

An Acton celebration 'do'

There's a big 'do' going on in Acton this weekend.

Those countless, faithful, behind-the-scenes volunteers who have spent many hours will finally be able to see the fruits of their labours.

The 'do'? It's the celebration of the grand auditorium of the old Acton Town Hall, which will officially be opened!

It always makes my heart skip a beat when I see projects like this come together, where everything old is new again.

I was quite pleased to be invited to witness this celebration, as the project has been completed with a great deal of volunteer help and some wonderful 'gifts' from major donors in the form of materials, labour and equipment.

Being a journalist, one often witnesses these types of projects as they advance through the stages, from start to finish.

We see the diamond in the rough, the bare bones of the project, and at times, find ourselves looking at a project that appears to have insurmountable obstacles in the way of attaining the vision of those who are undertaking the project.

The first tour of the facility is often the most shocking, and the old Town Hall was no exception. The first time I set foot inside, it was pretty tired and decrepit.

But now it's standing proud and regal, just like the day it was built, back in the late 1880s.

While interviewing and researching for a feature on Acton Town Hall in the spring issue of *Sideroads*, I was able to experience the passion of those who put so much blood, sweat and tears into refurbishing the hall to be ready for this day.

Although countless people put Herculean efforts into the job, two stand out.

Heritage Acton committee chair Ron Birrell deserves a huge pat on the back for the tireless hours leading up to Saturday's celebration.

The modest, humble, understated Birrell has a God-given gift for bring-

Ted Brown



ing out the best in volunteers. Leading by example, he not only worked at the auditorium for months, but also worked behind-the-scenes, skillfully acquiring bits and pieces of equipment and supplies for the building, through his connections in the construction industry.

Another who deserves a pat on the back is Kathleen Dills, who has kept the media informed, as well as doing her bit as fund raising chair.

Both can be thankless jobs, but Kathleen's sunny personality has resulted in companies and individuals coming forward to offer money and in-kind gifts to further the project.

There are countless others who have done much too, but many chose to remain a part of that huge group of volunteers who simply got the job done.

The celebration begins Saturday at 1 p.m., when there will be an 'invitation only' reception where contributors to the project will be acknowledged for their generosity and dedication.

The main event will take place at 2:30, as the committee will kick open the doors for an open house, with ongoing activities all day, showcasing the hall and allow actors, musicians and dancers to strut their stuff on the newly refurbished stage.

I've seen the hall—it's beautiful, decorated in period colours and fabrics, just like the day it was opened.

As those people take to the stage, I'm sure there will be countless generations of previous Actonians, looking down from above.

And I have no doubt—they'll be smiling.

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