

## Elkland fire chief tells how

# Avoid disaster—learn wood stove care

Winter came early for the Elkland Township Fire Department. It was Sept. 14 when firemen extinguished a fire at a S. Seeger Street home which had spread from the fireplace where it was supposed to be into the wall, where it wasn't.

The increasingly popular use of fireplaces and wood burning stoves the past few years in order to offset the ever increasing cost of conventional heating fuels has made life unpleasant for firemen.

During the winter of 1979-80, firemen responded to 16 house fires stemming from the burning of wood fuel. Only one house was a total loss, and it wasn't provable the cause was the wood stove, but even a few hundred dollars damage is damage that need not have occurred if proper precautions had been made in installation of the heating unit and its use.

Fire Chief Jack Hartwick is afraid there may be even more such fires this winter. Many wood stoves were installed a year ago and the owners got through the winter without maintenance, primarily cleaning the chimney. But no maintenance this winter will mean that the creosote that has built up inside may eventually ignite.

During the heating season from October, 1979, through

March, 1980, according to the Michigan State Police Fire Marshal Division, 18 persons died in the state from house fires related to woodburning stoves. There were 235 persons treated for injuries from such fires, with an estimated 10 times that many unreported injuries.

There were 1,199 reported fires directly caused by "solid fuel appliances," including fireplaces, causing \$6.1 million in damages, plus 1,279 chimney fires related to burning wood.

Improper installation is one contributing cause of such fires. Hartwick recalled one fire last year, where the stove pipe went

directly through the outside wall of the house, with no insulating pipe (thimble) around it. The pipe had rusted through where it went through the wall and when the pipe got hot, burning creosote fell into the wall and started a fire.

A mistake he has seen in old homes is to connect the stove pipe with the old chimney, without firing the chimney or installing a pipe inside. Mortar has fallen out and even more falls out if the fire is extremely hot. Burning creosote can then escape through the cracks into the house.

Burning green wood which creates more creosote is another error he has seen. In

addition to being highly flammable, creosote also reduces efficiency. As little as 1 millimeter can reduce a stove's efficiency as much as 15 percent.

Homeowners can hire chimney sweeps to clean their chimneys — there are at least three or four in this area — or buy brushes, available at some hardware stores, and do the job themselves.

Following are some safety tips from the state Bureau of Construction Codes, National Fire Protection Association and State Police Fire Marshal Division, as reported in the Michigan Department of Labor Labor Register magazine:

### INSTALLATION

—Observe manufacturers' recommended clearances.

—Keep the connector pipe from the stove to the chimney as short as possible.

—Use at least 24 gauge steel stove pipe.

—Sections of pipe should be fastened together with at least three wood screws.

—If pipe is more than six feet long, other mechanical support is required.

—If masonry chimney is used, the stovepipe should extend to the inner surface of the masonry wall, but not into the flue space.

—Clearance between the connector and any combustible materials should be at least 18 inches.

—If more than one section of pipe is used, the upper pipe should be fitted over the lower one to prevent air leaks.

—Try to avoid 90 degree angles in the stovepipe (they tend to accumulate creosote), use a few 45 degree turns if necessary.

—Do not reduce the size of the stovepipe from the stove outlet to the chimney. This could cause backup smoke.

—If the stove is not equipped with a damper, one should be built into the stovepipe to control draft.

—The chimney, whether masonry or factory built should extend at least three feet above the roof and two feet above any ridge of the building within 10 feet.

—There should also be at least 16 feet from the stove outlet to the chimney top.

—Never vent more than one heating appliance into one flue.

—A metal ventilated thimble must be used where the pipe goes through walls and ceilings and should be at least 12 inches larger in diameter than the connector.

### MAINTENANCE

—Before firing the stove, inspect the chimney and connectors for creosote buildup or other blockages and defects.

—Clean the chimney once a year and the stovepipe twice or three times during the heating season.

### PROPER USE

—Never use gasoline, kerosene, charcoal starter or any other flammable liquid to start a fire.

—If your home is tightly insulated, you might want to open a window a crack to assure proper draft for the safe and efficient operation of the stove.

—When starting a fire, place a small amount of paper in front of your pile of kindling and then place larger logs on top of the kindling.

—Open the draft and damper wide to make the fire start quickly and prevent large amounts of back-up smoke in the room. Soon after the fire catches, the

damper controls should be adjusted down.

