

Opinion

THIS WEEK

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PUBLISHER: Ken Bellamy **EDITOR:** Colin Gibson
OFFICE MANAGER: Jean Shewell **CIRCULATION MANAGER:** Marie Shadbolt

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PHONE: 873-2254

FAX: 873-3918

Plan for holiday safety

It may not seem like it, but the holiday season is almost upon us. Before you and your family get caught up in the hustle and bustle traditionally associated with this hectic time of year, keep in mind that now is a good time to start planning for Yuletide safety in and around your home.

Don't wait until a mishap happens to realize that you should have replaced that frayed extension cord you use for the tree lights - or that you should have had the fireplace chimney checked and cleaned before lighting the first fire of the season.

By thinking and planning ahead now, you can relieve yourself of a good deal of seasonal stress and ensure that your home is safe and ready for the arrival of the holidays.

Check for Damage and Fraying

To start with, go through your boxes of decorations now to see if everything is in proper working order. Check strings of lights by plugging them in. Remove and replace any worn-out bulbs.

Take a good look at the wires on light strands for signs of wear and tear. Any strings that are frayed should be disposed of because these can pose a potential fire hazard. It's also a good idea to get rid of any light strands that appear to be helplessly twisted or mangled. After all, it's not worth the risk of a possible hazard.

Check any extension cords you plan to use either for your Christmas tree or for outdoor decorating. Make sure that they are in good condition. When decorating outdoors, don't use anything but lights and extension cords that are specifically designed for outdoor use.

Provide for space

If Christmas decorating is synonymous with major upheaval in your home, make sure you have adequate space to store excess clutter until the holidays are over. Accidents happen more easily when things become too crammed - particularly if you're planning on doing a lot of entertaining.

Plan to keep hallways, stairwells and staircases clear of excess decoration and other paraphernalia.

Check Fireplace

If you haven't had your fireplace checked or cleaned by a qualified professional for a while, it's a good idea to get it inspected. A buildup of creosote can cause chimney fires.

Creosote may appear in the form of dry, flaky deposits clinging to the chimney liner, or a shiny, glazed coating which resembles black paint.

If you plan to use your fireplace a great deal over the holidays, avoid draping flammable decorations (garlands, etc.) along the mantle. Keep Christmas stockings well away from the fire as well - and be sure someone is always in the room when the fireplace is being used.

Caring for Your Tree

When it does come time to put up your tree, choose a spot that's well out of the direct line of traffic in your home. If you have a small house, it's a good idea to choose a relatively small tree. Also, be sure to use a sturdy tree stand.

Ideally, you should try to place your tree close to an electrical outlet if you plan to decorate it with lights. This way, you won't have to run a number of extension cords across the floor.

If you purchase a fresh cut real tree, be sure to water it regularly and inspect branches for signs of dryness. If you're going to be away for part of the holidays, make sure you arrange for someone to water it for you, or opt for an artificial tree.

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

The People's Corner

Insurance should benefit the players

To the Editor:

In almost every local paper I read about the dispute and settlement between the OMHA and CAHA regarding insurance.

In March 1992 while play-

ing for the OMHA Juvenile Acton team, my son suffered a broken neck as the result of an illegal check from behind. He has gone through two major surgeries, each lasting over four hours. He has

screws and wire in his neck. He will never play another contact sport again; he will probably never be able to pursue the career he desired. For this, the OMHA insurance awarded him \$150.

Will the insurance policy in place now help the players or will the extra money the parents have to pay help pro-

tect its executive and members against the possibility of legal action?

There is no doubt in my mind that the insurance policy has to be worked out structurally. However, it should be to benefit the players.

**Sandra Jarbeau
Acton**

Seniors offer thanks

To the Editor:

May we, through "The People's Corner", take the opportunity for The Georgetown and District Seniors Association to extend seasons greetings and a year-end thank you to all in the Halton Hills community who have supported our association and its endeavors.

To our over 700 faithful members, your contributions and participation is now at this time showing a positive promise of results. To the community at large, business, private and service groups, your tangible support and recognition has been invaluable and encouraging.

We recognize and appreciate the positive attitude of

our town, the mayor, the members of council and dedicated staff toward the goal of a services, social and recreation centre for seniors. And to you, Mr. Editor, your staff and your newspaper, our very real appreciation for your generous help in providing a means of communication and publicity.

It is impossible to name all those individuals and organizations, who have helped our association in its purpose. But you know who you are and realize what your help has meant. Our thanks for the year past and our best wishes for the coming year.

The Georgetown and District Seniors Association

**Ross Bethel,
Vice-President**

Deposit charge is garbage!

To the Editor:

I have just read that we rural residents are going to be charged \$5 to deposit our garbage at the Milton landfill site. The comments of our councillors seems to suggest that up to now we have been subsidized by the property taxes paid by town dwellers.

My household pays over \$6,000 a year in property taxes to the town of Milton. For this, we receive no water supply and no sewers, and have minimal police presence. We drive on unpaved roads, with no street lights. We have no children in the school system, which is just as well, because our roads will now not be plowed overnight to allow school buses to run.

Now, it is not enough that we are expected to drive 50 kilometres to dispose of our

own garbage and stand out in all weathers separating our recyclables, and dropping cans and bottles into igloos one at a time, but we have to pay for the privilege.

Councillors should not be surprised if rural residents find other solutions. May I suggest, in the interests of the environment, that we find out when Mayor Miller has his free garbage pick-up, and take our bags along to his front lawn.

**Jo Phenix
Acton**

Christmas spirit alive

To the Editor:

The Christmas spirit is alive and well in Acton! On Thursday past, 130 blood donors gave the best gift possible - themselves, and as a result, up to 520 people may benefit from their donations. There are so many ways that people can spend time after work at this time of year that we are proud and thankful that our donors make the clinic a priority.

Volunteer registrars, phoned, refreshment ladies and walkers all helped to make this clinic run as smoothly as

possible. Thanks to each one of you for your commitment of time and energy.

Thanks go to the Walker Masonic Lodge for their generosity as sponsors, to Tim Horton Donuts for a major contribution of refreshments and to all of the local businesses that help in promoting our clinics.

To one and all a Merry Christmas and our best wishes for a rejuvenating holiday season.

**Geoffrey Moon
Acton Blood Clinic
Convener**

Got a beef or a comment?

Halton Hills This Week welcomes your letters. Letters must be signed and include your full name and address. Names will be withheld on request. Halton Hills This Week reserves the right to edit, revise, or reject any letters on the basis of factual errors, punctuation, spelling errors or as a result of space limitations. Opinions expressed in letters to the editor are not necessarily those of Halton Hills This Week or its employees.

Send your letters to:
**The Editor,
 Halton Hills This Week,
 232 Guelph St., Unit 9,
 Georgetown, ON,
 L7G 4B1**



Handel's Messiah performed

Dale Wood conducted the Georgetown Choral Society and Etobicoke Symphony through Handel's Messiah to an enthralled audience last Friday at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church in Georgetown.

photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW