

EDITORIAL

With Tim Morgetroyd



Acton crime rate falls

That old expression "No news is good news" had a loud sweet ring two weeks ago. I was phoning police for any reports of local crime they had, and after listening to papers being shuffled and examined at the other end of the line the answer was: "Nothing."

I waited for the inevitable "but" only to realize that this particular "nothing" didn't mean nothing big, nothing for the front page, or nothing except something not worth printing — like a recent plugging of toilets in a park washroom by children.

During the five weeks I've worked at this paper I've gone to the police station in Georgetown Monday mornings, waiting an hour or more for two or three reports of scratched cars or a broken window while the Georgetown reporters scribble furiously in their notebooks about assaults, car thefts, or my favourite: 1,500 pizza boxes stolen from a pizza restaurant (someone with a cardboard fetish, or a new pizza business?).

The Acton crime reports have made the other reporters grin, chuckle, and laugh out loud, but I've never been embarrassed — and never will be — by a lack of crime.

A little more than a decade ago Acton was, when measured by population, among the murder capitals of not just Ontario but all of Canada. That was during the very prosperous 1970s when Ontario had a surplus instead of a debt. Today, with our president of the Chamber of Commerce announcing area business is hanging on by its fingernails, there was a week that saw the town inside a crime-free bubble.

This demonstrates crime is not the tail of the economy, wagging when things are bad, as some people never tire of insisting. Bad economic times don't mean instant crime waves or triple the number of wife beatings, and the best economic times don't mean police stations can be mothballed.

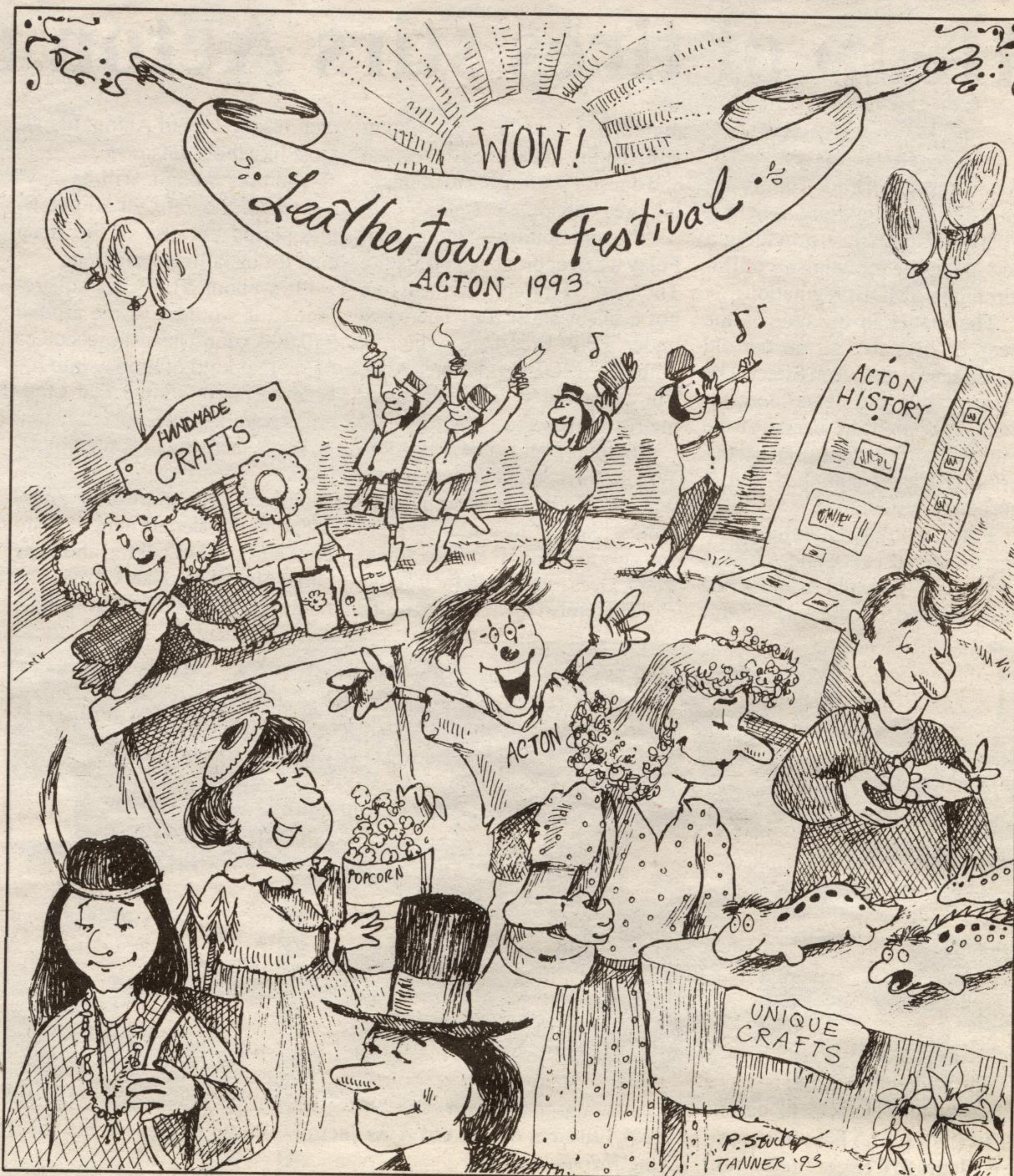
We deserve to live in a totally crime-free zone and that doesn't mean accepting even scratched cars as being inevitable, or the new "the economy made me do it" version of the "the devil made me do it" alibi.

