

Condemned barn now thriving furniture business



MRS. MARION MORETTE sits on a hand-crafted love seat in one of the showrooms at Morette's Furniture in Hillsburgh.



JACK WHEELER cuts out furniture frames on a hand saw in the workshop at Morette's Furniture in Hillsburgh. He is the company's foreman and is one of the original employees.

A wall covered with thank you letters in an old converted Hillsburgh barn is one form of advertising for Morette's Furniture in that village.

The letters are from satisfied customers thanking owners Bruce and Marion Morette for the speedy service and the fine workmanship of furniture bought in their plant.

Each piece is handcrafted and upholstered from the inside out, on the premises. Because of the individuality of each item, the owners do not advertise too much as their workers can only produce so much furniture at one time.

One letter on the wall which the Morettes are especially proud of is hand written, thanking them for cushions. The signature is that of singer-composer Gordon Lightfoot.

The thriving business began 20 years ago, when Mr. Morette, tired of working for someone else in Toronto, purchased an old condemned barn in Hillsburgh. He moved his new bride into the building which was without water and hydro, and started up a frame shop just a few feet from their living quarters.

Over the years, renovations were done, and the couple raised two children there. Eight years ago, the family moved into a new house across the road from the barn.

As with all small businesses, they experienced their share of growing pains, but eventually hired John Wheeler to help out. Together, the two men made furniture frames for Toronto

firms.

In 1961, Mr. Morette decided his small plant could handle upholstery also. Soon, the men were adding cushions and various materials and patterns to the birch Canadian hardwood frames. Now, because everything is done on the premises, the various pieces of furniture can be modified to the customers' wants and needs.

Ten years later, the company outgrew the old potato barn. The Morettes bought the old town hall from the village, where they established an upholstery shop. Past customers would bring their furniture back to be recovered, which was done in the hall. Eventually others brought furniture to the site, and Morette's expanded into re-upholstering.

The town hall was sufficient until three years ago, when Morette's built a modern 7,000 square foot building be-

hind the first barn. The town hall is now used as a show room.

From a one-man operation 20 years ago, the business has come to employ 27 people, mainly from Hillsburgh and Rockwood. The business has managed to maintain the family atmosphere, with everyone donning different hats if need be. No one minds working a bit of overtime if it is going to help the company or satisfy a customer.

Another advantage to the family-like atmosphere is the Morette's dedication to their customers. If a client wants a specific piece of furniture, with a certain type of material, the Morettes will warn the buyer if the selection is not going to look right, or if the cloth will not lie properly.

They also let the customer know they are not perfect and mistakes can be made. If this happens, the company will

gladly pick the furniture up at the home, return it to the factory, and repair it.

In spite of not pushing their customers, the Morettes have found their business is still growing. They have set certain limits as to delivery and pickup responsibility. Kitchener-Waterloo is their western boundary with Toronto as the eastern limits. They go as far north as Newmarket, and as far south as Hamilton. If customers come from any other areas, they are advised of the limitations.

Because 75 per cent of the business is from Toronto, a country atmosphere is upheld. Picnic tables are outside with swings and sandboxes, so families can make an entire day of choosing their furniture. Because of the great volume of customers, up to 25 orders a week, some arrive expecting bargains. Mrs. Morette explained that the business does

not plan to create a bargain by giving up quality but feels the company does a good job of compromising price and quality. An order usually takes three or four weeks to fill.

Most of the furniture made is traditional style, but some colonial, modern and contemporary items are made. Everything including love seats, sofas, sofa beds, and winged chairs are made at the site.

In addition to the furniture business, Mr. Morette also builds salt and sand storage domes. His business is called Bulk-Store Structures Ltd.

From a small corner of a condemned barn in 1957 to a sprawling array of buildings today, Morette's furniture has earned a good reputation in many parts of southern Ontario. The owners enjoy their jobs, enjoy their employees and most of all, enjoy their customers.

Silverwood

W.I. opens new year with regular meeting

by Mrs. L. Giffen
The first meeting of the Silverwood Women's Institute of the new year was held on January 12 at 1:30 at the home of Mrs. George Burt.

Our first vice president Mrs. H. Lindauer opened the meeting by all singing the Opening Ode. Ten members and one visitor answered the roll call, what in your early family life influences your decisions today.

The minutes of the Nov. and Dec. meetings were read and approved as was the treasurer's report.

Several thank you notes were read from those who were remembered at Christmas.

A letter was read from Farm Safety and it was voted that Mrs. I. Carmichael be our rep. for 1978.

Mrs. H. Marchington our family and consumer affairs

convenor took over the meeting. She read a paper of a Quebec lady who had at one time lived in Nairobi and returned last year to attend the A.C.W. Triennial Conference held in Nairobi. She not only told of the conference but of the land, the people and interesting facts of the country. Mrs. Marchington ended her program with a contest on the parts of the body. The meeting closed followed by a social half hour.

