business has expanded to a degree wedding invitations are also handled that it now includes an office supply by GSS.

cept was simple enough. She ac- However, GSS also supplies comcepted typing work and other panies in Acton, Milton, Erin, secretarial dutles that could be completed in her home, thus enabling to with materials. her to care for her six-month old

business" became a thriving opera- they excel in.

handle everything from basic typing competitively priced, as well." and copying work, to phone answer-ing service and telex communica- has a staff of six, and Ms. Tanas has and copying work, to phone answer-

The office is also equipped for Fax transmissions, a network which good staff. I've had many comallows photocopies, diagrams, or pliments on how well my staff deals drawings to be reproduced at points with the public. That's been a major

The placement division of GSS in both the office supplies and provides secretaries for fill-in ser- secretarial divisions." vice where they are required by As both a business owner, and the clients. Employees of GSS are sometimes placed in permanent secretarial positions, too.

Ms. Tanas opened the office supplies division of her company five years ago, after recognizing the great need for such a service in Georgetown, for both the commercial and industrial sectors.

"There was no one to offer the extent of office supplies we now do in Georgetown," she says. "Commer-

Fourteen years ago, Marg Tanas cial and industrial companies had to began a small in-home secretarial get their supplies outside the com-

GSS provides all types of office supplies, as well as office furniture, Today, that basic concept has equipment such as typewriters and grown to become Georgetown calculators, portable photocopiers, Secretarial Service, and the and computer supplies. Orders for

Much of the company's business is In the beginning, Ms. Tanas' con- derived from the Georgetown area. Brampton, Mississauga, and Toron-

A company van ensures orders are filled quickly, and delivery is free. But it wasn't long before a "hobby Service is one area Ms. Tanas feels

"I think service is the top quality GSS assists people in a variety of our company," she says. "Service ways. At the company's offices, is where we've gained the most located at 348 Guelph St., employees ground. But, of course, we have to be

> high praise for her employees. "No business can exist without a

president of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce Ms. Tanas recognizes the need to make advancements in her operation, and

part of the success of this company,

the community as a whole. "Living and working in Georgetown, I'm very supportive of the community. There are lots of opportunities, if we tap into them. "But I believe you can get into

trouble if you don't build on a con-

trolled basis. Steady growth is im-

portant."

GSS Office Supplies carries a wide range of materials, and services

many companies in Georgetown and the surrounding area. Marg Tanas,

right, is the owner of the business, while Pat Barr is her assistant,

rangements for them" Mr. Wong attributes his success to

FOCUS '87 - Wednesday, March 25, 1987 - Page 7 Love of ceramics his life's work

By MARY-LIZ SHAW Herald Special

A little over three years ago Michael Wong was a disillusioned management consultant trapped in a job that took him to Halifax every weekend, leaving him little time to spend with his family and friends,

"Now he is a successful Georgetown businessman, owner of Connoisseur's Court, who has turned his love of ceramics into his life's

The small shop at 50 Main Street contains unique novelty items and elegant Japanese floral arrangements. Passers-by are immediately drawn to the classical music blaring from a tiny speaker sitting on the edge of the sidewalk.

"I've had a lot of comments on the music," Mr. Wong said. People will be dancing down the street and they'll tell me it is so pleasant to hear good music while they're shopping."

Mr. Wong decided to open his business three years ago after an unsuccessful stint job-hunting. His wife had taken up ceramics while he was travelling back and forth to Halifax. "A friend of mine owned a

building in Georgetown," Mr. Wong said. "The rents were so low here, I couldn't pass it up; I really decided to take a chance because I felt I had nothing to lose."

Business has grown steadily ever since and his services have expanded. Although most of his original stock was ceramics, Mr. Wong said he now deals primarily in special floral arrangements, based on the Japanese style known as Ikebana.

"They have simple, defined lines, very appealing to the eye," he said. "Customers will often bring in their own vases and have me design ar-

the uniqueness of his stock, which includes a peacock feather costume ball mask and brightly coloured feather boas, and to his devotion to individual customer service.



Cold outside? Who would know? Mike Wong of Connoisseur's Court in Georgetown sits at his piano which he often plays to entertain his customers. His Main Street

shop specializes in custom-made ceramics and flower arrangements. (Photo by Mary-Liz Shaw)

"I try to stay away from importers who sell in bulk to large companies such as The Bay or Zellers. I'd rather look for the unusual. I have things that you would be hard pressed to find even in Toronto."

Impeccably dressed in a grey pinstriped suit and pink shirt. Mr. Wong's sales style is relaxed and friendly. He enjoys entertaining his customers by playing the upright piano sitting in the middle of the tiny

Although Mr. Wong describes his customers as representing a crosssection of the community, he has attracted people from Toronto, Brampton and Mississauga, Wordof-mouth, he said, is his best form of advertising.

"Someone will go into a home which has one of my arrangements and she'll like it. The next week, that person is in my shop.

