



**SUNDAY OUTING** for the Lewis family of Ballinafad is an afternoon of pleasure skating at Acton arena. Suzanne, 8; Georgia, Scott, 11; and Jack Lewis catch an hour or two of public skating wherever it happens to be available. Erin and Georgetown have only two hours a week—Acton has four. A number of skaters think it should be more.

## All non-hockey enthusiasts please stand up to be counted!

by Celia Saxon  
Highly organized sports are here to stay. Community arenas are booked solid from November to April with hockey schools, games and practices for men and boys. Girls, and even boys, sign up for a season of figure skating lessons.

Unfortunately there are some people who don't fit into this organized system and like to skate just for the fun of it.

Of the 2,773 children registered in Acton and district schools, 632 belong to a structured program at Acton arena. That leaves 2,141 non-participating youngsters to skate in the four hours a week allotted to pleasure skating. Not to mention moms and dads and preschoolers, which all adds up to inadequate public skating facilities.

"Can't cover cost. There's no way public skating could cover the costs of the arena," said Harold Townsley, arena manager. "It takes a lot of quarters to make up \$7,000." That's how much ice rentals amount to in one season. Only 3 percent of that comes from public skating.

One hundred hours of ice time is available at Acton arena every week. The skating club uses up 12½ of those hours. Mothers and lots, the police and preschoolers' hockey school each take up one hour throughout the week, and the schools fill in all the vacant ice time during school hours. The rink is available for rental from midnight til 3 a.m. on Fridays. The remaining 50 hours is devoted to hockey.

The revenue collected from ice rentals covers 75 percent of the arena expenses and only 25 percent is paid for out of taxes. Pleasure skaters are only covering 3 percent of the expenses, but then they are only getting 4 percent of the benefits.

Outdoor rinks "What we really need are outdoor rinks where the little kids can go to skate and not be afraid of the big kids," said Diane Spielvogel, former chairman of the Parks and Recreation board which was disbanded Dec. 31 when regional government took over. She mentioned a

proposal for the installation of underground sprinkler systems to flood skating areas on the school grounds but the plan seems to have died with the recreation board.

"Battling the elements and fighting city hall," Mrs. Spielvogel and her committee have tried in vain for several years to come up with an answer. Last winter a rink was built in the park but with the fluctuating temperatures it was only usable for about two weeks.

"This year there has been so much snow that the works department are too busy with road sanding and snow removal to worry about anything as small as outdoor rinks for the kids," she complained.

**H. H. problems**  
Meanwhile Doug Collison of Halton Hills Recreation department is having his own little problems over in Georgetown. Until Jan. 1 he was responsible only for the Georgetown Recreation. Suddenly he finds himself in charge of the whole Halton Hills operation, including all of Esqueping and Acton as well as Georgetown. All decisions now are subject to regional government red tape.

Collison hopes to reinstate the Acton board as the Ward 1 recreation committee, and plans to meet with them soon to discuss the possibilities of working together.

"I don't disagree that there should be more pleasure

skating. I think it's a very valid idea to build outdoor rinks and get out there and clear the lake." Collison stated. "If you have the staff and a good winter, great!"

For the Milton winter carnival this month a skating track was cleared all the way around the lake adding a little old-fashioned atmosphere to the festivities. With a little imagination and co-operation from the upper echelon Acton could do the same thing.

**Flood own yard**  
"In Georgetown two rinks were built on the same site, one for hockey, the other for pleasure," Mr. Collison explained. "There's a great demand for hockey. The big boys take over the boarded area, so the little boys take

their sticks onto the other rink and the pleasure skater is still at a loss. To have everything the way they want it people may have to go back to the old method of flooding their own back yards. That's what I do."

The hockey craze is upon us whether we like it or not. Although more than half of the available ice time at Acton arena is monopolized by hockey, each of the approximately 600 players still only gets one hour a week of skating time, providing very little opportunity to improve necessary skating skills, let alone hockey techniques.

Which all goes to prove that even the hockey players could benefit from more pleasure skating time.

