“Our flag is what we make of it,” Martin said, before recalling a Flag Day speech in 1917. “It has no other character than that which we give it from generation to generation.”

“Those are not my words, but essentially true,” Martin said. “The entire totality of our history is bound up in our flag.”

“That which we give it from generation to generation.”

By Jonathan Ellis

“Historic U.S. flags in front of his home in Benjamin Hills.”

CHICAGO—A fire chief’s demonstration of the dangers of fireworks became a teachable moment Tuesday morning when a canister tipped over and shot fireworks into a crowd, injuring a director of a fire safety group.

Laura Barros, assistant executive director of the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance, suffered a small burn on her left foot. Before heading off to a news conference, the episode illustrated how dangerous fireworks can be no matter who handles them.

“We did not mean to hurt anyone,” Kuryla said. “It shows that, trained or untrained, (fireworks) are very dangerous.”

The crowd immediately rushed to her aid, pouring cold water on the burn and calling for an ambulance. “It happened before I saw it,” Barros said. “It felt like a sharp pin, and then like a burn.”

Barros said the incident highlights how dangerous fireworks can be.

“This was so safe as you could make it and it still happened,” she said, holding her foot up for photographers and television cameras. “My foot would have gone up (in flames) had it been a piece of wood or dry grass.”

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The other flag, used by the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment, is white with a blue anchor and a banner with the word “Hope.” It also features a blue field with 13 yellow stars in the upper left corner.

Martin encourages visitors to wander through the flags. He keeps two binders with information on the flags for visitors to learn more.

Although he already has 70 flags, Martin said he collects them not from curiosity, and he intends to add more.

“Those are nothing as a collection list of American flags,” Martin said. “It wasn’t American in decor, but essentially true.”

Martin said he gets his flags from stores online and has even made some. Besides displaying the flags, he also shows them to different groups and organizations.

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“But it shows that, trained or untrained, (fireworks) are very dangerous.”

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