

GRAPEVINE



New trick, old Dog

The vacant Red Dog Café, a favourite watering hole for many Actonites, has been sold to a former employee and will re-open mid-February under the new name - The Red Dog.

Limehouse resident Lauri Tothe-Parker, who worked at the Red Dog for three years, picks up the keys tomorrow (Friday).

"I've managed restaurants and worked as a waitress and bartender at a lot of different places, so I thought the next step is to have one myself," Tothe-Parker said on Tuesday.

When owner Barb Ferris closed the restaurant in October, a note on the door said it was closed for renovation. That note was replaced with one saying the property was in the lawful possession of an Angelo Kyriakoulis, one of the mortgage holders who was bought out by Savoy Capital, the vendor.

Tothe-Parker said she plans to offer a whole new pub, roadhouse-style menu and give the restaurant a cosmetic facelift.

Life givers

Donators were in a generous mood at last Thursday's Canadian Blood Services clinic at the Legion, giving 66 units of blood.

Organizers say a heartfelt thanks to the community for supporting the clinic, sponsored by Acton's Walker Masonic Lodge.

First-time donor, Cathy MacSween of Acton, 24, said she was giving blood for the first time because she wanted to do something to help others. She plans to be a regular donor.

RIDE

Been pulled over in a RIDE spot check yet this holiday season? If not, there's a good chance you will be as Halton police plan to check approximately 20,000 vehicles in the coming weeks for drinking drivers.

If you haven't been drinking, you get a loot bag, filled with substance abuse, air bag safety and part host liability information from Halton's health department and a window scraper from MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) Halton.

Anyone who fills out a five-question survey and returns it postage-paid is eligible for a \$200 gift certificate from Canadian Tire or HMV.

Santa's helper

Kudos to Halton police Constable Julian Elliott for making this Christmas happier for a lot of needy children in the Acton area.

For the second year in a row, Elliott has spearheaded a donation of toys from Zellers, where he once worked in store security, to the Acton Corps of the Salvation Army that will distribute the toys to under-privileged kids.

Speedier service?

A crew of more than a half dozen workers - fueled by hot fresh coffee - worked through the night on Monday on a facelift and efficiency-based redo at Tim Hortons.

In an effort to speed the ordering process and make more efficient use of space, a new deli counter is being installed and food prep equipment rearranged.

Owner/operator John Malinosky said he'll consider re-instating a "coffee only" line if that is what his customers want, but noted it didn't improve the waiting time when he tried it several years ago because some customers continually misused it by ordering food, delaying those in line behind them.

No high 'schticking'

Forget about Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary guidance and rules of procedure at Town council - if newly elected Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis gets a ruling he doesn't like, he'll just reach for the NHL rulebook.

When the new Council met for its first business meeting last week at the desk of each councillor was an NHL rulebook - courtesy of Lewis, a former director of officiating with the NHL - and an apple from Ward 2 farmer Peter McCarthy. Mayor Kathy Gastle also got an official NHL whistle to use if things get way out of hand in the council chambers.

Acton Councillor Clark Somerville suggested one possible transgression by councillors that could fit both Robert's Rules and the NHL rulebook - no high 'schticking'.



IS IT BARNEY? Strange shapes arose from the snowstorm of last week including this critter which obviously arose from the primeval swamp to park in front of a Main Street home.

Once upon a Christmas morning

I am a Christmas person. I look forward to the hustle and bustle, the lights, the carols and, to a lesser degree, the shopping. Above all, I love Christmas morning. I delight in the excitement crackling in the air as we gather around the tree. It's a special family time.

The Way I See It

with Mike O'Leary



Christmas was simpler when I was a boy. Obviously, my only responsibility was to get a present for Mom and Dad (perfume for Mom, a "flat 50" of Players for my Dad.) I recall putting up the tree and trying to find the burn-out bulb which would keep the whole string dark. Do you remember the long "bubble lights"? My mother supervised the placing of the ornaments, each one lovingly unwrapped from its tissue cocoon. One had to be very careful because the ornaments were glass and easily broken. We had no TV but there were Christmas programs galore on the big floor console radio.

