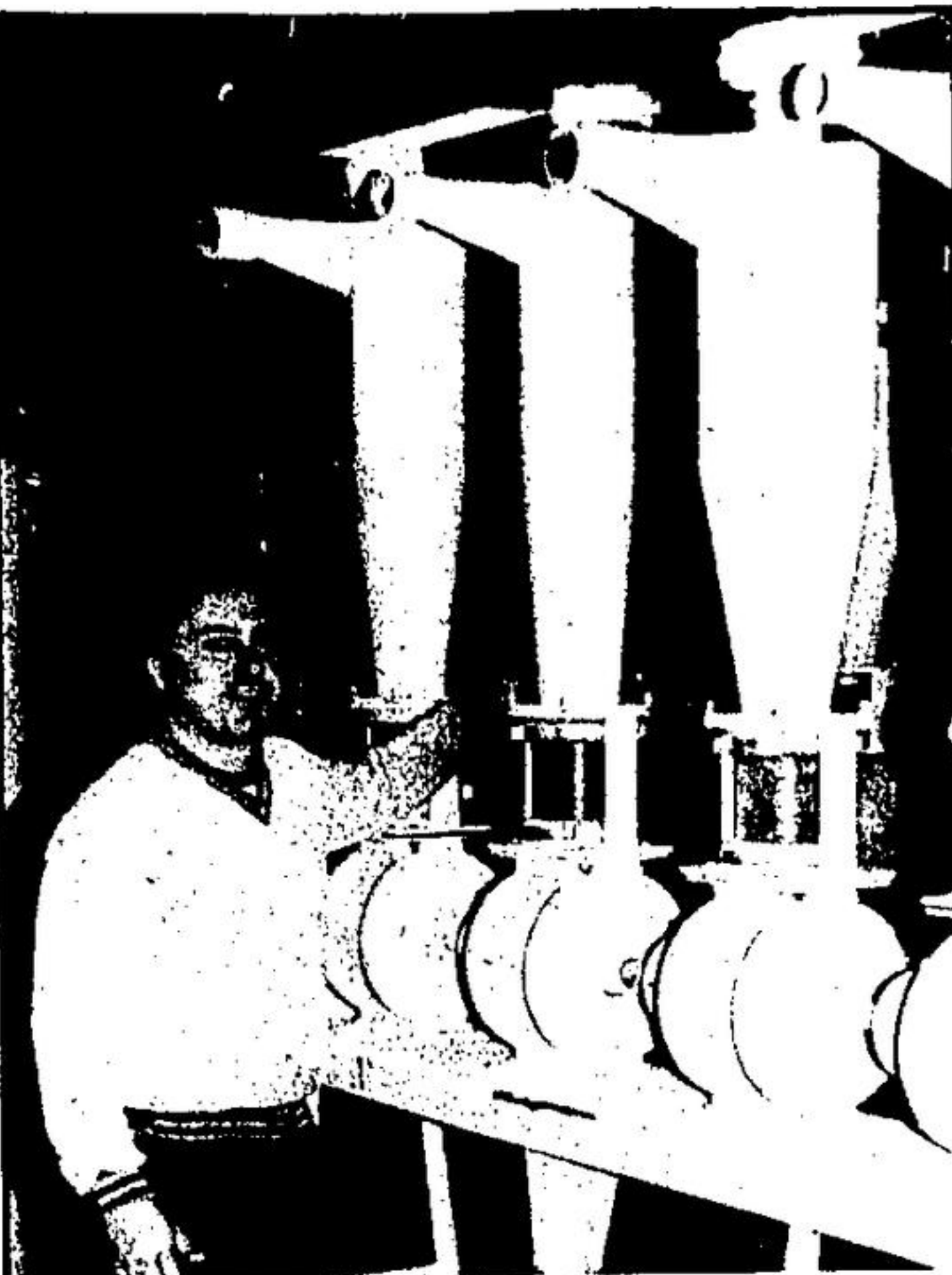


Maytime Gardening Products

# Grinding up soil for gardeners



**JOLLY MILLER**-Manager Brian Dolotowicz is standing beside new machines within the new mill of Halton Flour Milling at 62 Mill St. West in Acton. The new mill will increase production dramatically and should be working by May. You can still buy flour and mixes wholesale at the mill. The new store is in the new offices at 62 Mill Street. (Herald photo)

In good or poor times

## Brian's always in the dough

One business a bad economy will never hurt is Acton's Halton Flour Milling Inc. "When people get worse off they buy more bread and when things are good they buy fancier baked goods. We make flour for both kinds of food," said the owner of Halton Flour Milling, Brian Dolotowicz.

