

Halton health test shows it's safe to swim in Fairy Lake other testing being done because of mysterious fish kills

Pollution may be closing beaches elsewhere, but Halton Health Unit tests have shown it's perfectly safe for people to swim at the Fairy Lake beach.

However, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) for Ontario is testing some water samples for chemical contamination because of two mysterious "fish kills" in May and June.

Provincial official Kim Choo-Ying said Friday the MOE believes the fish were killed because the rampant plant growth in Fairy Lake this summer took too much oxygen out of the water.

Neil Pattullo of the Halton Health Unit said Fairy Lake was last tested for "bacterial" pollution on July 21 and the "results were well within limits."

The region tries to test water samples

from the swimming area every few weeks.

Tests showed little change in the bacterial count of the swimming area water between June 20 and July 21, Pattullo, a senior public health inspector, said. Also test results are no worse this summer than they were last summer. There is no danger of Fairy Lake beach being closed like Guelph Lake or beaches in Metro.

The only difference in the lake, health unit staff have noticed, is the "lush growth in the water this year."

No chemical contamination tests are done by the Halton Health Unit on Fairy Lake water because "nothing is going in there."

Pattullo acknowledged a citizen who lives in the area of the lake contacted the Health Unit in June about an unusual number of dead fish floating on the water. The health

unit contacted the MOE, Pattullo said, but the province felt the problem was the lack of oxygen in the water because of the increased plant life.

A few weeks ago Free Press Outdoors writer Lorne Fletcher mentioned the dead fish in his column.

"I've heard many complaints in the past month of an excess of dead fish floating on the surface of Fairy Lake. This problem seems to be applying to all species. Only July 1, well over 30 fish, Pike, Bass and Catfish were floating on the surface."

"I don't know if it is some kind of contamination reaching the lake, but it is certainly a problem which should be looked into. It takes a fair amount of pollution, if that's what the problem is, to kill a Catfish," Fletcher wrote.

After reading the article, Councillor Rick Bonnette became concerned and worked with Fletcher to have 11 water samples turned over to the MOE. Also, since then, Bonnette said he has talked to some other people living around the lake and they also have observed large numbers of dead fish at Fairy Lake this year.

Bonnette added citizens are saying they haven't seen the lake in such a mess in years and they find the MOE's lack of oxygen in the water theory tough to swallow as the cause of so many fish deaths, especially the hardy Catfish. He said Fletcher knew of two big fish kills, May 14 and June 20, involving 20 to 50 fish each time.

The 11 water samples will receive a "normal chemical parameters" test, Choo-Ying said. He wasn't hopeful of finding out much though, since the samples were taken

several weeks after the last fish kill.

"The lake is shallow," Choo-Ying observed, "and the plant growth during the night would be using up a lot of oxygen. We have no proof, but we suspect not getting enough oxygen is killing the fish." It is not "unusual to have a small kill" periodically in a shallow lake in weather conditions such as those this spring and summer, Choo-Ying added.

So much testing is taking place this summer that it will be about another three weeks before results of tests on the 11 samples are known.

Choo-Ying said the MOE didn't investigate sooner because the reports of dead fish indicated there were live fish still in the area and they were short staffed. Staff recently inspected the lake and found nothing unusual.

The Acton Free Press



A METROLAND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

One Hundred and Ninth Year—Issue 4

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 1983

28 Pages—Thirty Cents

Council still considering Stevens property for municipal complex

Price for site may be lower

Plans for a new municipal building on the Stevens property on Maple Avenue are still very much alive and the Town could end up paying much less for it than the \$650,000 price stated eight months ago.

In March Halton Hills council extended its option on the 30 acre property for 90 days, which means the option should have run out in June. However, at press time, this newspaper could not find out what has happened to the option put on the property last November, with a \$10,000 deposit.

This newspaper has learned the land was the subject of an in-camera council discussion, July 25, and will be reviewed again in open session next Monday.

When the consultant's study on municipal and hydro space needs was unveiled in April, the selection of a site was referred to the

building committee for further study. That committee looked at a number of sites, but wound up favoring the Stevens property.

At the July 25 in-camera council session, sources say a straw vote authorized the mayor and building committee to continue negotiations on the land, and determine whether Hydro would be willing to pay half the cost.

Reportedly the price of the land has already been trimmed and armed with a new appraisal the Town will try to have it cut further.

No firm plans have been made, but the favored idea would see the Town and Hydro split the cost of the land. Then the bulk of the site would be sold to a developer to build single family and link homes on the newly serviced property. The Stevens estate is now within the Georgetown urban boundary, meaning it is slated for water and sewer service.

Revenue from the surplus land would help defray the costs of the land and the building.

