



**TUNING UP:** Acton Citizens' Band director George Elliott gives his performers a few pointers on tuning up as they prepare to entertain visitors at the Band Hall Sunday during their Christmas Concert. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

# IODE enjoys Yule dinner

By Dot Norton

What a night. Snow and then some! Some of the ladies made it to dinner but not me. I got blizzardied out before I left the parking lot.

I gather from our Regent's report that nine ladies braved the storm and had a very special turkey dinner with all the trimmings at Andy's.

First, let me say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to one and all who support our IODE through the year.

Our treasurer Alma Braida tells us our bazaar was a great success and again we thank the people of Acton who support us. The big winner of the 50/50 draw was Brenda Noseworthy.

Joyce held a hamper

meeting Dec. 13 so the baskets will be ready for those who need it most.

The Jan. 9 meeting will be held at Alma Braida's at 7:30 and anyone interested in the work we do is welcome to join us.

# Advisory group helping minister deal with road rage

Following is a letter of reply to Norman Foote of Acton regarding a letter he wrote to the Ministry of Transportation regarding road rage. The letter was filed with The New Tanner for publication.

Dear Mr. Foote:

Thank you for your letter about road rage and the attached newspaper clipping. I have also received a copy of your letter to my colleague, the Honourable James Flaherty, Attorney General. I appreciate you taking the time to bring your concerns to my attention, and I welcome the opportunity to respond.

Let me assure you that I fully understand your concerns about "road rage" incidents on our roads. However, although this term is often used synonymously with aggressive driving, it is important to clarify that these two terms refer to different behaviours.

Road rage generally refers to violent exchanges between drivers resulting from real or perceived inconsiderate driving actions, such as one driver "cutting off" another in an improper lane change. Road rage incidents may involve verbal altercations, fist fights, the use of weapons, a vehicle or other objects as weapons, resulting in varying degrees of injury or even death.

Aggressive driving, on the other hand, refers to driving behaviours that endanger other road users without the involvement of violent acts. These include speeding, tailgating, improper lane changes or running red lights. While these behaviours can lead to road rage, they are essentially different in that they are not caused by motorists who are provoked by actions of other motorists.

While in Ontario, the extent of incidents that can be strictly described as road rage remains relatively small compared to other jurisdictions, this government takes a serious view of drivers who engage in aggressive driving behaviour, such as those described in the newspaper clipping that you provided. Over the past five years, this ministry has introduced tough new legislation under Ontario's Road Safety Plan and increased funding for traffic enforcement in order to further deter aggressive driving

and remove the worst offenders from our roads.

For example in 1998, this government significantly increased the fines for running red and amber lights. This fine increase was introduced as part of a community safety package that offered \$150 million over five years for enhanced policing initiatives.

I also appreciate your suggestion that drivers convicted of aggressive driving should be made to take mandatory driver education classes. You may be interested to know that this ministry does have a number of remedial programs and driver performance-based thresholds that trigger a re-evaluation of a driver's behaviour as a condition of having a driv-

er's licence reinstated. These include accumulated demerit points, collision frequency or drinking and driving convictions. The re-evaluation process may include counselling, a combination of remedial programs or a mandatory road re-test.

You may be aware that last fall, I announced a comprehensive Action Plan for Safer Roads in Ontario. Among other initiatives in that plan was the establishment of an Ontario advisory Group on Safe Driving. I have asked the Advisory group to examine the effectiveness of our current measures and to help identify further initiatives that target aggressive driving and promote safe driving practices.

The Advisory group has identified several priority areas for review and will focus on finding ways to reduce unsafe driving behaviour and enhance road user safety. The identified priority areas include excessive speed, driving too fast for conditions, tailgating and other forms of aggressive driving behaviours. I look forward to the Advisory group's recommendations on these matters.

Thank you for taking the time to bring your concerns and suggestions to my attention.

Sincerely,  
David Turnbull,  
Minster

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