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"ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED"

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1994

Users' group tired of waiting for new arena

BY DOUG HARRISON

The Acton Tanner

The Acton Arena Users' Committee (AAUC) has the same frustrations they had a year ago after seeing no change in the status of the new Acton arena.

"We recommended that if the time-line would make it difficult to get things going in Acton East, the Acton North site (on Wallace Street between McDonald Boulevard and Main Street, near the industrial part of town) was also an excellent choice for an arena

site, and we still have that stance," says president Gord Chapman.

Lack of funds has been the major impediment to the new arena, but that may soon change.

The federal government announced its intention to create jobs in Halton Hills by partially funding an infrastructure program. Both the federal and provincial governments will give a combined total of \$1,713,022 to the Town of Halton Hills if the Town can allocate \$856,511 for such a program, and if it can come up with \$2.5 million in infrastructure projects.

The other condition for receiving this money, according to Paul Stover, superintendent of facilities for the Town, is that the potential projects cannot already be planned for completion this year.

He notes there are a number of road projects and other jobs that have been deferred for various reasons that were to be discussed at council Monday night.

Andy Koopmans, treasurer for the Town, says the Acton arena is one such project under discussion and adds the Town should cover the required \$2.5 million and "we have reserve funds available to us" if a problem arises.

"It strikes me that the arena is a classic project of extreme importance that has to be done and time is now more of a factor," Chapman insists. "The building conditions are right, interest rates for debentures are less expensive and other monies are available."

Chapman says the Town's main

objection with the Acton North site has been the condition of Wallace Street and how it doesn't meet standards. He says he understands the Town's concerns to include street lights, upgrading of curbs, gutters and sidewalks and lack of visibility.

"The Town's concerns about Acton North might not be my concerns. I don't buy that it's necessary to do all that construction. There are lights and a sidewalk on one side. The road going into Prospect Park (to the existing arena) doesn't meet standards," argues Chapman, who adds the Town's figures to repair the road are between \$800,000 and \$900,000.

"I've driven to enough arenas on bumpy roads to not be too excited about not having a four-lane highway to the arena."

Stover contends the Acton North site is somewhat isolated and with seven to eight acres of available land, it doesn't allow the Town "to build a community park with the arena. Stand-alone facilities are too expensive to operate." He adds that Acton North would be in the same predicament as the Acton East site until the fish study is done.

Chapman says the AAUC is going to become more pro-active. He points out they will make a presentation to council once they get more information on Acton East's status and stresses they don't want to wait until the conclusion of the Ontario Municipal Board hearings.

Students get break

There will be no school for many Acton students (not including St. Joe's) on Thursday and Friday, the two weekdays prior to the March Break (March 14 to March 18).

The additional days are due to the Ontario government's Social Contract legislation and the need for staff to take off days without pay.

Bob Williams, Halton Board director of education, stated in a statement released yesterday (Tuesday): "We appreciate the patience of our community as we deal with the difficult problem of balancing the requirement of unpaid days with the need to provide instruction. The solution we have reached with our teaching groups is our best effort to achieve that balance."

See *What's Happening* (Page 6) for some nifty things to do next week!

IRISH EYES WERE SMILING!

Eight-year-old Leigh-Anne Morton performs a traditional dance at Trinity United Church's Irish Ceilidh Saturday. (Mike Albano photo)

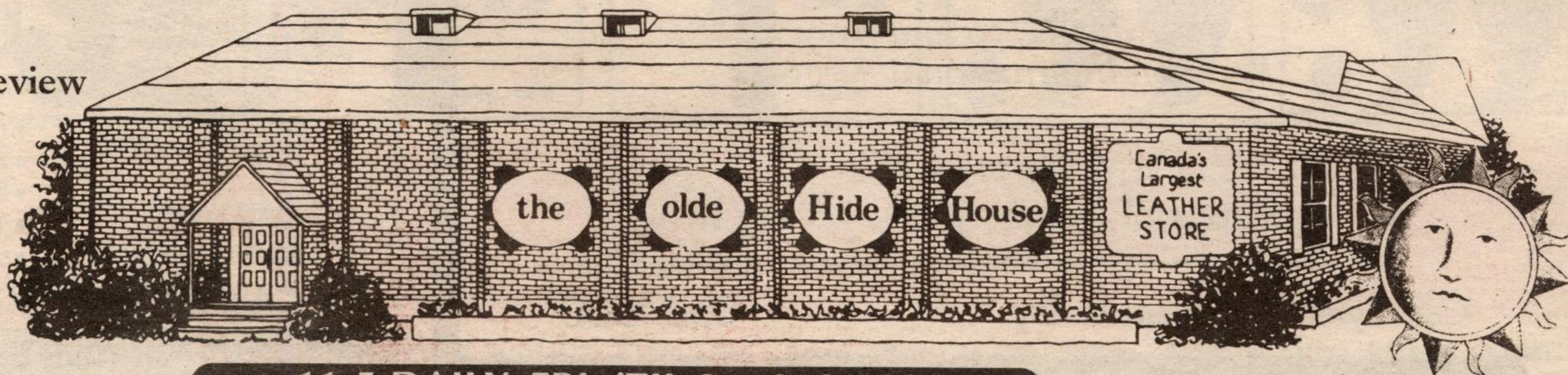


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