For one semester during my college journalism course, I worked on the police desk of a Toronto newspaper and heard the crimes reported on the police scanners as soon as the police on the street did. I was working Christmas morning when, just about the time children should have been opening their presents, a report came in that a little girl had just called police to tell them her mother's boyfriend was beating up her mother. If that hadn't happened I certainly wouldn't have been embarrassed by the lack of crime that night, or other reporters laughing.

I still believe in getting the best and fastest coverage of any crime that happens and it does feel good to beat the competition, but I'll never be embarrassed by a lack of crime.



MEOW! Peter Sladek, 2, of Acton, became a cat instantly at last Wednesday's annual Summer Carnival at the Community Centre. Junior leader Andrea Butterworth did the honours. (Doug Harrison photo)



LETTERS

Downtown snubbed

To the Editor,

As a downtown store owner and citizen of Acton, I would like to express my views on the Leathertown Festival held on Sunday, Aug. 8. The idea was great, but I'm afraid that a lot of people were left very upset.

It has always been my understanding that the purpose of the Tourism Committee was to promote THEIR community as a whole, not just selected areas. The downtown area of Acton, which is the heart and soul of this town, was left completely out in the cold on Sunday.

Why were the businesses of this town not asked to be a part of the celebrations by asking if they would like to set up a booth on the Festival grounds? Outside vendors were asked to participate, why not

