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THE CLUB AT NORTH HALTON

Homecoming brings tears and cheers

Continued from pg. 1

town's social scene, having been the site of countless hockey games, figure skating shows, wrestling bouts, rollerskating nights and more. The farewell started on Friday night with a wine and cheese at the arena, and continued on Saturday night with a dance featuring live music by local bands. The rink was a sea of hugs, handshakes, laughter and tears as old friends reunited.

"I can't even begin to tell you how emotional this is," says a teary Diann Turkington of Fort Erie, Ontario, who ran into many friends she hadn't seen in decades.

For Craig Lawrence of Georgetown, the weekend was emotional for a different reason. His grandparents used to run the Memorial Arena and he spent a lot of his life within the old brick walls.

"My whole family worked here," Lawrence says. "My grandmother served hot chocolate at the canteen and I used to run back behind the bar to steal chocolate bars."

Dave and Gerry Kentner also spent a fair share of their time at the Memorial.

"The atmosphere in here on Friday nights when the Raiders were playing was electric," Gerry says. "My girls loved running around the arena. It was a safe haven for them."



Members of the Georgetown Little Theatre performed a series of vignettes from the Memorial Arena's past. Actors Ro Palumbo-Coates (left) and Adam McCormack bring back memories of falling in love at the infamous Bantam Tournament.

Photo by Andrea Lefebvre

Dave remembers rushing to the arena after school to get the best seats for the Raiders game. He also remembers spectators bringing bottles of alcohol to the games and dropping the empties into the arena's cinderblock walls. When the arena walls come down, he is going to be on the lookout for that special glass "insulation."

Between the video and photos projected on its walls and the historical vignettes acted out by Georgetown Little Theatre members on its rink, the Memorial Arena was the definite star of Homecoming 2013.

"We all grew up (at the Memorial)," says Georgetown resident Debbie Smart. "It will be sad to see it go."

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