The approximately half a million dollars in the reserve fund, combined with government grants would make the whole package attractively affordable to many councillors.

The consultant's space needs study pegged the cost of a combined Town and Hydro administration centre at \$4.4 million.

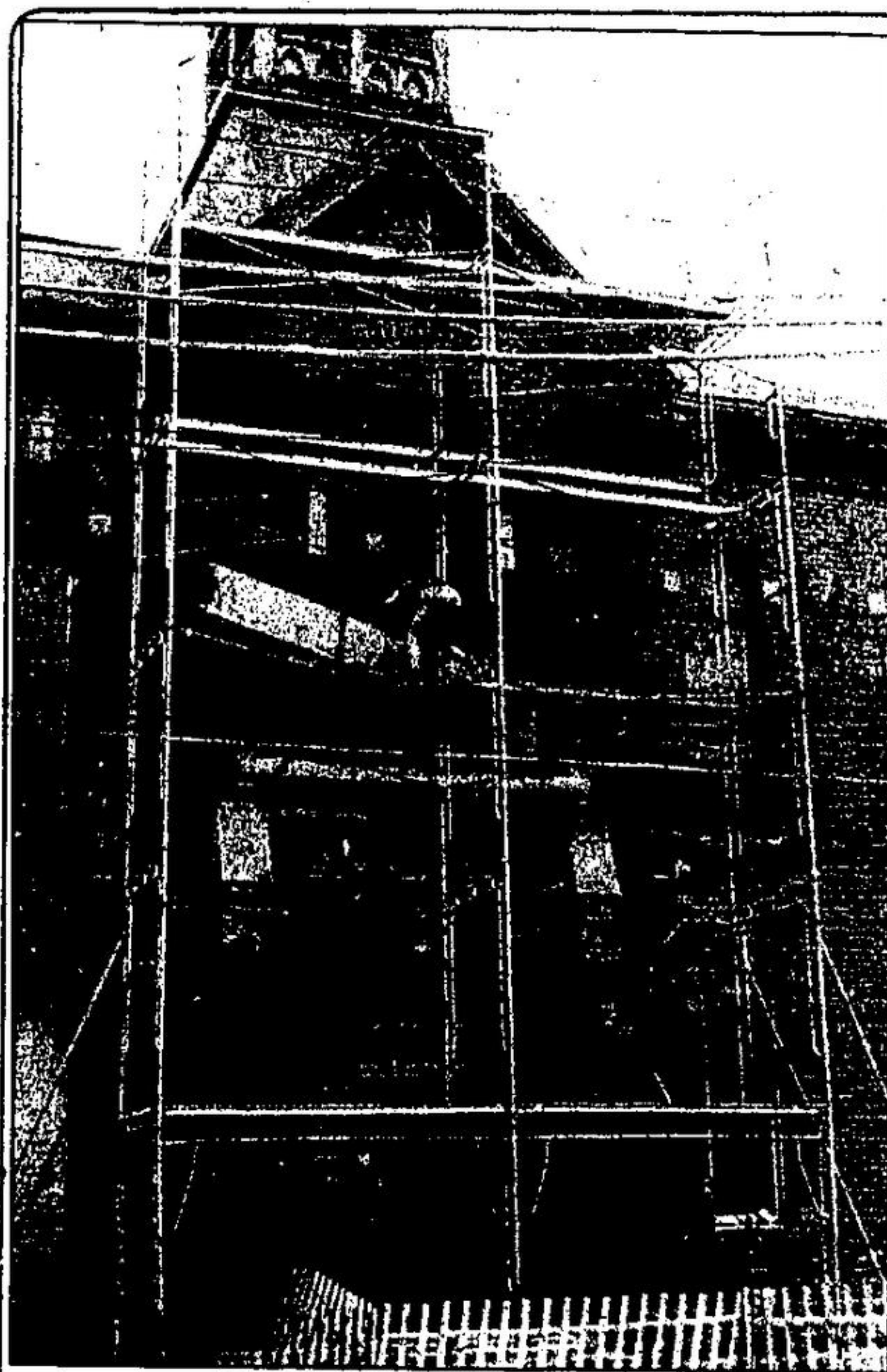
Inside

The hockey lottery is a big hit already. See page 10.

A dirt bike rider was hit by a dune buggy. More on page 3.

Police beat is on page 8.

Former Eramosa Township councillor Dave Mayson has been named to the Eramosa Non-Profit Housing corporation board of directors. See page 11.



Bracing and scaffolding will keep the town hall from falling down when the middle of the front wall is ripped down and rebuilt in the weeks ahead.

Town hall under budget but behind schedule

It may not look like it, but roughly six months after the start of town hall restoration project a lot of work on the historic building has taken place.

