

PROFILES

with

Jennifer Barr



One of the most popular attractions at the Acton Fall Fair are those big chestnut beauties—the Carlsberg team. The championship Belgian draft horses, arrayed in an eight-horse hitch, pulling a replica of the original Danish carved beer drays, has become a thrilling event at all the best fairs and exhibitions.

Evan Hayter of Division Street, Acton, is the national director of advertising and promotion for Carling O'Keefe and the chestnut beauties come under his supervision. At least, their promotion is his responsibility, he doesn't actually shovel up behind them.

The Carlsberg team came into being in 1974 when Carling O'Keefe entered into a licensed

agreement with Carlsberg in Denmark to import their beer. The beer is now brewed in Canada and had grown to encompass 72 kinds of Carlsberg and two brands including the new Carlsberg Light.

When Carlsberg hit the Canadian scene a good corporate vehicle was needed to advertise it. What better than a horse drawn vehicle.

Draft horse hitches have long been an advertisement for beer dating from 18th century days in Europe and England when beer drays were drawn by the largest horses to be bred. It was only natural these proud teams in fancy harness came to advertise the brewer.

Denmark was no exception and the Carlsberg brewers were proud of their fine Belgians and heavy oak wagons.

Exact reproduction

In seeking to reproduce the original historical brewers dray, Carling O'Keefe approached Palmer Farms in Schomberg to select the best Belgian draft geldings money could buy. The Palmer farms are still headquarters for the 23 Carlsberg owned horses and some 40 head of Palmer owned horses who are often loaned for displays.

The wagons are superbly crafted replicas of

Danish brewery wagons made from solid oak and carved by Antonio Galati and J.J. Bourgaud. Embellished with the traditional Royal Danish Crown, carving of Neptune, horseheads, the Danish mermaid and sea horses, the wagon is a tribute to its craftsmen.

On top of the wagon are 17 carved oak beer barrels the same as those used at Carlsberg Breweries in Copenhagen—only empty.

The horses, all geldings, are perfectly matched sorrels with flaxen manes and tails and flashing white socks. They top a ton-weight each and often go up to 2,600 pounds. Belgians are the heaviest horses in the world and are desired for their solid flesh (who said this life was fair?).

The jingling black and silver harness was specially made by Samuel Freedman who adorned each harness with three crowns. Team drivers wear traditional costumes of white bell bottom trousers, green velvet jackets, and top hats.

The teams, of which there used to be three, one each in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta, are now strictly an Ontario sight and reduced to two. Rising costs have forced Carling O'Keefe to keep the teams where they can have the most exposure, which is 52 weeks a year down south here.

Even when the horses are resting in their stables, velvet-lined displays of harness and wagon are shown in malls and exhibits.

With seven men and two huge trucks per team it's easy to understand why Evan Hayter says the "initial investment was substantial". However, he goes on to add "it's such a popular item—it's the best known beer vehicle in Canada—the team and wagon is an extra plus, there is a direct ratio in sales increases whenever the team appears."

The birth of twin fillies to one of the Palmer mares this spring (the first ever recorded in Canada) in conjunction with the birth of Carling Light beer was a happy coincidence that proved a boom to the advertising department, too.

Fair the greatest

When Evan and Janet Hayter moved to Acton five years ago to raise their four sons, Corey 1½, Bradley 5, Christopher 6, and Evan the Third 10,

Evan was unaware of the Acton Fall Fair.

His first visit convinced him it was "the greatest thing I ever came across in my whole life". He was even more delighted to find the Carlsberg team in the parade.

He explains that not every request is honored with a Carlsberg appearance. The event is carefully checked out to make sure it's the kind of exhibit worthy of the team and that the maximum amount of people will be exposed to the subliminal advertising.

"We make sure we try to get something out of the (Acton) Fall Fair every year."

Evan is such a fair enthusiast, he brings 30 friends from Toronto out on Fair Saturday to enjoy the fair and host a few of the product Evan works so hard to promote.

