

And the walls came tumblin' down

160 Mennonites here to tear down old tannery

By: ANGELA TYLER
The New Tanner

Acton's long history in leather is closing another chapter. Demolition of the buildings on the former Beardmore and Company land is in full swing.

The 180 acres, now owned by Maple Leaf Foods, is becoming a flat line of land. Priestly

Demolition of Aurora has been contracted by a consulting firm, on behalf of Maple Leaf Foods to clear the land of all the buildings.

Ryan Priestly of Priestly Demolition confirmed with *The New Tanner* that all the buildings would be gone by the end of 1999. Demolition this year will continue until the end of November and resume again in the spring once the snow has cleared. The project is

scheduled to end late fall next year. The demolition company has approximately 20 crew members on site.

This week, Acton has been home to more than 160 Mennonites from the Conestoga and Mount Forest area. The group traveled by bus to help with the demolition and recycling of building materials. Unfortunately, a barn in the Conestoga area burned last week and now

some of the Beardmore building structures, including lumber and steel beams, will help build another barn.

Maple Leaf Foods has also been marking some of the land with surveyor type stakes. Jeffrey Miller of Maple Leaf Foods said that there are no current plans for development of the land, "it is part of our on going in-

See TANNERY, Page 2

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What's Inside



Dog days of August? Cody, a 1½ year old pet owned by Mike and Jen Meyer of Acton enjoyed the Leathertown Festival along with lots of other canines. See Page 7.



Three of the 160 Mennonite farmers who are razing the Beardmore tannery enjoy a lunch break. More photos on Page 3.



The Under 13 Girls Select soccer club did well at the Kincardine tournament on the weekend. See Page 9.

Jennifer Aitken takes a look at the Crawford Lake Indian Village in her column on Page 11.

Park Board threatens to block arena razing

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner



REMAINS OF THE RECENT FIRE and years of leather history cover the ground where the old pasting and boiler rooms were at Beardmore. The demolition is now in full swing. — Angela Tyler photo

The Acton Agricultural Society will use a 23-year old agreement with the Town to block the planned demolition of the Prospect Park arena if the Town doesn't promise, in writing, that it will act with good faith in finding alternatives for the Society which uses the arena each year during the fall fair.

The 1975 agreement, and an earlier one with the Town of Acton, gives the Society unrestricted use of Prospect Park and buildings during the fair for as long as the Society exists. On Sept. 21, after the 85th edition of the fair ends, the Town, no longer able to get liability insurance for the structurally unsound building, will close it.

Council recently asked staff to prepare demolition tender documents, but reiterated its willingness to work with the Society and a subcommittee of Heritage Acton, which wants to save the building.

In a letter to council Society treasurer Daniel Varanelli said they are concerned if they abandon renovation of the former arena all chances of obtaining a alternate facility would be gone. The Society and Town have discussed both building a smaller facility in Prospect Park and buying additional land at the new Acton arena site and moving some or all fair activities to that location.

Society president Ron White said they took the tough stance as a bargaining chip.

"We don't want to leave the park if it's at all possible because it's a nice setting for the fair," he said recently.

Noisy party under Town investigation

The owner of a Fifth Line Acton farm and the organizer of a rave party that drew approximately 3,000 partygoers and scores of noise complaints two weeks ago face steep fines if charged and convicted under Town noise and public performance by-laws. The maximum fine under the Provincial Offences Act for a conviction under the bylaws is \$5,000 for each count for each person charged.

Town staff has requested the police report on the party and begun interviewing people

who complained about the noise to try to substantiate allegations that the party contravened the Town's subjective noise bylaw.

Bylaw enforcement officer Henry Tse said from what's he's heard so far, the complaints would result in charges, but the complainants would have to be willing to go to court and testify.

"If a whole bunch of residents will say (in court) that they could not sleep until 3 or 5 a.m. and police testify that they had to shout to be heard at the scene then it's



DEBRIS: Party goers left a few heaps of garbage behind following a party on the Fifth Line.

likely that the noise will be judged to be too loud by a Justice of the Peace," Tse explained in an interview on Friday.

Tse said if they can prove that tickets were sold for the event then there would likely be sufficient grounds to say the August 8 party was a public performance, which requires a Town permit.

Tse said that while staff will conduct a standard investigation, they do have an "ulterior motive."

"If anybody wants to hold something like this they better follow the rules and if they don't want to follow the rules, don't do it."

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