



Ron Birrell displays one of the newel posts that will grace the staircase leading up to the auditorium.
Photo by Ted Brown

Upstairs, the hall saw many varied events, including dances, concerts, minstrel shows and graduations. Acton's first movies were shown in the hall, and rallies, both political and temperance, as well as receptions for veterans were all held upstairs at the old Town Hall.

But by the 1960s, the great hall of the Town Hall had been pretty much relegated to a storage facility, and the downstairs was the home of the local Ontario Provincial Police office, in the years before regional government created Halton Regional Police.

On the Bower Avenue side of the building, Acton Fire Department maintained their apparatus bays to store their fire trucks and to hold their weekly practices.

The Town Hall was becoming an eyesore, and by the mid-1970s, Town of Halton Hills staff questioned the safety of the building.

On April 25, 1977, Halton Hills Works Committee recommended that Acton Town Hall be torn down, and the area to be used to construct a parking lot for Acton Fire Department.

Halton Hills Council agreed, but only five days passed and more than 80 people came forward to challenge the decision, and before long, a petition with more than 2,000 names was presented at council.

Halton Hills Council quickly abandoned the demolition of the Town Hall.

Soon after, the Acton Town Hall Restoration Committee was formed, with George Elliott acting as chairman. The committee was now in place, but they had no money. Bake sales and other small fundraisers did little to fill the

coffers to fund the committee's goals.

However, at a meeting, committee member Ted Tyler had a suggestion.

Tyler proposed raising funds with a lottery, and the Actario Lottery was formed (playing off the name of the then provincial 'Wintario' lottery.)

The Actario lottery ran every Saturday morning for two years, and as a result, more than \$30,000 were raised, and the project was underway.

Actario was to be the first of many fundraising projects, and the group also applied for several provincial and federal grants, to further the restoration.

The restoration of the building was taken over by Heritage Acton, a registered charity formed in January, 1983, and the building was deeded to Heritage Acton by the Town of Halton Hills Council.

The group was now in position to move forward.

The grants rolled in over the years, as the committee received a \$133,720 federal work grant in 1982, and an Ontario Heritage Foundation grant for \$60,000 in 1984.

"The first project was to stabilize the exterior of the building," said present committee chairman Ron Birrell. "The building was not sound— in fact it was in pretty bad shape, and the outside walls needed lots of work. Those first monies raised were entirely devoted to stabilizing the building, mostly by installing steel beams under the exterior walls. It was quite an undertaking

"But after successfully stabilizing the building,



Perched high on a scaffolding, Town Hall interior designer Gail Kerr takes her turn with a paint brush, working on the top of the arch over the stage.

Photo by Ted Brown

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