

Opinion

Follow these tips for safe snowmobiling on the trails

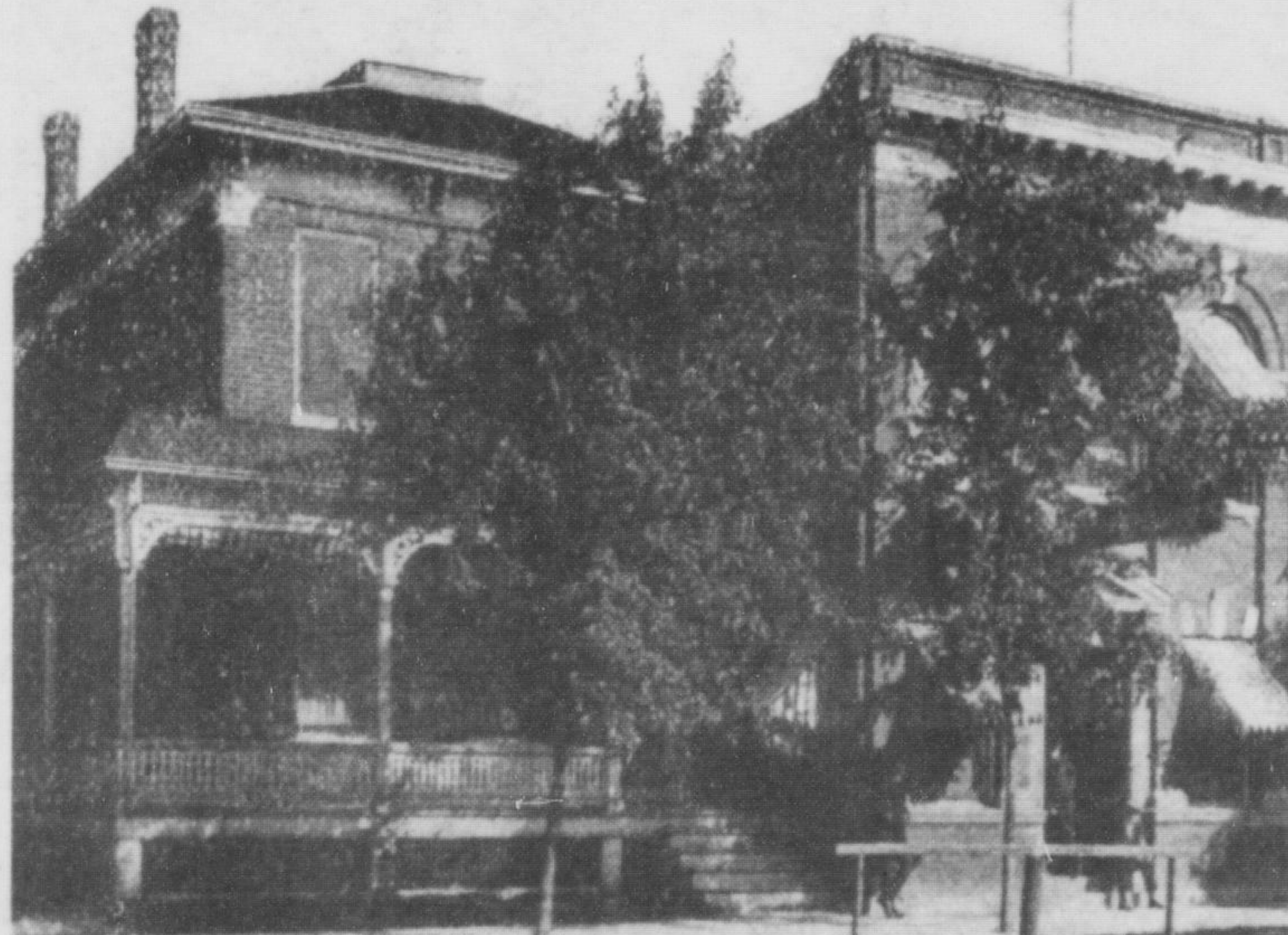
With areas of the province covered in snow after last week's storm, it's no wonder local residents are taking to the great outdoors — astride their snowmobiles.

But before you head out for a leisurely ride, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) remind riders to take several precautions.

While the OPP is best known for patrolling Ontario roads, the agency is also committed to saving lives on Ontario's trails and waterways. The OFSC, committed to proactive leadership in promoting safe and responsible riding on and off Ontario snowmobile trails, too, wants to do what it can to ensure local residents are safe on snow-covered trails.

And to ensure snowmobilers make it home, safe and sound, they're reminded to take charge of their safety and well-being by preparing their machine, gear and equipment before they rev up their sled. Here are a few tips for snowmobile enthusiasts, as set out by the OPP and OFSC.

- Before hitting the trails, service your sled. This will help prevent any breakdowns that can leave you and your passenger stranded.
 - Have a repair kit on board, one that is outfitted with the proper tools to address minor breakdowns.
 - Carry a first aid kit. Pre-assembled first aid kits are available at outdoor and sporting good stores, as well as on the web.
 - Acquire a survival kit, which can help make spending the day — or night — out in the cold much easier and safer. These, too, can be purchased at outdoor and sporting good stores.
 - Go high tech. A variety of devices, including Global Positioning System units, cellphones, satellite phones and SPOT Personal Trackers, can prove very useful, especially during emergency situations.
 - Call on your friends. Invite a friend to join you for a ride, as riding as a pair or in a group is safer than going solo.
 - Know your sled's safety features. It's always good to review your sled's safety manual. In addition, read the Safe Riders messaging on the OFSC web site, where you can obtain important safety information.
- These safety tips are designed to ensure you and your riding companions are safe on trails — no matter how experienced a rider you are. We sure hope you'll consider them.



Heritage Matters

In 1905, the two-storey structure on the right was built for the Bank of Hamilton. The bank manager and his family lived in the attached house (left). The Bank of Hamilton merged in 1924 with the Bank of Commerce. In 1957, a new building for the Bank of Commerce replaced both buildings. The bank building was recently sold and is currently Yogurty's and Jamba Juice. The property is located at 147 Main St. E.

— Submitted by Heritage Milton and Milton Historical Society

Letters welcome

The Canadian Champion welcomes letters to the editor. We reserve the right to edit, revise and reject letters.

Letters must be signed with first and last name, and the address and the telephone number of the writer included for verification purposes.

Email your letters to kmiceli@miltoncanadianchampion.com or send by mail to 555 Industrial Dr., Milton, Ont., L9T 5E1, or leave them at our office.

Our office hours are Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Letters

We must elect councillors who will minimize property tax hikes

Dear Editor:

Re: 'Town council must control spending, keep taxes low' in the January 29 *Champion*.

As a property tax-paying Miltonian for the last 37 years, I appreciate Councillor Rick Malboeuf keeping us informed of what he believes has been poor judgment displayed in the expenditure of our property tax dollars.

In my opinion, the concerns he expressed certainly have merit. Even with the slots revenue windfall, recently \$6 million, not available to other municipalities, Milton property tax increases consistently exceed the rate of inflation.

Councillors are entrusted to spend tax-

payers' hard earned dollars. They have the onerous duty and primary responsibility to ensure that the funds are spent wisely. We must elect councillors whose main focus is to control spending, hence minimizing property tax increases.

Councillors' email addresses and ward boundaries are readily available at the Town of Milton website, www.milton.ca. I encourage property tax payers to contact their respective local and regional councillors and express their concerns.

Property tax payers should remain informed and exercise their vote accordingly at the next municipal election.

Trig Smith
Milton

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555 Industrial Drive, Milton, Ont. L9T 5E1

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