

EDITORIAL

with Dawn Brown

Supporting the community you live in

This Sunday will kick off the 26th year for the Leathertown Festival in Downtown Acton. The family street festival, held for the first time in 1991, will once again line Mill Street with a variety of vendors, boast three stages with a long list of entertainers—including children’s entertainers Sharon and Bram. (While Sharon and Bram have been entertaining children for decades, for those of us raised in the 70’s and 80’s songs like “Skinnamarink” and “One Elephant” were staples growing up.)

The Leathertown Festival is a celebration of our town’s history, our roots in the leather industry that go all the way back 1842. This festival acknowledges the tanneries that were a major part of this town like Abraham Nelles who owned Acton’s first tannery, which was sold 1856 to George L. Beardmore. The Beardmore & Co. Tannery remained in operation until 1986, though it had been bought by Canadian Packers 1944, but still operated under the Beardmore name.

While remembering our roots, our history is important, the value events like these bring to our sense of community is immeasurable. For some, they grew up going to the Leathertown Festival with their families, and now they in turn bring their own children to the festival, and one day those children may bring their families. These are the traditions and memories we create that will stay with us for generations, tiny threads woven into the intricate history of our town.

Acton is a town that understands the value of community. Time and again the evidence is written in the pages of this very newspaper. The compassion and generosity the town showed when people came together to help a local family who lost everything in a fire. The community groups who worked tirelessly to help bring three Syrian families to our town. Three community groups who pulled together to gather community support for Access to Arden, then again when those same three groups recently organized a scavenger hunt to give back to the community and say thank you. And the list goes on.

On the Leathertown Festival website, it states that Acton could be the last true small town in the GTA, and perhaps that helps to make our town unique. But events like the Leathertown Festival, Fall Fair, Winter Carnival—and more—also play an integral part in what makes our town, our community unique. We’re lucky to have them to share them with our families and each other. We’re fortunate to live in a town where there are people willing to come together and put these events on, volunteers who take time out of their own busy lives to help make these events run smoothly. If we want to continue to have community events like Leathertown, to continue to build on the community and history of our town, then we as residents need to show our support by attending them.



RESERVOIR GETS REVAMPED: A major expansion of the reservoir, at the top of Churchill Road North, has been completed. New grass, trees and planting beds have replaced the dirt, concrete and construction materials that dominated the site during the work. - Les Schmidt photo

Construction delays do not justify parking lot 'Rushing' Roulette

Traffic in Acton is an endless conversation. Even though most people don't have "payday" weekly cheques anymore, the traffic in downtown Acton on a Thursday or Friday afternoon is still the same after 40 years. In the downtown core, amidst empty store fronts and despite the lack of a payday, the traffic is still insanely busy. Cars still park downtown and car doors still fly open unexpectedly when you drive by.

Although we have side-streets and alternate routes, we are really a one east to west road and a one north to south road kinda town. Main Street/Highway 25 and Mill Street/Highway 7 are what most people are familiar with, and even if you are more familiar with the side streets, frankly, sometimes by the time you re-route it's just easier to wade through the congestion.

Congestion is one thing, construction is another, and construction pretty much cripples this town's traffic. In the spring, Mill Street began construction to the west of the four corners. It's still limping along. Then in the prime of summer, the junction between east and



By **Angela Tyler**

west has been torn to shreds. I am not complaining about the construction or when said construction is occurring. What I am complaining about is how we are handling this disruption to our sheltered lives.

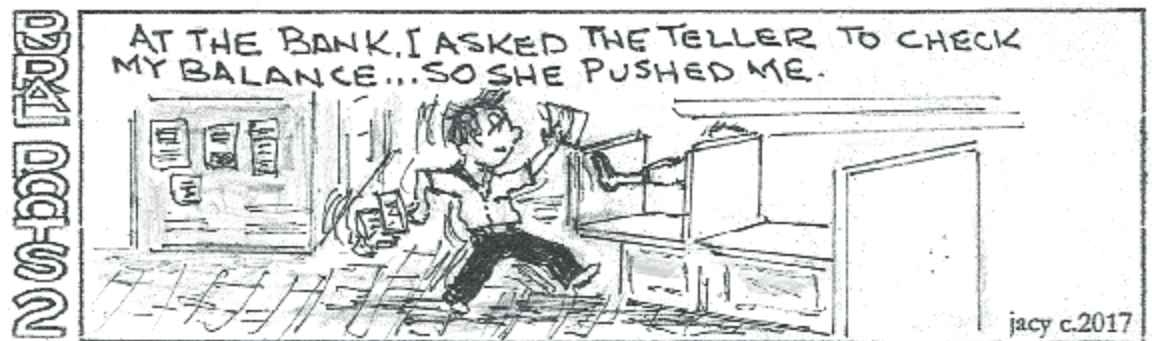
Many communities not too far from us have construction that is far more invasive and much more extensive than what's going on in our town. The construction is for our benefit—improving roads in some cases and in others bringing our cabling into current standards or giving our town increased water supply for our growing community. All of these situations we benefit from despite a short-term annoyance.

But back to the junction that connects east to west Acton. Several times a day the traffic is stopped for trains passing by and GO trains loading and unloading. We deal with it because it's a train. However, when it's construction, we get whacky.

We race up side streets only to find that access is closed as well. When re-routing fails we resort to racing through a parking lot where pedestrians are, and they are unprotected. Has anybody noticed the ridiculous number of impatient people who re-route through the TD/Shoppers Drug Mart plaza instead of waiting a few extra minutes?

There is such an increase of traffic, the signs that used to advertise the retailers have now been turned around and hand written warnings for drivers to heed speed limits and watch for pedestrians in their place. One day, when I was trying to leave the plaza after shopping at one of the retailers, I stopped to watch the traffic. It was insane.

We need to take a moment to reflect on what we do as drivers. We have several large scale construction projects in Acton that are probably going to affect traffic. A few of these projects might last into the next year. Isn't it better to slow down, be patient and in the end reap the rewards instead of trying to play Russian Roulette at the hands of the steering wheel?



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CONTACT US:

379 Queen Street East
Acton, Ontario L7J 2N2
Tel: 519-853-0051
Fax: 519-853-0052

E-MAIL:

General: thenewtanner@on.aibn.com
(including Advertising and Circulation)
Editorial: tannereditor@bellnet.ca

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