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(July 21, 2003) — *"I think it's coming! At least, that's what I heard."*

The town of Parry Sound was buzzing Friday - after all, it was an enormous date for the area. Friday, July 18 was the official opening of the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame within the Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts on the waterfront of this beautiful Ontario town.

The germ of an idea had been planted in 1979 when Bobby Orr was forced, through injury, to retire from the National Hockey League. Orr had perennially shown immense pride in his hometown, and the community wanted to honour this extraordinary athlete and citizen in an extraordinary manner. But Halls of Fame and museums don't spring from the soil like so many maple seedlings dotting the wooded areas that line the highways on trips to this vacation community. It would be twenty-four long, often challenging years before the dream would finally be realized.



The building is incredible - 24,000 square feet located on three-and-a-half acres of awe-inspiring Georgian Bay shoreline. Step through the front doors of the impressive structure and to the left, find a 480-seat concert hall; to the right -- the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame. The Honoured Member of the Hockey Hall of Fame has every aspect of his life captured within the walls of the two-storey edifice. From his childhood years, visitors will find Bobby's very first trophy, his Parry Sound Shamrocks jerseys and other artifacts from a well-documented era. His Oshawa Generals' career includes items that chronicle Orr's incredible four-year junior career. Then, of course, there is much space dedicated to the legendary Bruins' years, including the stick Bobby used to score the Stanley Cup-winning goal in 1970 and the puck he banged past St. Louis Blues' netminder Glenn Hall that spring to record arguably the most famous goal in NHL history. Orr's Chicago years are punctuated with crutches and a cane from one of his many knee surgeries. Internationally, Bobby is represented with, among many things, Inuit carvings won during his magnificent 1976 Canada Cup tournament. Bobby Orr's benevolent nature is documented with many of the 'thank you' plaques, trophies and awards presented to him through the years. Bobby's miniature NHL awards, including the Stanley Cup, Calder, Norris, Art Ross, Hart, Smythe and Pearson Trophies are on display in a beautiful window setting that also includes both his 1970 Stanley Cup championship ring and the ring awarded in 1979 when Bobby was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.



The Georgian Bay neighbours the new Bobby Orr Hall of Fame.

Sound!"

The areas around the perimeter of the Charles W. Stockey Centre were a hive of activity leading up to the ribbon-cutting at 1PM - face painting, Native ceremonial dancing, a steel drum band, fiddlers, trampoline demonstrations, synchronized skipping exhibits and food and drink areas. The Hockey Hall of Fame was on site with several of the trophies Orr had won through his brilliant career - the Canada Cup, the Hart Trophy, Lester B. Pearson Trophy, the Art Ross Trophy, the Norris Trophy, Conn Smythe Trophy and Calder Trophy. Fans circled the silver awards, examining the hardware and pointing to Bobby Orr's inscribed name. But there was a whisper that permeated the crowd -- *"Do you think the Stanley Cup will be here?"* *"A friend of a friend said it was on its way up to Parry*

At one o'clock, 'Hockey Night in Canada's' Ron MacLean welcomed the crowd, estimated at more than three thousand, to Parry Sound. Then, Michael Burgess, musical theatre's biggest hockey fan, sang the Canadian national anthem. Several dignitaries addressed the throng, beginning with Norm Miller, the Member of Provincial Parliament for Parry Sound-Muskoka. Ontario Premier Ernie Eves paid tribute to Orr, stating, "*He epitomizes everything it means to be Canadian.*" Andy Mitchell, the Secretary of State for Rural Development and Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario spoke of Bobby Orr's "*...impact on people, not only in Parry Sound, not just in Canada, but around the world.*" Following Mitchell's elongated address, Ron MacLean joked, "*Bobby, I wish your career had lasted as long as that speech!*" Parry Sound Mayor Ted Knight was introduced next, and talked of his longstanding dream initiated with former Ontario Premier William Davis twenty-four years before. Fundraising chairman Doris Brown thanked the generous sponsors for their invaluable contributions to the building of the Charles W. Stockey Centre. The Artistic Director of the Festival of Sound, James Campbell, stood at the podium next and said the new facility was incredibly exciting. "*The anticipation may even surpass the thrill I recall when, at age nine, I unwrapped the new Toronto Maple Leaf hockey uniform my parents bought me as a bribe to continue one more year of music lessons.*" Charles W. Stockey, major benefactor of the facility stated, "*I'm certain this beautiful new building will stimulate and revitalize Parry Sound's neglected but beautiful waterfront.*"

