

# COMMENT

## Then & Now



Above is the front view of the Georgetown Dairy at 29 Main St. Georgetown in 1950 which was formerly the Toronto Suburban Railway station. In recent years it was home to the TD bank and now sits for lease.

Then photo courtesy of Esquesing Historical Society/Now photo Amy Douglas



## What was the date on that receipt?

Since the deadline for filing income tax has just passed us, I've been up to my eyeballs in papers, T-slips and countless bits of paper.

I'm one of those people who enters the tax season with great intentions only to find myself scurrying like a hyperactive squirrel on speed trying to get them in before the deadline.

Having said that, I managed to get my tax return in just under the wire, and my accountant had it back in record time - even before the deadline.

During that assembling the documents phase, I had to review a stack of receipts.

When one runs a farming operation, it is in fact a business and any receipt that can be used as an expense deduction is golden.

Now it might be my age, or my glasses need to be updated, but I find those receipts from a debt or credit card transactions are virtually impossible to read, being so tiny.

And equally annoying is the fact the date is not printed in any particular position on the receipt, nor in any standard format.

A receipt that is a couple of years old is of no value to me, yet they do get mixed into the wrong files at times. And when I have to go through them, it takes time to locate the date.

For example, I recently purchased some supplies for the animals. The date on the debit receipt was printed 04/18/17, meaning April 18, 2017. It was also printed at the top of the receipt, and the time of the sale, and business name are all in that same place.

It is perfectly formatted. Every bit of info I need is at the top of the receipt.

Especially the date it's in the same order we say it, April 18, 2017.

Then I picked up another receipt. The date is at the bottom of the receipt, with the numbers 17/18/03. I had to study the numbers, before I realized it was March 18, 2017.

Who puts the year first? When I was in

school, the date was spoken Day/Month/Year, and also written that way across the top of the chalkboard, like the first example above.

And this date is at the very bottom of the receipt? Again, why not keep it standardized?



TED BROWN

In many papers we deal with, there's a specified format for official documents, like legal and municipal papers. They're in a standard format so people can read them easier.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), enacted in 2005 by the provincial government, certain guidelines must be observed to make the documents easier to read.

Things like font size, contrast and colour of the type, not to mention headings, dates and To and From are specified in the Act.

And I truly think debit and credit card receipts should be included.

Not only would it make them easier to sort, but we could read them a whole lot faster.

It seems the world is trying to pack as much information into the tiniest space on packaging, instructions and receipts, yet many people can hardly read them.

Last week, I was administering a drug to one of the sheep, and to read the directions for the dosage, I had to take a photo of the text printed on the bottle with my smart phone, then zoom in on it to read the directions.

It's the same with over the counter drugs. One can hardly read the type.

Will the date format ever become standardized? I'm not holding my breath. The money world seems content to let it remain illegible.

But I'm pretty certain, had my receipts dates been printed in a standard format, my income tax would certainly have been in earlier this year.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

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