

# An etiquette quandary

You know, I like to do things right.

I like to wear the appropriate outfit for the event, order the right wine with the food, say the right thing at the right time. In short, I hate making an idiot of myself by doing it 'wrong'.

Wrong, that is, by etiquette standards.

Now this past weekend, I had an etiquette quandary. I was invited to attend an event, but didn't know what the appropriate gift would be.

You see, it was a garage opening. Now we're not talking about a 'garage' as a place of business, rather a 'garage', as a place to store cars, in this case, toy cars (of sorts.)

You see, my friends have a couple of little British cars, and they wanted a place to store them and tinker with them when the winter storms were raging. So they built a new garage for them.

Being the media animal that I am, I suggested they should make an event of the building experience by holding a ground-breaking ceremony.

I even offered to get Mayor Rick Bonnette to drop by and take a shovel in hand, but they declined, figuring he might be too busy to dig the foundation. I also suggested, after the construction was completed, that they ought to hold a 'garage opening' party.

(Okay, so I'm looking for another way to get invited to a party—I don't get out much.)

Anyway, the ground-breaking came and went without celebration,



**Ted Brown**

but when the final piece of siding and the last shingle were nailed on, the invites were sent out for the 'garage opening'.

Of course, that etiquette thing came up. What exactly does one take to a garage opening?

The first thing that came to mind was beer.

You can never go wrong with beer. You can enhance it with pizza, but that's optional. Since both my friends have been known to imbibe from time to time, I knew it'd be welcome.

They also own two teeny-tiny British cars (appropriate since they are both teeny-tiny people) as well as a teeny-tiny 'truckette', called a Dodge Rampage. I decided Brit beer was most appropriate—I picked up some Bombardier Ale.

But I wanted to bring along a gift that was addressing the unique aspect of the party.

With a burning urge to maintain my decorum in the etiquette department, I e-mailed an on-line etiquette consultant, to ask "What is the proper gift for a garage open-

ing?"

The answer came back, stating "Etiquette says that when attending the opening of a garage, guests should bring one (or in this case two) quarts of oil— besides beer, of course."

Okay, I had the beer covered, but the oil? These are British cars— and oil is only available in litres. Another etiquette quandary!

Back to the e-mail— I asked, "Quarts? Or litres? (They have British cars.)"

The reply stated: "Import two quarts for the MGBs, and the beer must be Old Speckled Hen."

Old Speckled Hen! Of course, that beer was named after an old prototype MG that had a defective speckly paint job— hence the name.

It was too late to import oil in quarts and I'd already been to LCBO, so I went with the beer I had. But what to give in place of the oil?

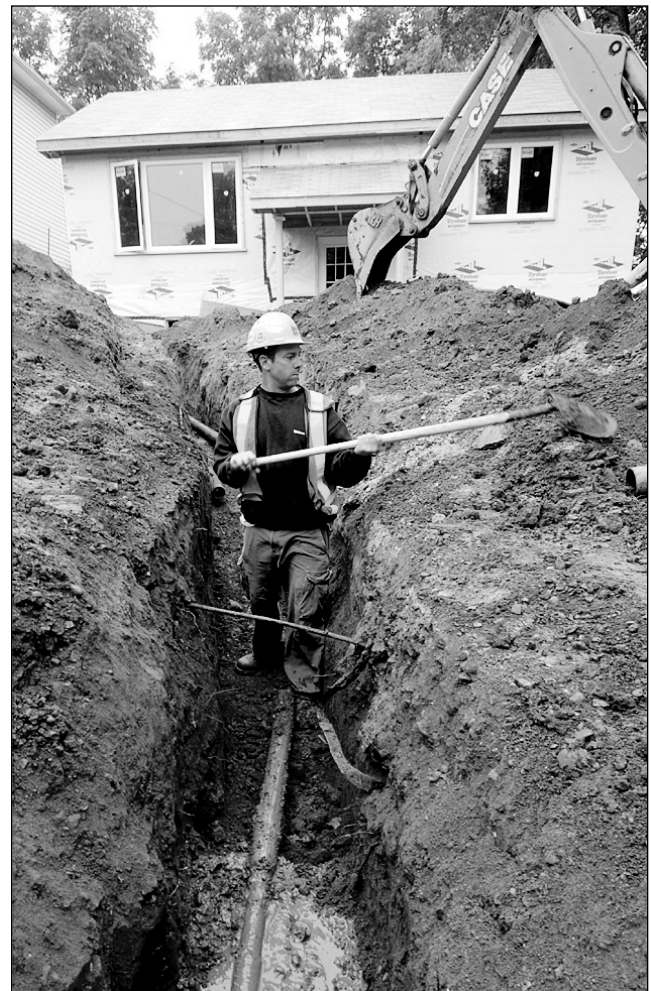
I figured the garage was built for them to tinker with and work on their vehicles.

And after working on them, their hands would be dirty— It was obvious! I picked up a huge can of Canadian Tire Hand Cleaner.

In retrospect, I figured it was the perfect gift, since they own two MGBs and a Chrysler product.

It's a pretty sure bet they'll spend lots of time working on them— simply getting 'em started.

(Ted Brown can be reached at [tbrown@independentfreepress.com](mailto:tbrown@independentfreepress.com))



## Dig this donation

Corey Teneycke of Link Line Contractors of Milton scoops some material out of the trench as the company donated its services to Habitat for Humanity earlier this week to bore under the street to bring services into the 50 Dayfoot Drive build in Georgetown. Link Line not only donated the machinery and manpower to connect the project, but also the material, at a total value of between \$4-7,000. Photo by Ted Brown



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