

# WALTER IS A BIT OF A 'CLOSET STREET RACER'

HE LIKES OUR MUSTANG, WRITES TED BROWN



TED BROWN  
Column

Last weekend the Sidekick and I embarked upon one of our regular treks to Ottawa.

Her father Walter resides in the nation's capital, and she visits him for a weekend every three months or so.

Most times I go along, or she sometimes takes along her grandchildren to keep her company.

It also allows them an opportunity to visit their great-grandfather.

During her winter visits she often travels alone, taking the train since Ottawa can be unpredictable in the winter with snowstorms dropping in without much warning.

A year ago, she drove home through a snowstorm, with her granddaughter in tow - it was a bit unnerving for them.

I usually stay home during her winter visits, to hold down the fort and keep on top of the snow removal around home.

Walter lives in assisted housing and requires help with his mobility, but he's

always happy to see us arrive.

Up until a few years ago we'd take him out for dinner when we visited, to give him a treat.

But with his mobility issues that has become more difficult, so we sometimes pick up Swiss Chalet take-out, or something like that, to enjoy back at his nursing home.

Although we don't go for dinner anymore, we still take him for a drive around Ottawa, something he enjoys a great deal.

One trip I drove the Mustang for the weekend, and we took Walter for a tour, seated in the passenger seat with the Sidekick in the back.

We drove around Ottawa, as he took in the sights around him.

At one point, he commented how "this Mustang doesn't seem very fast."

I knew he was baiting me.

Geez, I was taking it easy so I wouldn't shake him up too much.

The Sidekick had told me on numerous occasions how she didn't really enjoy riding with her dad back when he was still driving.

It seems he had a heavy foot.

I let his comment pass.

But after more comments here and there, I smiled to myself - it was time.

I signalled and pulled



The Grand Trunk Station in Acton was erected in 1908. Note the roof of the Beardmore Warehouse in the background, which is now the Olde Hide House. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of Halton Hills (Esquesing township).

EHS photo

out onto the on-ramp to the open highway.

And I punched it.

I could sense Walter grinning from ear to ear as the Mustang howled in response and he was settled back into the seat with the acceleration.

Once we levelled out to cruising speed, Walter had to admit "it sounds pretty good, and it has lots of guts, too ..."

Of course, the captive, white-knuckled Sidekick in the back seat didn't share our enthusiasm.

She doesn't enjoy any bursts of acceleration quite as much as the two of us in the front seats - even after I pointed out to her that we

hadn't yet reached the legal speed limit.

I learned something that day. It seems Walter is a bit of a closet street racer. He likes speed.

Since that fun-filled drive, whenever we prepare to travel to Ottawa, we go through the same discussion - which vehicle are we taking?

Do we take her Escape or my F150 pickup?

The truck gives such great vision and comfort travelling down the highway, but at the cost of fuel economy, compared to the Escape.

But being four-wheel-drive, the F150 gives a sense of security if one of those

Ottawa snowstorms should drop in unannounced.

And there's the Mustang - our fair-weather vehicle.

We generally make our decision which vehicle we're driving at the last minute, after studying the weather forecasts in the Ottawa area.

But when we arrive, I've made it the Sidekick's responsibility to tell her dad which vehicle we've

brought.

I just can't stand to see that expression of disappointment on the poor man's face when we arrive in the Escape or F-150, and he realizes a sobering fact.

There'll be no street racing in Ottawa this weekend.

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