

# GRAPEVINE



## Volunteers needed

A lack of volunteers could force the Acton BIA (Business Improvement Area) to cancel this year's edition - the 8th - of the popular Leathertown Festival. Organizers have issued a plea for volunteers willing to help plan the event - the 8th - that brings approximately 5,000 to downtown Acton for a day of food, fun, and special events.

Unfortunately, the Festival committee is down to four or five members - half the number needed - and the call is out for people to solicit sponsors, do advertising and publicity, organize vendors, book and schedule entertainment and handle rental equipment.

Volunteers can expect to meet once a month from now until July and then more frequently until the August street event. A special meeting will be held Wednesday (Feb. 24) at 7:30 p.m. in the Legion boardroom for anyone who wants more information or wants to sign up.

## Break a leg!

Good luck to the Acton High school students who will perform a student-written play next Friday in the Sears Drama Festival in Burlington. The drama, written by Beckie McCoig and Matt Schiller - deals with adolescent issues including peer-group pressure, pregnancy and drinking and driving.

## Congrats, Captain

Part-time Acton firefighter Dale Levere is now Captain Levere after a recent promotion from acting-captain. Levere replaces Acton's Herb Dodds who retired last year after 40 years of volunteer fire fighting. Levere, who has been a volunteer fire fighter in Acton for 14 years, works at Blue Circus Aggregates (formerly UAL).

## Sequins and sweat

The routines are being finalized and the sewers are creating el-

ephants, lions and tigers as the Acton Figure Skating Club gears up for its Circus Extravaganza - a mini carnival slated for April 1 at the arena.

"It will never be as good as the old carnivals - they cost between \$10,00 and \$20,000 to stage - but it will be a great night of skating," said ASFC president Bev Bailie who promised that people will be "surprised" by the single performance show.

A competition this week among the Club's junior skaters will determine who skates highlighted performances during the show and who will be the ringmaster.

## Still with skating....

The Club's new 9-member synchronized (formerly called precision) skating team has been invited to entertain (weather permitting) during the Acton Agricultural Society's Winter Fair on February 27 at Prospect Park. The 9-member squad will also entertain at the Cystic Fibrosis Skate-a-thon at the Acton arena next month.

## Successful sale

Kudos to all those who helped raise an astounding \$582 at Friday's bake sale at Robert Little school to help pay for an electric wheelchair for Grade 3 student Stephanie Brock.

Organizers Toni Loewen and Ann Hamilton were shocked with the generous support and donations of money and treats from teachers and parents.

"There was a line-up down the hall and people off the street were making donations, including the mail lady, who paid \$20 for two cupcakes," said Loewen, adding they were "shocked" when they added up all the money.

So far, the school has raised approximately \$1,000 which is half of what the Brock's need as their contribution to pay for the \$8,000 chair. Stephanie and her parents are overwhelmed and grateful for all the school and community support.



Acton had a strong ladies' ball team in the 1920s, pictured here in a photo loaned by Don Ryder. Among those playing were the Mason twins, Lottie and Hazel, who are in the front and back rows respectively. Marguerite (Ryder) Spielvogel is in the middle, Don thinks, but other identities are unknown. Any ideas?

## Conning the elderly isn't sporting

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY  
The New Tanner

There are times when the news business makes me sick or so angry I want to commit a crime.

When a cop called with the information a thief hit a Georgetown Seniors residence three times in the past week, after hitting one on Elizabeth Drive in Acton a week ago, I saw red.

We know the man knocked at a private residence in Acton supposedly looking for a specific woman an hour or so before going to Elizabeth Drive. That resident was smart and kept the chain on her door so he had no opportunity to force his way inside.

She was also quick enough to question why he was at her door if the woman he was seeking lived in a seniors' apartment.

I have no idea how he gained entry to the Sargent Road apartments. Possibly there is no lock on the main door. More likely, he waited until someone was leaving or punched buzzers until some trusting soul opened that front door for him. Nor do I know what was stolen. I just know it appears the man was specifically targeting seniors and that infuriates me.

The seniors in these apartments aren't wealthy. They may be able to get by but they can't afford thefts of any amount of cash let alone property of any account.

These things also destroy their confidence. Besides making them fearful in their own homes, they are often embarrassed in case they are perceived as stupid to have been taken advantage of by someone.

It's the mind set that disturbs me so. At one time we saw our seniors as people to be looked up to. Sure, if you lived with them you might have more question of their infallibility, but in general you at least respected them. Now kids

make fun of them or fear them and con artists see them as a source of income. A favourite source of income, it seems, because they are picked on so frequently.

My own father is probably luckier than many because we don't get many attempts at home repairs and scams of that sort. Possibly that's because he's male. Of course, he always does his own repairs too, so he's harder to fool about what does or doesn't need fixing. Even legitimate repairmen have been sent packing because he wanted to do the work himself.

