

EDITORIAL

with Traci Gardner

Canada shows overwhelming support for Albertans

For the past week our entire nation has been mesmerized, and shaken up as an all encompassing forest fire shifted course, crossed a main highway and jumped a river driving through sections of Alberta's Fort McMurray, which is the middle of oilsands country.

As the devastation of the fires unfolded before us, we as a nation were mortified by the magnitude of the destruction, and the seriousness of the immediate danger faced by firefighters and the 85,000 residents whom were ordered to evacuate last Tuesday. This was the largest scale evacuation in Ontario's history, even larger than the evacuation of Slave Lake in 2011.

Hundreds of evacuees were stranded in their cars along the south-bound route having run out of gas, or broken down, waiting for police or good Samaritans to bring gas.

Many other communities in Alberta have opened their homes, hotels, and camp grounds to the Fort Mac families, showing that in times of need we are all there for each other to help as much as we can. Every city across Canada has stepped up in many different ways to help those who are now displaced in Fort Mac – including our own. Many Acton businesses are doing what they can to help out. Sobeys and No Frills are matching their customer donations dollar for dollar. No Frills is putting in \$300,000 in cash donations as well as food, water and essential items, Tyler Transport is matching employee donations. The Georgetown Branch of the Halton Hills Public Library is partnering with Ace2Putt this weekend with an indoor mini golf with all proceeds going to the Canadian Red Cross Alberta Fires Appeal. Children have parted with toys, and games to donate to kids out there who fled with nothing, there's been lemonade stands set-up by kids wanting to help. This is just to name a very few locally.

A truck enthusiast group – '519 Trucks' has stepped up in a big way. A Facebook post was made by the club founder on Thursday asking for ideas of how we could all help, within hours a plan was made, dozens of group members had donated the use of their trailers and trucks, and meet-ups were arranged all over Southern and Southwestern Ontario, to accept donations of water, fuel, toiletries and other needed items as well as gift cards and gas cards. An Ontario trucking company donated a couple 18-wheelers with empty trailers, and offered to drive the filled trucks to Alberta. The 519 Truck club and their efforts have been featured on every Canadian news and radio station. What began as a few club members just wanting to help with some donations has turned into one of the largest personal donation drives Ontario has seen.

The out-pouring of support across the country is overwhelming. It's a reminder of the basic decency and compassion that unites Canadians when people are hit by such a disaster.

Fort McMurray has been a place of opportunity for many. Thousands of Canadians have moved to Fort Mac to work in the oil industry and earn a good living. It is a place in Canada where most of us have connections, its prosperity has been shared across our entire nation, and its devastation touches us all.

Alberta, like all of Canada is strong, it is resilient, but they need our help to be able to get these fires under control, and then looking forward, to rebuild the community that is a big part of us all. So, please if you haven't already, take the time to make a small donation, be it through the many businesses big and small who are accepting donations, or by simply texting the word FIRE to 30333 to make a \$10 donation directly to the Canadian Red Cross' Fort McMurray Fire relief Fund.



PET PALS: Angie Williams (left) and Jen Everson (right) from Global Pet Foods presented a cheque to their foster friend Shirley from Grand River All Breed Rescue with help from their Acton and area customers they were able to raise \$1374 from their annual 'Show us your heart' campaign. The funds raised will help homeless animals in need of finding forever homes.

– Submitted photos

It's not dorky – it's Pacer-ific

Yes, I know. You saw the car in Wayne's World movie... "Rock on Wayne". Yes, you're right. It was the car in the giant submarine sandwich commercial. It was actually the Sandwich King if you want to get technical. Yep... I have heard it's been called a fish bowl and the 1978 AMC Pacer was the 30/51 worst cars ever made according to Time magazine. I believe they referred to it as "This glassine bolus of dorkiness is the pathetic winner". I've heard them all. However, the most important thing is you may have seen one driving around town and it isn't your imagination...it's me.

I am the owner of the pathetic dorkiness winner car and I am loving it. About ten years ago, I informed the Dude I was giving him a decade's notice that when I turn 50 years old he was able to buy me either a '68 Mustang or an AMC Pacer. He thought I was insane I'm sure. Clearly what sane person would have those two as an option? However, he soon learned that I was seriously asking for a "fish bowl".

How hard could it be? He had no idea what he was about to embark on. He's a wheeler/dealer kind of guy and one who is al-



By
Angela Tyler

ways looking at and for classic cars. He took the Pacer challenge upon himself. Let's me explain the difficulty. In about seven years, he had found maybe three and none of them were in very good shape or very far away. One was in the Netherlands.

Then last fall, in an odd chain of events, a Pacer stored in a not too far away garage was made known to him and he gave it to me three years before I turned 50 because he didn't know where he could store it for that long without me knowing. I was in absolute shock when he surprised me, however, it didn't take me long to embrace my "pathetic dorkiness".

What I soon found out was that this quirky car had gone full circle. The big-small car as it was advertised and the one that was 30/51 worst cars ever made hummed along and the more I drove, the more people were smiling when they saw it or giving me the thumbs up. I even had a Harley-Davidson pass me on the highway, but slow down

along side of me to give me an approving nod and wave. I've had people stop to take pictures of it and last week some guy out of the blue came up to me in a parking lot to ask me if it was for sale. Dorkiness was now cool.

Oddly, before last fall, I had never been in a Pacer, let alone drive one. It was just one of those cars that I liked. Now, it just makes me feel happy driving it. A sunny morning and taking it for a drive qualifies the day to be "pacer-ific". I've coined the phrase.

Our kids love the car too. A week or so ago when I met them at the bus, I had the Pacer. Their driver looked at it and said "I haven't seen a Gremlin in a long time". It was like nails on a blackboard to me...argh calling it a Gremlin. Little J, in her six years of wisdom, noticed my shock and turned to her driver and politely clarified "it's a Pacer." It was a proud mommy moment.

I never used to really understand the big deal about driving "classic" old cars in the summer time, until now. Mine might not be seen by many as a classic but we are sure having a lot of pacer-ific fun with it.



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