

Clark Somerville working to resolve Acton parking issue

Continued from page 1

Town of Halton Hills at 15 Main Street North is in the process of becoming a public parking lot, allowing for 55 new parking spaces for downtown shoppers. Grumbings however, have been heard from shoppers and merchants that would like to see parking returned to Acton's main thoroughfare, grumbings that Regional Councillor Clark Somerville has heard and is working to alleviate. He is asking Council to reconsider the parking ban in a motion put forward on the agenda of the

November 8 Council meeting, asking for the return of parking spaces on the south side of Mill Street, between Willow Street and Main Street. "I'm also asking Council to continue to look at the issue of accessible parking downtown for people who have mobility issues," he outlined.

Councillor Somerville is the Council representative for the Business Improvement Association (BIA), which invited downtown merchants to their October 6 meeting to provide input into what could be done about the parking

situation. "We asked the merchants if adding the eight spots back on the south side would solve the problem. Then we asked Town staff to make sure that it would work, and still have the safety considerations and improved sightlines that were needed," explains Councillor Somerville. Those sightline considerations were especially important in an area where he says pedestrians have been struck by cars because of poor visibility around parked cars. "This is a provincial highway," he points out. "There are an average of 12,000 vehicles

per day travelling on that road."

BIA Chairman John McNabb applauds the motion going to Council on November 8. "The idea was to make it safer, with the idea that parking would be quicker and easier to find after the traffic flow sped up," he explains. "Our understanding is that this will satisfy the majority of the merchants." He also argues that "Acton businesses are not drive throughs. There's plenty of off street and side street parking in the downtown area for people who don't want to walk more than a block."

Tea and sympathy at The Front Parlour

By ANN KORNUTA

"How do you take your tea, Ms. Kornuta?" Nelson asked me seconds after I entered their family run boutique. "Tea? Sure. I take three sugars and hold the cream," I say and I am immediately handed an exquisite china cup that would do justice at a formal English tea party. I immediately feel welcomed and at home.

I am shopping at Milton's newest home décor and gift outfitting store, The Front Parlour.

Eight weeks ago Dina Elliott and her husband Nelson opened their lavish storefront on 86 Main Street East offering a new concept in home decoration and design. They originally operated from their home, providing custom gift and home décor to private clients. Dina explains "It took us a year to find something that would work space wise."

"We wanted to create a relaxing experience for our customers," Nelson says. "We have a kid's corner so families can have their kids watch video tapes and play while the parents shop.

It's very spacious as well. If a store is comfortable to be in, we feel people will come back"

Decorative candles and sensational hand made soaps, speciality custom leather furniture, and paintings from local artists go into making the shop a cornucopia of delights. Every detail is closely looked at and rearranged until Dina and Nelson

are happy with the finished appearance.

"Almost everyone we meet here, we meet on a first name basis. Almost everyone leaves his or her contact information since not everyone is coming to buy what is on the floor. We can do any kind of packaging that they like."

Many of their gift arrangements feature a soft and wonderful smell of scented soap. Dina is responsible for her own Goat's Milk soap line offered exclusively in the front parlour she has called The Winifred Line. "Each bar of soap is made by me in my own kitchen from my own recipe," Dina explains. The soaps themselves are one of the high-

"ALMOST EVERYONE WE MEET HERE WE MEET ON A FIRST NAME BASIS"

lights of the shop and are popular gift ideas.

Their strength is their customer service and I found out it is customary for Dina and Nelson to offer tea to everyone who comes into their store in hopes of making them feel more invited. Dina says, "We have a rule that as long as someone is in the store we don't close up. Sometimes we are here on a weekend until 7:30 with our clients helping them choose gift packages or planning their special event."

Some of the unique services Dina and Nelson offer at the Front Parlour are:

The Corporate gift program- Where Dina and Nelson do extensive research

on a company to assemble the "Just Right" Gift package.

