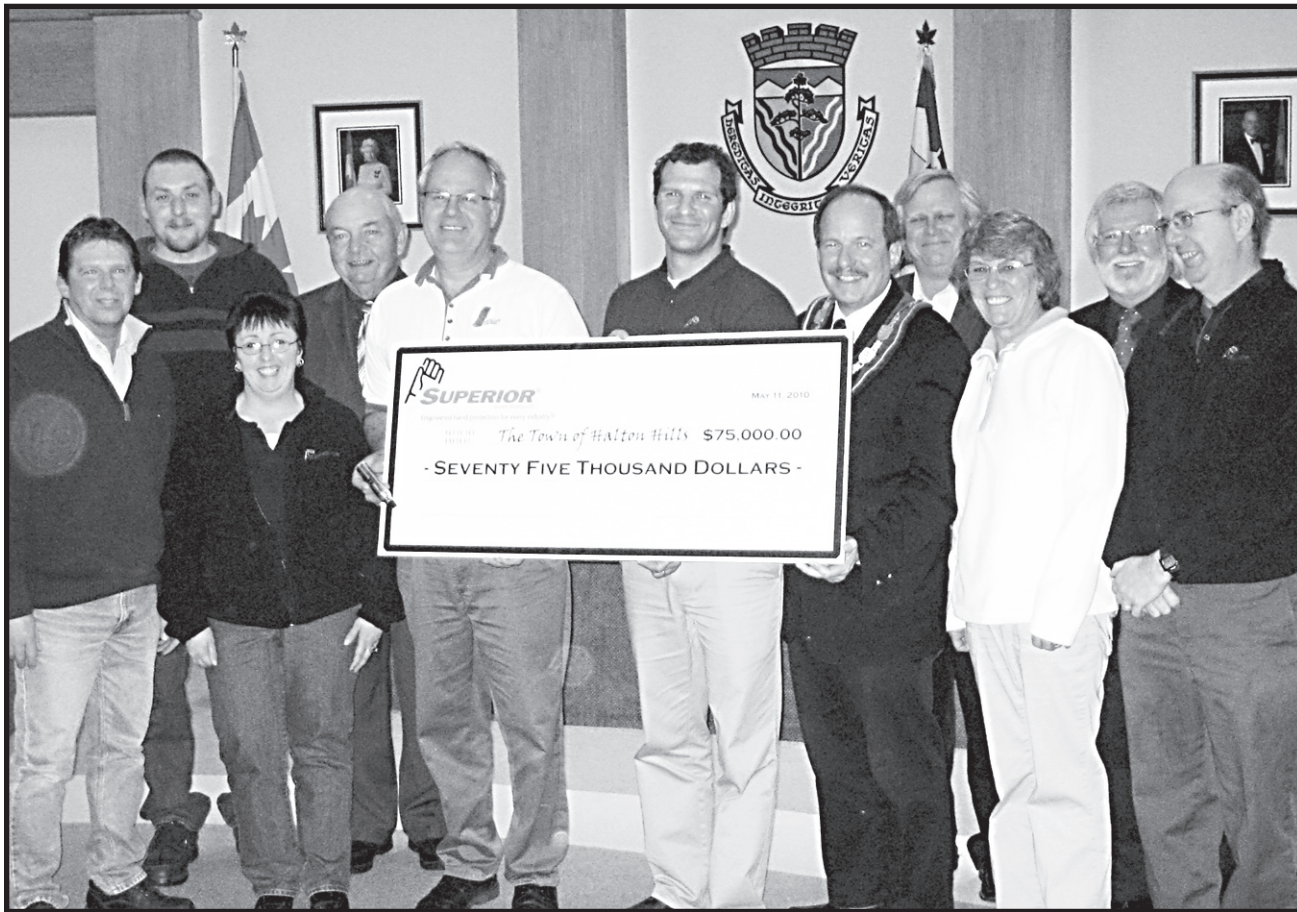


Geng's donation makes a big splash

\$75,000 for splash pad

By Frances Niblock



SPLASH PAD DONATION: The owners and department heads of Acton's Superior Glove presented the Town with a cheque for \$75,000 for the new splash pad now under construction in Prospect Park. On hand were: back, from left: Roy Bishop, Todd Schonnop, Councillor Mike O'Leary, Superior owners Tony Geng and Joe Geng, Mayor Rick Bonnette, Councillor Clark Somerville, Jill Whalen, Councillor Jon Hurst and Dan Miller. Front left: Lynda Rolfe. – Submitted photo

A 12-foot-long leaping fish and fishing pole will greet visitors to Acton's new splash pad in Prospect Park, thanks in part, to the generosity of the Geng family, owners of Superior Glove.

