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'HOMETOWN PAPER, NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!'

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 1996

Acton exec explains CTC closing

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

The Acton Tanner

In a surprise move that shocked and saddened many Acton residents, the Canadian Tire Corporation Ltd. abruptly closed its Acton store without warning last

Wednesday night.

Eighteen full and part-time staff, who thought they were going to be introduced to a new dealer, were instead told they were out of work and not to come in the next day.

Acton resident Wayne

Sales, senior vice-president of marketing for Canadian Tire, said the company was desperately trying to re-position itself in the marketplace and that, "Acton does not personify the shopping experience that we want for Cana-

dians."

Sales said the average Canadian Tire store must now be at least 20,000 square feet. At 4,000 square feet the Acton store was too small, and that limited the amount of product that could be carried.

"When you run a flyer program that averages 16 to 24 pages, the building is so small, customers couldn't get the merchandise advertised because there just wasn't enough room for it," Sales explained Friday.

Sales said customers could instead go to the new 28,000 square foot Georgetown store or the new store being built in Guelph.

Sales said that historically, Acton had been used as a first

training store for dealers who learned the ropes here and then quickly moved on.

"Normally we give more notice of a change than was the case in Acton but because the current dealer had an opportunity to move to a larger store, and us looking at it from a marketing perspective in terms of the Acton store not representing what we want a Canadian Tire store to represent to Canadians, those two decisions came together with short timing," Sales said.

Sales added they would make "best efforts" to relocate the Acton employees to other Canadian Tire stores but there was no guarantee that anyone would be offered

jobs at another store, although he did say they would require 40 to 50 staff at the new Guelph store.

Sales said there was a personal part in the decision because he now lives in Acton.

"We wrestled with the decision to close Acton because we are a very active part of local communities and I really enjoy living in Acton, but we had to make an appropriate decision in terms of our customers," Sales explained, noting that people questioned him "time and time again" about why they can't get a particular product at the Acton store.

All Canadian Tire stores are run by dealers while the

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HURRY!

Four-year-old Jesse Kuenzig, left, looks like he's not sure whether he should take a bucket full of water (and holes in the bottom) from Sarah Intonr, 7, during a wet and wild game at McKenzie-Smith Bennett's play day, held last Wednesday. (Karen Wetmore photo)

Swim coach wants pool operating costs known

Acton swim coach Gerry Ockenden gets steamed when he talks about the possible closing of the Acton Indoor Pool because of financial cuts by the Halton Board of Education.

As of September the Board will no longer pay to operate the pool except when its students are using it. Board trustees have cut all swim programs except those for the trainable mentally handicapped.

Ockenden, coach of the Acton Aqua Ducks, said he took a 1,000-name petition to the Board of Education five years ago when there was a move to close the Acton pool.

"You show me where it says that it costs \$114,000 to operate that Acton pool for a year," Ockenden challenged

in a recent interview. The \$114,000 figure was supplied by the Town, which also said it does not have the money to operate the pool.

Under a 20-year-old agreement the Board paid for operating the pool and six others in Halton, for "the life of the pool." The Board now says that the life of the pool is up.

The Town operated its recreational swim programs in the pool but did not pay the Board for the use.

Ockenden said five years ago he suggested that some meters be put on the pool to measure gas and electricity use, to find out exactly what the operating costs were.

"If you want to close down a pool and use the cost as the main reason then tell me how much it costs to run for a

year," Ockenden said.

Ockenden also complained that the pool is under-utilized and that the Town should explore ways to use the pool during the day for things like Mom and tot swim programs and exercise programs.

"For some reason people can't get into the Acton pool to run programs and maybe it's time that they re-assess what is actually going on.

"Why doesn't the Town put someone in charge of the aquatic program and see if there can be enough use to generate enough money to operate the pool?" Ockenden suggested.

The Aqua Ducks use the Acton Pool for 10 months of the year and pay between \$8,000 and \$10,000 in pool rental fees.

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