

# EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

## Natural beauty has its limits

Memory Gardens, the parkette at the corner of Main Street North and River Street, is certainly one of Acton's beauty spots. Situated on the banks of Black Creek, commonly known as the School Creek, it's a testament to the work of the Acton Horticultural Society whose members tend it lovingly.

In the background are the grounds and building of the Acton library. It is connected to River Street by a new span over the creek, which though not as picturesque as its bow bridge predecessor, makes the library access easier and less hazardous in winter months.

The scene is bucolic, a park bench a mecca for those who would meditate as the babbling creek wends its way under busy Highway 7 on its way to Fairy Lake. Unfortunately, outside of a few metres of lawn from the highway culvert to the library span, the creek almost vanishes in the welter of weeds, small trees, shrubs and aquatic plants which mark its course.

You see the new, old thing is to let water courses, creeks and lakes, revert to their natural habitat. No more sweeping green lawns leading to the water's edge. Instead, there's long grass, indigenous weeds and plants which sparkling spring water nourishes.

Nothing wrong with that; too many streams have been channelized, polluted and turned into turgid pools of putrid water.

However, we also don't see anything wrong with green lawns where it would aid the natural beauty in places such as the library. There's no need to have almost the full length of the creek looking like the middle of Algonquin Park. There's a place for the hand of man to provide a balance.

## No mud slinging

One of the ironic things in the current demonization of the new Canadian Alliance Party's leader Stockwell Day by certain media, is the prediction that he and his party haven't got a chance of winning a federal election majority. If he and his party haven't got a chance why bother flinging all the mud?

Is it because many of the issues he has been discussing and the stand he has taken on them are held by many Canadians? Is there a perception among many ultra left leaning politicians that the political scene is shifting more to the right? Is it really because Day is not afraid to say he's a Christian and adheres to Christian values?

In any event the mud slingers would be far better occupied in defending their own positions and leave the results to the ballot box.



REFLECTING: Adam Pawluch left, was busy fishing for minnows at Fairy Lake recently under the guidance of his host Kazi Borkowski. Overhead, the reflecting clouds create a strange impression as though the pair were staring off the edge of a cliff into blue nothingness. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

## When is neatness 'obsessive'?

BY ANGELA TYLER  
The New Tanner

Have you ever walked into a room and noticed a picture on a wall hanging on an angle? Do you walk by it or do you straighten the picture?

The other day I was talking with friends about appearances. One noted you can tell a lot about a person when you approach their home. If the outside is neat in appearance, the inside usually is, and usually the person is, too. Maybe it's a fairly simple observation, but this sparked a whole other direction in the conversation.

"Go look in my cupboard" one said. I looked dumbfounded and said I didn't want to look in their cupboard. They insisted I look in their cupboard at their boxed and canned goods. In the cupboard things were arranged meticulously. Everything was in its place.

I wanted to tell them I was surprised, but I am the same way. Certain boxed items must be in a certain place, canned goods in another, but also it depends on what type of canned good it is. I have another friend who takes it one step beyond that by making sure all the labels must face a certain direction. I think I would have been more concerned if they were also alphabetized.

As the conversation continued, I confessed to another trait. When grocery shopping, food has to come out of the cart in my proper order at the check out. Canned goods together,

boxed goods together, frozen items together and then when I get home, everything is in bags with similar items. I think I won that part of the obsessive syndrome behaviour because I was starting to get an odd look. Another friend said they try to do that, but with a family of four, they gave up a long time ago...too much food on the bi-monthly shopping outing.

"What about clothes" I asked. "How are things put away in your closet?" One friend is neat in appearance, a 'clean cut' person, who takes pride in his appearance. He said he wasn't as particular about that. They asked about me. Once again, I think I won this one. It bugs me if my clothes aren't facing the same way on hangers. I also have the colours starting at white on the right, ending with black coloured items on the left.

At this point in the conversation I had gone from being a friend on the same 'wave length' to getting that look that says 'weirdo'. It was then my friend gave me specific instructions not to look at the bedroom floor and definitely not in the closet.

