

# Acton woman unhappy with delay at Fairview cemetery

By Frances Niblock

Without a promised permanent vase in a memory garden near the columbarium in Fairview Cemetery where she laid her mother to rest two years ago, Acton's Jacki Higgins was forced to break Town rules and leave a potted geranium beside the granite structure on Mother's Day.

"This columbarium is a disgrace to our cemetery, I think," Higgins said on Friday. "Compared with columbariums in Milton and Paris, it is not a peaceful, well-cared for area."

A columbarium is a multi-niche structure that holds cremated remains. Higgins said she and her father would have never considered it as a burial option for the late Jean Earle if they'd known the site work would not be done two years later.

"If the Town wants to sell these columbariums, they need to be beautiful so when people come to look at where they are going to put mom or dad, they don't find a weedy field with no flowers," Higgins said, adding every time they visit the cemetery, it reminds them that nothing has been done.

After two years of being told by Town staff there was no money for the promised improvements, she finally wrote to the mayor asking for action, telling him that "when I visit my mother at the cemetery I feel as if I have let her down miserably. Her ashes should be in a beautiful place."

Mayor Rick Bonnette said they moved the columbarium project ahead in the budget to meet a need, and that created "shortfalls" which will be taken care of this summer.

Warren Harris, the Town's



**FITFUL RESTING PLACE:** Acton's Jacki Higgins is unhappy the Town has not completed landscaping and planting work around the columbarium in Fairview Cemetery where her mother was laid to rest two years ago. — Frances Niblock photo

manager of parks and open spaces, said the plan at Fairview calls for two additional concrete pads for future columbariums.

"We're taking a step to create the overall garden settings of it, so then we can do the planting in the back of the columbarium, and in the circle area created by the ring road," Harris said on Friday, adding depending on need, a request for a second columbarium could be included in 2008 budget talks.

Harris said the landscaping calls for tree and shrub planting at the back of the existing columbarium and "something in the centre of the new roundabout."

In gardens adjacent to the columbarium pads, he said there will be permanent vases that niche purchasers can also buy — for \$400 — so they can place fresh flowers near their loved one's resting place.

Acton Councillor Jon

Hurst, chair of the cemetery committee, is quite willing to take the blame for the delays in finishing the Fairview columbarium project.

"Part of the problem is my fault because we moved it ahead a year so we could offer the niches to Acton residents, but they can't do anything until they pour the other two cement pads," Hurst said on Monday, adding he understands Higgins' concerns.

"If they were told that flower beds and landscaping were imminent, that was probably a mis-communication from somebody, but there are going to happen by the end of the summer," Hurst said, adding he'd meet with town staff this week to determine the timing of the project and he would call Higgins to let her know.

The Fairview Cemetery columbarium cost \$35,000, approximately the same

amount approved in this year's budget for two additional pads and improvements to the site.

The average price for a niche is \$1,700, bringing the Town \$108,800 in sales revenue this year from the columbariums in Acton and Georgetown.

## Summer safety tips

Victoria Day long weekend is approaching and families are gearing up for summer rituals, including road trips, camping, bonfires and cottage openings — not to mention black-flies and mosquitoes.

But precautions are needed to keep this first long weekend of the season safe and enjoyable.

1. Be sure your tent has been treated with a flame retardant fabric.

2. Do not use candles or open flame heaters inside the tent. Use only battery-operated flashlights or lanterns.

3. Always check and obey any campground rules

regarding campfires, restrictions or fire bans.

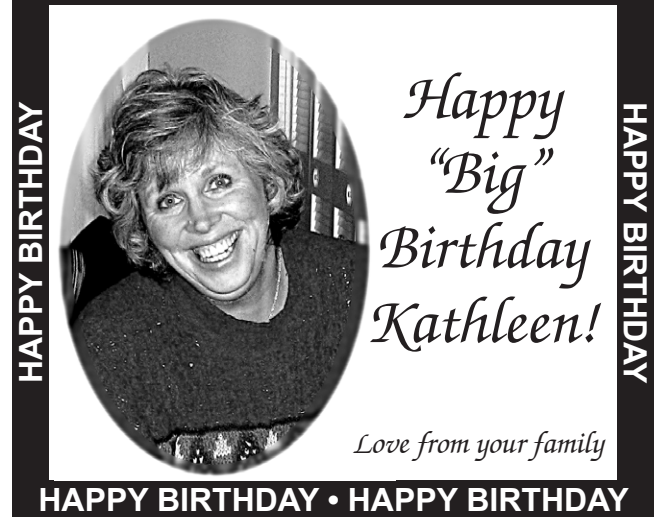
4. Always put the campfire out before going to bed. Soak with water or cover it completely with dirt or sand.

5. Clear all vegetation and dig a pit surrounded by rocks for your campfire. Keep the site downwind from your tent.

6. Always supervise the children around the campfire. Never allow children to run or play around the campfire.

7. Remember that a large fire is not always the best and usually more difficult to control/extinguish.

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