

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

The McGibbon Hotel, one of Georgetown's oldest businesses, changed hands again last week. New owner, Nick Markou, has a host of plans on how to improve the building's appearance and turn it into a drawing card for downtown Georgetown but won't

be rushing into anything. He sees it as a long-term project that should pay off since the area badly needs a good hotel and the building although more than 112 years old is still structurally sound. (Herald photo)

Century-old McGibbon Hotel changes hands, Markou brothers plan extensive renovations

Georgetown's McGibbon Hotel changed hands again last week.

Nick Markou closed the deal Friday to purchase the hotel from Gladbar Hotels Ltd. for an undisclosed amount. The hotel has been in operation for more than a century.

Work has already begun on a long term plan to convert one of Georgetown's oldest commercial establishments into an attractive and profitable business capable of enhancing the town and drawing people back to the Main Street.

"We came to town looking for the worst eyesore around," joked George Markou, the new owner's brother. "The McGibbon has a terrible reputation but we hope to clean it up, renovate the front of the building and the interior, make it an asset to the town."

Mr. Markou, who will be helping his brother to run their new business, said they are not keen on strip development and feel it has not been planned in the best interest of the town. By putting the McGibbon into the sort of shape they have planned they feel it can become an asset to the community and even the key to revitalizing the downtown core.

"We're hotel and restaurant people from way back," he said. "We're young and aggressive and can do something with the place. We've committed a number of dollars and we want to get it running again properly."

BEGUN REPAIRS

The brothers have already begun repairing walls and windows in the building and have new beds installed in some of the rooms while other beds are ordered and have not yet arrived. Painting is also under way. They like the character of the building and point to the rounded window

frames and beautiful carved banisters on the stairs as definite attractions in the building's decor. The building is structurally sound, they say, and the plumbing and wiring have been brought up to modern requirements. There is also a sprinkler system throughout the building. Unfortunately fire regulations will force them to remove tongue and groove wainscoting which they feel is part of the building's old-fashioned attraction.

The old landmark at the corner of Main and Mill Streets has 27 rooms, seven apartments and five stores, Mr. Markou said.

"It's amazing that we're almost fully occupied," he said. "The resident's ages break at about thirds, one third young people, one third middle-aged and one third elderly."

Mr. Markou's plans for the hotel include upgrading the dining room which seats 40 and opening up the beverage room with glass windows to "get the sun in and the smell out." The beverage room, which seats 140, now has draft beer again as a result of weekend changes.

Presently a Toronto man, Mr. Markou has considerable experience in the sort of thing he will face in his new business since he has had a number of years as manager of food and beverages at race tracks including Mohawk. Although he is not planning any immediate move he may come to Georgetown later. His brother George is married and lives in Streetsville.

"It's an exciting challenge," Nick Markou said. "We're looking at a very long-term investment."

"We intend to be not just owners but on-the-spot management as well," said

George Markou. "We want to make the McGibbon a meeting place for Georgetown."

Future plans call for renovations to an existing room in the basement to turn it into a meeting room, but everything will have to proceed slowly.

"Everything we've seen needs work," Mr. Markou said, "but we hope to be able to turn it from something almost like a flop house into a respectable hotel where a man could bring his wife for dinner and she wouldn't be insulted."

Although they have sold their hotel the Gladman's won't be turning their backs on Georgetown said Gladbar director, Larry Gladman.

"We've been in Georgetown too long to stop being interested in the town now. We have other property and we'll continue to maintain it and show an interest in Georgetown."

Their other property includes the Royal Bank building and Simpson-Sears store as well as ravine

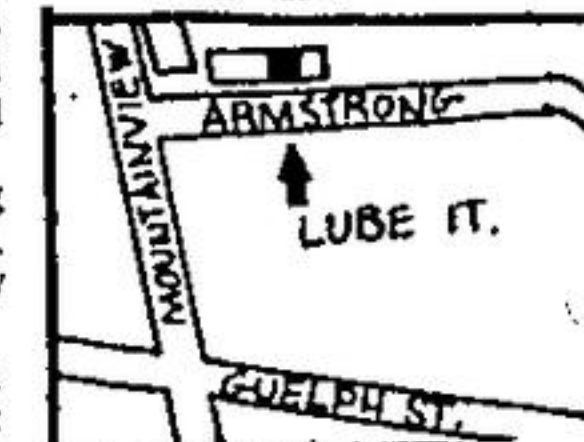
property near where the McNally apartments are scheduled to be built. Mr. Gladman said that Gladbar hopes eventually to be able to build apartments on their lot off Water Street.

