

Local leather firm sold to U.K. company

Thirty-seven jobs at the Eagle Ottawa Canada Ltd. leather finishing plant in Acton have been saved with the purchase of the McDonald Boulevard plant by an international leather manufacturer. The new company trades as Permair Leathers Limited.

Porvair International Limited, makers of the Permair footwear and personal leather finishing system, purchased Eagle Ottawa and will relocate its North American base to Acton from Massachusetts.

Eagle Ottawa laid off 17 workers less than a month ago when it lost a contract to supply leather interiors for cars. Permair's manager director, Eagle's former CEO Gord Williams, said the remaining 28 plant and nine staff jobs were in jeopardy.

"Without that (Permair) business from the U.S. plant, we'd certainly be faced with more reductions," Gordon said on Tuesday, adding Acton will produce

leather for footwear, ice skates, belts and personal products.

Gordon said it was "disappointing" to have to cut the workforce by half, but stressed it is time to look forward, not backward.

"The 37 people who will remain here, I think, have certainly more security in their jobs than they did three or four weeks ago," Gordon said.

Eagle Ottawa, which formed in Michigan after the Civil War, purchased the

Acton plant from Frank Heller and Company in 1990. Heller began finishing split leather in the early 1960s. The Acton location was Eagle Ottawa's only manufacturing plant in Canada.

Gordon said with the loss of the automotive side of the business, they're reconfiguring the 110,000-square-foot plant to use less than half of the building and will sublet the surplus space to other tenants.

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What's Inside



Rev. Mark Tiller is directing the Acton High School production of Guys and Dolls which opens April 12. See Page 6.



The artists who painted the new mural in Acton Arena say thanks to the community. See photo on Page 4.



Nothing like pancakes and maple syrup to stir up appetites at Limehouse Hall. See Page 8.

WEEKLY CHUCKLE

The Boss sent for Murphy and said: "You were supposed to work Monday but you phoned to say you were sick. However, someone saw you at the opening Blue Jay game." Murphy said: "Twasn't me at all, just looked like me." Boss: "How do you know?" Murphy: "I saw him."

Acton citizens won't accept sale of land at MSB - Rick Bonnette

Message to go to Halton School Board

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

ClubLink Golf North 'hold hands'

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

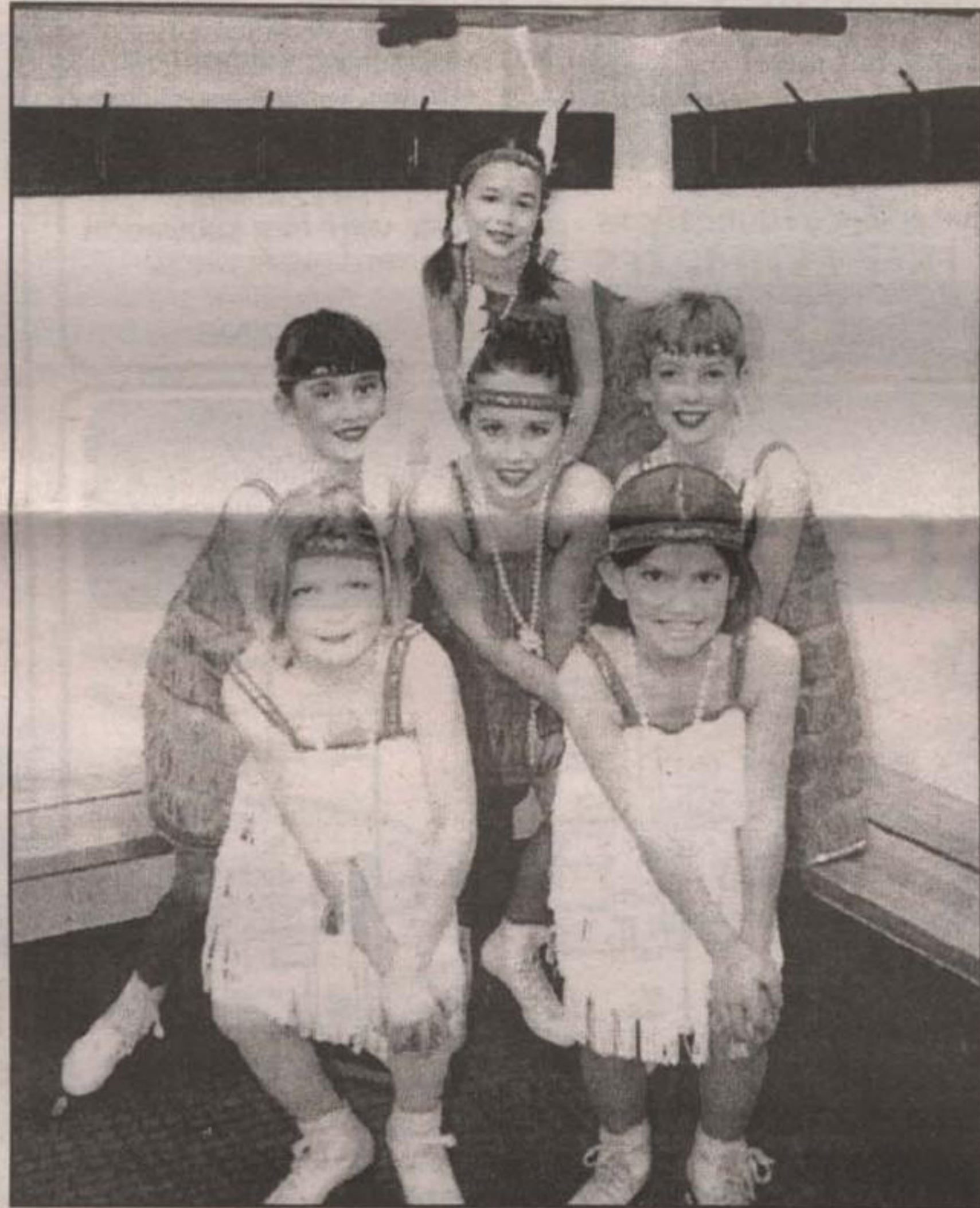
GolfNorth marketing director Kevin Hurd isn't swinging his clubs as much as he'd like these days - he's busy dispelling the perception that up-market ClubLink - owner of Blue Springs - has bought out GolfNorth - owner of Acton Golf Club, formerly Acton Meadows.