The project is a bit behind schedule, but Ted Tyler thinks the lost ground can be made up pretty quickly now. Also, because work has been slow, crew sizes have been reduced at times the past couple of months so the project is substantially under budget so far. The surplus will quickly be eaten up the next little while though.

It took time to erect necessary scaffolding to safety standards in front of the building and to erect temporary stairs at the side. Also, building scaffolding on the second floor and bracing the interior of the town hall from top to bottom took up time too, Tyler said.

The scaffolding at the side gives workers access to the roof where a hatch has been installed.

Some brick work on the exterior has been replaced to prevent further deterioration, it's been hard to find matching brick and the old bricks weren't all the same size so each new brick must be cut to size.

As expected with such an old building, Heritage Acton and its workers have been "surprised" a few times, such as when they discovered extra cracks above the upper floor front windows. Various problems, some areas are still covered so they can only guess what they are, have resulted in the arch over the doorway dropping down over the years. That's why the keystone fell out years ago. Even past efforts to repair problems have presented new ones.

The bottom line is the front of the building leans out about two inches. They've

decided to tear the whole front between the door and rose window out, that's why the scaffolding and bracing. Braces, 2 by 4s, have been put on the front so the walls will be held up while the front is removed and various repairs made. Another slowing precaution was that Halton Hills Hydro had to put insulators on the wires at the front of the building.

This work should begin sometime this week.

On the first floor most of the partitions are in and everything has been braced. Also walls and floors have been reinforced with steel. However, despite all the changes, the building will retain a lot of its old flavor because many features have been retained, such as the old door frames.

The main stairway has been reframed and wall studs are in for an elevator shaft.

Wiring and drywalling on the first floor remains to be done.

The basement has been excavated, another time consuming job, and crawl spaces enlarged. There are thick new concrete walls in the cellar.

Some work in both the basement and first floor is pending because final plans aren't nailed down for an addition to the hall, which would allow handicapped access to both floors and an elevator.

There have been no water problems in the basement yet, something which was expected. However, they are still going to put in tile drains and a sump pump.

Tyler said something like 4,000 to 5,000 pounds of steel has gone into the first floor and basement already.

They knew there was wood rot in one second floor ceiling truce, not in two.

(Continued on page 2)

Leathertown Market and Ciderfest weekend

One big bash

The Leathertown Market and Ciderfest will be an event which not only local residents will remember but also the hundreds of visitors from outside town who are expected to attend the big celebration August 26, 27 and 28.

One of the most novel ideas for this big event downtown and at Prospect Park will be that come the Yule season all those who sign the guest book will hear from Acton again, they'll receive a Christmas card.

This is just one of the ideas local businessmen and others have come up with to not only make the three day festival a fun filled weekend but also boost Acton's image as a tourist spot.

The North Halton Tourism Association is billing Leathertown Market and Ciderfest as the first of the Heritage Days series of celebrations running from late August to almost the end of September in this area. They'll be promoting this event with a tourist guide to the north and through various media coverage, the campaign is expected to attract thousands to north Halton from Metro to the east to Kitchener in the west.

Leathertown Market and Ciderfest is a Heritage Acton (town hall restoration) fund raising project, but many other community groups are also involved.

There'll be a gigantic sidewalk sale downtown. Then Mill St. from Main to the Tracks will be closed to traffic and the centre of the street will be filled with market booths. Also, there will be entertainment stages and display booths scattered through the market.

Sunday, a whole day of fun at Prospect Park is planned and there will be dances both Friday and Saturday nights.

Head organizer of the weekend, Citizen of the Year Ted Tyler, acknowledged some plans are still tentative. People away on vacations have slowed some groups in their planning. However, Tyler expects all loose ends will be tied up in the next couple of weeks.

One thing his group needs is more volunteer helpers and they are also looking for even more involvement than this project already enjoys from local organizations.

Friday night there will be a youth dance at the arena, this is being organized by Ed Wood of the BIA, featuring White Summer.

The Curling Club has been booked for a Monte Carlo night. This event will be run by either a local service club or one of the ball teams. More details will be announced later.

