

12 days of safety

Christmas is a busy time of year. It's also one filled with fire hazards— from cooking to dry trees to overloaded power outlets and beyond.

That's precisely why the Ontario Fire Marshal has drafted the 12 Days of Holiday Fire Safety.

While titled after the popular festive song, it's really a dozen recommendations for helping to keep you and your family alive:

- If using a fresh tree, be sure its base is constantly in water and the tree itself is kept clear of fireplaces, heaters and candles.
- Inspect all strings of lights before putting them up, and discard any that are frayed or damaged.
- Ensure your smoke alarm is fully functional, with one on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas.
- Make sure you have a carbon monoxide alarm. This potentially deadly gas is odourless and colourless.
- Have a fire escape plan, and make sure everyone knows how to get out safely.
- Use extension cords sparingly, and never put them under a rug.
- Give space heaters space— at least one metre (three feet) from anything that can burn.
- Blow out all candles before leaving the room or going to bed. Keep lit candles away from children and pets, as well as anything that can burn.
- Make sure all matches and lighters are also beyond the reach of children. Keep them with you at all times.
- When cooking, always stay in the kitchen— especially if using oil or high temperatures.
- Direct smokers outside. Careless smoking is the leading cause of fatal fires.
- Keep a close eye on anyone attempting to cook or smoke while under the influence of alcohol (any drug for that matter).

By following these tips, we can all enjoy a safe and, hopefully, happy holiday.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

An Ipsos Reid poll showed that 67 per cent of Ontarians believe all apartments, condos and co-ops in the province should be 100 per cent smoke-free. Do you agree these building should be smoke-free?

- Yes. Smokers impact non-smokers (56%)
- No. Smokers should be allowed to light up in their own home (44%)

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

'Spark'-ling effort from vet staff

Dear editor,

Not often do we take the time to thank businesses for making our little town a community, but in this instance we must.

Recently the wonderful ladies of Black Creek Animal Hospital opened their clinic doors to the 2nd Acton Sparks. They provided an amazing hands-on tour for our 22 members that was not only incredible, but incredibly generous. They were prepared, personal and completely committed to the concept of helping these 5-and-6-year-olds feel empowered in their understanding of a vet's office and a pet owners' responsibilities.

Dr. Jones, Maxine, Ashley and Stacy were fantastic ambassadors of the profession and our community. I think they have clearly demonstrated how strongly they care about Acton and the many people and animals that call it home.

On a side note, Maxine introduced our unit to their current resident, Captain Morgan, a sleek and sweet black cat in need of some

fairly extensive surgery. While not once did they ask us about financially supporting their efforts for the Captain, I think it would be a lovely gesture from our community to support this wonderful group and their generous efforts. Clearly Captain Morgan deserves a second chance at a happy healthy life and what better way to show our community spirit then to give to another at Christmas time.

Best wishes to all and again thanks to Black Creek Animal Hospital for being a wonderful part of OUR community!

Trish "Firefly" Bell on behalf of Rainbow, Sparkie, Starlight, Bumblebee and our 22 girl members, 2nd Acton Sparks Girl Guides of Canada

'Angel' thanked

Dear editor,

As a member of the St. Andrew's United Church and the proud parent of a youth who participates in the annual Christmas play, I would like to thank Stephanie Scott for her tireless efforts in pulling together amazing productions year after year.

It would be easy for Stephanie to simply recycle a play from a previ-

ous year or have the youth sing Christmas carols, but that's not her style. In July, she starts looking for a play with a meaningful message— one that will give the kids a chance to experience stage performances, understand the Christmas message, share their learnings with their families, all the while building their self-confidence.

The church gymnasium is transformed into a theatrical stage that compliments the play's theme thanks to the craftsmanship of Bryan Scott and Mike Hopper, who follow Stephanie's master plan. Countless hours are poured into set designs, costumes and rehearsals.

Recently, more than 20 youths flawlessly performed this year's masterpiece entitled *Hang Ups*. It may not sound like a Christmas-ish play, but it definitely was. The audience filled the gym to capacity and rewarded the performers and their director with a standing ovation.

Steph, the mother of four children with a crazy busy schedule of her own, always has an open heart for other children.

In our house we refer to her as an angel. We are lucky to have her so committed to developing our youth.

Jo-Anne Kallio, Georgetown