We are all pleased to hear that Mrs. M. Corbett is home from hospital and progressing favorably.

One permit is issued

Only one building permit was issued for Acton last month. Its value was placed at \$3,500, for store front renovations.

PEOPLE, PLACES and THINGS

Classified advertising is one of the best ways to get your message across and put it all together in terms of people, places and things. Getting the "things" people need, in the "place" where they need them, calls for an easy-to-use, economical and far-reaching method of communication. That is exactly what we do at the Free Press every week in our classified advertising section... we put it all together for people, places and things. Let the Free Press' classifieds put things together for you.



Liberal meeting

In an effort to move the political activity around the riding and increase the involvement of people in the party work and political process, Halton Liberals held a meeting at Martin St. School Wednesday night.

MP Frank Philbrook said the meeting discussed plans for the national convention, the travelling caucus in March as well as plans to boost membership in the party.

Dr. Philbrook said the meeting was to be part of an ongoing process to boost involvement and generate interest.

Because of poor weather and conflicting meetings, the attendance was limited to a crowd of about 15 people.

Hope Baetz will turn on the lights

The 4,000 strong Interested Citizens Group (ICG) viewed the appointment of Reuben Baetz as Ontario's new energy minister with great interest this week. Baetz succeeds James Taylor who resigned on Friday, one day before Premier Davis shuffled his cabinet.

John Minns, publicity officer for the ICG, predicted Taylor was going to quit before any official shuffle was made and his remarks were published in this newspaper last week. He said Taylor was in an intolerable position and being made a scapegoat for the Cabinet and Ontario Hydro in their dealings over the Bruce to Milton hydro corridor the citizens have opposed for the past four years.

The new energy minister said one of his first priorities would be clean up the relationship between the Government and Ontario Hydro. He said although Hydro is a terrific organization doing important work the ironic thing may be that in creating our energy, Hydro was perhaps keeping many people in the dark about why it decided to take specific steps.

"We're going to have to turn on the lights at Hydro," he is reported to have said. Baetz also is reported to have said Hydro has failed to realize the public demands to know the reasons behind policy decisions. "When somebody is suddenly told that a hydro line is going through his back yard, he has to be told why," he stated. This has been one of the constant criticisms of Ontario Hydro from the Interested Citizens Group for the past four years. Hydro gave a

decision and seldom thought it was necessary to tell why it was made.

Mr. Taylor acknowledged he often bridled at some of the things he was asked to do as a cabinet minister and it is possible shoving the Bruce to Milton corridor through had much to do with his decision to resign.

The Interested Citizens Group found Mr. Taylor sympathetic in their dealings with him over investigating the possibility of another, better route for the corridor but felt he could not penetrate the bureaucracy at Hydro or Queen's Park.

Taylor is quoted as saying Ontario Hydro is a cabinet minister's nightmare and the Government has little control over it.

Meanwhile, John Schneider of the Interested Citizens says he welcomes remarks by Mr. Baetz about telling people why a hydro line is coming through their back yard. "I'd expect an immediate moratorium of the Bruce to Milton corridor until such time as he can explain to people here why it must go through," Schneider said. "It would add a lot of credibility to his statement."

"Let's see some action. I'd fall off the chair if Mr. Baetz could explain to people here why the corridor should follow the route Hydro wants now," he said. "Still it is time for them to be reasonable," he mused.

"People just don't know how much it is costing them to go the long route Ontario Hydro is pushing when a much shorter path could be followed that would save \$10 million in power (and skirt prime agricultural land). "Who is calling the shots

here, anyway—the bureaucrats or the elected officials?"

In the meantime he says the ICG is catching its wind to have another crack at asking for an independent study unhampered by obstruction from bureaucrats.

Bill Mann, president of the ICG, just returned from a Libyan business trip, Tuesday and was reluctant to comment until he was more acquainted with the changes at Queen's Park.

"It's interesting," he did acknowledge.

Two-car collision

Halton Regional Police report an estimated \$50 in damages to a car driven by Hubert Draper of Islington, and an estimated \$800 in estimated damages to a car driven by Waltraup Schumeth, 41 Storey Dr., on January 18 at 12:15 p.m. The incident occurred on Church St., police say.

357 dogs

There were 357 dogs destroyed during 1977, according to a report from Halton Hills Animal Control statistics.

A total of 590 dogs were impounded in the past year, with 190 claimed by the owners and 43 placed in other homes.

In all, canine control officers answered 2,822 calls during the year. The report submitted to the administration committee prompted Chairman Russ Miller to remark, "It shows how much some people care about their dogs."

ACTON FREE PRESS WANT ADS WORK!

REACH OVER 4,000 HOMES FOR ONLY '1.95 FOR 12 WORDS

CALL NOW

853-2010