

Centerville Students Learn About Safety

By Barbara Patterson

"OK everyone, what do you do before you fly a kite?" asks Al Sanders.

"Look up!" shout the students.

"Right!" Al responds with a big smile. "Never fly kites under power lines."

Al is at Centerville School giving his annual electrical safety talk. Electrical safety is a subject he knows a lot about. Before retiring from Klickitat PUD, Al worked as a journeyman lineman and foreman on the White Salmon line crew.

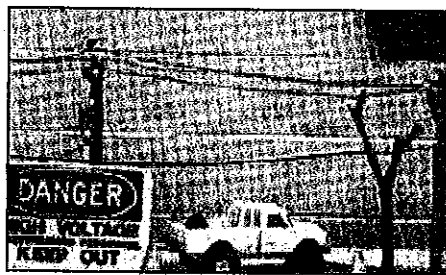
Later in his career, Al became KPUD's safety coordinator. He presented safety meetings for the staff, and developed and delivered electrical safety training programs for fire departments, as well as for fourth-grade students in area elementary schools.

Centerville School students sit on the gymnasium floor, watching attentively as a short musical cartoon video titled "Louie the Lightning Bug" lights up the television screen. The video's message is "electricity is a good thing, but it can be dangerous."

For his electrical safety demonstration, Al uses props built in his home workshop. The props include three power poles—complete with a transformer box, insulators, and electrical lines—a house with a service drop line and antenna; a truck; human figures; and a tree.

Al uses a small transformer to energize his power lines. It increases the voltage from 120 to 15,000.

Al explains how power is brought from the lines, through the trans-



Retired KPUD lineman and foreman Al Sanders demonstrates electrical safety to Centerville School students, using several props, including miniature energized power lines and even a toy pickup truck.

former and down to the house's electrical panel through the service drop.

Next, he drops a power line to the ground. This could happen during a storm, he says. Al cautions the students to keep away from downed power lines.

To make his point, he passes around a rock with a deep burn groove, where it was hit by an ener-

gized wire.

"You can't always tell by looking if electrical cords or downed power lines are energized," he warns.

To prove it, he demonstrates with a thick orange extension cord. Al walks in front of the students, holding the plug end of the cord.

"Is this energized?" he asks.

Some students think it is, others don't know.

Al picks up a light bulb plugged into a socket and plugs it into the extension cord. The light comes on. The cord was energized.

"120 volts can stop your heart from beating," he says, pointing to the words displayed in front of his props: "Play it Safe—Respect Electricity."

Next, Al talks about indoor safety, demonstrating how to correctly pull a plug from a wall. He tells the students to watch out for babies, puppies and kittens, who may chew the covering on electrical cords. They can contact wires and get shocked, he says.

"If you touch a sink or stove and get a shock, something needs to be repaired right now," he says. "And remember, electricity and water don't mix. No putting the radio on the edge of the bathtub!"

An enthusiastic question and answer session concludes the electrical safety talk.

Klickitat PUD contracts Al to provide the safety program to elementary schools throughout Klickitat County. Al contracts with other utilities in Oregon as well, to provide this service.

Al also presents programs to adult groups. ■