In April the thriving flour mill will have an addition. Its modern mill opens then which will increase production four times; it will produce 100 tons of flour a day.

The Acton mill has been producing flour for 151 years. Brian Dolotowicz, a former flour mill manager from Montreal, will stop that tradition soon. He has owned the mill for three years. Not only will flour be produced, but also a new line of products. The mill already produces a variety of flours: pastry, cake, all purpose, whole wheat. Mixes are the newest products and the way of the future, Mr. Dolotowicz said.

Soon the mill will be making mixes for cakes, breads and other baked goods. New technology helps Halton Flour Milling to make this change.

"Our computer system allows us to monitor quality and guarantee consistency," Mr. Dolotowicz said. There are only three other flour mills in Canada as advanced, he said.

Keeping up with technology is a goal of the young staff at the mill. Brian Dolotowicz is the oldest at 34. His staff are upgrading their skills by taking courses in flour milling and baking. Not that the staff will be baking in Acton, but bakers are their best customers, and all aspects of the business must be understood for

quality flour to be made. Baking courses are from the Canadian Baking Council and milling courses they take are from the United States.

International trade is also part of the mill's plan. Today their market is only in southern Ontario, Russia, Cuba and the Third World are in the mill's future, Mr. Dolotowicz said. "We have interest from abroad we just can't fulfill," he said.

Local interest is also present. Mr. Dolotowicz explains it is the quality of the product and the service that buyers are seeking.

The mill is always sold out even though it operates seven days a week and 24 hours a day. Some of the mill's customers include Voorman cookies in Burlington and Dare cookies. They also deliver to many Italian and Portuguese bakeries in Toronto.

"We will run to Toronto with one bag of flour if a customer runs out," Mr. Dolotowicz said. That is the quality service they are known for. When the mill starts producing more flour there will be more runs and the Acton cartage company, Goy Cartage, that makes deliveries, will be flourishing with the mill.

Acton is a good place for the thriving flour mill. "Guelph is the hub of Ontario and Acton is not far away," Mr. Dolotowicz explained. Being near farmland is another asset of Halton Flour Milling, he said.

When the new mill opens the staff will increase from 12 to 20. "We're young and we're going to make it," Mr. Dolotowicz said.

By Ani Pederlan  
Herald Staff

With all the winter snow and ice, it may seem a little early to be talking gardening, but that's what Hussein Fazal has been talking since January.

Mr. Fazal is the manager of Maytime Gardening Products, a Norval company on Highway 7 near Mississauga Road.

Since January, the company's been busy mixing up potting soils for the spring and summer gardeners. There's a warehouse full of top soil from Caledon East, peat moss, fertilizer and limestone.

These ingredients are mixed together, then run through a large machine called a shredder. The shredder takes out any stones and finely grinds the mixture.

From the shredder, the potting soil goes into one of two bins where it gets packaged into 3, 5, 10 lb or 38 kilogram bags.

"If nothing goes wrong, we can fill 3,000 bags in a day," Mr. Fazal said.

Maytime's sales are within Canada, and mostly to Toronto's suburbs and Ontario towns.

Because summertime is a really slow time for the business, Maytime prefers to have temporary staff.

"The biggest problem we have is employees. We're located in the middle of nowhere and it's hard to get them," the manager said. "We've put an ad at the employment centre for the last week and a half and only got one application."

Currently, the company has five employees working in the back and two office staff. Its work schedule of three days a week gets boosted to five in April and May when two more staff are

also hired. After a slow summer, business picks up again in September, Mr. Fazal said.

Owned by Murtaza Alibhai and Mohammed Ebrahim, the gardening supplies company was bought in December 1980, when it was on the verge of bankruptcy, Mr. Fazal said.

The owners are originally from Zaire, in Africa and operate businesses internationally.

As well as the gardening supplies, Maytime has expanded into a retail outlet for giftware and brassware since September 1984.

Originally beginning with imported brass planters from India, the company now imports other brass items like picture frames, wood boxes, fireplace screens, house numbers, mailboxes and door knockers. English pewter mugs are also sold as silver plated gift items from India.