MacLean then introduced his television sparring partner, Don Cherry, who coached Bobby Orr with the Bruins between 1974 and 1976. Cherry looked up at the threatening sky and remarked, "*The clouds are coming in - looks like a storm.*" He then turned to Orr and smiled, "*Bobby, hold the clouds back, will ya?*" Cherry told a funny story about his days as coach of the Bruins. "*Phil Esposito had scored 65 goals or somethin' like that. He came to me and said, 'Grapes, it's always 'Bobby this' and 'Bobby that.' Once in a while, how about givin' me some credit?' Anyways, we were in Vancouver, see. I'll never forget it. Harry Sinden called me and told me he had traded Phil to New York. Harry said, 'Go tell Bobby and take him with you when you tell Esposito,' so I tell Bobby and told him to come with me to tell Espo. I knocked on the door and Phil answers. He's standin' there in these funny silk pyjamas. I sit down, and Bobby goes stands by the window. Espo says, 'Grapes, if you tell me I've been traded to the Rangers, I'm gonna jump out the window!' I said, 'Bobby, get away from that window!' After loud guffaws from the crowd, Cherry introduced, "Here's Bobby Orr, the greatest guy." Orr stepped behind the podium to a long, loud ovation.*

"*Thanks Don, and thanks for your friendship,*" Bobby started. Ironically, as Orr began to speak, the dark skies that had been so ominous moments before turned sunshiney and bright blue. Bobby proceeded to thank the many people instrumental in the creation of the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame. "*This is probably the most difficult thing I've ever had to do - to stand here and tell you how I feel.*" Continuing, he stated, "*I've been a very lucky guy. I played on championship teams. I played for Canada. I've won some awards and I'm very proud of those accomplishments. But I don't think there's anything greater than to come home and to be recognized at home. This is the pinnacle.*"

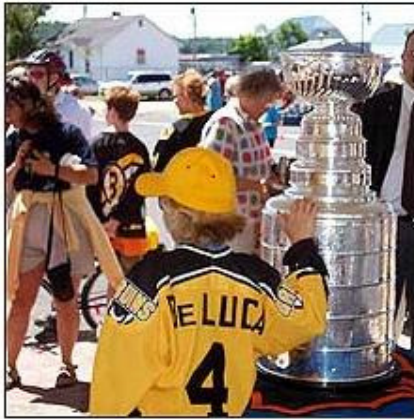
"*From the Orr family to the organizing committee -- you've done an outstanding job,*" Bobby smiled, then introduced his family - sisters Pat and Penny and brothers Ron and Doug, their respective spouses and families. "*Thank you for the sacrifices you had to make so I could chase my dream.*" He then thanked his father, Doug, for unconditional support through the years. "*My Dad was my biggest supporter. He never put pressure on me.*"

Bobby then spoke of his Grandma Orr and his Mom, Arva. "*I know they're watching,*" Orr said, pausing to bring his emotions under control. After a moment, the crowd clapped appreciatively at Bobby's deep affection for his mother and grandmother. "*I know how thrilled they'd be.*"

Before introducing his beautiful wife Peggy, with whom he'll celebrate his thirtieth wedding anniversary this September, his oldest son Darren and Darren's fiancée Chelsea, Orr pronounced Friday, "*...the most marvelous day of my life! I am so thrilled.*"



Fans jammed into the Hall all afternoon long.



The whispers had surrounded the Stockey Centre all morning -- *"I think the Stanley Cup is going to be here."* At twelve noon, when the beautiful, silver icon was carefully removed from its travelling case, the Parry Sound crowd gasped, applauded and crowded the table upon which it was placed. *"Line up to the left and you'll all get a chance to see the Stanley Cup and get your picture taken with it,"* insisted Cup Keeper Walt Neubrand, sporting the white gloves reverently worn wherever the Stanley Cup travels. The fans did as instructed, and for three hours, incredulous fans hugged the same Cup Bobby Orr cradled in 1970 and 1972. *"This is magic!"* stated one young lady. *"I had no idea the Stanley Cup was going to be here!"* Charles W. Stockey, namesake for the new building, ventured by and asked to be shown the engraved name of his favourite player, Charlie Conacher of the 1932 Maple Leafs. *"Unreal,"* beamed Jon Green, one of the driving forces behind the Bobby Orr Hall of

Fame.

The Stanley Cup was generously made available to the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame by the New Jersey Devils. After spending Thursday with John Madden in Connecticut, the trophy made its way to Toronto early Friday morning, then was driven the two and a half hours north to Parry Sound in time to honour one of the greatest players ever to have played the game. It was a magnanimous gesture by the Devils in recognition of Bobby Orr's magnificent contributions to the game of hockey.

On Wednesday, return to the *Stanley Cup Journal* and discover how John Madden celebrated on his day with the Stanley Cup.

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