—When stoking the fire, it is a good idea to open the damper control, but adjust it downward again soon after.

—Never overload a stove. Solid fuel appliances do not have automatic safety shut-offs when the fire gets too hot.

### ADDITIONAL TIPS

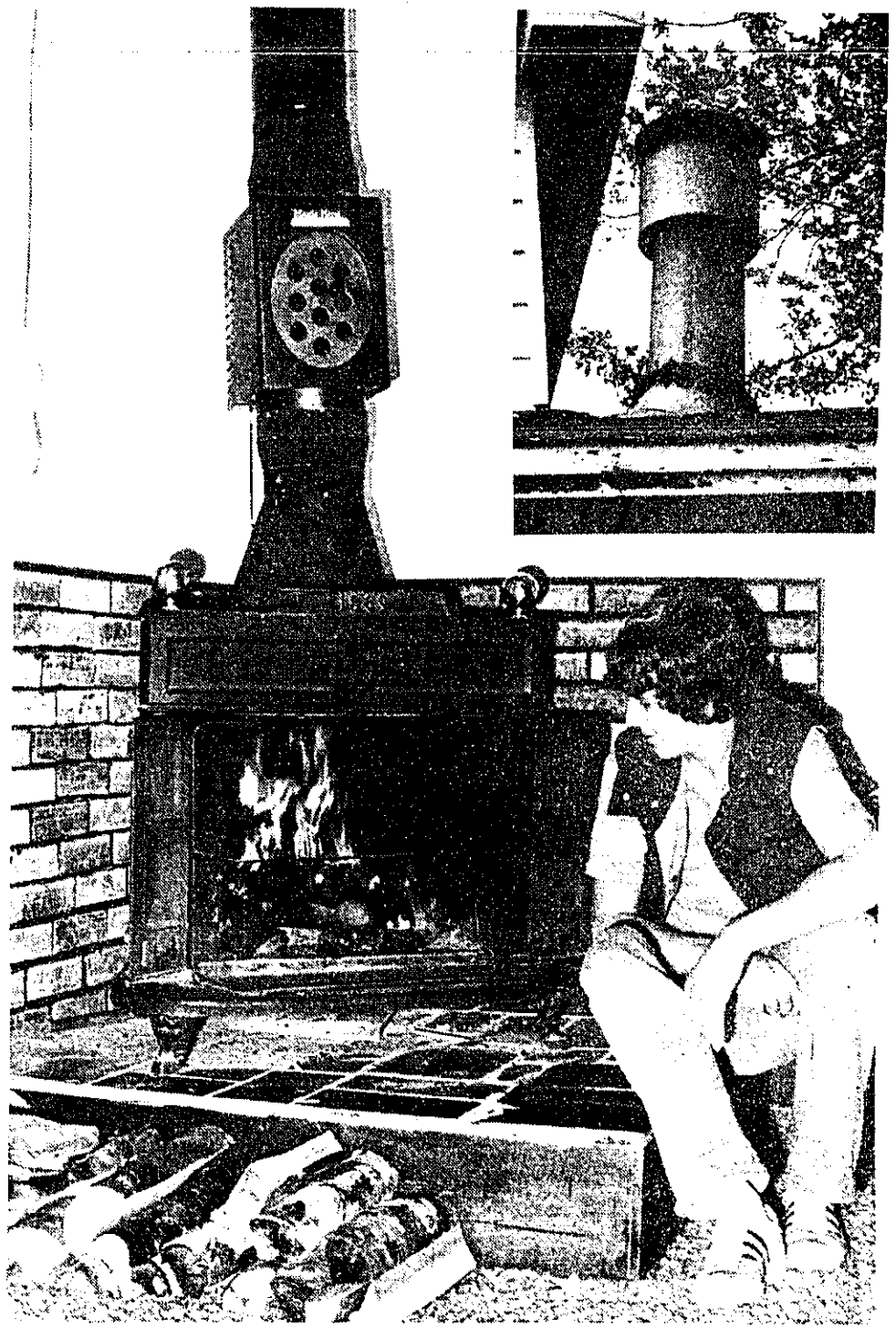
—Place an approved fire extinguisher near the stove.

—Place a smoke or fire detector near your sleeping quarters but far enough away from the stove to prevent it from sounding during normal heat radiation.

