

Home fire awareness

Thirty per cent of smoke alarms "useless"

Canadians will gain an extra hour's sleep October 28 when they change their clocks from daylight-saving time. But those who take an extra moment to change their smoke alarm batteries gain even more: the best protection possible against home fires.

Fire officials say the simple annual practice of changing smoke detector batteries is the easiest, most effective and accessible way

to curb fire-related deaths and injuries.

Yet, an estimated 30 per cent of home smoke alarms now are useless due to old or missing batteries.

Canada has the highest per capita death rate from fire of any industrialized nation. Non-working smoke detectors contribute to many of the 439 fire-related deaths and 2,603 injuries that occur each

year. And all too often, it is children, low-income, elderly and disabled people who fall victim to these events.

In an effort to curb these recent trends and to underscore the importance of fire safety awareness, Eveready Batteries is sponsoring the annual "Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery" program, with the endorsement of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, the Association of Fire Marshals and the Fire Commissioners.

"The national education cam-

paign encourages the public to change their smoke alarm batteries in the fall when they change their clocks back to standard time," says Eveready co-spokesperson Lanny McDonald, former captain and now Vice-President of the Calgary Flames. Adds co-spokesperson Sylvie Bernier, Olympic gold medalist in diving, "If you've taken the trouble to install a smoke alarm, make sure it works. And make sure you know what to do when you hear the alarm."

The annual reminder serves to underscore the need for routine smoke detector maintenance. Fire officials say a working smoke alarm can double the chances of surviving a fire by providing critical early warning and escape time.

"If your smoke alarm is battery operated, replace the battery at least once a year or when it's low - don't just remove it. With no battery a smoke alarm is powerless to save your life," said Marcel Ethier, Executive Director, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs.



Sylvie Bernier and Lanny McDonald remind you to "Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery".

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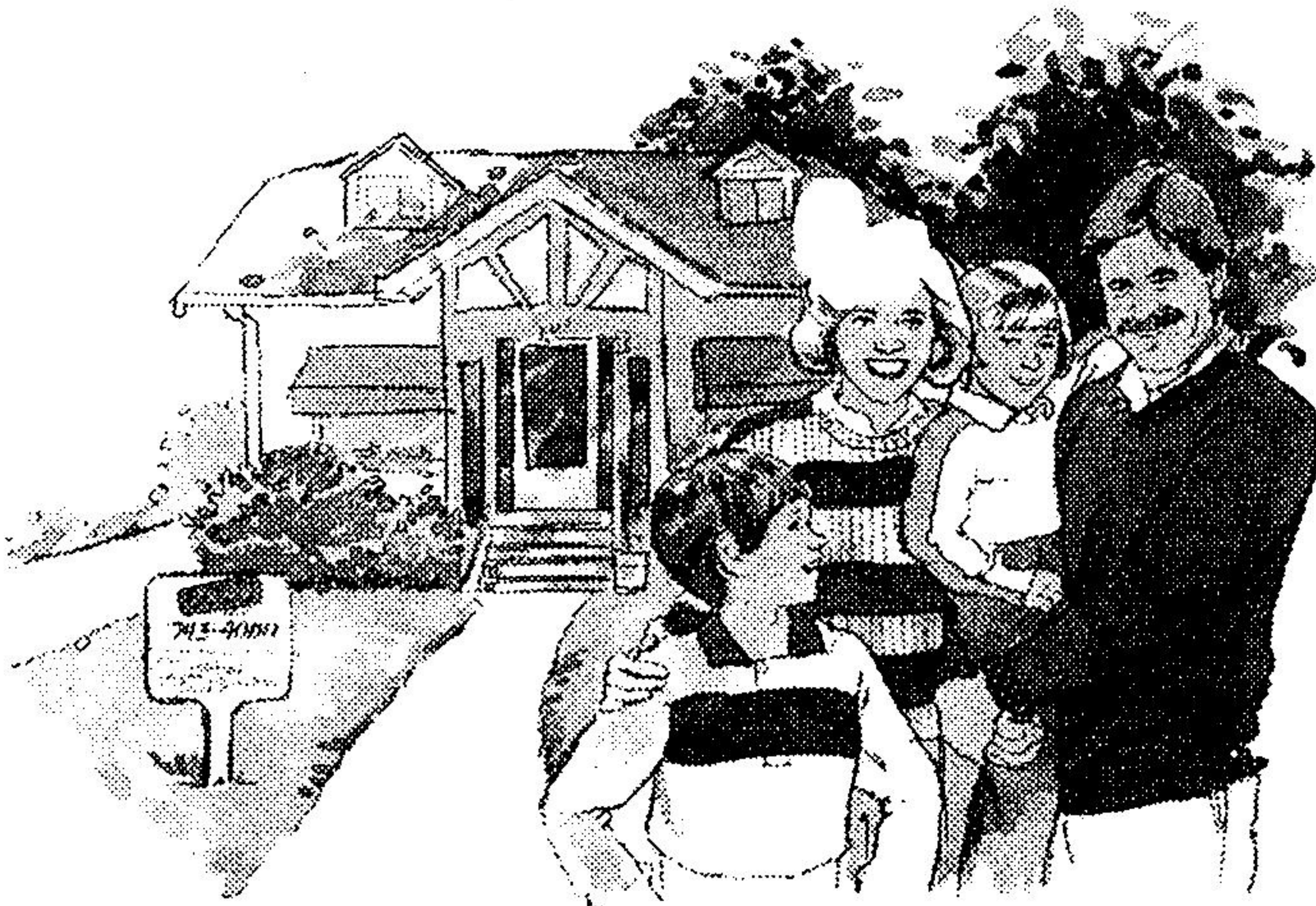
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