On Christmas morning my brother, sister and I leapt from our beds before daylight. We had to wait till the sun came up before rousing the adults. Santa, you see, was still about his rounds until daylight and untold calamities would befall children who spied on him. So we would wait quietly (sort of) and patiently (not!) gazing at the wrapped present trying to guess the contents.

When I say Christmas was simpler, I mean we didn't get as many "things" as kids do now. We would get one main present, a couple of smaller toys and then the obligatory sweater, shirts, socks and underwear. Aunts, uncles and grandparents always gave clothes and I'm not sure I forgive them to this day.

We didn't have the choices kids have today with no TV, we had to make do with paging through the Eaton's and Simpson's catalogues. I remember that you were expected to be a tad subtle when telling your Mom or Dad what was on your wish list. These were secrets better shared with Santa who, if you were very good, might fulfill your dreams come Christmas morning. There was also the annual trip to see the Eaton's Santa Claus parade, the department store windows and the

jolly old elf himself. Was there ever a more wondrous place than Eaton's Toyland in the Queen St. store? I can still smell the wax on the wooden floor. Come to think about it, I can still see Mom whispering to Santa after I saw him. I wonder what that was about? Christmas morning was the best. That's when you actually found out if you had been good enough all year. Will I get my new skates or did that bird, who everyone knew was Santa's spy, rat you out for playing with matches under the back porch? Getting what you asked for gave you bragging rights with your friends for the rest of the year. At least, until September, when the whole process would start again.

Christmas morning, after the presents were opened, began a chain of events which led to a wondrous day for a boy. First came Mass where the priest would try to impress upon us that the birth of the Christchild was far more important than the presents at home just waiting for us. The adults would nod solemnly. The children would do their best to look attentive and angelic in the hope that Father Doyle would wrap things up so we could get out of there. That memory, perhaps, explains why I enjoy Christmas Eve Mass so much.

Once home the kitchen would be the centre of activity. The cooking of the turkey was a most serious affair and keeping the peace between my mother and grandmother required all the diplomatic skills my father possessed. Both were what was then described as "strong-willed women." Both stubborn as mules is what they were. "The Bride" and I have no such problems. I barbeque the turkey outdoors.

During the day, various aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and my maternal grandparents would visit. Sweets and candy were devoured with gusto. My mother's specialty

was shortbread cookies and I can't see one to this day without thinking of her. The dinner itself would be a feast, except for the turnips my grandmother would insist on including. The day was over all too soon.

This Christmas morning will, I hope, find "The Bride," all our girls and I gathered under the tree. I intend to make a special effort to cherish this day. The girls are making their own way now so, although I hope we will still get together on Christmas for yearsto come, the chances of them being their Christmas morning fade with each passing year. I'll watch them open their gifts and try to recall the other Christmas mornings I've been blessed to have them in my life. I'll giggle and be glad that, no matter what we give them, I know that nothing will be "some assembly required." Then I'll cook a big brunch and we'll continue with our day. But I'll enjoy Christmas morning most.

The greatest Christmas morning was the one 2000 years ago. Whether you're a believer or not, no one can deny the incredible impact that Christ and His message has had on mankind. In spite of some of the things that have been done in His name, we must remember to teach and practice His message. Love God and love one another. Be at peace with yourself. Care for the infirm, the weak, the less fortunate. Be forgiving.

This is my Christmas Wish for you. I wish you the comfort and joy of family and friends. If you give a bucket of love I hope you get an ocean in return. I hope your children cherish you as much as you do them. I hope you can keep the things that are truly important in perspective. I wish you a smile, a hug, a touch from a loved one. I wish you peace and happiness.

I've come to realize that those words of Father Doyle, spoken all those years ago, are oh so true. The presents are fun, but they're not all there is. Pass the word.

Mary, Catharine, Colleen, Christine, Erin and I would like to wish you a happy, healthy, holy and peaceful Christmas. God's blessings to you all.