Brothers Joe and Tony Geng, the first corporate donors to the \$540,000 project, and their department heads delivered a large ceremonial cheque for \$75,000 to the Town during Tuesday's council meeting.

"When we first heard about the splash pad project we thought it would be something that would really benefit the citizens of Acton, and it is a great way for us to be able to say 'thank you' to everyone in Halton Hills, and particularly Acton, for all

the support we've received over the years," Joe Geng said.

He said the donation marks the company's 100th anniversary in Acton, and it allows them to "memorialize that a little bit. And, (we) also we just thought it would be something that is really good for Acton..." Geng said outside the council chambers.

Mayor Rick Bonnette thanked the Geng family for their continued generosity – they made a donation to the Dufferin Rural Heritage Centre. He said the splash pad, which is 60 per cent complete, should be open by July.

It will have 13 features, multiple jets and a water recirculation system.

Fairy Lake is really a wetland

By Frances Niblock

Fairy Lake is not a lake, after all.

It is a clear, shallow ecosite – a small ecosystem – that is "more appropriately considered to be a wetland community than a lake" and should be managed accordingly as part of the larger watershed that provides the ground water that makes up 90 per cent of the lake.

A guiding document for future uses and on-going management plans for the lake/wetland, the Fairy Lake Water Quality Study was endorsed by Town councillors on Tuesday. The study looked at long-term stewardship strategies to improve water quality, manage weeds, control waterfowl and develop a public communication strategy.

In his report to Council, Warren Harris, the Town's Manager of Parks and Open Space, identified the main water quality issues as nutrient enrichment, from things like lawn fertilizers, and high bacteria contamination because of dog and waterfowl feces and street runoff.

Along with the moves to preserve the existing aquatic community and reduce bacteria, Harris said the message is also that they have to appreciate that Fairy Lake "was a wetland in the beginning and is making moves on its own to become that again, so how can we best work with that."

The waterfowl management plan includes continuing an egg oiling program, creating a five to 10-metre shoreline buffer, promoting public shoreline naturalization and a public education program to get people to stop feeding the waterfowl.

That will be a "challenge" Harris said because for some people, feeding the ducks and geese is part of an enjoyable visit to Prospect Park. He said they also need to communicate "the don'ts" of disposing of dog feces in catch basins, a practice he finds "puzzling" but commonplace.

The water quality action plan includes public education on lake ecosystems, a watershed-wide Stoop and Scoop policy, eliminating/reducing fertilizer use and

reducing upstream contaminants.

While some of the proposals to improve the water quality can be done without cost, or within existing Town programs and budgets, the cost of some broader watershed issues won't be addressed until a Black Creek Subwatershed Study is completed by Credit Valley Conservation. Other projects totalling \$250,500 will be debated during the Town's 2011 budget talks.

Acton Councillor Jon Hurst, who called Fairy Lake a unique beautiful asset, questioned the long-term results of the egg-oiling plan that prevents eggs from hatching. Harris said the four-year-old oiling program, under the guidance of the Ministry of natural resources, said any responsible program to control the waterfowl populations had to include egg oiling.

Hurst also suggested that the name Fairy Wetland would not catch on.

Noting the presence of Killifish in the lake – a positive finding – Acton Councillor Clark Somerville suggested that the new

signage should include information about a catch and release fish policy.

Mayor Rick Bonnette, who noted that the lake was created in 1840 to provide water for the Beardmore tannery, asked if the bottom dredging done in the mid-1960s was a good thing.

Harris said the dredging was commonplace in

that era, but the shift they now have to promote to the public is that dredging impacts native plants and fish – a total destruction – and creates more hurdles to preserve a provincially-significant wetland.

The Fairy Lake Water Quality Study is available at the Town's libraries and on the Town's website.

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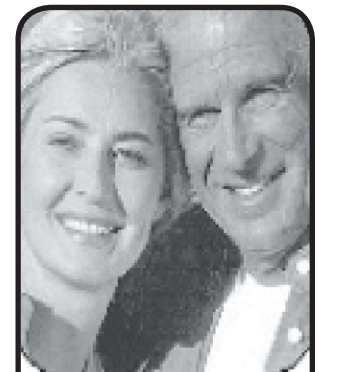
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