What really annoys him are the telephone calls with apparently no one on the other end. He's threatening to find the whistle I used with my gym classes. God help the caller if he ever does. He'll probably be deaf for life if Dad blows that thing in his ear.

I keep telling him he can relax about it. It's only someone trying to find out whether the house is empty. If it is occupied they won't try breaking in. That doesn't soothe him, of course, and I don't know if it's true. You hear lots of horror stories that contradict that theory, but mostly in large centres.

Telephone scammers also have a tough time at our house because of Dad's hearing problems. He does have a volume adjustment on the receiver but if I'm there, he never answers the machine.

I guess the calls that annoy me most are the telemarketers. You know the type. Bright, chirpy voices, wanting to speak to Mrs. .... I shake the dickens out of them by saying my mother doesn't live here any more. When they try to find out when to call back, I don't make it easy and say she's in a nursing home. I'm blunt. "She won't be back."

Usually that stops them. Which is fine because I don't want to buy vacuums, new windows, get the carpets cleaned or cash in my RRSPs. I wouldn't think of doing any of those things by phone anyway unless it's

with a business I know and trust and all I'm doing is making an appointment.

One type of call we've had that surprised me were from bank representatives calling to remind Dad his GIC was due for renewal. First, why would they call him? What's wrong with a letter? Second, who calls at 10 p.m.? Why not during regular business hours?

When he went to the bank and conducted his business in person as usual the caller's information was correct so we have to assume the call was legitimate. But it still leaves me questioning the timing of the call.

Since it was a bank, I suppose I shouldn't wonder at anything. For all their protestations about "helping" and "serving" their customers a recent report on bank charges shows they say one thing and do another. The additional cost of banking by human teller instead of bank machines, catches mostly seniors, the report says. And seniors, because they are so often on fixed incomes, are least likely to have the extra pennies to cover those costs.

I'd like to see banks in general straighten out their records. My husband's been dead over two years, yet I still get letters personally addressed to him suggesting he convert his RRSP funds with their bank. These come from several banks and an assortment of trust companies so the guilt is spread around. Actually, I suppose our bank sold a list of customers to someone else and that's how I get this unwelcome mail.

What I'd really like would be a ban on spreading lists around. If I want to deal with you, I'll call you. Otherwise, when strangers call, I'm just suspicious. And I'm not even an official senior yet! Am I getting prematurely paranoid?



## Downtowns need residents' support

To the Editor:

Given the last few editions of our newspaper, it was very refreshing to see your pro-active pictorial regarding the number of vacant and recently vacated storefronts in Acton in the Feb. 4 edition of The Tanner.

Some of the buildings have indeed been vacant for some time, but that is neither here nor there! The initiative of your (our) newspaper to take it upon themselves to point out possible businesses to fill these storefronts is truly admirable. You do care about Acton and it shows!!

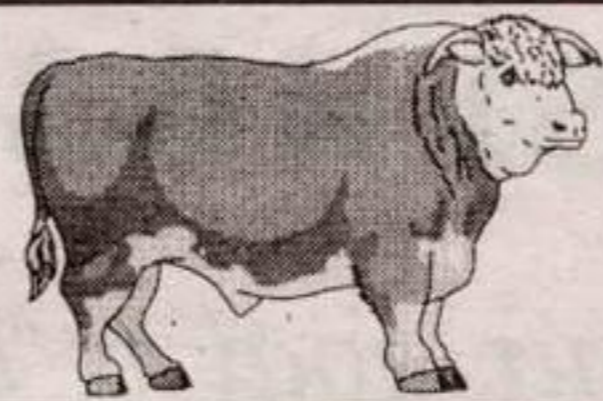
While we do have a privately owned proprietorship in Downtown Georgetown I admire your initiative in promoting Downtown Acton, a directive which is sadly lacking in Georgetown. Other than relying on the olde Hide House, which you pointed out brings upwards of 300,000 consumers to the area, both Georgetown and Acton should take advantage of community minded outlets such as yours to promote the advantages which are offered in small-town Ontario.

Yes, prices are a consideration, but you cannot begin to convince me or any rational thinking individual, that a few cents per pound on a roast or bag of birdseed justifies driving to Brampton, Mississauga or Guelph to save pennies.

Wake-up!! The Acton/Georgetown downtowns are trying to thrive and survive in a highly competitive market and penny-pinching individuals only hinder expansion and the entrepreneurial spirit which we all should encourage and support.

Once again, thank you for "planting the seed" of all of the vacancies and the opportunities available and please continue to support our eroding downtowns. As an aside, the individual who received the shoddy treatment at one of the area mechanics, trying venting your frustrations at the business involved rather than the entire core of businesses in Acton.

Yours very truly,  
James Dye,  
A proud (but new) Acton resident



## WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.