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Wednesday, May 2, 1979

\$50 will buy you new arena seat

How would you like to buy a new seat in the Richmond Hill Arena for \$50? You're going to get the opportunity to do so in the next few months and the Richmond Hill Arena Board and Parks and Recreation Committee hope you go along with the idea. Nothing lasts forever and the 1,850 seats in the new Richmond Hill Arena are living, or dying, proof of it. Some people might not realize it but those very seats first saw the light of day at Maple Leaf Gardens in the depression year of 1931. Now they're really depressed. They were discarded by the Gardens in 1968 and found their way to the local arena in an 11th hour stay of execution. The

reprieve, however, has run its course. "They've served us well for the past 11 years," states Arena Administrator Ed Sackfield, "but it's becoming impractical to continue using them. They're just worn out. Right now we have 250 broken or damaged or just unusable seats." "It would cost in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to just fix up the seats," said Sackfield, "and you'd still be left with the same backs and essentially the same everything."

HARD PART
 Now comes the hard part: Cost of replacing the old seats with 2,000 new molded plastic ones will amount to \$100,000. The big crunch is the fact the arena board can't afford to buy

one seat, let alone 2,000. "There's just no way the arena board can afford new seats," states chairman Elgin Barrow. "We're already paying off \$73,000 in debenture debts for the arenas. And no one wants us to raise our other rates for ice-time and such." Parks and Recreation committee member and councillor Al Duffy echoed Barrow's sentiments. "It would be unfair to go to the town for tax money," he said, "because we feel the arena is used by the people with children and not by senior citizens and others without children." He added that it was never "the intention of the Arena Board's charter to go to the Town for funds and it never has. They've always paid their way, out of the money generated by the arenas and we feel it should stay that way."

Barrow said the arena board "hasn't gone to the general public for money since we appealed for funds to install the original artificial ice surface in 1954 at a cost of \$25,000." Which leaves the final solution to public subscription and the

arena board and Councillor Duffy have come up with what they feel is a relatively painless solution: States Duffy: "Our idea is to sell the public, service clubs, business firms and any other organizations on purchasing at least one seat at a cost of \$50." The buyer would also automatically receive a lifetime membership on the arena board with voting privileges. "In this way," said Duffy, "we'd be minimizing the overall financial burden and everyone would be contributing to what is, after all, a community project beneficial to everyone with children." He added that "maybe different members of a family could contribute \$12 each to make up the total of \$50." In the final analysis, whatever the method, the old Maple Leaf Garden seats have pretty well seen their life span at the Richmond Hill Arena. Councillor Duffy, Barrow and Sackfield plan to send out letters to the general populace outlining their proposal in the next few weeks. "We'd like to see the money

available along with the seats by the time next season rolls around," said Duffy. "With the

community's support it can be done." For further information call

either Duffy at 884-1747, Barrow at 884-1595 or Sackfield at 884-9384.



Be seated?

Richmond Hill Arena Administrator Ed Sackfield points to three of the 150 ex-Maple Leaf Garden seats that have bitten the dust. He's hoping to sell 2,000 new seats to the public at \$50 a crack. (Liberal Photo by Bruce Hogg).



fred simpson

Ides of Spring

Some guy came up to me the other day and told me he had a "bad case of nerves". "Congratulations," I said, sticking out a hand. "Glad to have you aboard. I was wondering when you'd start acting normal like the rest of us. Just hang your purse over there." What I mean is that these are trying times. I was subjected to an awful scene the other day. I was seeing my psychiatrist and he had a breakdown right in front of me. No class. Things like that depress you. I guess you can blame it on the pressures of the times. It's even getting to the dogs. I know a dog who has so many hangups he thinks he's a human being. He won't even go for a walk anymore. How would you like to go for a stroll on a nice Spring day and have someone following you with a pooper-scooper? Destroys your dignity.

LONG WINTER
 You can blame it on the long winter, I guess. Once you get a sniff of Spring you tend to get a little willy-nilly. Why not? It's the only way to keep your sanity. In fact that's my motto: "Make someone else crazy." On to other things. You can read the details (hopefully) elsewhere on this page about the Richmond Hill Arena Board and Company proposing to have us all buy a new seat for \$50.

