

## PARENTS ALERTED TO TOY HAZARDS

Parents beware. The burden of choosing safe toys for children is back in the lap of the consumer. This according to a child and family specialist from UNR's College of Agriculture.

Today's toys may be less safe than those on the shelf 10 years ago because of cutbacks that have curtailed extensive testing by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, says Sally Kees Martin, Nevada Cooperative Extension child specialist.

"Parents may have been lulled into complacency by CPSC testing, but now that the organization is not able to monitor toys as closely as it once did, there is the possibility of more 'bad' toys on the shelves," says Martin. "Parents need to be more alert to potential hazards when purchasing toys."

During this holiday gift-giving season, Martin reminds consumers to keep in mind the child's age, interests and skill level when purchasing toys.

"Be a label reader," she emphasizes. Heed age recommendations (for example, 'Not recommended for child under age three') and safety labels (flame retardant/flame resistant).

"One continual safety hazard, especially for children under three, are toys with

small, removable parts that can be swallowed or become lodged in the windpipe, ear or nose," Martin says. "The diameter of the toy should be no smaller than 1 1/4 inch."

Other potential problems to be aware of when buying toys:

- Sharp edges. Toys, by regulation, should be free of sharp glass and metal edges.

- Loud noises. Toy caps and some noisemaking guns can produce sounds at noise levels that can damage hearing. The law requires a warning label on caps producing noise above a certain level.

- Cords and strings. Toys with long strings can be dangerous for infants if they become wrapped around the child's neck. Strangulation may occur.

- Sharp points. Some stuffed boys may have wires inside that could cut or stab if exposed.

- Propelled objects. Projectiles like guided missiles and darts can turn into weapons that can injure, especially eyes.

- Electric toys. If these items are improperly constructed or wired, burns and shocks can result.

"Parents have an important role in helping children learn to use toys safely," Martin says. "Toy manufac-

## ADOPT-A-GRANDPARENT FOR CHRISTMAS

The Henderson Convalescent Hospital Auxiliary is conducting its annual "Adopt-A-Grandparent for Christmas" program now through December 19.

The Auxiliary hopes to provide Christmas presents for the 120 residents living at

turers cannot always anticipate the numerous imaginative things kids can do with a toy. The responsibility of teaching safety rests with the parent."

Martin emphasizes that toys for older children should be kept out of the hands of smaller tots. "Teach older children to help keep their toys away from younger siblings," she advises.

Parents should check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards; dangerous toys should be thrown away or repaired immediately.

Teaching children to put toys on a shelf or in a toy chest will help prevent tripping and falls. "Toy boxes should also be checked for safety," says Martin. "Use a chest that has a lightweight lid and can be opened from the inside. The lid should stay open at any angle once it has been raised. For extra safety, be sure there are ventilation holes for fresh air."

For additional information about toy safety, contact your local Nevada Cooperative Extension home economist.

the Henderson convalescent Hospital. They also hope to have patients without families adopted by individuals who can provide a present for the Annual Christmas Party.

The Auxiliary is asking individuals for a \$10.00 donation so they can provide at least one nice Christmas present to put under the tree to be opened December 19 at their party. They also hope to fill 120 stockings which will be given to the patients on Christmas morning.

The donation of \$10.00 entitles the donor to a Certificate of Adoption and the satisfaction of knowing that they have made Christmas a little happier for someone else.

Christmas can be a very lonely and sad time for patients confined to a hospital or nursing home, especially if they have no family to share it with. If you are interested in "Adopting-A-Grandparent for Christmas" please call 565-8555 or send your donation to 1180 East Lake Mead, Henderson, NV 89015.

## Keep the Tragedy of Fire Out of the Christmas Holidays

CARSON CITY, Nv. — "Keep your holiday season safe from the tragedy of fire both at home and in the workplace," advises Acting State Fire Marshal Rex Jordan. "By following a few fire-safe guidelines, Christmas holiday fires can be avoided," according to Jordan, who suggests families consider purchasing approved smoke detectors and home fire extinguishers for Christmas to help make their homes fire safe year-round.

According to Jordan, the following guidelines can help make the Christmas holidays safer from the destruction and tragedy of a fire:

- Keep Christmas trees fresh by mounting and keeping them in water. Once trees dried out, they will not again absorb water.

- Place your Christmas tree away from fireplaces, radiators, woodstoves, heaters, television sets and other sources of heat. Don't place your tree where it will block an exit in case of fire.

- Do not use candles or other types of open flame decorations on Christmas trees. Use only UL-listed or

"approved" Christmas lights for trees and outdoor decorations or displays.

- Avoid using multiple plug adaptors and extension cords. Do not place extension cords under rugs, and keep all plugs and appliances away from the tree base where water is used to keep trees fresh.

- Do not leave Christmas tree lights on all night. Trees can dry out and the heat from bulbs can cause fires.

- Even artificial trees can be hazards. Use lights on such trees only if they are labeled safe for lights.

- Avoid using candles and open flame heating devices for serving dishes in or around dried flower arrangements. Avoid using pine boughs and other types of natural decorations around fireplaces, candles and other open flame devices. Such natural decorations can dry out quickly and become tinder dry.

- Use only flame-resistant tree and house decorations. Avoid paper and other combustible type decorations. Keep tinsel and metal decorations out of bulb sockets.

- Do not use candles and other sources of open flame in ceremonies, pageants, plays and gatherings. Candles and other sources of open flame are especially dangerous where people gather in large numbers. Hand-held, battery-powered candles are available for ceremonies.

- Be sure materials used in costumes for pageants, ceremonies and plays are of fire-retardant types.

- Avoid kitchen burns by keeping handles for pots and pans turned-in on stovetops to avoid overturning them. Teach children safe kitchen practices and keep a home fire extinguisher handy. Show every member of your family how your fire extinguisher works.

- Test home smoke detectors regularly.

- Have a home evacuation plan in case of fire and practice home fire drills.

- Keep fire, ambulance and police phone numbers near phones.

"Give your family, neighbors and friends a special gift by being fire safe and keeping the tragedy of fire out of their lives this Christmas season," Jordan says.

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