America great. For them too, the Statue stands as a symbol of what America can be.

That some black citizens claim indifference to the Statue's centennial should not be surprising. It is hard to expend energies in praise that need to be spent in struggle to change conditions that bring such hardship and inequality to so many black people, other minorities, and the disadvantaged.

But at the same time we too, are part of the tradition the centennial celebrates. As many as two million black people voluntarily came to the United States, emigrating from the West Indies, Canada, and Africa, in search of better lives.

The achievements of those black immigrants will be honored when Dr. Kenneth

to see them stolen by right wingers for their own purposes.

While it is easy to be cynical about the show-biz atmosphere and events surrounding the centennial, we should not fall into the trap of forgetting that the Statue is a symbol of liberty that symbolizes America and its promises to the entire world. As Americans striving to make our country better for all, it is our symbol, too.

Register

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