HIGH CHAIR

Sounds like a novel idea to me. I haven't owned a seat since my parents bought me a high chair for my birthday a hundred or so years ago. I thought they were being kind until my mother taught me how to fall out of it. Anyway, the fact seems to be the old seats at the "new" Richmond Hill Arena have pretty well had it. They're original relics of Maple Leaf Gardens dating back to 1931. Some of you were even young then. It boils down to this. New seats will cost a total of \$100,000 for 2,000 of them and there just ain't any money in the arena board cupboard. That means you can do it by raising arena ice rates (listen to the screams), raising the tax rate (listen to the screams) or by getting enough people to chip in and come up with \$50 a seat.

HELP

As I said, the latter idea is a novel one and with help from business organizations, service clubs, and just plain people, well, maybe that's the way to do it. They're also looking for a catchy slogan and maybe some school kids can come up with one. I've tried and it's no dice. Think about it. More on this later.

CASEY STRIKES

What else have we here? Oh yes, once Spring sticks its head around the corner can Russ "Casey" Cripps be far behind? The answer is no. Casey, who is masterminding the Wilson Niblett entry in the Ontario Fastball League this season, is brimming optimism as usual. The season hasn't even come up with its initial burp and Casey is already looking ahead to the All Ontario elimination finals in Kemptville (near Ottawa) which start June 29. The Niblett team opens against Cardinal on the Friday night at 9 p.m. and Casey figures that's good news.

"We don't get to meet the heavyweight teams in the first game," he said. "That means if we get by Cardinal we only play one game on Saturday. If we win that one we don't play till Sunday so we'll be well rested."

Not that Casey's underestimating Cardinal. "You can't take them lightly," he said. "Those farmers can hit the ball a mile. They practice with tree trunks. The only way you get the ball by them is rolling it on the ground. We got the pitchers who can do that." I think he was kidding.

Now for the notes:

DANCES

The Richmond Hill Juvenile Girls' softball team is holding a 1950's-1970's dance (I think I fit in there somewhere) Friday May 11 at the Richvale Community Centre. It goes from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

There will be the usual delights such as a buffet lunch, spot prizes, door prizes, refreshments. For tickets or further information call Don Snider at 884-5200.

Finally, don't forget the Dynes Jewellers Junior Fastball team will be holding a sitdown dinner dance May 18. The problem is I forget where. Anyway, tickets are available from Sid Moreland, Ross McMillan or Angus Phillip.

Second Hand Rose

If anyone is ever looking for a second name for the Richmond Hill Arena it's simple. Just call it Maple Leaf Gardens II. At least that's the impression one would get from talking to Doug Moore of Richmond Hill who is also chief engineer at the Gardens. It was due to the assistance of Moore that the Richmond Hill Arena was able to get the use of some 1,850 abandoned Maple Leaf Garden seats in 1968 at just the cost of transporting them. The seats were a welcome addition to the new arena but they also served themselves well in other capacities.

States Doug who was a former committee member of the early

Richmond Hill Junior Rams' hockey team: "We used some of those seats to build the present-day Rams' dressing room benches as well as the doors to the rooms. As a matter of fact, the wood we used to build the benches and shelving were from the old 'grays' at the Gardens years ago." Wood from the seats was also used to construct the present referees' dressing room doors. Moore acknowledged that "while the old Garden seats have stood the test of time very well since being installed at the Gardens in 1931, they've seen their day." We used to have some spares around but they're gone now and they just don't make parts for that type of seat anymore."

By FRED SIMPSON
 A Thornhill mother of three young hockey players feels

Mary's name is optimism

Optimism is Mary Williamson's middle name these days when she looks over the pre-season line-up of her Richmond Hill Junior Ladies softball team. Especially in the pitching department. Returning will be ace chucker Darlene Nelson who is a lefty and considered by Mary to be "the best Junior A pitcher around." Helping to buttress the talents of Nelson will be Sue Thompson who also doubles as an infielder-outfielder and Kelly McInnis. "Kelly is returning after a year out of ball," said Manager Williamson, "and she's a pitcher." McInnis should also have some sympathy for the plight of umpires having been one last season. Another plus for Manager Williamson and coach Moe Williamson will be the loss of only three players from last year's Metro Ladies Softball League team due to over-age. "We have nine coming back

joining the Metro Toronto Hockey League would be a detrimental move for all concerned.

Judy Duckman was replying to a proposal to have the Ontario Hockey Association change the

MTHL boundaries to include Thornhill.

"It's my opinion that Thornhill has its own identity as a small community and joining Metro would be an undesirable move. We're proud of living in a small community and we'd like to keep it that way."