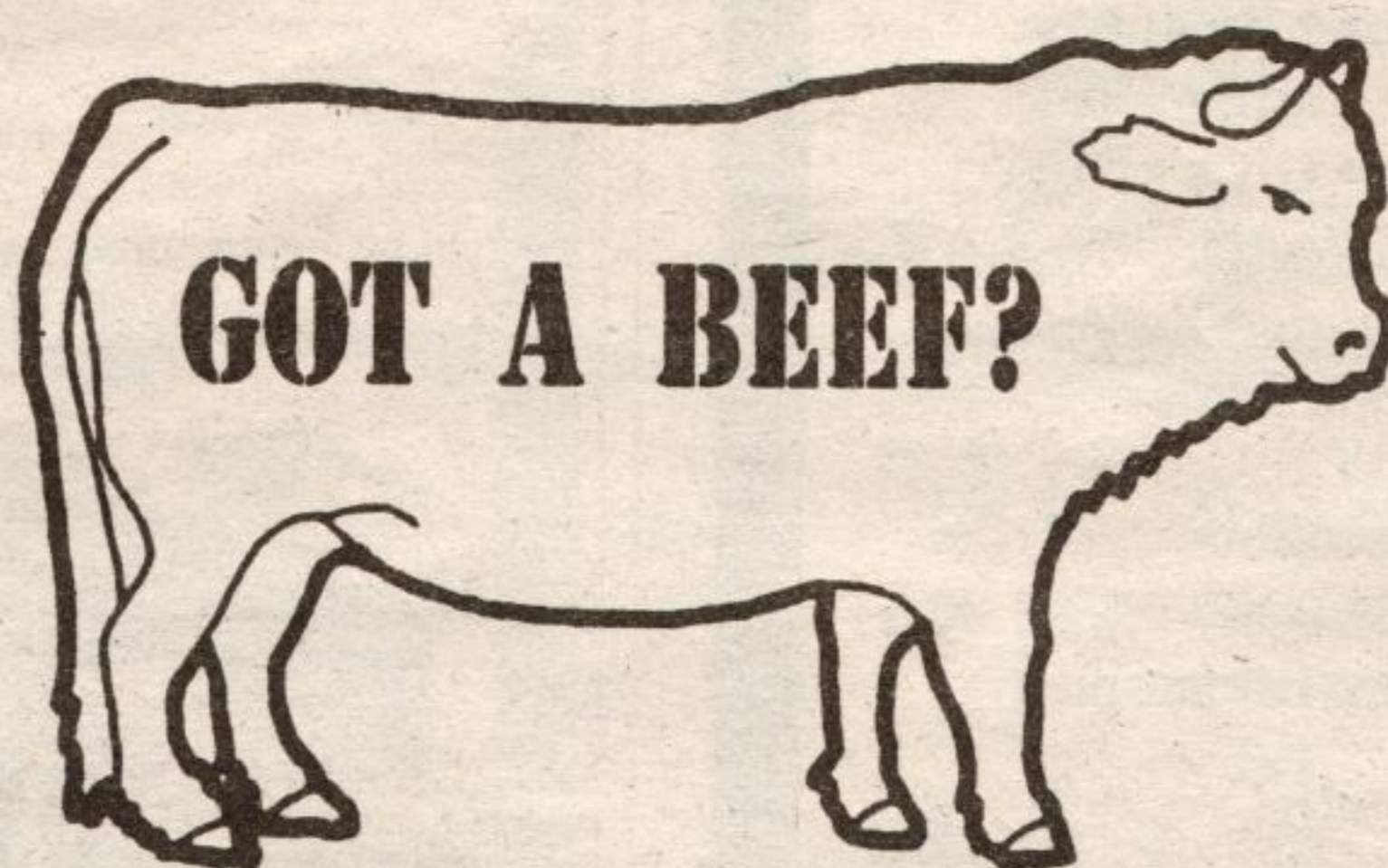
us? They were asked to advertise the event by hanging up posters, and even there, some stores were not even approached.

Those stores that did have a member of the committee approach them were encouraged to hold a sidewalk sale to get involved. They were told that a bus tour was coming through town and we would all be part of it. Well, the bus toured all over Acton, but never came through the downtown. All the festivities were held on the Hide House parking lot and all that we as store owners provided for the day was a place for people to park their cars.

There were so many vehicles parked downtown, that those of us who did set up a table outside, couldn't be seen. A lot of us went to a lot of trouble and expense to provide good bargains for the public and it was all for nothing.

The next time we are handed a few balloons and told to have a great day, I know where I will be. At home with my family.

*A downtown merchant
(Name withheld on request)*



Write a letter to the Editor!

Just drop it off at our 7 Mill St. E. offices, fax it to us at 853-5040 or mail it to P.O. Box 150, Acton L7J 2M3.

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THE ACTON TANNER is published weekly on Wednesdays by Wicklow Hills Publishing Co. Inc. at 7 Mill Street, East, Acton, Ontario. L7J 1G8. Mailing address: P.O. Box 150, Acton, Ont., L7J 2M3. Telephone: 519-853-5100. Facsimile: 853-5040. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Ideas expressed herein are those of the author only.

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