

OPINION

Be ready when bad weather finally arrives

As we steamroll our way to the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the coming days can be filled with fun and frivolity as we enjoy time with family and friends.

However, this can also be a time when a pleasurable outing turns tragic with little warning.

While we have enjoyed an unusually mild December so far, it's more than likely we will be in the grip of Old Man Winter before long. That's why we remind everyone who takes to the road to be ready for bad weather.

All drivers should be prepared for an emergency with the following items in their trunk: ice scraper, windshield deicer, flashlight, whisk broom, gloves, blanket, booster cables, extra clothes, candle/matches, bottled water, snacks, necessary medications and a first-aid kit.

If you are planning a long trip, it's best to let someone know your travel route. Check weather and travel conditions before heading out and don't take chances if the weather is bad. Allow yourself extra time for travel, or wait until conditions improve. Call the Ministry of Transportation's information number on road conditions, listed in your local phone directory, or check the on-line Winter Road Condition Reports.

It's also wise to ensure your vehicle is ready to tackle winter conditions.

That means having your vehicle checked by a licensed mechanic to ensure that things like your vehicle's critical fluids (oil, coolant, brake fluid, etc.), wiper blades, lights, bulbs, battery and most importantly, the tires, are all in good condition.

In a skid, it's important to regain control of your vehicle, especially if it skids sideways. To do this, decelerate by taking your foot off the brake, step on the clutch or shift to neutral, then look where you want your vehicle to go and steer in that direction.

All of the above are simple, common sense tips that are easy to follow.

However, it's almost a certainty tragedy will strike someone this holiday season who didn't follow one or more of these safety tips.

Don't let it be you.



Readers Write

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

Let's help out those less fortunate

DEAR EDITOR:

Please urge Champion readers to remember to share with those less fortunate than themselves this Christmas.

It's true that work and family schedules are hectic these days, and that the economy tends to be run with debit cards, credit cards and individual store cards more than with cash. However, there are no good excuses for not donating to the Salvation Army Christmas kettles or The Champion's Christmas Bureau Fund.

The truth is, our station in life has a

lot to do with the circumstances of our birth and other factors, over which we have no control. In other words, some of us have been lucky, and some haven't. What if you or I were one of the unfortunate ones?

Wouldn't we hope that others would share with us and help bring us hope?

Thank you in advance, Milton, for stepping up to the plate and helping the Salvation Army bring Christmas to those in need in our community.

TARA BONIN
MILTON

Aroundtown

Good-news stories are in abundance this year

One of the frequent complaints anyone in the newspaper business hears is that there aren't enough good-news stories written.

Here at The Champion, I think we have a good balance of the feel-good stories we all want to hear and the more serious ones we all need to hear.

The past year has been one that has showcased Miltonians' generosity and kind-heartedness time and again.

To remind residents of the great year we've had, the following, in no particular order, are my top five picks for good news stories of the year.

1. In July, firefighters were called to a fire on White Drive. Not knowing if anyone was inside, crews rushed into the blazing home and were able to pull to safety a young man who'd been sleeping in the basement. There's little doubt he would've died if it weren't for

their bravery. Two of them were later recognized with a provincial award for their efforts.

2. In October, The Champion printed a story about the financial plight of baby Holly Taylor's family. Holly, just one year old, had been diagnosed with a rare developmental disorder. Well, Miltonians stepped up to the plate, and numerous fundraising events were quickly organized and are, in fact, still going on.

3. Councillor Mike Boughton is well known for raising money for cancer research through an annual golf tournament. But the fight against the disease became personal early this year when Boughton was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Kicking into gear once more, Boughton held a head-shav-



Stephanie Thiessen

ing fundraiser before his surgery. His goal was to raise \$5,000. Instead, Miltonians reached deep and gave more than \$30,000.

4. Last month, Milton resident Darren Coogan smashed open the window of a blazing van to pull out — in the nick of time — a fellow Milton resident, Satwinder Bajwa, on Hwy. 407. Just seconds later, the entire van was engulfed in flames.

5. On Monday, the motor home of a Milton woman caught fire. She lost everything she had, including two beloved dogs. A trust fund was set up, and Miltonians gave generously. Okay, so that hasn't happened yet, but I have every confidence Miltonians will continue to show their generous spirits. Merry Christmas!

The Canadian Champion
Milton's Community Newspaper Since 1860

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

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