

OPINION

Most residential fires preventable, says fire marshal

With the fast-paced lifestyle many of us lead, forgetfulness and fatigue can be a deadly combination that can turn special times into tragedies.

That's especially true during the holiday season when many people find themselves burning the proverbial candle at both ends in preparation for sharing some quality time with family and friends.

Ontario's Fire Marshal Patrick Burke asks residents to be extra diligent over the holidays to avoid becoming the victim of a momentary distraction or memory lapse.

Between November 1, 2005 and January 31, 2006, 24 Ontarians lost their lives in preventable house fires.

Burke emphasizes how misused and forgotten candles are one of the most common causes of house fires at this time of year.

And that message is also one of the Milton Fire Department.

Other contributors to holiday celebrations going up in smoke include improperly used space heaters, pots left unattended and careless smoking.

"People need to pay attention to potential fire hazards in their homes," Burke says.

Simple tips that could save your home — and your life — include:

- never leaving pots unattended while cooking;
- smothering pot fires with lids and turning off stove burners rather than attempting to remove an ignited pot from a stove;
- never removing batteries from smoke alarms that have activated while you're cooking; instead relocate the smoke alarm or purchase an alarm with a 'hush' feature;
- always placing lit candles in sturdy candleholders with glass shades and displaying them away from children, pets and any combustible items;
- keeping matches and lighters out of children's reach;
- drink responsibly and keeping a close watch of others who do not, since alcohol consumption is a contributing factor in many residential fires.

The fire marshal reminds us that more than 90 per cent of residential fires are preventable.

By paying more attention to how we celebrate the season, we can all avoid becoming the next holiday fire statistic.



ReadersWrite

Send your letters to miltoned@haltonsearch.com or drop them off at 875 Main St. E.

Take time to know where exits are

DEAR EDITOR:

I wanted to write and clear up a misconception that may have been left with some Miltonians after reading last week's article about the grease fire at the new movie theatre.

The issue concerns the practice of evacuating a building once the fire alarm sounds. When a fire occurs in a building, any building (especially your home), it's always safer to be outside than in.

Though different buildings have different levels of fire protection, when a fire occurs many different things can go wrong, so it's generally safer to attempt to leave a building at the first indication of trouble.

I would encourage all Miltonians to make a conscious decision to be aware of their surroundings at all times, especially during the holiday shopping season. When you go into a store or a

• see FIRE on page A7

Upfront

Sports, and its coverage, should be open to everyone

When it comes to sports, it doesn't take much to push my emotional buttons.

At the risk of taking some ribbing from those in local competitive circles, I'll admit I get downright choked up during more than a few sports movies, usually those involving David vs. Goliath clashes or the always-touching father and son moments.

And that RBC commercial about the old arena maintenance guy building a makeshift dressing room for the young girl definitely triggers the waterworks for yours truly.

In that particular case, it's the effort made toward breaking down barriers that I find especially heartwarming. Like many who are passionate about sports, the idea that they should be open to everyone — regardless of age, sex, background or physical limitations — is one I hold quite dearly.

And as far as I'm concerned, the same

holds true for sports coverage. As long as you've got a story to tell with enough success and/or general appeal attached, it should be told. I take that very seriously. The idea of anyone being excluded from ANY aspect of sports is one that doesn't sit well with me at all.

Which leads me to a somewhat concerning notion that arose during a diversity training session I and others in Metroland's editorial ranks recently attended. With the presenter also hailing from Milton — and providing the best work seminar I've ever been part of — a fair portion of the day revolved around how our town's cultural make-up is slowly but surely changing, and how that's relevant to its newspaper.

Having said that, I had to question if there

are some newcomers in our community who for one reason or another were reluctant to

bring their sporting stories to my attention. After all, some might figure that they haven't been here long enough to warrant coverage, or feel that because their particular sport isn't of the traditional or mainstream variety found in Canada I'm not likely to be interested.

If either of those arguments is what's holding you back, hold back no longer.

The only criteria for getting in The Champion's sports section is that you've got an interesting — and timely (please) — story to tell.

And if I'm not familiar with your sport, hey, I'm always willing to learn.



Steve LeBlanc

The Canadian Champion
Milton's Community Newspaper Since 1860

875 Main St. E.,
Milton, Ont. L9T 3Z3

905-878-2341

Editorial Fax: 905-878-4943
Advertising Fax: 905-876-2364
Classified: 905-875-3300
Circulation: 905-878-5947

www.miltoncanadianchampion.com

Publisher
Neil Oliver

Advertising Director
Wendy McNab

Managing Editor
Karen Miceli

Production Manager
Tim Coles

Circulation Manager
Charlene Hall

Office Manager
Teri Casas

The Canadian Champion, published every Tuesday and Friday at 875 Main St. E., Milton, Ont., L9T 3Z3, is a division of Metroland Media Group West — Group Publisher Ian Oliver.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with a reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. The publisher reserves the right to categorize advertisements or decline.

CCAB Audited

Recognized for excellence by

OCNA Ontario Community Newspapers Association

CNA Canadian Community Newspapers Association

SNAA Suburban Newspapers of America

The Canadian Champion is a proud media sponsor for:

Halton Healthcare Child Find ONTARIO

WELCOME WAGON SINCE 1950 Jingle Bell Fund MILTON CANADA DAY

UNITED WAY OF MILTON Relay For Life TV AUCTION MILTON SANTA CLAUS PARADE

Milton Community Centre MCRC YMCA OF GAVELLE

ATHENA Awards The Oakville, Milton and District Local Food Estate Board

Showcase Milton more than a Home and Leisure Show! Milton's Spring Festival

MILTON GALA Awards FAO POLICE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Milton Canadian Champion is a Recyclable Product