—Keep a container of

coarse salt near the stove. In case of a chimney fire, call your local fire department. Flames can often be slowed down or extinguished by dumping cups full of salt in the firebox.

—Place portable, folding escape ladders under your bed or windowsills for emergency use.



ENJOYING THE HEAT from the Franklin wood burning stove in the home of Elkland Township Fire Chief Jack Hartwick is son Rob. The stove is elevated off the floor, sits on slate, is a safe distance from the walls, which are covered with fireproof imitation brick. The smokestack (inset) as it goes through the roof is surrounded by two larger pipes.

## Increase wages for CETA workers in public service

The Thumb Area Consortium will have to get by on leftover funds until Congress gets around to appropriating more money.

The agency which administers the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program in the upper Thumb finished the

1979-80 fiscal year Sept. 30 with 1,497 participants in various job and job training programs and \$823,673 in the bank.

Executive Director Frank Lenard told the consortium administrative board last Thursday that before Congress adjourned recently, it passed a resolution authorizing continuation of CETA spending at the 1979-80 level, but appropriated no new funds. It will appropriate money when it reconvenes after the Nov. 4 election.

That means his agency will have to get by on the \$823,673 until new funds are received, which could mean it could be in trouble by December, he said.

The preliminary report for the now ended fiscal year showed the consortium was authorized almost \$7.8 million in CETA funds, of which it spent \$6.97 million.

The new wage standard for CETA public service jobs, set by the U.S. Department of Labor, is \$7.84 annually, which works out to \$3.77 per hour for a 40-hour week. The standard for 1979-80 had been \$7.765.

CETA recipients can be paid more than that, but the overall average must be \$3.77 and all wages must be at or above the minimum wage of \$3.35.

The higher wage, according to Lenard, will still eliminate some potential jobs as employing units can't pay CETA employees less than they pay their own employees for the same job.

The executive director reported that the agency program monitor Roy Allen has

uncovered instances of consortium sub-contractors using CETA funds to pay for travel that was not CETA-related, including at least one trip out of state.

Accordingly, the board approved a new policy requiring prior written approval for all travel outside of Tuscola, Huron and Sanilac counties.

Also prohibited will be paying for meals or lodging within the three counties with CETA funds.

The three sub-contractors, which run various CETA programs, are the Human Development Commission, Caro; Huron Intermediate School District, Bad Axe, and Tri-County Public Service Agency, Sandusky.

Lenard said after the meeting the travel, though not proper, was not illegal.

The board approved purchase of five five-drawer 30-inch lateral files and four five-drawer 42-inch lateral files for a total of \$4,375 from Thumb Office Supply of Bad Axe. It was the only one of three firms asked to submit bids which did so.

Lenard said the added filing cabinets were needed because the state is requiring a separate file for each CETA participant, dating back to 1974, which must be updated quarterly.

Purchase of an IBM electric typewriter for \$922 was approved.

Purchase of three desks, three desk chairs and some other chairs and folding tables, at a maximum cost of \$2,000 was authorized. The furniture is needed because an assessment worker, classroom training counselor and clerk-typist are being added to the staff.

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## 400 at facility's open house

Sunday afternoon, Oct. 5, more than 400 residents, employees, families and friends enjoyed an open house and quilt show at Provincial House.

More than 75 quilts and other hand work were on display. Quilts shown were from 110 years old to new ones.

Music for the afternoon was provided by Dean Strieter of Unionville and Ruth Esau of Cass City, who played the piano, and the Merry Music group from Caro.

Dona Strieter, administrator of Provincial House, honored 10 residents who have lived at the home the past seven years. Honored were Mary Mikich, Ada Scott, Betty Gerber, Anna Woldan, Gladys Lounsbury, Victoria O'Neil, Helen Stec, Theresa Schweiss, Lillie Lamphere and Gertrude Taylor.

Provincial House in Cass City opened seven years ago, Oct. 8, 1973. Refreshments were served.

## Arrest pupils for school vandalism

(continued from page one)


partment in the investigation were the Akron Police Department and Michigan State Police crime lab.

The vandalism included destruction beyond repair of 24 electric typewriters, 10 manual ones, six calculators, photography equipment, broken furniture, windows, glassware and shelving in the chemistry room, and most of the dishes in the cafeteria. The destroyed electric typewriters alone were worth \$24,000.

Some electric drills, sanders, tape recorders, calculators and other items were stolen but were later found in a cornfield behind the school.

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