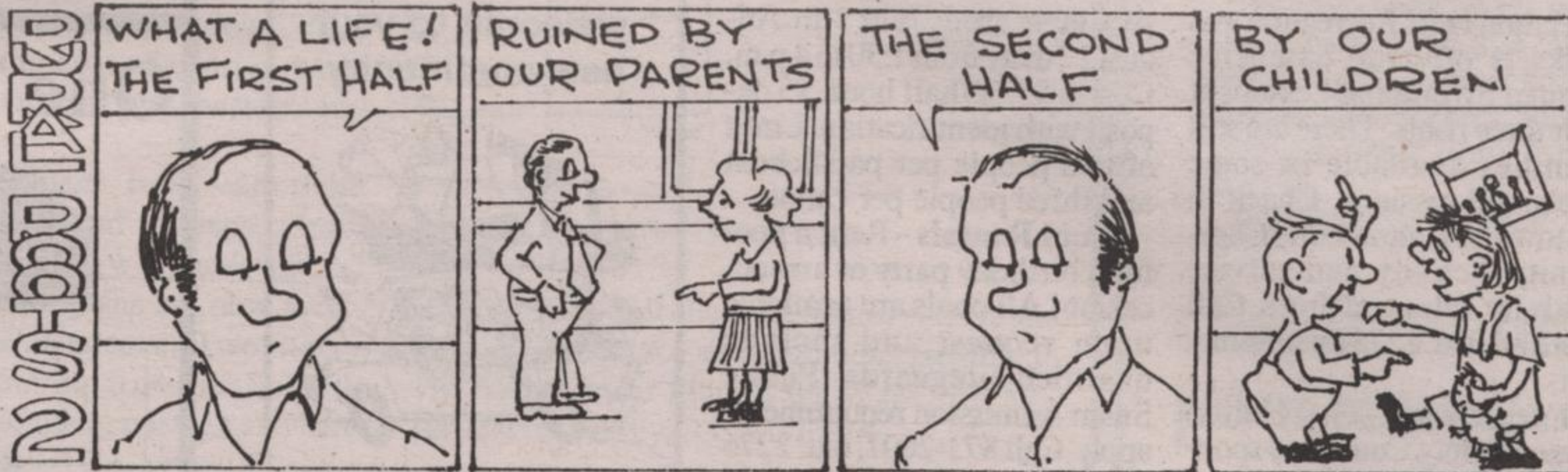
The next night, I was thinking about the little 'obsessive' things we do, or things that bug us and we have to fix, such as the picture on the wall hanging on an angle. I'm positive my mom's mission in life is to make sure I have no lint or dog hair on my clothes. With a 150-pound hairy dog, that is an impossible task. If she sees something on my clothes, she'll say to me,

"let me just get this..." as she picks off a piece of lint. It drives me nuts when she does that, but I suppose it drives her nuts seeing that dog hair stuck to my shirt.

My dad is obsessive when it comes to planting flowers. Not that he is obsessive with the number of flowers he plants, but how they are planted. I remember the first spring I was in my home and he helped me build a front flower bed. After I proudly planted all my flowers, he came over and told me how they were incorrectly spaced. A couple of years ago he wasn't feeling too good, so my mom decided to plant all their flowers so he wouldn't have to worry about it. The next day he went out and measured the distance between the plants. Needless to say, there were quite a few that had to be replanted.

I'm positive one of my neighbours is like this with his lawn. In eight years, I have never seen his lawn have that 'need to be mowed' look. Their home and garden is always kept beautifully and they have also won awards. However, I often wonder if he has a schedule to mow the lawn or maybe he measures it, like my dad does with planting flowers?

When does neatness become obsessive? At what point does a quirky thing you do become a wacky thing and make others concerned? Maybe it's hereditary? Maybe it's a result of our environment? Or maybe it's just what makes us individuals.



# THE NEW Tanner

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