



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HANS**

There was a birthday celebration downstairs at the children's library in the library-cultural centre Friday night. Youngsters gathered to honor one of their favorite writers, Hans Christian Andersen, who was born 177 years earlier in Denmark. Surrounded by a tall castle wall and decorated with symbols

from Andersen's fairy tales, the cake with candles proved to be the highlight of the evening. The writer died in 1875 and left behind such timeless works as "The Ugly Duckling", "The Brave Tin Soldier" and "The Little Mermaid".

(Herald photo)

**Council okays demolition but opponents may not give up yet**

**Thumbs down on town hall**

By CHRIS AAGAARD  
Herald Staff Writer  
There is little hope left that Acton's century-old town hall building will ever become a thriving landmark to the community's heritage following town council's decision Monday night to tear down the structure. Some Actonians, however, may still try to save it.

Backed by the Actario organization and the town hall restoration committee, Acton councillors Terry Grubbe, Dave Whiting and Ross Knechtel failed to persuade council to sell the building for \$1.

Tenders for the purchase of the building closed Thursday and the \$1 scheme proposed by Actario and the restoration committee was the only offer made for the building.

Eventually drafted into a council recommendation, the proposal called on the town to sell the building to a "non-profit, non-share corporation" providing that the legal requirements surrounding the sale were met and that the town would have the option of buying back the hall for the same price after it had been restored to provincial fire and building codes standards.

The draft purchase agreement stressed that the building's outer facade must be restored to its historical character and stated that work necessary to bring the building up to safety standards must be completed in six months.

But with a majority of councillors expressing doubt that restoration proponents would find the money to pay even for the exterior work, council voted 7-5 against the sale and later endorsed a motion calling for the building to be torn down to make way for a municipal parking lot.

Coun. George Malby was absent from the meeting which saw councillors Walter Biehn, Mike Armstrong, Pam Sheldon, Harry Levy, John McDonald, Marilyn Serjeantson and Russ Miller oppose the sale. Georgetown regional Coun. Roy Booth joined Mayor Pete Pomeroy and councillors Grubbe, Knechtel and Whiting to support the proposal.

Details of the demolition have not been settled. "There are so many questions for which we don't have answers," Coun. Levy argued. "The offer we have is far too nebulous. The only answer we have now is to demolish the building."

Expressing disbelief at council's decision, Actario chairman Ted Tyler, one of the architects of the proposal, told reporters later he didn't think

proponents of the restoration are ready to give up the fight; but he declined to give details of what further action they might take until the organizations involved have had a chance to review the decision.

While the building has been unoccupied since 1974, funding efforts to have the hall restored have continued for five years. Actario, a local lottery corporation, was founded to raise money for the project. The town spent \$11,000 last fall to present various restoration scenarios and their costs.

Council rejected a restoration scheme which has seen municipal funds used to refurbish the building. The restoration scenarios estimated costs around \$400,000 of which the town would pay about half. There were several grant programs from which funds could be drawn if the municipality was involved with the restoration.

Having raised about \$45,000 on their own, the restoration committee and Actario had hoped to combine the amount with the \$34,000 left over from the original \$40,000 which the town committed towards the building's demolition five years ago.

Mr. Tyler told council he believed the combined funds of almost \$80,000 "would carry us a long way" towards refurbishing the building, meeting safety standards outlined by the province. Volunteers working on the building would contribute to the costs saving.

Although he said he felt the six-month time limit as outlined in the proposed purchase agreement to bring the building up to proper standards was restrictive, he

expressed hope that the restoration groups would find a long-term tenant for the hall by the end of the year.

Mr. Tyler joined Acton councillors in arguing that the building would be an inexpensive solution to the town's shortage of office space for government services in Acton. "The group involved with this isn't doing this with the hope of getting reward or great

personal benefit," Coun. Knechtel said. "It's not a scheme to shaft the town but an honest attempt to put in Acton a centre or focus for the downtown area."

"There's no question in my mind that we will eventually have to find more suitable quarters for town and regional offices."

"People have a 'wait and see' attitude right now," Mr.

Tyler said. "If we got the go ahead (for the \$1 sale), money would start to flow again."

In another motion, council instructed town staff to continue looking into the possibility of buying Acton's "old stone school", a building near the community's library which is structurally sounder than the hall and seen as an alternative site for a community hall in downtown Acton.

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**Dominion Hotel murder trial finally draws to a close**

Four weeks after it began, the trial of two Acton men charged with murder in connection with the 1979 Dominion Hotel Fire was expected to end yesterday (Tuesday) as The Herald went to press.

Following a lengthy charge by Mr. Justice Coulter Osborne which began Friday, the 12-member jury retired to consider its verdict and ad-

ourned for supper and an evening's break. They resumed deliberations yesterday morning.

Charged are Dominion Hotel owner Cosimo Mercuri, 43, and one of his employees, Michael McCrystal, 49. A resident of the Main Street, Acton, hotel, 58-year old Howard Gibbons, died in the Aug. 19, 1979, fire. Lack of evidence prompted

Justice Osborne to order the jury to find a third defendant, Leonard Cripps, 59, not guilty March 29.

Ending his summation Friday, crown attorney Paul Stunt said that while he recommends a verdict of second degree murder as charged against Mr. McCrystal, the jury might also choose a verdict of manslaughter in his

case. For Mr. Mercuri, however, no such option is possible, Mr. Stunt said. If the jury finds the hotel owner guilty of arson, as the crown has charged, Canadian law automatically finds him guilty of second degree murder.

All murder convictions carry the same life sentence. Continued on page A10

**Town holds the budget line**

Continued from page A1  
owing easier access for disabled residents to the upstairs hall. A wheelchair ramp is

planned for Acton's Memorial Arena. \$35,000 will be spend building a theatre manager's office

at the Halton Hills Library-Cultural Centre. The town will also purchase a piano and a projector for the John Elliott Theatre.

—with a \$2,500 subsidy from the province and \$7,500 of the town's money, work crews will renovate Norval's community centre. Georgetown's outdoor public swimming pool will get a \$12,000 facelift.

There was only one note of concern raised about the budget. Acton regional Coun. Dave

Whiting noted that the mosquito spraying program in his community had been deleted this year.

Coun. Levy maintained that the program is a regional concern; however, he assured council that there are "certain avenues open to us" and the program will be looked at by the town if problems arise.

Councillors will review the town's five-year budget forecast within the next couple of weeks.



**BOOK BUFFS!**

There wasn't an inch of space to spare in the basement of Georgetown's Knox Presbyterian Church Saturday as the Georgetown University Women's Club held its annual book sale. It provided an excellent opportunity for seven and a half-year old Amy Gordon (left) and Christine Siles, 10, to fill their own bookshelves, preparing for a rainy day armchair browse. Sales totalled \$1,800 for the club and the money will be used to finance community projects and scholarships for local students. (Herald photo)

**Greyhounds?**

Continued from page A1  
sort of excitement," she says, "but not involve the same amount of organization and expense."

Furthermore, she feels many people seem to prefer greyhound racing to horse racing events. "We'll be looking for sponsors for our races," explains Mrs. Gosling. "We're hopeful that interested firms will come forward to sponsor one or more races. In this way, it would help to offset some of the expense involved in staging the greyhound races."

At the meeting of the Fair Board, it was announced that a new midway will be at the fair this year. A contract was signed in February with Mississauga Amusements to bring their rides and midway to the fair. The midway that has been in attendance for several years now could not continue, as the new fair dates in September coincided with another commitment.

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