

BIA summer student takes pride in Acton's downtown

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Christine O'Leary takes pride in Acton's downtown. Just admire the work of the flower beds, hanging baskets and cleanliness of the sidewalks.

The Acton resident is in her second year working for the Business Improvement Association (BIA) to keep the downtown area clean and attractive.

She's often seen watering plants and sweeping in front of downtown shops. But there's more to this job than what people see.

O'Leary's day is nearly half done when the first commuters make their way through town. The 25 to 30-hour-a-week job also sees her weeding, re-planting uprooted plants and digging for garbage in the flower beds.

Then the broom comes out for some sweeping along Mill and Main Streets under the watchful eye of the merchants.

"Sometimes it's a difficult position to fill. Although you work independently, every merchant oversees much of her work. But she did a very good job last year watering planters and the hanging baskets. She's eager, industrious and dependable," says BIA member Dan Dolliver.

The job, you could say, has been designed for the 19-year Bishop Reding graduate.

O'Leary loves the outdoors — hiking, walking along trails and soccer — and no longer considers herself strictly a big-city person. She enjoys the passersby who

offer advice on the care of plants, while others will just admire their beauty.

"I like hearing them (the people) tell me the flowers look good. It makes me feel good knowing they appreciate what I'm doing," says O'Leary, who will attend Ottawa's Carleton University in September to study law. "It's something good for the town and for me."

The job takes an independent and responsible person who can

work virtually unsupervised. And while most small towns have a works department to do this type of work, Acton's BIA pays for O'Leary's salary.

And O'Leary does her part to satisfy the downtown merchants.

"They're so nice," she praises. "They offer me coffee and compliment my work. They know it's hard, so it's nice working for them, knowing they appreciate it."

"I like being able to say I do this — keeping the town looking nice."



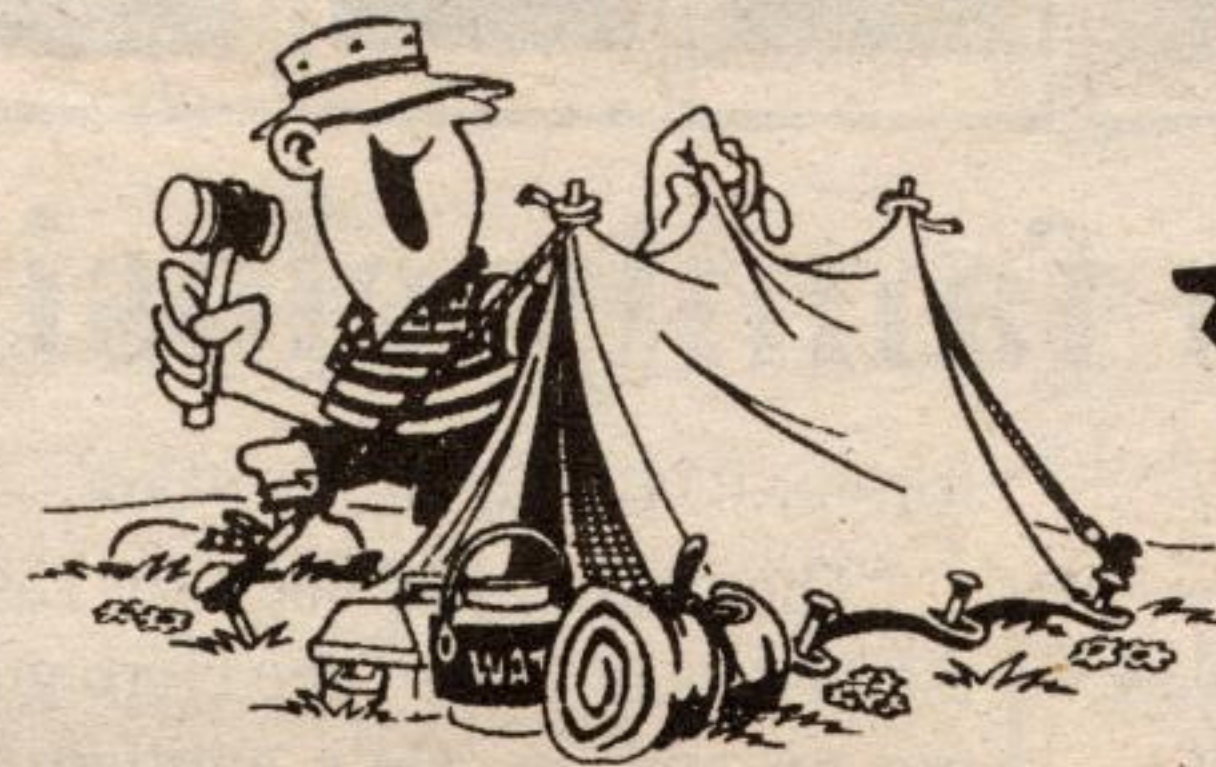
GOOD WORK! Acton's Christine O'Leary tends to a flower bed on Main Street. The 19-year-old has been hired by the local BIA to water the hanging baskets, flower beds and sweep the downtown core through the summer. (Doug Harrison photo)

Wading pool open for summer

The wading pool at Prospect Park is now open! Only two feet deep at the deepest end, the pool is great for young children. The pool is open Monday to Friday, 1:30 to 4, and weekends from 12 to 4.

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