

EDITORIAL

with Hartley Coles

Downtown Parking

It is no surprise that new measures designed to solve the traffic congestion in downtown Acton have been rejected by merchants.

The new measures would ban parking on both sides of Mill St. for two blocks from Main to John Street. Merchants used to vehicles parking on both sides of Mill St. say the lack of any parking on that stretch of Mill St. will seriously affect business already hurt by reconstruction over the summer.

The \$2 million reconstruction job to replace water and sewage pipes often closed the two blocks concerned for days on end. There's no doubt it seriously affected business. However, now improvements are in place, and the disruption of construction is over, it would be utter folly to return to the old policy of allowing parking on both sides of the street.

It's a fact that Highway 7 runs through the downtown. Each year the traffic gets heavier. It can create congestion that extends from Main and Mill to the eastern boundaries of Acton. Vehicles parking on Mill St., moving in and out of the confusion only add to the congestion.

Nevertheless if improvements to the downtown are going to seriously hurt merchants' business then some concessions should be made. Perhaps allowing parking on the south side of Mill St. is the answer, providing it doesn't interfere with the free flow of traffic or create a safety hazard.

The new parking lot which runs from Willow to Main St. has relieved a lot of downtown Acton's parking woes but they will never be completely resolved until Highway 7 is rerouted. That's not likely to happen for years so it is up to merchants and the Town to come up with a solution that's fair to everyone and takes safety into consideration.

Reconstruction has made the downtown a much more attractive place to shop but returning to the previous parking scene would invalidate the improvements.

Traditional Marriage

This country's Supreme Court is wrestling with the thorny issue of same sex "marriages" in order to give Parliament some guide lines to work with on a proposed bill to allow them, as proposed by the Liberals under Paul Martin.

The Court has already told the government in a close 5-4 decision in 1995 that defining spouses as a man and a woman discriminated against the Charter of Rights. The five justices whose broad interpretation of the Charter supports same-sex marriage have now been joined by two more believed to have the same belief. In fact the Liberals have been accused of appointing liberal minded judges so the first interpretation of the Charter was strengthened.

It's a fact that the Charter of rights does not include "sexual orientation" among the grounds for non-discrimination. It states:

"Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, and in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Sexual orientation was proposed but rejected by the Trudeau government.

In 1995 when the Supreme Court "read in" sexual orientation as equal to the other grounds of non-discrimination it split 5-4 on the question of defining "spouses" as a man and a woman. The four justices who deferred wrote:

"...Marriage is by nature heterosexual. It would be possible to legally define marriage to include homosexual couples but this would not change the biological and social realities that underline the traditional marriage..."

We would hope the Supreme Court takes heed to these words. The alternative definition goes against the wisdom of centuries and suggests those who would reject it as having little understanding of what marriage is all about. It certainly goes far beyond two people of the same-sex "loving one another".

If there is any change to traditional marriage then it should be decided by a free vote of Parliament not by judges who are there to interpret them. The last time the vote on same sex marriages was taken the Liberals "stacked the deck" by ordering the federal cabinet to vote for it. Not surprisingly the Liberals won by two votes. They may have stacked the Supreme Court to pander to their wishes but it is not going to wash with the public. And that's probably why they are hanging back on a "free vote" now because it's quite possible they'll lose.



FOX FANS: Despite a broken leg, Acton High School student Curtis Fetch walked the track at the school on September 16 to help raise approximately \$1,000 for the school's annual Terry Fox Run. — Submitted photo

Winter gives Angela the 'grumbles'

Winter approaching seems to bring out the grumbly in people. After what seemed like more than a month of problems and working what seemed like a month straight, I was ready to grumble.

I blame the cold weather. I despise that first day in the fall, which you have to turn on the heat. It smells when the furnace kicks in the first time, it's pitch black when I go to work in the morning and I now have to use my flashlight when I barbecue. It was enough to make anyone grumble.

Just after lunch as I drove past Home Hardware, I was greeted by the daily onslaught on teenagers. The day had warmed up by their second nutritional break of the day and they were out in full force.

There they were. Some were in Sobeys parking lot. Although there are plenty of signs stating no loitering or skateboarding, there, as most days, were quite a few of them doing exactly that.

Those who aren't in the parking lot seemed to be crossing the road, only not at the crosswalk. Boldly, without fear, they fun in front of traffic regardless if it's a car or a tractor-trailer. Some even wait in the turning lane for their moment to dodge into traffic.

I've talked about this before, as well as, the editorial last week mentioned this. But there doesn't seem to be a day go by at the Tanner office that we don't fear that one day,



By
Angela Tyler

traffic may not yield to those who choose not to cross the highway at the crosswalk. What many forget is, this although we may be in Acton, this is still a highway.

I came into the office to once again find the newest trend in fundraising waiting for me. It was another letter requesting either a 'gift' or money in support of an organization or individual.

I think most businesses do donate to certain causes or charities. I personally do my bit with the Trunk Sale on my own time or selling daffodils for the Cancer Society in the spring. However, lately, I've discovered with talking to other companies they are being overwhelmed with requests.

The days of traditional fund raising seem to be lost. Rarely now is one asked to buy a raffle ticket for a quilt or other prizes. The trend now seems to be with silent auctions or having door prizes available for those at the dance or such.

For a while I was keeping the letters of the requests. It wasn't uncommon to get multiple requests each week. However, I've given up. I think if I kept all the letters,

I'd be able to wallpaper a room.

Some requests, your heart tells you a donation is in order. While other requests are a little more difficult to comply with. Especially when the request doesn't come from a charitable organization yet from another business or a government funded group.

One company I talked with about this was completely frustrated. When asked for a donation for a silent auction the organization originally refused the offer stating that they thought their members wouldn't be interested in the item, which happened to be a few t-shirts and ball caps. Later, they rescinded their first refusal and came back for the donation.

Some people think donations don't cost anything. However, they usually do. Many downtown merchants especially have had a hard go this summer during the construction of Mill Street. Some just can't afford to give, even if it is a charity. For a \$50 item, if the business made 10% profit, they would need to do \$500 in sales to pay for the item that they donated.

If we expect businesses to donate to organizations, charitable or other, we also need to support them. Shop in Acton. Before you head out of town to buy things, look here first.

Now, let me grumble about the forty-five minute wait I had in the doctor's office the other day....



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