

Elma, town's longest merchant, sells store



Elma Braida

by Helen Murray
Elma Braida has been a familiar figure in downtown for more years than she cares to reveal, but even though her association with Acton Home Furnishings is coming to a close, she will always be remembered for her role in Acton's businesses.
Dave Hunter has purchased Acton Home Furnishings, the oldest business in town, as of last week. Miss Braida will remain in the store until the end of the month, when she will settle back and "enjoy her leisure time."
Miss Braida will not say when she started working at the store. But V.B. Rumley owned the place, then called Johnson and Rumley, along with the funeral home. When she started she worked in the store and did books for both businesses. A chap by the name of Rae West was the embalmer at the home, and when Rumley put the store up for sale, Miss Braida and West bought it, on November 1,

1948. That's when it acquired the present name.
It was business as usual until December 1965, when West died suddenly of a heart attack. Suddenly, Miss Braida was faced with the prospect of running the store alone for the first time.
Acton has been good for Miss Braida. With complete home furnishings except appliances, she sold many newlyweds their first chesterfield, and helped others catch up on new furniture styles as they replaced the old with new.
Most folks bought on the credit plan, Miss Braida recalls. She remembers the store holding the loan on many purchases, and while most people could be trusted, there were a few who "stuck" her. But business was based on trust back then she says, and for the most part, it paid off.
These days, she says, people have been paying cash or with a credit card. Very few people take

bank loans to purchase furniture she says.
Contrary to current trend, Miss Braida did not sell because of high interest rates or the troubled economy. Matter of fact, 1981 was one of the best years she had as far as sales go. While many businesses are forced to close due to low sales or financing problems, Miss Braida decided to sell because the opportunity was there.
She explains that she had planned to sell in a few years, but when Hunter approached her, she decided to take him up on his offer.
Now she looks forward to travelling and relaxing. "I don't know the meaning of the word 'retire,'" she laughs, preferring to use the term "leisure time."
Miss Braida is well known around town for her work with the Cancer Society and heart fund as well as the store. For many years she has taken care of In Memoriams for both organizations, a job the new owner will continue to do. But she will still keep her

ties with the Cancer Society, as well as continue as treasurer of the IOOE.
The town has changed since Miss Braida first walked through the doors of the store. The town hall is now boarded up, two schools have been built (M.Z. Bennett and Acton High), and a third (St. Joseph's) is nearly ready to go. There's been an influx of newcomers, doubling the population of the town, stores have come and gone. A new library has been built and the post office torn down. Regional government has bowled everyone over and we phone Oakville when calling the police.
For the past 33 years, Miss Braida has kept her stalwart watch over the happenings of the town, and now it's her turn to enter into the "changes" column of the history of Acton.
It's people in the present like Miss Braida who give Acton such a strong past.

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If you can't beat it, join it. That's what Greg Wagner, Gail Gall and Terri Miller decided to do recently when the cold temperatures got to be too much. Robert Little school playground was the ideal spot to forget the cold and take advantage of the snow and go tobogganing. Gall (centre) proved you don't need a fancy new toboggan to have a good time.
Photo by HELEN MURRAY

St. Joseph's to tender, aim for March start

The new St. Joseph's School project went to tender this week.
Trustee Irene McCauley announced that last Tuesday the Halton Separate School Board approved the project to go to tender this week.
Working drawings were approved recently by the provincial Ministry of Education.
McCauley says the board wants the tender back by the first week in February.
Once the tenders have been opened and the contract awarded the board will have a better idea when work can begin. McCauley noted the board would like to see ground broken on the Mill St. West site in March, but that will depend on the weather and other factors.
The ministry has set a maximum grant level cost for the new school of \$1,188,972 out of 1982 financing. This maximum grant level doesn't mean the board

will receive that much from the province, just that the school can't cost more than \$1,188,972. This cost estimate based on the working drawings covers construction, professional fees, furnishings, equipment, library and resource centre materials.
The maximum amount that can be debentured for the project by the board is \$147,000.
Board official John Birrell explained right now projections are about \$6,000 over the maximum grant level. He noted the debentured amount would be subtracted from the maximum grantable level so the board will likely receive \$1,041,972 from Queen's Park. He added sometimes the province will allow more money to be raised through debenture if costs are higher than expected and there are special circumstances or additional funds, such as \$6,000 over project grantable level, could come from local taxes.

Cops plan another open house will keep 'dirty dozen' intact

Halton Regional Police are planning to hold another open house in Acton this year despite the fact there apparently isn't the unhappiness and discontent with the force which existed a year ago.
A year ago this month the force, in an effort to stabilize its presence here and improve community relations, assigned 12 officers to patrol Acton in 1981. In February of last year the police held an open house at the Acton Legion and about 250 residents turned out to meet the new Acton officers and the police brass.
In an interview this week Chief James Harding described the past year as a "community success story."
He said the best way to gauge the success of efforts to improve relations with the community was to look at complaints about service from the community, and Harding noted they are way down. Inspector Matt MacPherson, commander of district one (Acton, Georgetown, Milton, Esquesing and Nassagaweya) said he hasn't been hearing many complaints either. "The lack of complaints indicates things are working well."
"We aren't the big dark strangers anymore in Acton," MacPherson declared.
But even though people seem happier with the force here now, the police still are "definitely" going to hold an open house in Acton in 1982, Harding said. He added the open house may be held in con-