He says he loves living in Acton and feels he comes home to the country.

Evan travels a lot keeping track of Carling O'Keefe promotions which include the Toronto Argonauts, the Quebec Nordiques and the Montreal Expos, so when he's home he really enjoys it.

Always the sports enthusiast he's involved in house league hockey and coaches a major rep team. It's also his fifth year of playing in the industrial league.

He says he also does his best to promote "his own brands" of beer. Although Evan has little to do with the Carlsberg team other than making sure their promotion is handled well, he says he feels a great pride in them.

Great for horse business

Carling O'Keefe's acquisition and promotion of their draft teams had a positive effect on draft horse breeding all over Canada. In the late '60s and early '70s draft horses were rapidly becoming extinct. There was little purpose to breeding the huge horses who had served for centuries in harness. Breed classes at the fairs

were experiencing fewer and fewer entries. It was quite an event when the Royal Winter Fair was able to attract even two six-horse-hitches for their evening horse show.

With Carling O'Keefe's interest in Belgians and the public interest therein, other companies followed suit creating an upsurge in draft horse breeding.

Suddenly breeders could command good prices for their horses, gelded males were in demand instead of ending up in dog food cans. The draft horse came of age and their numbers are reflecting new popularity, much to the spectators delight. The Royal Winter Fair now has more six-horse-hitches than it can cram into its arena.

As a former Belgian breeder in the starvin' sixties I watch the resurgence of draft breeding with a prayer of thanks to Carling O'Keefe and companies like them.



Evan Hayter

Acton board's only priority

A new Catholic school in Acton is the number one and only priority of the Halton Separate School Board parents were assured last Wednesday evening at the regular meeting of the board held at Robert Little school.

The board agreed last month to a recommendation by Acton parents to hold the August meeting in Acton so they could tour the facility, which will house 225 students this school year.

In answer to a question by a parent at the meeting, Chairman Robert O'Brien said Acton was the one and only priority of the board for the allocation of funds by the Ministry.

Earlier in the year the Acton parents were told they were a top priority on the board's request to the ministry for funds. The Ministry announced in July their decision to approve the Board's number one priority for a school in Oakville. No additional funds were available for Acton. The board later said the two schools were of equal priority.

Chairman O'Brien said they had sent a letter to Minister of Education Bette Stephenson requesting a delegation meet with her in mid or late September to discuss the need for a school in Acton. "Acton is a one school community presently housed in a building in excess of 100 years of age with inadequate washroom, administrative and program support facilities. Portables are also located on site. The building is leased from the (Halton) Board of Education," he explained in a letter.

Although the parents are optimistic about receiving funds during a September review, parent Mike McMahon asked the board what action they would take should they be turned down for funds and

whether they would consider a porta-pak school.

Chairman O'Brien said the board would have to look at all the alternatives but assured parents they would continue to fight for an Acton facility. Director of Education Cliff Brynes said he would not suggest a porta-pak unit since they may never get the additional funding for a building, once they are housed in a portable unit. Many of the parents were concerned over the fact the school is empty when board and ministry officials tour the facility. "Visualize the same facility when it is filled with 225 children plus staff, all working in cramped quarters under pressure," a mother told the board.

The board agreed to have the Ministry regional director to the school once it is opened in September.

Spokesman for the parents, Vince Whelan, said the board's concern and support for a new school in Acton was well demonstrated with their decision to hold the meeting in town. After touring the facilities the



St. Joseph's principal, Sean Briggs, was on hand when members of the Catholic board toured the school. Parents have been assured they are the board's number one and only priority.

meeting was then held at the Robert Little public school auditorium. "Some of us, myself included, let our actions rule our intentions and have at times been outspoken as far as the board is concerned," he said.

Since the matter is now out of board hands,

HALTON HILLS BLUE FINS

SWIM CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, September 4, 1980

at

CEDARVALE COMMUNITY CENTRE

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sat. sun. 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

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NO NAME macaroni & cheese dinner 7 1/2 oz. 3/.89

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