



CULTURAL MOMENT FOR JANUARY 12, 2026 CELEBRATES NEW YEAR'S 1978 IN ARTHUR

Soon the Arthur and Area Community Centre will be 50 years old! Naturally, there are several stories to share about the construction of the building. This is one of those stories, as told to the writer by the late David Kozinets.

In the spring of 1976, several local arenas were inspected and deemed to be unsafe. The old Arthur arena was one of those, and as such was condemned and closed. This challenge was met head on by the service clubs, businesses and the community under the leadership of the Arthur Council, with recreation representatives from each of the four neighbouring townships - Peel, Arthur, West Luther and West Garafraxa - to build a new facility.

Plans were arranged, a contractor was hired and the new arena was built in 1977.

The first hockey game was played in October and continued construction on the lower hall went on as planned. It would be ready before the end of the year.

Now the rest of the story! It happens on December 31, 1977

It was agreed between the Lions Club and the Optimist Club that a job well done deserved a party on New Year's Eve. They got together to build a stage, beg, borrow and rent chairs and tables and put out flyers. A band volunteered to play for the event and ticket sales went quickly and they sold out.

All permits were obtained and inspectors had signed off... all except one.

There didn't seem to be a valid reason for not approving the building other than the floor was not finished - it was still concrete - but that had nothing to do with the fire inspection and the Fire Chief not signing off on occupancy of the building.

Not liking the outcome, a couple of representatives of the service clubs went to see Reeve Dave Kozinets at the Sussman's store to have a meeting about the problem. Reeve Kozinets told these gentlemen that he would look after it.

The Fire Chief was summoned to the town office and after a lengthy chat with no resolution, he was relieved of his duties. Reeve Kozinets then called the Deputy Fire Chief to the office and promoted him to the Fire Chief position, with his first official task being a fire inspection at the new arena with instructions to report back.

Needless to say, the New Year's Eve Party happened with a full house and 1978 was ushered in like no other New Year's Eve since.

Submitted by Bonny McDougall, Wellington North Cultural Roundtable