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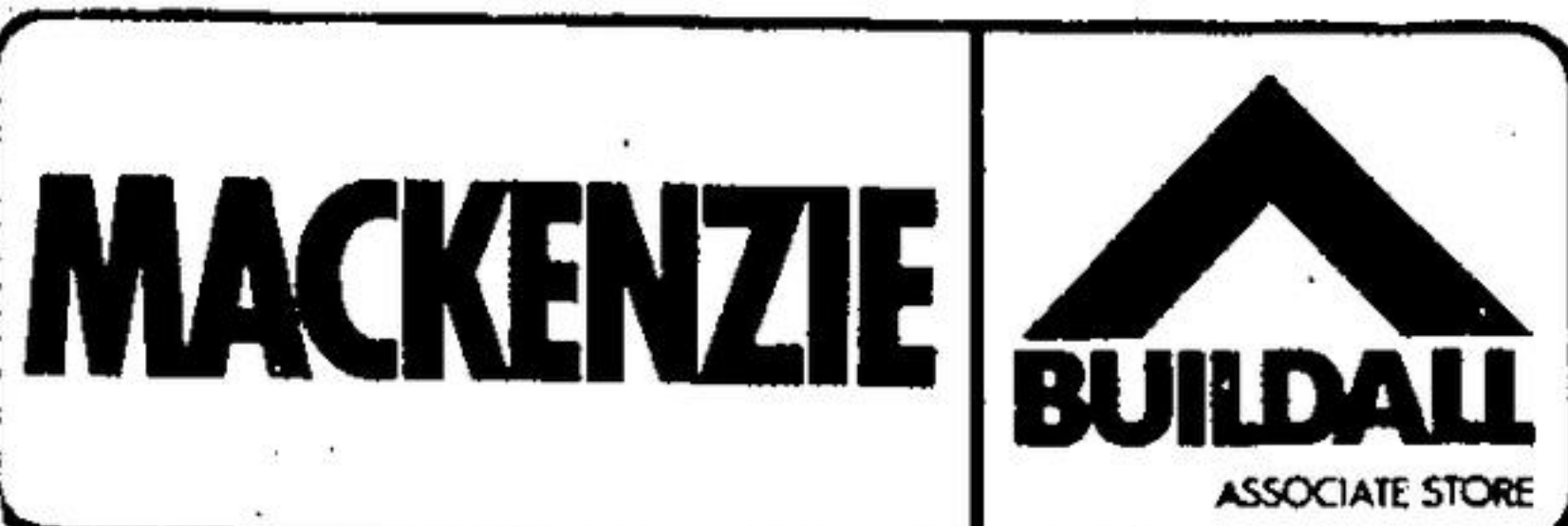
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A MINIMAL number of skaters are on the rink during the 12½ hours allotted weekly to the figure skating club. Hockey players get 50 hours.