Event Planning- May it be a wedding or a small birthday party, Dina and Nelson will be there to select just the right centrepiece.

The Dog House Club- Have a problem remembering those milestones? Take the worry out of the stress of "what to get" and sign up for The Front Parlour's Dog House Club. After registering with The Front Parlour you will receive an email notice two weeks in advance with a list of possible gift ideas that would best suit the event.

Come check out the great smells, sights and gift ideas The Front Parlour. If you don't find what you are looking for the Elliotts will do what they can to find what you need.



PHOTO BY ANN KORNUTA
Nelson and Dina Elliott along with daughter Jessica and their family dog, Toby offer a taste of the Front Parlour's style with a few of their favourite things from around the store.

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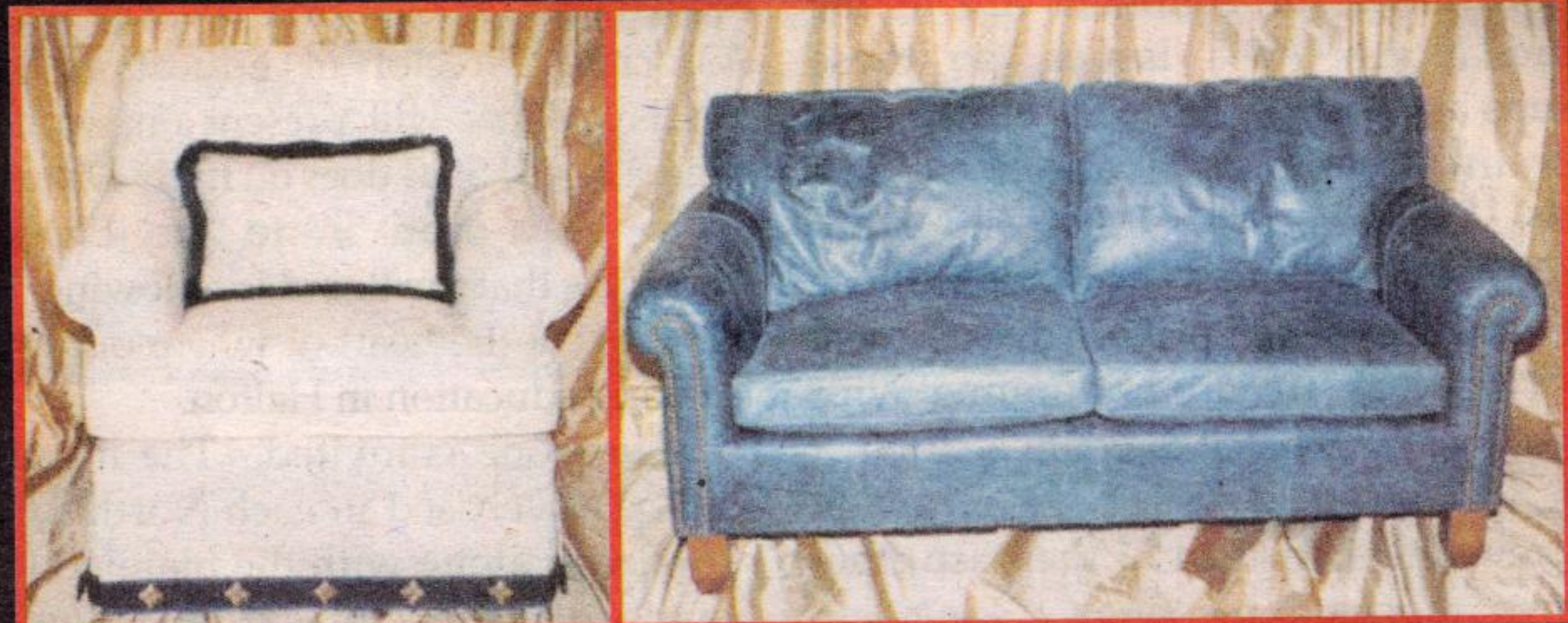
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