

Wings look for coach

Ernie Gare, of Vernon, is among the leading candidates for the vacant head coaching position with Kelowna Wings, of the Western Hockey League.

Gare told the Daily News he has discussed the coaching post on two occasions with Kelowna General Manager Marc Pezzin. Wings' majority owner Vic Fitzgerald has received permission from WHL governors to move the team from Kelowna and is expected to relocate the club in Spokane.

Fitzgerald said Tuesday that Pezzin will remain with the team as general manager, but no decision has been made on the coaching position.

Gare said, "With the move to Spokane, the situation may have changed. I talked to Marc about a month ago and again last weekend. I told him I am interested in the job."

Gare, a native of Nelson, helped Vernon Essos win the B.C. Junior Hockey League title in 1972. He starred with Spokane Chiefs, of the Western International Hockey League, from 1973-77. During Gare's stint in Spokane, Chiefs won three provincial and one national senior 'A' titles. He spent three more years in the WIHL, with Trail Smoke Eaters, before returning to Vernon.

He played parts of two seasons with the Vernon Cougars intermediate team and coached the Vernon Coca-Cola Juvenile Reps in 1982-83.

"I expect to talk to Marc as soon as he returns from the WHL meetings (in Saskatoon)," Gare said. "I know they've received a lot of applications for the coaching job so I don't really know what my chances are."

President favors move

KELOWNA (Special) — The president of the Western Hockey League openly admits he wouldn't mind seeing Kelowna Wings transferred to Spokane.

"One city has a 5,000 seat building and one has a 2,000 seat building," said Ed Chynoweth. "From a business, economic standpoint I'm concerned (about the Wings). Economically without some changes or something on the drawing board we can't exist in Kelowna."

The City of Kelowna has formed a task force to investigate the feasibility of a new arena.

"A task force," Chynoweth snorted. "You have a population of 80,000 people and you need a task force to tell you that you need a new arena."

Chynoweth said after Spokane Chiefs withdrew from the Western International Hockey League recently because of a proposed gate equalization plan, the Chiefs expressed interest in acquiring a WHL franchise. The Chiefs were told the WHL is not expanding now, or in the near future and an expansion franchise is out of the question.

"But if someone wanted to sell them an existing team and transfer it to Spokane, as long as it was before the WHL scheduling meeting on June 27, that was a different story," he said.

Chynoweth said that Kelowna or any other team in the league is welcome to explore the possibility. He said, however, he is a little suspicious of Spokane's motives since the threat of the WHL moving in would improve the Chiefs' bargaining power with the WIHL.

"From my standpoint I don't know whether the WHL is being used as a lever or if they (the Chiefs) want to be a partner with a WHL team," Chynoweth said.