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"Serving Essex and Community Since 1896"

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# Stanley Cup comes to Essex

BY TIM LAW

The Stanley Cup, one of the most prestigious trophies in professional sports, is coming to Essex as part of the annual Essex Fun Fest that runs July 6-9.

Leamington native and long-time Essex resident Wally Tatomir is bringing the cup back to the area where he spent his youth. Tatomir is the equipment manager for the 2006 Stanley Cup Champion Carolina Hurricanes.

The event marks the first time the Stanley Cup has ever been brought to the town of Essex and many people are anticipating seeing the cup in person for the first time.

"It's very exciting for everyone to have it here," says Don McDermott who is part of the planning committee for the event as well as an old friend of Tatomir's.

"I have a lot of great memories of Wally," says McDermott. "We go back as far as the mid-60s when we were 15 or 16 years old and playing minor hockey in the old South Essex Hockey League in Leamington."

Tatomir has become one of the most respected equipment managers in the National Hockey League with over 30 years in the equipment business.

Prior to joining the Hurricanes in 1994, Tatomir was an equipment consultant in the NHL with the Detroit Red Wings and Los Angeles Kings. He also worked many years locally with the Windsor Spitfires and Detroit Junior Wings of the Ontario Hockey League.

Now a resident of Raleigh, N.C., Tatomir has had a major role in developing and patenting a number of unique and innovative ideas in the manufacturing of hockey equipment. One notable invention is "Eze-Out", an extractor used for removing broken blades from the shafts of aluminum and graphite hockey sticks, which Tatomir developed in 1998.

The Stanley Cup was named after Lord Stanley of Preston, who served as Canada's sixth Governor General from 1888-1893. It will be on display Sunday, July 9 at the Essex arena beginning at 9 a.m. with doors closing at 2 p.m. Admission is free.

A professional photographer will be on site to take photos of people posing with the cup. Viewers will also be allowed to take their own photos of the coveted award. All proceeds from the event will go toward the arena building fund.



Photo courtesy of Wally Tatomir

Long-time Essex resident Wally Tatomir hoists the Stanley Cup after his team, the Carolina Hurricanes, won the seventh game of the Stanley Cup finals against the Edmonton Oilers June 19. Tatomir, the equipment manager for the Hurricanes, will be bringing the cup to Essex on Sunday, July 9 during the Essex Fun Fest.

# Bill Sherk's 'Auto Stop' rolls into Essex for Fun Fest

Bill Sherk is on a roll. When he arrives in Essex this Saturday for the Essex Fun Fest and BIA Cruise Day, Sherk will not only draw fans of his writing, but also viewers of his CFTV34 television show, The Auto Stop.

A segment of the show is scheduled to begin taping at 2 p.m. Saturday on the promenade in front of the Mighty Dollar on Talbot Street.

Sherk's articles in Old Autos continue to delight readers who love classic vehicles. The June 19 issue features Ford Motor Company and Essex Farmers Limited, its Essex dealer from 1926 to 1982. The article includes a narrative of Ford's history backed by rare photographs from Essex Farmers' glory years. A 1964 photo in front of the building now occupied by Rizzo's Crossing shows the sales staff receiving Ford's Distinguished Achievement Award.

Sherk's books continue to sell well across the country including his newest offering, I'll Never Forget My First Car. But it's Sherk's venture into television that's getting him noticed.

Bill Sherk is the star of the CFTV34 production, The Auto Stop. Early this week, a two-part show highlighting Chrysler Corporation was filmed. Prior to that, an outstanding production of Larry Labute's restoration of a 1938 Lincoln Zephyr got Sherk and Labute both a lot of attention.

Part of The Auto Stop's appeal is the use of nostalgic music and classic photos used by producer Augie Ingratta that highlights the pop culture of the period.

"The Auto Stop" isn't just about cars," Sherk says, "it's about the people who drove the cars and the music they listened to while they were driving."

The show is named after the longtime hotel that sat near the corner of Erie Street South and Mill Street in Leamington.

A busy man with a community conscience, Sherk and friend Roger Roney are co-chairs of the committee working to restore the historic Michigan Central Station in Leamington.

After the TV taping, look for Bill Sherk to show off his bandstand shoes down by the stage occupied by disc jockey Muff Martin in front of the municipal building. — Free Press Staff

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