

Averting tragedy

People who decide to disregard Ontario's laws regarding working smoke alarms continue to pay the ultimate fine—their lives.

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) confirmed last week that three separate recent tragic fires have claimed the lives of four adults and three young children in Ontario. A fourth adult remains in hospital with fire-related injuries.

The absence of working smoke alarms and home fire escape plans were common factors in all three fatal fires.

"The tragic incidents... could have been prevented," said Ontario Fire Marshal Ted Wieclawek.

"It's the law to have working smoke alarms. I strongly urge everyone to take a few minutes to test their smoke alarms and practice their home fire escape plans. You are responsible for your children and everyone else in your home and, for ensuring everyone knows what to do if a fire occurs."

To ensure everyone is safe from fire, the Office of the Fire Marshal is urging residents to:

- Test smoke alarms to make sure they are working;
- Install battery-operated smoke alarms, or electrically-connected alarms with a battery backup; and,
- Develop and practise a home fire escape plan to ensure everyone knows what to do if a fire occurs

It's the law in Ontario to have working smoke alarms on every storey of the home and outside all sleeping areas.

Failure to comply with the law can result in a ticket of \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000 for individuals or \$100,000 for corporations.

It can also cost you and your family your lives.

These recent tragedies are a stark reminder of how the purchase of two or three smoke alarms, batteries to power them and a willingness to check twice a year to make sure they still work can literally mean the difference between life and death.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

Halton Hills Farmers are frustrated by dangerous driving by impatient drivers. When you encounter a slow moving farm vehicle what do you do?

- Relax and enjoy the scenery until the farmer reaches his destination (87%)
- Rev your motor, and try to pass at any opportunity— no matter if it's illegal (13%)

The Independent & Free Press

The Independent & Free Press is published Tuesday and Thursday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.



Steve Nease

905-873-0301
Publisher: Ken Nugent
General manager: Steve Foreman (sforeman@theifp.ca)
Retail advertising manager: Cindi Campbell (ccampbell@theifp.ca)
Managing editor: John McGhie (jmcghie@theifp.ca)
Distribution manager: Nancy Geissler (ngeissler@theifp.ca)
Classifieds
 Kristie Pells (classified@theifp.ca)
Accounting
 Rose Marie Gauthier
Editorial
 Cynthia Gamble: News editor (cgamble@theifp.ca)
 Ted Brown: Photography (tbrown@theifp.ca)
 Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer (ltallyn@theifp.ca)
 Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports (emaher@theifp.ca)

Letters policy

Letters must include an address and daytime phone number.

Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

Publication is not guaranteed.

Email:

jmcghie@theifp.ca

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON, L7G 4B1.

Letters to the editor

Youth encouraged to have their say

Dear editor,

Thank you for writing an article on the Youth Needs Survey (YNS) July 14.

YNS is urging youth in our community to provide feedback for this study. It's time to put our heads together to provide a strategy to support services and facilities for youth in the community of Halton Hills.

Halton Hills is working on providing more recreational services to youth. Most youth are giving lots of feedback to us but we need more of it, so make our day by answering the polls on our Facebook page as well as giving us more likes.

Again, please take time to give your input towards YNS to help establish the Halton Hills we want to have and see for us and for upcoming generations.

Are you interested in volunteering with YNS? If so, please feel free to contact Jessica Stovin, Recreation Supervisor, Community Programs either by phone at 905-873-2601 ext. 2276 or via email at youth@haltonhills.ca.

You are more than welcome to visit us at Haltonhills.ca/youth. Please make yourself like to Facebook/yms.

Let everyone know that YOUth matters in Halton Hills.

*Harnoor Gill,
YNS Youth crew,
Grade 8*

Stewarttown Middle School

Cats say 'thanks'

Dear editor,

Just a quick note to say thank you for everyone who came to our first ever fundraising garage sale for Cats Anonymous.

We managed, with your help, to raise more than \$600, for which we are grateful.

This will go a long way to helping us pay our vet bill for our 'Partridge Family Surgery Fund'— kittens who were born with bilateral luxating patellae (knee problems).

Thank you also to *The Independent & Free Press* for adding us to your community events column.

Again, thank you all who purchased or donated to our kitties. You may read more on our website at: <http://www.catsanonymous.ca/>

*Debra Hayes,
Georgetown*

Wall collapse not 'minor'

Dear editor,

Re: Town loans cash to HHGC to prevent its closure (Aug. 14).

The landlord of the Halton Hills Gymnastics Centre describes the collapse of an interior 20-foot concrete wall as "minor" and says it "could have been fixed in a week" if the Town had not been involved.

I witnessed the incident, and it was far from minor. Fortunately, no one was injured, but an hour later the gym would have been packed with children. As it happened, one gymnast training near the wall was moved to safety by the quick thinking of her coach, Florin Chivu, who noticed the wall behaving oddly. Seconds later, the wall collapsed, crushing much of the apparatus where the gymnast had been working.

So, I am grateful that the Town stepped in to ensure that appropriate repairs were made. While the landlord is focused on how quickly the wall could have been replaced, the Town's inspectors and engineers ensured that the new wall will not collapse... even on a windy day.

*Nancy Kovacs,
Georgetown*