

Breaking the ice

While the snow and cold returned—at least briefly—this past weekend, residents are reminded that even without the snowstorms and freezing temperatures winter does bring its share of danger.

Last week's near-tragedy on Fairy Lake in which a resident and his dog were (thankfully) rescued after falling through the ice is a reminder to everyone that local ponds and waterways are not safe to walk on—be it man or beast.

First, all dog owners should remember their pets should always be on a leash when out for a stroll. It's not just a safety issue, but a courtesy to others you may come across who either aren't dog fanciers or have restrained dogs of their own.

Secondly, avoid walking near bodies of water. With the unusually mild winter we've enjoyed, ponds, lakes etc. have not been able to freeze over. That goes for anyone hoping to skate on any of the ponds that dot Halton Hills.

There must be at least 10 cm of clear, good quality ice before you can walk on it—18 cm to snowmobile on, and 38 cm to drive a light 4x4 truck on.

If you do fall through, you only have about 10 minutes to get out before succumbing to hypothermia. Getting out is no easy task, but it can be done.

Rule number one is, don't panic and control your breathing. Cold shock will cause you to hyperventilate for up to three minutes. Don't try to get out at this point.

Once your breathing slows down, you can now attempt to get out of the water.

Get out the way you came in, because it's obvious the ice was strong enough to hold your weight before you fell in.

Don't lift yourself up. Place your arms and chest on the ice and kick hard so that your body is horizontal, and then just shimmy or roll along the ice.

But perhaps the best advice is to avoid bodies of water unless absolutely certain they are safe to venture onto.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.independentfreepress.com)

What gift are you most likely to give your loved one on Valentine's Day?

- A restaurant dinner (19%)
- Nothing...I'm not a romantic (49%)
 - Flowers (16%)
 - Chocolates (16%)

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.



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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Anonymous letters will not be published.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.

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Letters to the editor

This Lion proud to be part of a pride

Dear editor,

I felt compelled to share some of my recent experiences after being inspired to join the Georgetown Lions Club.

My inspiration to join was my mother-in-law Dianne Penrice who was named Georgetown's Citizen of the Year last year as a result of her volunteering and assisting with so many local charities and events.

My decision to join has been one of the best decisions I've made.

I had the pleasure of helping the Lions at the Classics for Cancer car show, the Georgetown Fall Fair, Santa Claus Parade, Light Up The Hills, a monthly charity poker night and the Salvation Army with their kettle campaign.

At every event I have seen the good things that are a result of the Lions' hard work, but most of all I've seen how they give back to the community, helping those who need it most.

Nothing can describe the feeling one gets when you help those less fortunate than yourself—for example, a mother thanking your club

for helping send her and her child with cancer to Disney World.

Since joining the Lions I've seen the generosity of Halton Hills' citizens, like the young lad who works at Metro collecting shopping carts and donating \$5 to the Sally Ann kettle.

The Georgetown Lions is a small club but they truly make a difference in Halton Hills and abroad. I'm proud to be part of their family and salute their achievements over the years.

Grant Harris, Georgetown

Samaritans thanked

Dear editor,

I would like to thank the couple who came to my assistance on Saturday, Jan. 28—it was kind of you to stop to see if I was okay.

When you stayed to help my daughter get into the car so I could take her to her music lesson, it was also very much appreciated.

Sue and Debbie Scrace, Georgetown

A big disconnect

Dear editor,

I wish to share an experience I had traveling south recently with my teenage daughter.

We agreed to leave our "umbilical cords" (BlackBerrys) at home.

My daughter did travel with her iPod. Unknown to me the iPod provided not just music, but access to her accounts, Facebook, Twitter and emails.

In the lobby the first evening I observed approximately 150 people moving about, oblivious to their surroundings on cell phones, working their BlackBerrys, iPads, iPods and Skype.

At week's end I thought about the things I had seen. The new culture and traditional meals I had experienced, traveling off the beaten path, the books I read, the journalizing, long walks and the endless hours staring at that coral blue Caribbean water. I wondered, was I the one who was connected or disconnected?

I couldn't help but feel that a whole lot of people missed a really great holiday.

Gary Rubie, Georgetown

Send us a letter

Want to share your thoughts? To submit a letter to the editor email jmcghie@theifp.ca. Letters must be no longer than 150 words and must include the author's name, hometown and daytime phone number (for verification purposes).