junction with police week in the spring. Holding another open house, in an absence of complaints and protests, will demonstrate the force's continuing interest in being part of the community and show this interest doesn't exist only when the public is unhappy.
Right now there are no plans to change the officers in Acton, often called the "dirty dozen". Constables Alex Fishbein, Tom Roduck, William Parry, Robert Ustrzycki, Art Goddard, Don Cousens, Nick Leoni, Rod Beaumont, Jack Pool, Keith Woodstra, John Lyver and Garry George will continue to be posted to Acton for the foreseeable future.
Police feel a pretty good job was done of keeping the same faces here all year. There was one change in the contingent last year, Bill Cunningham was promoted to Sergeant and so was replaced by Lyver. Poot hasn't been around town much the last four or five months because he has been working all over Halton Hills as an Acting Sergeant. From time to time a new face has popped up on the street or in a cruiser because of illnesses, court appearances, training sessions etc., but generally the same men have been patrolling all year.
Both Harding and MacPherson said there may be a few personnel changes later this year, officers could be promoted or assigned to criminal investigations or youth work, but there won't be any wholesale change of the officers assigned to Acton. Harding said the force may decide later to put some new blood into the Acton contingent and take the opportunity to expose more officers to the "Acton policing experience."
The chief and district commander both pointed to increased willingness of the public to get involved in helping officers make arrests, providing tips and improved flow of information between police and citizens as signs that relations are definitely better now than they were in 1980.
Harding said it remains his goal to see the Acton police station open longer hours, though manpower

increases he's asked for in 1982 may not be enough to permit the station to be open more this year.
Calls for police service increased, as they did everywhere else, in Acton last year, MacPherson reported. At the same time he said there was improved enforcement, the officers assigned here handled things well and there was "a general overall improvement in the performance of the officers."
Citizens now recognize and know the officers, and he has been receiving positive feedback about the community from the men assigned here.
"The majority are in Acton of their own volition, that's where they want to work," MacPherson observed, adding the men are "enjoying" doing police work here. He said the community has shown an interest in the officers and the officers have "responded". Work by the 12 has been "very good".
A comparison of crimes between the first nine months of 1980 and the first nine months of 1981 in Acton only show upswings in some areas and decreases in others.
House break-ins went up by 11 while shop burglaries decreased by 18. School break-ins went down by one and there were six fewer break-ins of other buildings.
There were 19 more theft cases in Acton and one more car was stolen. There was an increase of one in the area of sex offences.
Vandalism soared. There were 69 more cases of willful damage to private property, mostly damage to cars, but one less incident of vandalism to public property.
Police laid 37 more liquor offense charges, nine more impaired drivers were nabbed and there two fewer drug cases.
MacPherson noted police clearance, or solving, of burglaries was "very good" and there was a 37.8 per cent increase in enforcement throughout north Halton.

Doberthien says
Police and citizens talking real change for the better

The man whose public complaints about the Halton Regional Police sparked efforts by the force to improve relations with Acton says the community should be pleased with the results of the past year.
Lorne Doberthien wrote a letter to the chief and this newspaper last January saying the officers were unknown to the community, weren't involved in Acton, suggested the OPP was needed back in Acton and warned vigilantes might be the only answer to improving the situations here.
The police responded by assigning 12 officers to patrol here all year, gave some citizens the red carpet treatment at the Oakville headquarters and held an open house here.
About a year later Doberthien said he "thinks things have gone a lot better" in the past year.
In his mind there is no question there's "better rapport between citizens and the police."
"Everyone, and I mean police and citizens, is going out of their way to say hello and be nice to each other now. We're talking to each other now," Doberthien declared.
He said he still hears complaints, some people say the police aren't any better now than they were before, but negative comments are now the exception to the rule. Also, he has heard citizens saying many very good things about the police.
"It has been (the past year) a real change for the better and Acton should be pleased with the results."

Hope spring start for new IGA plaza

There's better than a 50/50 chance work will begin this spring on the planned new IGA plaza on the Dominion Hotel site.
Doug Fread, a local contractor and one of the principals in the project, said they are still working to complete all the arrangements for a spring start.
The project, which has been approved by Halton Hills, calls for a new IGA supermarket, about four times larger than the existing store adjacent to the plaza site. In addition there would be about six retail stores.
He explained the money is there to finance the project, "but they (lenders) aren't giving it out too easily right now." Even after the question of what the interest rate will be is settled, Fread

said lenders want more; guarantees and other conditions.
Interest rates haven't really dropped as much as he and his partner would like, but they realize they may have to finance the project at high rates and not make any money back for a few years. He noted they must pay 3 1/2 per cent higher than the Bank of Canada prime rate which is 15 1/2, and recently hit a 13 month low.
Fread said they must decide if they will accept current interest rates or let it ride a while longer, hoping rates will go lower.
Besides the interest rates problem, Fread said, they must still cut some red tape in connection with financing and leases.
"We're still hoping to get started in the spring. It's better than a 50/50 chance we will."

Yugoslavs to trial April 1

Two of six owners of the Canadian-Yugoslav Centre south of Acton appeared in court Thursday in Milton and pleaded not guilty to noise bylaw violation charges.
The trial of Nick Cajic and Nedjelko Orbovic was scheduled for April 1.
Both men were charged December 9. Cajic faces two counts for noise bylaw violations at the recreation centre on July 5 and August 9 and Orbovic has been charged over noise complaints from July 12. Police and the town bylaw enforcement office were called to the Yugoslav Centre on Highway 25 several times during the summer by neighbors living on the Third Line who were annoyed by loud music and public address system announcements.
In November Cajic appeared in court and two charges were dismissed because the town was unable to prove he was responsible for the Yugoslav Centre on two occasions even though the court agreed the noise bylaw had been violated. The other three charges were withdrawn at that time.

inside
Life at the customs office. Turn to page 2.
Viewers miss the Movie Channel. See page 3.
AES seeks its time capsule. Details on page 5.



Stars on ice

Local skaters Kevin Parker and Susan Kinal, along with her partner David Rowe, were stars at the Canadian Divisional Figure Skating Championships. See sports. Parker photo courtesy the St. Catharines Standard.