

The Oakville Beaver

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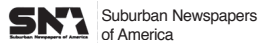
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NEW AT THE PARADE: The Oakville Minor Baseball Association (OMBA) brought a special guest as it joined, for the first time, the Oakville Santa Claus Parade. The reception was nothing short of spectacular for the float and ACE from the Toronto Blue Jays. The Blue Jays revealed their new logo and uniforms just the day before the parade so Ace was able to showcase them to Oakville. For more, visit www.baseballoakville.com.

Letter to the Editor

Everything old could be new again at Oakville Arena

Re: Is the clock ticking?, Oakville Beaver, Friday, Nov. 4, 2011

The Oakville Arena (Rebecca Street) is iconic in our town; not only for the majestic (historic) Hipel roof, but also it echoes with years of memories for residents of what was a much smaller town.

The arena and surrounding park are built on the original Trafalgar Township fairgrounds where citizens would come and picnic or watch a horse show and attend activities a few generations ago.

This is a very significant corner of our town.

Are we willing to allow this to become another site for the wrecker's ball?

Our family home was and still is in very close proximity to this facility and played a major role in our lives for as long as I can remember.

Oakville was a much smaller town at the time of the arena construction and this beautiful vital building was at the core of many activities.

Through the week, it was busy with student skate time and hockey for both M.O.H.A. and high schools from all parts of town.

On Friday nights you could not find a seat as hundreds of students and fans came in droves to see the Oakville Blades hit the ice.

On Saturday afternoon it was figure skating lessons and public skating. In the evenings as the records played over the loud speakers, teenagers and families circled the ice with the crisp sound of their blades gliding and carving the recently flooded surface.

The big event was always Sunday evening when the arena would come alive full to the rafters as the men's Senior A Oakville Oaks waited with anticipation for *God Save The Queen* to finish and onto the ice they came, accompanied by a roar from the crowd.

For Oakville this was as big an event as any NHL game would be.

The venue was — for years — home to the Oakville Figure Skating Club show, often featuring our Olympic medal winners Otto and Maria Jelink.

It is still one of only two arenas in town with seating for a major event. My sister and I, along with many of our high school friends, worked in the snack bar or the office selling tickets and getting things ready for the next event.

It was a never ending circle of preparation and clean up.

The Bently brothers were always in charge of cleaning and clearing the ice and, in the early years, flooding the ice by driving a tractor around pulling a very basic setup of 10 gallon drums full of water with a small series of holes to allow the water to hit the ice and freezewe never heard a complaint about the ice.

The facility was host to many big events in years gone past, including the

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Social season tests ability to endure uncomfortable footwear

Last week a friend e-mailed to ask if we were available for a dinner and she offered up a possible date. Without even so much as a casual consultation of the calendar that keeps me as organized as possible at this time of year, I declined, with regrets.

Don't look now, but (gasp) it's December.

Having lurched through November we are now officially launched into the silly social season. Which means we cannot add even a sliver more social to the old organizer: without even looking we know we're booked, or double-booked on all (once-available) evenings. In fact, there's one night when we are expected to be in downtown Toronto for a festive gathering while at once up at the airport rescuing weary, incoming travellers. Two places at one time? Luckily, I have a split personality, so one will party hardy and the other will don his chauffeur's cap.

Okay, a few confessions: despite the inevitable whining, we tend to enjoy the silly social season (and all the inevitable wining). We just wish it were better spread out between the overkill of this month and the barren social wasteland of January and February, months in which the daytimer is basically a blank slate. Then again, we kind of need those blank-slate months to recover from



Andy Juniper

December.

Over the years, December has increasingly become an endurance test. Survival of the fittest.

Not only is it the busiest month of the year — a time when workmates, family and friends all desire and demand our time — but it's also a time when only rare and freakish physical specimens are running at peak efficiency, and not being dragged down and beaten senseless by

some insidious ailment. Entering the month, no one in our household is altogether ailing. But, then again, no one is completely healthy.

Of course, the culmination of this silly social season is the one-two punch of Christmas and New Years. This is one of those years when Christmas will doubtlessly sneak up on a lot of people — sad souls who are currently on the floor in the fetal position, weeping profusely upon discovering that it's December.

Why this sneak-attack? I think it's because the weather has been so insanely unseasonable, very few of us have wrapped our

noggins around the Christmas Countdown, despite the onslaught of commercials and carols since late-August. I know that last Saturday I was certainly not thinking of Jolly Saint Nick, or hanging mistletoe, or decorating the house when I went out for a long bike ride. On November 26th. Why, that is just meteorological madness.

So, it's come down to this. Suddenly, 24 days left to do all the shopping we've yet to begin, to decorate the house and hang the stockings with great care, to plan mega-meals, and to socialize until our toes cramp from wearing uncomfortable dress shoes. Honestly, the only seasonal thing we've thus far accomplished is the hanging of the outdoors lights. In a moment of uncommon preparedness, I got those bulbs strung up on a beautiful warm day in early November; typically, I'm out there in a snowstorm, swaying from wind-bent branches, my eyelids frozen shut.

Speaking of frozen eyes: don't look now, people, but (gasp) it's December. Let the silly social season begin, testing our endurance, our patience, and our ability to tolerate uncomfortable footwear.

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