

Tatomir brings Stanley Cup to Essex

Crowds wait for chance to pose with championship trophy

BY TIM LAW

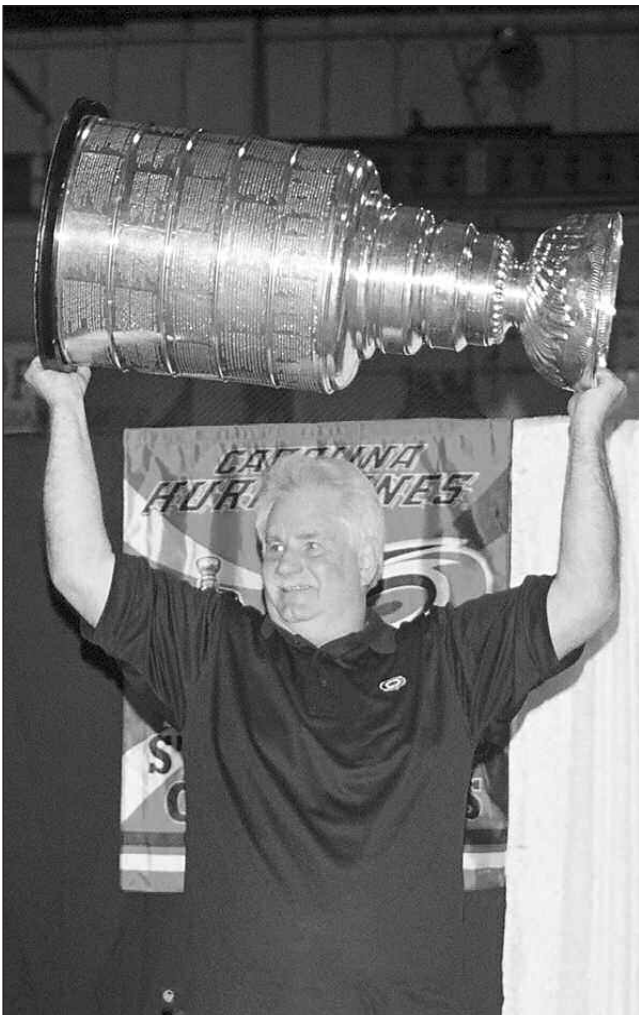
Over 200 people filed inside Essex Memorial Arena July 9 to pose for photos with the Stanley Cup, one of professional sports' most treasured awards.

Despite a late arrival due to flight delays from Raleigh, N.C to Toronto, the large crowd was not disappointed as the cup made its way to Essex via police escort from Highway 401.

"Everyone was extremely anxious to see it get here," Essex Mayor Ron McDermott said. "We were supposed to start at 9 a.m., but didn't get things rolling until noon unfortunately. But I think even with the late start everyone was still pretty excited to see it."

Admission to the arena was free. Most of the spectators brought their own cameras and some purchased professional photos to capture their moment with hockey's most prestigious award.

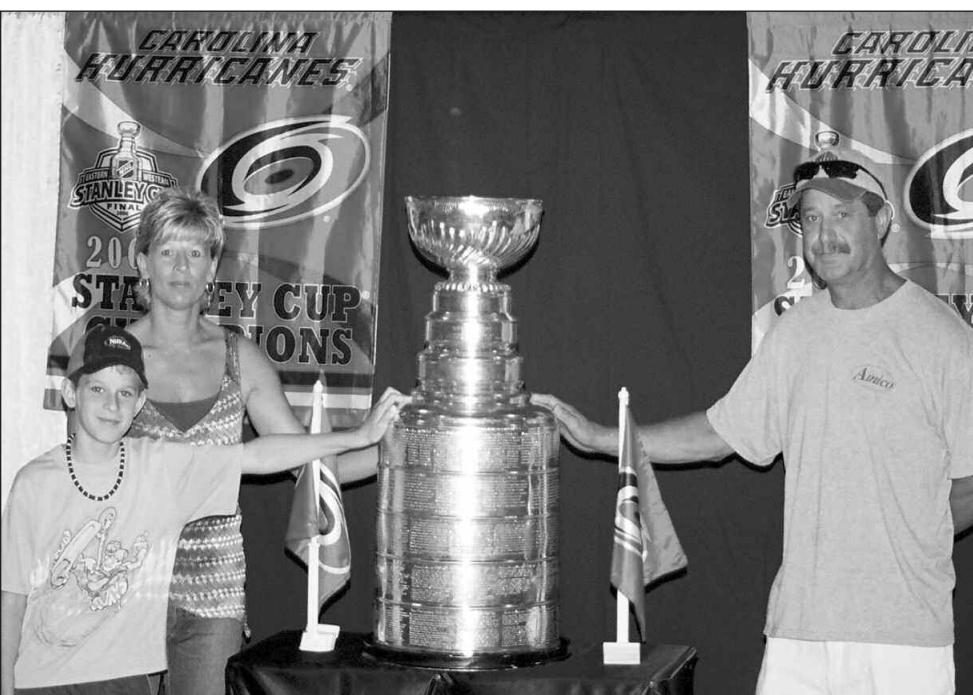
Leamington native Wally Tatomir, who is the equipment manager for the 2006 Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes, is responsible for bringing the cup to Essex. Before start-



Wally Tatomir, the equipment manager for the 2006 Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes, holds the Cup over his head July 9 at Essex Memorial Arena. Tatomir lived in Essex before starting his career with the NHL.

ing his career in professional hockey Tatomir lived for many years in Essex. Each member of the Hurricanes

was granted one day to enjoy the Stanley Cup. Tatomir wanted his day to include Essex.



Nine-year-old Maplewood student Dillon Buhler poses with his parents, Greg and Mary Jane, beside the Stanley Cup Sunday at Essex Memorial Arena.

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known as one of the most inventive equipment managers in the league and holds four patents on hockey equipment.

"For Wally to bring it here and share his only day with the cup with all of us here in Essex is an incredibly kind and giving act on his part," McDermott said.

Essex residents Greg and Mary Jane Buhler, along with their son Dillon, were among the first in line to get their photograph with the cup.

"It was amazing to actually be able to see it up close," said Dillon, who attends Maplewood Public School and also plays minor hockey at the Pee Wee level in Essex.

The event marked the first time the coveted award has ever been shown nearby in Leamington and Windsor. Town administrators were appreciative of Tatomir for the visit and

also happy the event coincided with the Fun Fest.

"Being a small town like we are, to have the cup here is really an amazing event in itself," McDermott said. "This year's Fun Fest was another success and this is just the icing on the cake for the entire weekend."

Following the viewing at the arena, Tatomir accompanied the Stanley Cup to the Essex branch of the Royal Canadian Legion for an invitation-only dinner afterwards attended by Tatomir's family and close friends.

All proceeds from the dinner will go toward the new arena building fund.

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