Posties want rural mail boxes dug out

To the Editor:
As rural mail drivers, we're hoping our customers will take note of our reminder.

When you clean out your driveway, **clean out access to your mailbox, too.** We have a terrible time with the snowbanks left around some of those boxes after recent snow falls.

Actually, town residents don't get delivery unless their walks are clean and free of ice so Posties have clear

access to make their deliveries.

We may be private contractors but that clear access applies to our boxes, too. We are not expected to leave our vehicles to make deliveries, so we too, can't do our job unless our customers provide us with that clear access to their rural boxes.

Have a happy, safe holiday and let us have safe access, too.

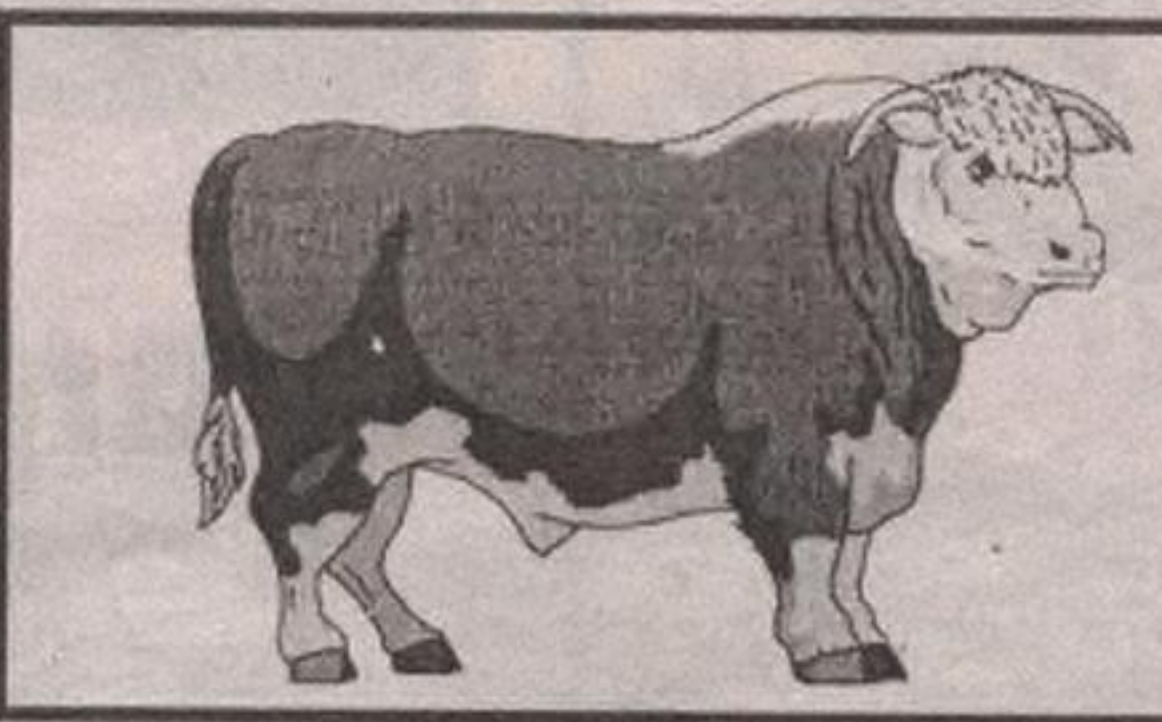
Your Rural Posties,
Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, and Limehouse

Check . . .

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tration mixed with determination, over 300 feet of lights, four large extension cords, about 10 small ones, four electrical plug adapters, one timer, roles of garland, red velvet bows, a staple gun, plastic ties, and only one outdoor plug, my outdoor decorating project was almost complete.

the snow covered lawn I was frozen solid but still putting on the finishing touches when my neighbour opened up her door and said, "Hey, do you want some more lights?" It seemed she had three more strands of icicle lights that her husband didn't want to put up.

How could I resist? After all they were clear icicle lights, not blue.



WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.