



WHEN THE MARSHALS COME HOME!

Hundreds of Junior Fire Marshals will be turned loose in Birmingham Thursday and Friday in connection with the annual observance of Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 4-10.

These young marshals will be Birmingham school children cooperating with local service clubs in an effort to increase the fire safety consciousness of children, and their parents, in this area, according to Birmingham Fire Marshal George Scott.

Armed with special junior fire marshal identification cards, the youngsters will be instructed to aid him in ferreting out any unsafe practices.

Each little marshal will be equipped with a check list to aid him in ferreting out any unsafe practices. He will check the cellar, garage and attic to see if there are any accumulations of combustible materials, such as newspapers and rags.

HE WILL instruct smokers not to smoke in bed, and to be sure that all matches and cigarettes are completely out before they are discarded.

The young marshal will frown on storage of flammable liquids in the house, and he will be free with advice about keeping matches out of the reach of children. Over 20,000 fires a year are started by children playing with matches.

Mother will be given instructions on safe practices she should follow while ironing, such as never leav-

ing the iron while it is connected to an electrical outlet.

Dad will have to check all cords on electrical appliances to make sure they are not defective.

DAD WILL BE advised by the young marshal that experts agree that all heating equipment should be checked each year.

Dad will be asked to demonstrate proper use of the family fire extinguisher, and, if there is no extinguisher in the house, he will be advised to get one.

Emergency means of escaping the house in the event of fire will highlight a general family discussion on the dangers of fire.

The young marshal's final duty will be to check the location of the nearest fire alarm box, to post the fire department's telephone number near the phone, and to inform the family on local fire alarm procedure.

WHEN ALL of this is done, he will want one of his parents to sign his check list so he can show his overseer marshals that he has done a competent job.

"If you have junior fire marshal in your home, cooperate with his or her fire prevention efforts. A small thing, perhaps, but what is more important than saving lives," said Marshal Scott.

Jones suddenly decided that he would study music. He bought a piano and after considerable shopping around, finally decided on a teacher and presented himself for his first lesson. As he sat down at the piano, the teacher asked if he would care to take an octave, first.

Jones turned a cold eye on her and remarked, bitingly, "Marriage, I do not drink alcohol in any form before dinner!"

NATURE NOW

Laughing Loon Turns Tables on Hunters

By LYDIA KING FREHSE
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

My early adventures in the out-of-doors were linked to the birds of woodland and meadow. It was not until we came to spend long summers in the north woods that I learned to know the waterfowl.

Living on a large inland lake, I was startled out of many a fair night's sleep by the weird and laughing call of one of these. It was the cry of the loon, and lived across the lake on the edge of a secluded marsh.

This shy bird came much earlier by way of a story in an old sports magazine, the "Gleaner, Trader and Trapper". Although it was not written for such as she, a little girl with long blond braids spent a delicious late summer afternoon reading it.

The story was called "The Laughing Loon of Long's Pond Lake", and I read it lying stretched out on the parlor floor of the "Big House".

So sensitive is the child mind to the wonder of that hour.

There is the tall hunter, bearded and gaunt, bending over his blazing camp fire. There is his red and gun leaning against the tent pole. There is the brooding forest, deep and dark. There is the loon at sundown, floating like a periscope on the quiet lake.

THE COMMON loon or "immer" is sometimes called the great northern diver. He is a primitive bird about the size of a goose, with ungainly legs and short wings, ill-suited to his aquatic life. His legs are set so far back on his body that walking is awkward and he is almost helpless on land.

His summer coat is a black and white checkered pattern with light underparts. His head is of an iridescent greenish color. His neck is banded with a collar of black and white vertical stripes.

In flight, his wing beat is slower and he is more ungainly than the goose. His short neck has a downward slope, his back is humped and his feet stretch out behind him.

THE LOON is faster and more agile in the water than a fish. His expert diving habits are his great protection. So swift is he in that moment when he slips into the water that he actually escapes the hunters' bullet to emerge safely at a point some 100 feet distant.

He can remain under water for as much as eight minutes, thus losing himself to his pursuer's eye. In the marsh he is further protected by his unusual pattern of black and white which blends invisibly with the shadows cast by the slender reeds and grasses. Here in a secluded spot at the very edge of the water or on a low hummock the pair builds a make-shift nest. Then the female lays two earth-colored and dappled eggs. When after four weeks these are hatched, the young are able to swim away at once.

THE BROODING period during May and June is followed by a long summer with the lake as a play and training ground for the young. The marsh is wild and tenanted by few enemies, so the little family is comparatively safe in its seclusion. In time of threatened danger the water provides a quick escape.

Each bird carries his own weapon in the shape of a long sharp beak which, coupled with his diving ability, assures him of an easy supply of the fish which he relishes.

So the long summer days drift by while the loon family lives on the perimeter of the marsh. They are oblivious to the dizzy flight of the dragonfly, the noisy house-keeping of the red-winged blackbird and the wary travels of the snake.

ON A DAY when the evenings have lengthened and the water's chill lingers on until noonday, the loon takes off on his long migration flight. This journey will carry him as far south as Northern Africa, where he spends a comfortable winter.

Now in mid-September the autumn migration of waterfowl is



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In progress and the loon follows the fireways with his fellows as wave after wave moves silently across the path of the moon. So it will continue until at last the marshes are frozen and empty and winter is at hand.

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