

# Gale force winds damage new arena



Town officials were right to be worried about high winds damaging the roof of the Acton arena — they just had the wrong building, causing more than a few smirks among those fighting the Town's demolition plans.

## Old one solid as a rock

While the worst winds in 23 years didn't harm the Prospect Park arena, a facility deemed unsafe for public use because of an unsound roof, last Tuesday's wind storm

ripped off sections of a roof overhang at the front of the new Acton arena.

Approximately 40 feet of the beige man-made roofing material protect-

ing the front entrance was torn off by the wind. Panels from two sections were torn off and one piece was retrieved by staff a quarter-of-a-mile away in a cornfield.

An arena employee, who wished to remain

nameless, said although the material looks like cheap garden shed roofing, it is expensive.

The contractor was scheduled to view the damage on Tuesday.

See pictures pg. 7

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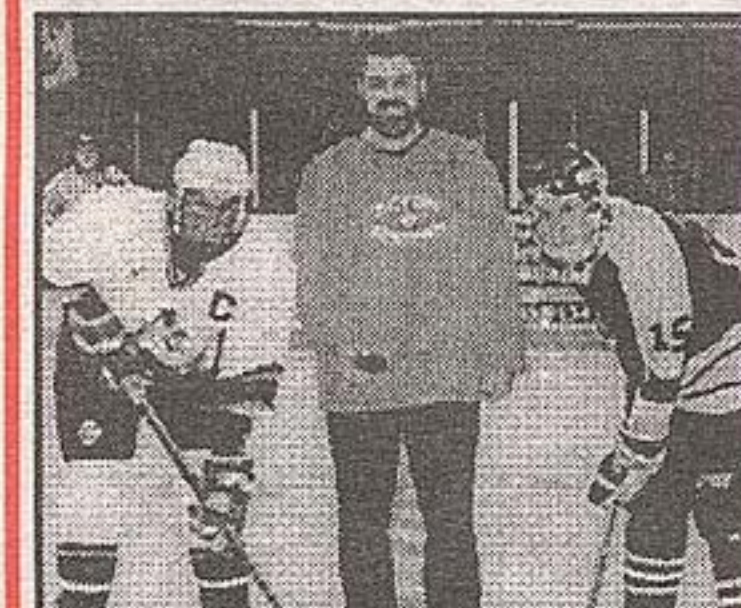
## What's Inside



Pastor Tom Cullen and his wife Janet enjoyed a trip to the Holy Land recently. See story and photo on page 12.



Two Acton volunteer fire fighters were honoured recently for their long years of service. See story on page 11.



Acton Juvenile Tanners face off with Thetford rivals in hockey action at the new arena. See Sports



Don't forget Saturday's Santa Claus parade

# Old ice palace a 'goner'

## Santa's here on Saturday

Acton has a date with jolly old St. Nick on Saturday at the official Christmas season kick off — the annual Acton Santa Claus parade, staged since 1985 by the Acton Fire-fighters Association.

Some last minute entries have convinced parade organizer Bill Spielvogel this year's parade — with its fairy tale Christmas theme — will be a success.

"Things have come together in the past few days and now I expect at least 40 entrants and that's more than last year," Spielvogel said in an interview on Sunday.

The Acton Citizens' Band will lead the parade featuring floats from two Acton schools, Robert Little and St. Joseph's Catholic school and six bands. The Streetsville Pipe Band's decade long participation in the Acton Santa Claus parade has ended.

Just like Christmas, the parade comes with a price tag. It costs approximately \$4,000 a year to stage the event and most of that comes from local business donations.

"Last year we almost lost our shirts. It took me a lot of begging and running round to get enough money to pay the bills, but this year is a little better," Spielvogel said.

See Santa Page 2



BY ANGELA TYLER  
 The New Tanner

Despite cries of protest from area residents, demolition of the old Acton Arena began yesterday (Wednesday) morning.

Echoes of sledgehammers could be heard throughout the surrounding homes and into the Lakeview subdivision as the wooden staircase that led into the arena's north side was the first thing to go.

Gary Caprara of Marrex Construction and Excavating from Caledon confirmed they had officially started the demolition and salvage of the arena. Today they were to begin on the interior and the exterior should be started in the next two weeks. Caprara said the demolition "will be completed by Christmas".

Caprara, who is the foreman at the site, said they expect to have a crew of 10 to 15 when the demolition is at it's fullest.

Wednesday morning's crew was surprised by the quick response they received from area residents. By 8 a.m., they already had people at the old arena protesting the demolition. One area resident had already called MPP Ted Chudleigh and tried to get in touch with the sheriff to stop the demolition, which has been approved by Town council.

## Government approval Tuesday seals its doom

By FRANCES NIBLOCK  
 The New Tanner

The demolition of the Prospect Park arena is underway, much to the anger and dismay of many Acton residents who felt the building was a restorable asset and not an unsafe liability.

Telephone approval late Tuesday from the Ministry of Culture, Citizenship and Recreation cleared the last hurdle for the demolition and crews began to dismantle the interior and remove several sections of the roof on Wednesday.

On Monday night a firm promise of up to \$20,000 in Town money to construct a new building in Prospect Park convinced the Acton Agricultural Society to abandon threats of legal action to stop the demolition, an integral part of the Acton Fall Fair's success.

As late as yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon Heritage Acton members were meeting to assess possible options in their fight to save the arena, and their involvement in the Society's ambitious fundraising plans for a new facility. At least one Acton resident who has already donated \$500 towards the restoration told The New Tanner said her money will not help pay for a new building.

The deal, reached with a 6-5 vote at the end of a long, confusing and emotional council meeting on Monday night, releases the Town from an earlier agreement to always provide a building in the park for the fair. It also sets the stage for the Agricultural Society to raise approxi-

mately \$300,000 for a new building to use during its annual fall fair.

Following the meeting Society spokesman Doug Fread said the deal was the "bare minimum" they could accept.

"I think this debate has divided the Town and that shouldn't have happened," Fread said, adding he's confident people who pledged money to restore the old arena will now support a fundraising campaign for a new building.

The exact location of the building, which can be up to 15,000 square feet, must be consistent with recommendations from a master parks plan that is now underway. The Town will grant the Society a lease to operate the building and will waive all building fees and permits for the new facility. The Society will pay all construction, servicing and ongoing maintenance costs and the Town will be able to use the new building, at no cost, on an occasional basis.

See Demolition Pg. 2

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