



Firefighter Tommy Tucker pauses for a moment at the blaze.

Child starts house fire

By TELA GOODWIN MANGE
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Cari Zimmerman looked at the flames coming out of her house Tuesday afternoon, and wished Fire Prevention Week had come a week sooner.

The blaze — which caused at least \$30,000 damage to her northwest Grand Prairie home — started after her 5-year-old son was playing under a bed with a lighter, fire officials said.

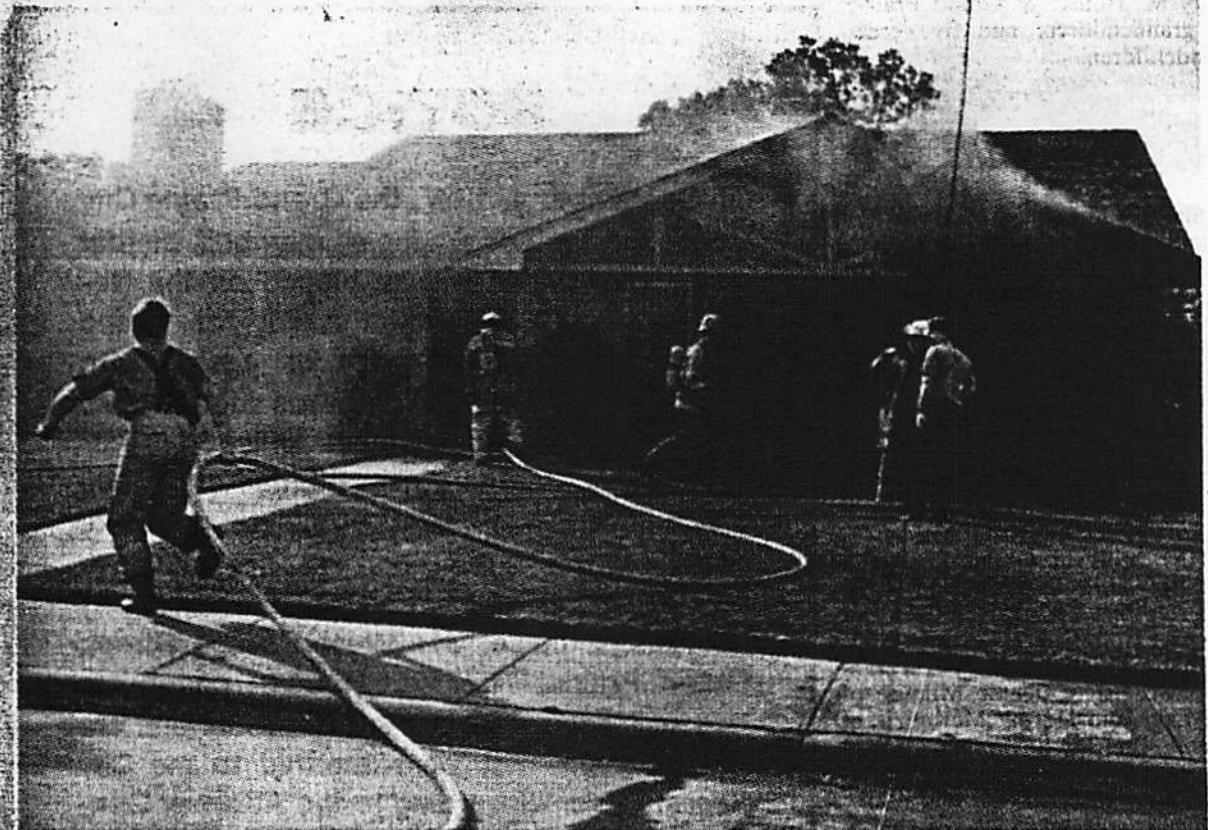
The fire comes just days before the start of Fire Prevention Week, which is marked by special safety programs and school visits by firefighters.

"I think I'm going to get all the kids in the neighborhood together and have my own little fire prevention deal," Zimmerman said.

Grand Prairie firefighters brought the fire at 2433 Parkwood under control before the flames reached the wood-shingle roof.

High winds in the area late Tuesday afternoon could have spread the fire to other houses in the area, said Lt. Bill Kallstrom of the Grand Prairie Fire Department.

See HOUSE, Page 2A



JOAN M. WILSON/Daily News

Heavy winds Tuesday afternoon threatened to spread the fire to neighboring houses, but firefighters contained the blaze to the Zimmerman home.

House damaged by fire

Continued from Page 1A

"They did a very good job of putting it out," Kallstrom said.

Zimmerman said her 5-year-old son was playing with a lighter underneath his bed. He woke her up to tell her about the fire, she said.

"I went in the bedroom and saw smoke coming from under the dust ruffle, so I went into the bathroom and filled a plastic trash can from the bathtub. I took it into the bedroom and threw the water on the fire, but nothing happened," she said.

Zimmerman said she took her 5-year-old, her 1-year-old son and their dog out of the house to call the fire department and her husband, Roger. By the time she came back, the three-bedroom house was engulfed in flames.

"I never dreamed it would go so fast," Zimmerman said.

Zimmerman said the fire department arrived quickly after she called the 911 emergency number from a neighbor's house.

No injuries were reported.

Zimmerman said she had told her son numerous times not to play with matches or lighters because they can be dangerous. "I think he realizes that now," she said.



JOAN M. WILSON/Daily News

A firefighter, protected by his headgear, works at putting out the fire which started after a child played with a lighter.