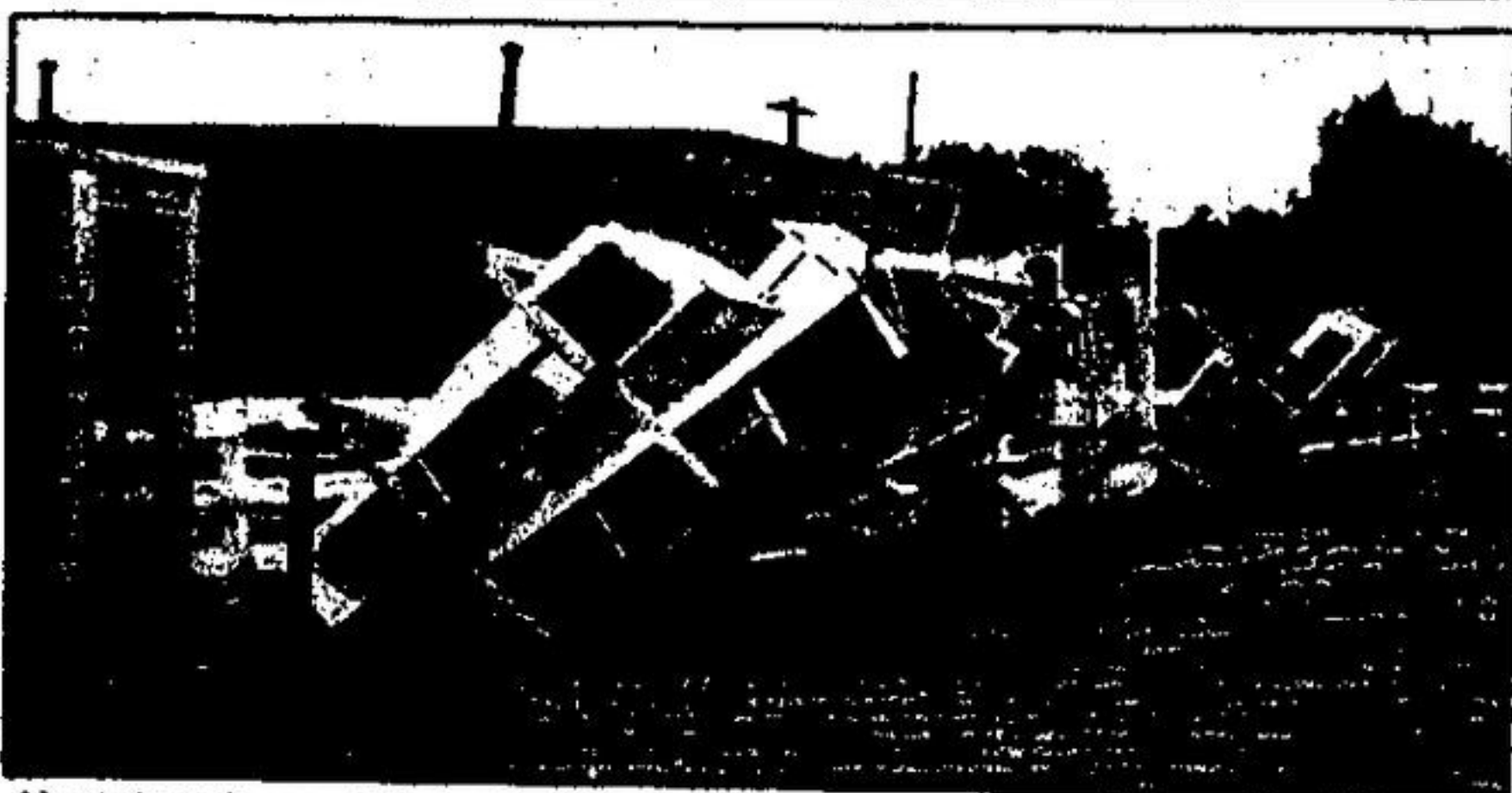
Tyler says they don't know yet if they'll have enough booths, displays, etc. to fill the centre of Mill right up to the tracks, but they are sure going to try. This market will certainly be much larger than the one two summers ago which filled both sides of Willow from Bower to Church. Tyler is certain they'll have enough booths and attractions to fill Mill at least to Elgin.

Vendors of both produce and flea market wares are already booked, organizers would welcome more.

Also they'd like to see every community organization participate with a public information booth, bake sale table, bingo game, children's game, rummage items booth, snack bar, etc. This is an excellent event for local groups to participate in since there will be a lot of traffic downtown offering a good chance to raise funds.

Other downtown attractions will include midway-type kiddies' rides, pony rides for children, stages featuring local entertainers doing their shows and a partial exhibit of Bill Yundt's famed

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About 15 truck caps at Little's Trailer World on Queen St. were blown over and damaged in a small tornado which ripped through town about 3 a.m. Monday morning. Les Pettis, from across the road, said he awoke in the middle of the night and looked outside just in time to see the funnel. He estimates it lasted about two minutes and dropped a tremendous amount of rain. An unrooted tree behind Standard Bred magazine pulled down a street light on Wilbur St. also. Hydro crews were called Monday morning to repair the damage.