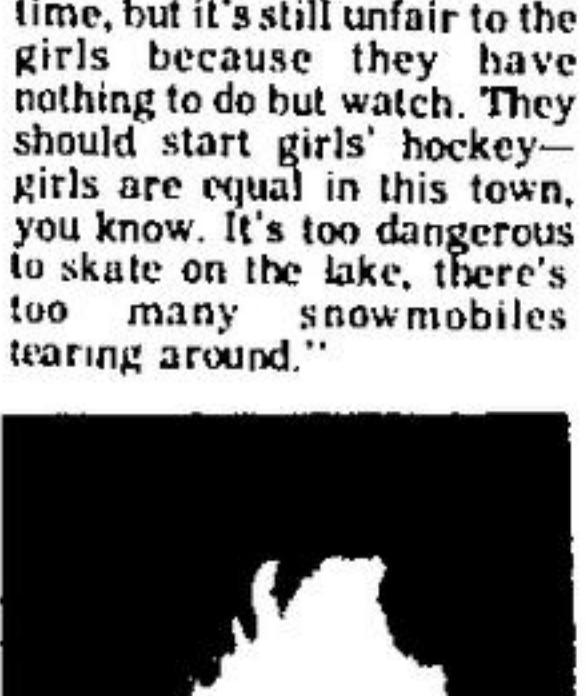
## Here's what they say



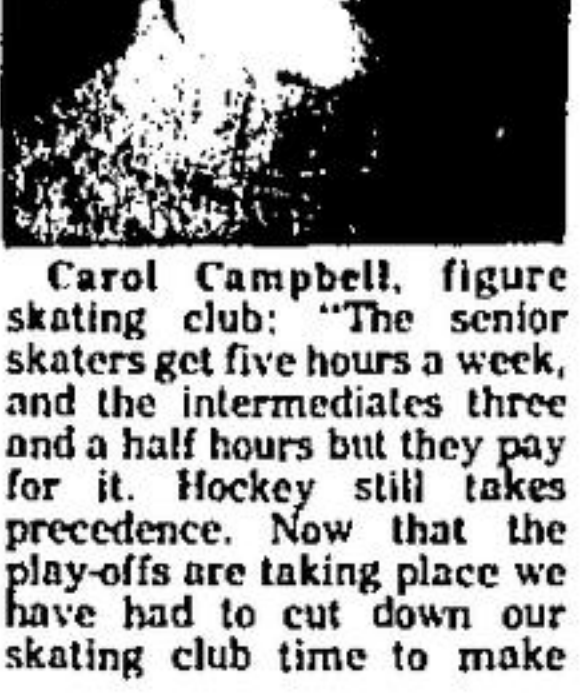
Frances Barens, grade 8, Robert Little: "Kids have nothing to do around Acton at night, so a large percentage would show up for an hour of public skating. Most of us hang around here anyway. We might as well be skating. They should cut down a little on the hockey."



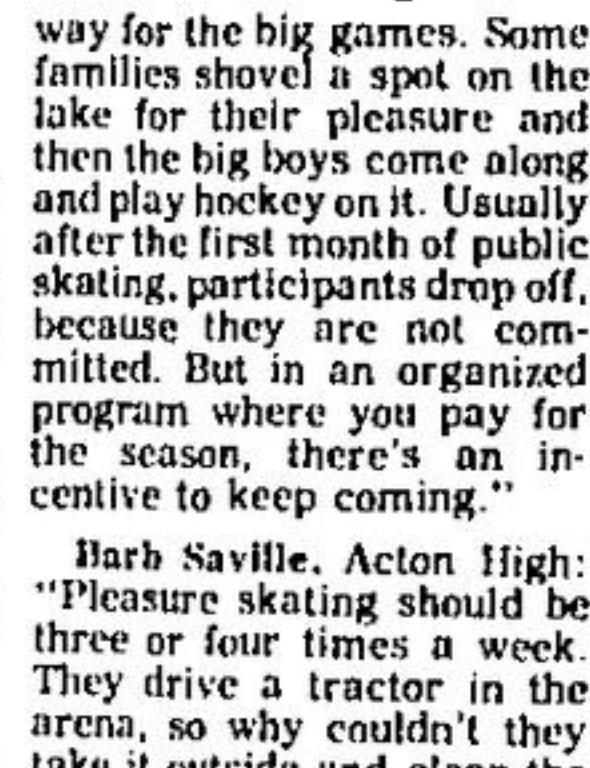
Mike Swelman, grade 6, Robert Little: "I play hockey for the Pee Wees. It looks like we get all the ice time, but I only get one game a week. That's only one hour of ice time, but it's still unfair to the girls because they have nothing to do but watch. They should start girls' hockey—girls are equal in this town, you know. It's too dangerous to skate on the lake, there's too many snowmobiles tearing around."



Laurie Pickles, grade 7, Robert Little: "I'd love to play hockey! We're equal to the boys and we should be able to do the same things as they do. Why should the boys have all the privileges?"



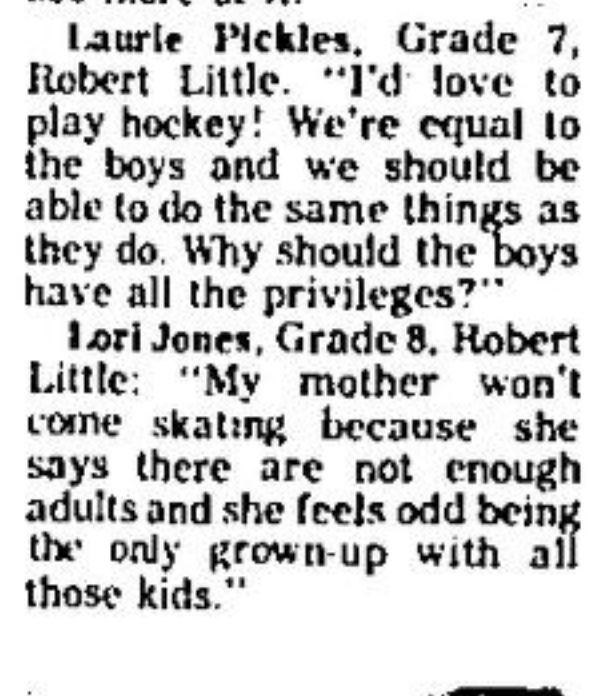
Carol Campbell, figure skating club: "The senior skaters get five hours a week, and the intermediates three and a half hours but they pay for it. Hockey still takes precedence. Now that the play-offs are taking place we have had to cut down our skating club time to make



