

## Article for November 5, 2014

Looks like I breezed right through October without giving enough attention to one of the most important weeks of the year. National Fire Prevention Week was celebrated in early October and I sincerely hope that you and your family honored that week by participating in an event at school, work, or in the community. Fire prevention should be continuous for you and family throughout the year, to help keep everyone safe and prevent fires if possible!

A home fire drill can be a very enjoyable family activity! I'm sure our own children (and some of the neighbors) recall evenings about dusk when one of us would yell out "Fire Drill Time!" It didn't matter where you were or what you were doing, you were involved in the drill! Kids would immediately drop to the ground and begin to evacuate the house, avoiding whichever area we had simulated to be on fire. It didn't take long for our neighbors to understand the loud voices and sometimes hollering that went on to make sure we were all safely out of the house and had all reported to our "safe zone"! Older children would help younger children and one of the adults would throw in an obstacle or two for an extra challenge! I had a slight case of claustrophobia before we really started practicing these drills! After a few of times with a flannel-lined wind breaker secured around my head while I crawled down the hallway reluctantly, I eventually learned to manage my fears and trudge forward to help everyone out of the house!

All of the drills we did in those years on Viser Street, paid off many years later when we actually experienced a house fire. Late one summer night when most of us were in bed, our youngest son woke up our oldest son saying that he was seeing, "fireflies in the shop". It was sparks from our breaker box. Amazingly, those kids sprang into action, woke everyone up (well, almost woke up their sister, but drug her out of the house safely), backed up the vehicles, took the youngest children to the neighbor's house, then connected water hoses and began fighting the fire. The only thing we forgot to do at that time was call 9-1-1 and report the fire!!

A fantastic fire department came to our aid, along with neighbors, family, friends, and others in the community. That was a little over 16 years ago and there's not a day that goes by that I don't thank heavens that our family was somewhat prepared. So, go ahead and have a little fun, but help your family learn the basics of getting out alive! Most of our volunteer firefighters will be happy to help you come up with a safe evacuation plan for your home or business. Just ask, and, as always, Be Safe Out There!