"We do wholesaling to people like Canadian Tire, Sears and small stores around Toronto," Mr. Fazal said of the giftware business.

Canadian-made plastic hanging baskets are also a big seller for the company, especially in Quebec, he said.

Both the giftware and gardening businesses are competitive ones, and you have to be careful with the pricing, Mr. Fazal said.

"Retail-wise, we're really surprised at what we're doing," he said. "I guess our prices are good compared to the stores. People are coming from the city and of course locally."

The retail outlet is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and starting May, will be open Saturdays also from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



The warm weather will be on its way soon, Hussein Fazal of Maytime Gardening Products in Norval says. Business is brisk this season as employees prepare potting soil for springtime gardeners. (Herald photo)

## Putting your best dressed foot forward

Like his father before him and his father before him, Acton's Bob Lavoie makes work socks. "I got the know-how from working with my father," Mr. Lavoie said. Of all the family businesses that preceded him, Bob Lavoie's business is the most successful, he said.

"Better management and a little bit of luck" are the reasons for his success, he said. The Lavoie name also helped, he admitted. "It's not a household name, but it's known in the sock business."

His own business began in 1961 from his home on RRI Georgetown.

From there he operated 12 knitting machines, some of them from his father's operation. Mr. Lavoie handled small contracts which he called custom-knitting.

Today he makes work socks for the major chain stores of Canada and is considering cracking the American market. Woolworths, K Mart, The Bay, and Mark's Work Warehouse are a few of his customers.

"We're hoping to break into the U.S. market. We're still looking into it and everytime we look it looks better," Mr. Lavoie said.

The business has doubled in size since the early days when they had just twelve machines. Instead of Mr. Lavoie's home, the business is working out of the Beardmore Tannery building on Frederick Street in Acton.

Expansion of the business continues next month when new machines arrive which will increase production by 10 per cent. Because Mr. Lavoie is in his 50's he does not want to expand much beyond this. If he was 20 years younger he might be more aggressive, he said.

R. Lavoie Knitting Ltd. makes between 1,800 and 2,000 socks a day.

Some of these are sport socks, but work socks are the specialty. An average machine makes between six to eight dozen pairs a day and his machines are running 50 hours a week.

Most of Mr. Lavoie's staff are women, all but himself and his mechanic. Working in Acton has been good for the company because there is never a shortage of workers, he said.

"Business has been fairly strong, fairly consistent over the last 10 years. Socks are a basic requirement, like bread and butter," he said.

The sock business does not change much. Machines used when he started are just as good as those he buys today. Wool is the base fabric in his work socks and cannot be worked too fast or it will break, he said.

Only the fabrics and colours of socks have changed much in the last fifteen years, he said.

One thing that hasn't changed is the Lavoie label on the socks. Perhaps it won't change in the future. Bob Lavoie has a 10 year-old son. Perhaps the Lavoie tradition will be carried on in Acton for years to come. "He might take over," Mr. Lavoie said. "If I was twenty years younger...."



SOCK IT TO THEM-Everyone could use a sock press like this to make work faster. Debbie Stuckey is pressing socks before they are shipped to customers. She works at R. Lavoie Knitting Ltd. at 100 Frederick St. in Acton. (Herald photo)

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## Workers better educated for jobs, says Census

Popular belief has it that Newfoundlanders are "Goin' Down the Road". However, many Canadians from other areas are, at the same time, moving into Canada's newest province. According to the 1981 CENSUS of Canada, six per cent, or about 34,000 was the count for come-from-away residents (CFAs), and surprisingly, out of all territories and provinces, the majority came from Ontario. Yes, the beauty of the East is still something to "rant and roar" about.

them "whether on board ship, in shanties, public institutions, or private houses". During that Census, the second in Canada's history, the enumerators registered a total of 4,324,810 people. One hundred years later the census enumerators registered almost 6 times as many people, some of them on modern accommodations such as "oil rigs". The population of Canada, according to the 1981 CENSUS was 24,343,181.

According to the 1981 CENSUS, Canadian workers are better prepared than ever for the job market. Over the last decade, Canadians have increased their level of education. In fact, one in three Canadians has attended a university, a college, or a technical institute.

The 1981 CENSUS showed that Canada's labour force increased 40 per cent in the last decade, and now exceeds 12 million people.

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