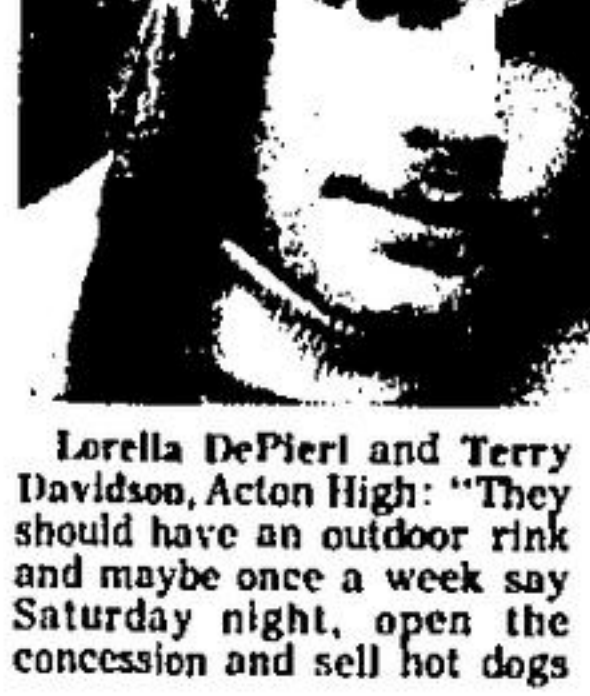
Barb Saville, Acton High: "Pleasure skating should be three or four times a week. They drive a tractor in the arena, so why couldn't they take it outside and clear the lake? Or build a rink outside?"



Terri and Bob King, Telpro Products: "Hockey is a great sport, but it isn't necessarily good for every kid. Our sons, Kelly 5, and Bobby 2½, are enrolled in hockey school and love it. But we like to take our kids out and skating is a good family outing. We'd like to see more of it."



Lori Jones, grade 8, Robert Little: "My mother won't come skating because she says there are not enough adults and she feels odd being the only grown-up with all those kids."



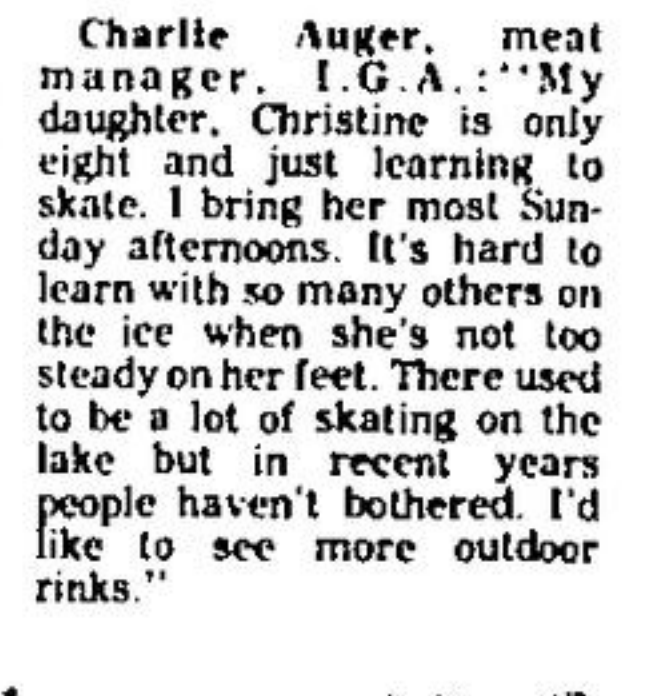
Lorella DePieri and Terry Davidson, Acton High: "They should have an outdoor rink and maybe once a week say Saturday night, open the concession and sell hot dogs



Jackie Newman, grade 7, Robert Little: "Figure skating is too expensive, and I wouldn't enjoy it. You pay fees, buy costumes, and then every time you earn a badge you have to pay for it. Besides it would get too cold being on the ice all that time."



Charlie Auger, meat manager, I.G.A.: "My daughter, Christine is only eight and just learning to skate. I bring her most Sunday afternoons. It's hard to learn with so many others on the ice when she's not too steady on her feet. There used to be a lot of skating on the lake but in recent years people haven't bothered. I'd like to see more outdoor rinks."



and hot drinks. Even a bonfire would be nice, then the teenagers wouldn't have to hang around town drinking and being rowdy."

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