

# Beware the added holiday gathering tip

*Karma always comes back to bite you, warns Ted Brown*

As we close in on the Christmas season, we find ourselves gathering with friends and colleagues to celebrate the holidays.

More often than not, those celebrations include good food, a few drinks and lots of camaraderie, usually at a local restaurant.

I belong to a couple of groups who gather before Christmas to enjoy the season at a local establishment.

One of our members takes command of the event and books the venue for dinner. She's proactive when it comes to booking the place.

It goes without saying, groups need to book their spaces early, as there's lots of competition for a location that can handle 15-20 people.

We nailed down a date and agreed to meet at the same place as last year. Group members and their spouses were set to go. Our group covers the cost of the members, but we ask that spouses cover their own tabs.

Two days before the event, our organizer called the restaurant to confirm our reservations. It was then she learned that a 20 per cent gratuity would be automatically applied to our tab by the restaurant, as we are a 'big group'. On top of that, those bringing spouses would have the 20 per cent added to their tab as well, even though they were paying separately.

This was two days before our event. Have you ever tried to find a restaurant



**TED BROWN**  
Column

for 20 people two days in advance? It ain't possible.

We begrudgingly stayed with the original venue.

I know I wasn't alone when it came to feeling like we'd been taken advantage of with a 20 per cent tip - a tip that we didn't even have any input into the amount.

Is the word 'TIP' an acronym for 'To Insure Proper Service'?

How can a patron at a restaurant be able to 'insure proper service' if the tip is arbitrarily included regardless of the level of service?

I'm not against tipping, far from it. I realize servers rely on their tips as part of their income. And I'm happy to tip, especially for good service. Even when it's questionable service, I will still tip, just not as generously.

Tipping is my way of saying 'Thanks for your good service - you've made this an enjoyable night.'

When the proprietor of the restaurant tacks on 20 per cent, not even allowing the patron any input to the level of service, it really makes me question if I want to return.

I'm a fan of the shop local campaign, and when The

Sidekick and I go out for dinner, we rarely leave Halton Hills.

We have our favourite locations, and some we attend to support local businesses.

There are a few that we don't attend, simply because they aren't our menu.

At our Christmas gathering, many members of our group expressed annoyance at the 20 per cent tip being added to the tab.

I don't think the owner of that establishment realizes the magnitude of tacking on that added 20 per cent.

Out of principal alone, The Sidekick and I won't be back to that location. One member of our group had a family party planned for the future. It's now moving to another location. Another person I spoke with is also moving her party elsewhere in January.

And it goes without saying, our group won't be returning for our Christmas celebration next year.

That's what happens when a proprietor gets too grabby, at a cost to their employees who are out the tips.

In this festive season, restaurants are booked to the rafters, with huge groups coming in, spending lots of money.

Is it really necessary to add another five per cent to the tab?

Just remember- karma always comes back to bite ya.

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## Trucks can't stop on a dime

Better education of truck drivers is no doubt needed, along with changes to the pay structure, as well as certain driving restrictions.

But the major reasons are overlooked.

For whatever reason, most car drivers appear to have an uncontrollable desire to drive in the left-

hand lane at 120 km/h or more.

Just look next time you go on Hwy 400, hardly anybody is in the right-hand lane. This causes people having to pass on the right, an absolute no-no in Europe.

This weaving in and out from lane to lane is what is causing most accidents, and the trucks cannot stop on a dime.

You get the picture. If you don't believe me,

just look at this: Deaths per billion kilometres driven in Sweden, the U.K., Ireland and Denmark average 3.75.

For Canada, the number is 6.2 and in the U.S. it's 7.1. Even Germany, with no speed limit in many stretches of the autobahn, is below us, at 4.9.

By the way, enforcing the speed limits might help as well.

Food for thought.  
**Svend Deman**

## COMMUNITY

### THE WAY WE WERE



Photo Esqueing Historical Society

Founded in 1895, what was once the Georgetown Public Library has undergone several transformations during its 122-year history. One such change was merging with the Acton Public Library in 1974 to become the Halton Hills Public Library. In 1960, the library was located in the former Congregational Church, as shown in this photo with a tree the staff had decorated for Christmas.

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