Ilye Gladman together with two partners purchased the hotel from Sitzer Investments in 1967. Mr. Gladman has since bought out his partners and was the building's sole owner when it was sold last week.



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About the Hills

Children with guns

A Cherry Street resident has expressed concern for children playing in the field and valley between Ewing and Ontario Street after someone shot his dog in the leg with a .22 calibre weapon.

The dog was running loose in the same area where children often play, the dog's owner told police, and he expressed his concern for the children's safety.

Acton collision

A rear-end collision last Friday at Mill Street near Wallace Street in Acton caused \$600 damage to cars driven by Audrey Bonnell of RR2 Rockwood and Kenneth Kamminga of Acton. There were no injuries.

NEC meets here

The next meeting of the Niagara Escarpment Commission will be held Thursday Jan. 4 at 10 a.m. and Friday Jan. 5, at 9:30 a.m. in the conference room of its main office: 232 Guelph St., Georgetown.

Guelph Line accident

T.V. Jespersen, 51, of RR2 Rockwood escaped injury Sunday when her car went into a ditch off Guelph Line, struck a fence travelled parallel along the fence and stopped in a wooded area between the fence and the road. Estimated damage to the car is \$2,000. The accident occurred on the Guelph Line six-tenths km from 25 Sideroad.

Psychic on target with predictions

Last year The Herald asked local psychics Jessie Zuest and Linda Beth Sanderson to take a look at what would be happening during 1978. Miss Sanderson has since moved away but Mrs. Zuest is still living in rural Milton and her predictions for this year appear on page one.

Although the ladies were way off in certain areas they were amazingly accurate in others.

It was predicted that Halton Hills would gain a head office for a national corporation on the western outskirts of town north of Highway Seven. While this was supposed to be a business venture it would appear to be true since the head office for the Jehovah Witnesses has come to the location described.

This year Mrs. Zuest predicted real trouble over the community not wanting a church.

"It doesn't make any sense," she said. "I see people fighting a church. Now that's not usual."

When it was pointed out that a battle to stop construction of the Jehovah Witness headquarters was already under way she found it quite a sensible premonition and continued to predict that the battle would heat up through the coming year.

NO ACTION

Last year the ladies predicted no action in either the Focal issue or the battle over the proposed Ontario Hydro corridor through Halton Hills. Time would be necessary before anything definite would happen, they said, although they saw Focal's development proceeding eventually and Mrs. Zuest still sees this.

The ladies said Quebec wouldn't separate and even that Levesque would calm things down. Whether they prove right in the long run the immediate picture would seem to bear out the accuracy of their prediction.

The three areas in which the ladies seem to have been less than accurate centre around the economy and politics.

Both ladies saw full elections last year and minority government as a result of it. Mrs. Zuest is still seeing minority government although she has showed the election date back as far as possible under the Canadian constitution.

The ladies predicted the arrival of new industry for Georgetown but instead the possibility of an expansion at Neilson's slipped away. Neither the foreseen government-related industry involved in transportation or mass transit that was to settle between Georgetown and Norval nor the American company related to the paper industry have materialized. Also the secret negotiations with a west coast company that would bring us new industry are either still a secret or haven't produced any results.

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Firefighters fined on liquor charges

Two Georgetown firefighters were convicted of selling liquor without a permit at the charity stag held by the Georgetown Volunteer Firefighters' Association last November.

Don Maveal and Bruce Lewis appeared before Justice of the Peace B. McDermott in Milton yesterday morning and were convicted of unlawfully selling liquor without a permit. Each was fined \$53.

Halton Regional Police Constable Les Graham said the firefighters had been under the impression that because the Georgetown golf and Country Club, where the stag was held, was licensed, they didn't need to apply for a licence for their event. In fact, it would have been necessary for the country club to purchase the liquor and sell it to those in attendance, because the club is already licensed, the association would not have been granted a special occasion permit.

January 8 has been set as the trial date for three women and two men in connection with performances by exotic dancers at the stag, which was held to raise money for muscular dystrophy and to restore a 1942 antique fire engine belonging to the Georgetown department. The three women are charged with giving an obscene

performance and taking part in an indecent act in a public place. The two men are charged with assisting in giving an obscene performance.

No decision has been reached on whether or not further charges will be laid in connection with the stag.

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