She added that "being part of the MTHL would mean some of our players could end up away down in the city with some other team and some of their players could end up here. It wouldn't be satisfactory to anyone."

Mrs. Duckman also came out strongly for the minor hockey set-up in Thornhill which sees better-than-average house league players moving up to town rep or all-star teams.

HELP EACH OTHER

"I feel that the house leagues and town rep teams should basically help each other for the benefit of hockey in the community."

"Boys who have that little extra ability should be encouraged to move up to a higher level of competition where they will continue to improve against strong opposition."

Mrs. Duckman doesn't agree that town rep hockey applies too much pressure on the youngsters. It's been my experience that the level of coaching in town rep hockey is of high calibre and the emphasis is on helping the child to develop in every way."

She said that "while there is competition there is also a great deal of fun and enjoyment between the players on the various teams."

Mrs. Duckman also disagreed that playing in the OMHA involved too much travel to northern communities such as Barrie and Orillia.

"During the regular season the teams visit Barrie or Orillia just four times. That number might reach to six times in total if the team reaches the playoffs." She added that "travel ex-

penses are made easier by hiring a bus.

"I also have a child playing with a house league select team and it's been my experience that it takes just as much travelling time to go down to the City plus all the hassle you get with traffic."

Mrs. Duckman thinks one of the problems "is the lack of communication between the town rep teams and the minor hockey house league parents."

"The idea of why the town rep teams exist and the fine work they do perhaps isn't being properly explained to parents in the younger age groups."

INFORMING

"It's a matter of informing minor hockey parents and sitting down and working out a satisfactory solution. I'm sure we're all interested in what is beneficial to all the youngsters in Thornhill minor hockey."

Mrs. Duckman was replying to a proposal made the previous week by Sylvia Jacobs who, along with husband Gerry Jacobs, operates a Thornhill Atom Select team.

Select teams are an off-shoot of the house league and carry above-average players who have decided not to play on town rep teams for one reason or another. They also play in the regular house leagues.

The Select teams have been forbidden to play against OMHA-affiliated teams because the Thornhill house league has been classed as an "outlaw" league. The town rep teams are affiliated with the OMHA.

That's why Mrs. Jacobs would like to affiliate with the OHA and the MTHL in particular.

She plans on applying to the OHA for such an affiliation and a resultant boundary change.

For further explanation attend the meeting called by Mrs. Jacobs at 8 p.m. tonight (Wednesday) in the upper lounge of the Thornhill Community Centre.

Casey's at the bat

The 1979 Ontario Fastball League won't get started until May 13 but already Richmond Hill Wilson Niblett Manager Russ "Casey" Cripps is looking ahead to June 29. That's when the Provincial Men's Fastball championships will be held at Kemptville, near Ottawa, with the Niblett team opening on the Friday night at 9 p.m. against Cardinal.

In the meanwhile, pre-season life goes on for the Niblett team which, despite the weather, has been working outside for the past two weeks.

OPTIMISTIC

Optimistic, as usual, is the word for Manager Cripps in the Spring as he announced that "we're ready to go. We have a lot of new faces and there's no dead weight on the team."

Returning to the fold will be first baseman Carl Alhzen who hit .345 two seasons ago in the OFL and is expected to contribute quite a bit with his bat in the same league this season.

Another new signee and a new face is Andy Purmals of Bradford who Cripps describes "as an all-around ballplayer who can play any position. I've been trying to get him for the last three years." But it's the pitching position that puts a smile on the face of Cripps.

GOOD PITCHING

Already signed is big righthander Paul Wannamaker who's expected to be the bellwether of the staff this season and Mike McLeod who Cripps feels "is really going to come into his own. He's 6'5" and fast." He also expects to sign lefty Steve

Crummey who has also impressed.

He's also high on catcher Brian Harris who had been working out with Grimsby but has apparently decided to cast his lot with Wilson Niblett.

Expected to be a big longball hitter for the Niblett team this season is Gary Preszcor who is recently of London plus Al Steele of Willowdale.

Bill Jansuc will also be returning along with local products Colin and Jeff Wood.

HANCOCK RETURNS

One of the more familiar ones will be coach Mickey Hancock who will also be spotted throughout the line-up.

Also on hand to help out will be Stan Thorntoning, a former player and mainstay of the Cripps' teams of yesteryear.

wanting to try out for the team are welcome to attend."

They also can reach Mary at home at 884-7620.



MARY WILLIAMSON
 Hope springs . . .