"It's a strategic alliance. It's reciprocal playing privileges. They didn't buy us - they invested in our company," Hurd said when asked about ClubLink's initial \$4.1 million investment in GolfNorth, which will retain its focus on golfing value, catering to the "middle range golfer."

"Immediately what we've heard through the grapevine is people are perceiving this as a buy out, and that's not the case, but the easiest way I can explain it is that we are holding hands, we're friends in the golf business now," Hurd said.

GolfNorth purchased Canterbury Common Golf Club from ClubLink and Dundee Country club and will market its 14 courses as GolfNorth by ClubLink, and doubling the number of courses from last year that the average member will be able to play, including

Continued on Page 2



FLAPPER FRENZY: These flappers caused quite a fuss when they strutted their stuff during the Acton Figure skating club's carnival on Saturday. The flappers include, front: Lauren Vermeulen and Samantha Medland. Middle: Nicky Spurrell, Megan Evans and Maja Vermeulen. Back: Emily Molcjan. - Frances Niblock photo

Blood Clinic April 13

April showers bring May flowers and the month also brings the opportunity to roll up your sleeve at the Acton Blood Donor Clinic on Thursday, April 13 at the Acton Legion, 15 Wright Ave. The clinic runs from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

All blood types are needed, a spokesperson for Canadian blood services, notes.

"We need to collect a total of 80 donations at this clinic to help meet the needs of hospital patients."

Acton citizens are not ready to "roll on their backs and play dead," when it comes to the potential sale of school board land, says Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette.

He and former school board chair Arlene Bruce of Acton, have been asked by a group of local residents to take that message to the Halton District School Board on April 19.

That's when trustees vote on a strategic report that includes the sale of surplus land, including a three-acre property at McKenzie-Smith Bennett school fronting on Churchill Road, that is currently used as a playground and for soccer, baseball and track and field. The rumoured value of the site is \$400,000.

The Acton School Board bought the land in 1957-58 for the school and the park and in 1969, the Halton County School Board was established and assumed all assets, including the MSB land. Bonnette asked why they would want to pay for it twice, when money is so tight.

"We've got to raise and find - beg, borrow and steal - an additional \$2 million to make up the (overage on) the leisure centre and the Alcott arena," Bonnette said, adding, "there's no way" the Town should buy the land.

"In Acton, we're looking at purchasing a 15 to 20 acre community park, so where are the dollars going to be?" Bonnette asked, reacting to a suggestion by Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson in The New Tanner that the Town would have to justify buying the land.

While agreeing the story is accurate, Serjeantson called the headline "terribly unfortunate", claiming her "name was toast," in Acton.

"You have to have the support of Council before you buy anything, but you have to look at all options," Serjeantson said on Sunday.

Bonnette said in today's dollars it would cost over \$200,000 to replace the sports fields at MSB which were used a total of 1,339 hours last year. Maintenance and operating costs for the MSB land was approximately \$10,000.

The possible sale generated a slew of protest letters and at least 2,000 people signed petitions urging the Board not to sell the land. Several donations have been used to buy 1,000 protest buttons that will be handed out within the week.

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