

Fire in the Park

On a windy day in March 1997, a father and his son came to Valley Forge National Historical Park, where George Washington stationed the Revolutionary Army during the difficult winter of 1777-1778. The Associated Press reported that they had something much less historic in mind: they wanted to launch a model rocket.

At first, they tried using electric ignition wires to light the fuse, but to no avail. So they tried lighting the fuse with a common sparkler, the kind seen in Fourth of July celebrations this past weekend.

That's when the trouble began. Sparks ignited a grass fire, and the winds quickly spread the blaze, burning one field where Revolutionary War soldiers had trained and coming within a half mile of George Washington's headquarters. Thirty units from 12 fire departments fought the blaze for an hour before bringing it under control. In the end, more than 30 acres were charred. The man with the sparkler -- and the not-so-bright idea -- was charged with destruction of government property and use of fireworks.

Like that sparkler, gossip never seems as dangerous as it really is. Once issued, it spreads rapidly, causing great destruction.

As my mother used to say, "If you can't say something nice about someone, don't say anything at all." On the other hand, sincere, honest compliments -- given to our residents and fellow associates -- will create a wonderful, caring environment in the centers of Life Care and American Lifestyles and in the work of Life Care at Home. Try it today and see for yourself.

--Beecher Hunter