Mr. Wong has been building up his Christmas stock to set up a permanent Christmas ornmament and gift section. He has also imported unusual replicas of 18th and 19th century guns, pistols and swords. "The guns and swords are popular with the men and the mechanisms are entirely workable." Perhaps the most unique of these items is a miniature replica of a

medieval crossbow with an iron ar-Mr. Wong has just completed in-

terior decoration for two offices and

he is hoping to do more of them. "I think professionals realize that most of our life is spent at the office and it should be a more pleasant, relaxing atmosphere," he said. "An environment that is calm and pleasing to the eye puts customers at ease and probably increase productivi-

# Firm benefits from declining dollar

By SANDY CAMPBELL

Herald Staff The decline of the Canadian dollar is the cause of a boom for at least

one Acton business. In the last three years, sales of Commercial Shearing Ltd. have increased over 50 per cent, said David Roberts, managing director of the 6 Commerce Crescent business.

Commercial Shearing supplies many Canadian companies with hydraulic gear pumps, motors and direction control valves.

Most dump trucks have hydraulie components manufactured by Commercial Shearing. Machines used in refuge, mining, construction, shipping and utilities have parts supplied by the Acton business. "Almost all Ontario hydro trucks have one or two components of ours," Mr. Roberts said.

The comparative low price of the Canadian dollar is benefitting Commercial Shearing, because 20 to 30 per cent of what they make ends up on machines shipped to the United the competitive market, he was uneight to ten years ago when a dollar was a dollar was a dollar," Mr. Roberts said at the exchange rate.

Commercial Shearing is a worldwide company with sales in 1986 to \$275 million. Parts made at the Acton business are sent across Canada to Commercial Shearing distribution centres. There are seven such centres in Ontario alone.

The Acton outlet was established in 1973 and employs 18 people, machinists, assemblers, testers, shippers and office personal make up that staff.

Parts are machined, assembled and tested in Acton. Designs come from the United States.

In 1987 the company will be intechnically, superior to other products, and we are now showing them to our customers," Mr. Roberts said Because of secreey needed in

States. "Things have changed since willing to discuss these latest developments.

Hydraulic parts for mobile machinery is a very competitive business. There are about 12 companies in direct competition with Commercial Shearing, and three or four are larger than Commercial Shearing. Many of the companies have merged or will merge for survival. "Hopefully there will only be

one of them," Mr. Roberts said. When Commercial Shearing came looking for a location in southern Ontario they were originally considering the St. Catherines area. "We were looking for a small community

three or four left soon, and we will be

with a stable work force. "Acton had the people, the propertroducing some new products which ty was available and it is still close should increase business. "They are enough to Toronto," Mr. Roberts said. A big part of Commercial

Shearing's business is in Southern Ontario. Commercial Shearing does not

plan to expand the Acton plant in 1987. They do plan to have another good year. New designs are part of that optimism. Traditionally high quality is another.

The body of a Commercial Shearing parts is "very rugged, all cast iron. It's not cheap but moderately priced," Mr. Roberts said. Other companies make their bodies out of aluminum, which may not be as heavy, but is also less reliable, he

The name Commercial Shearing has been around for 65 years, Originally the business cut steel into strips. Cutting steel is called shearing. The companies first effort into hydraulics was manufacturing a dump truck that would dump in three directions, from the back and both sides. Soon they stopped making the trucks and were making hydraulic parts only. Today Commercial Shearing is a leader in the design of hydraulic machinery, Mr. Roberts said.

Frank Heller and Co.

(Herald photo)

# The best half of the leather industry

By SANDY CAMPBELL

Herald Staff Taking the worst half of a cow hide and making it equal to the best half is one way Acton's Frank Heller and Company made a name for themselves in the leather industry.

The company on McDonald Boulevard has been in Acton for over 20 years and employs 225 peo-ple. "We could be the biggest producer of splits in Canada and North America," sald Mike MacPhee, the controller (chief accountant) of the Acton business.

Splits is a term used to describe what happens to the cow hide; it is split in two. There is the outer layer, which is considered to be the best part, and there is the inner layer. "The outer layer is considered bet-

ter. It is easier to work with," Mr. MacPhee said. "We've developed expertise in finishing split leather (the inner layer)," he said.

After the Acton tannery is finished with the inner hide it can be used for

### **Block Parents** unite forces

Block Parents of Acton and Georgetown want to amalgamate their two groups into one.

Although originally formed to help prevent child molestings and abductions, the Block Parent Program has grown and expanded since its incep-tion in London, Ontario in 1968.

Across Canada the familiar red and white sign is displayed in the windows of more than 300,000 homes

just about anything: boots, hand bags, gloves. Foot wear is the real

test for leather, Mr. MacPhee said. The leather in a shoe has to absorb impact and not crack or peel. For years the Frank Heller product has stood up to those tests and has the confidence of the footwear industry, Mr. MacPhee said. Greb, Kaufman, Cougar and Bata are some of the

names in footwear they deal with. The Heller name is recognized in North America for the work they do with inner hides. Only an expert could tell the difference between a finished Heller hide and the more valuable outer hide, Mr. MacPhee said. A Heller hide is a little less expensive,

Frank Heller did not live to see the success his company has had recently. He died in 1969. Carrying on the family name within the company is his son Ron Heller, who is the vicepresident of production and a life long resident of Acton.

On an average week 350,000 square feet of hide is processed at Prank Heller. That's about 175,000 hides a month, Mr. MacPhee said.

The tannery specializes in custom orders. A customer will come with a sample of the color he would like, and the tannery will come up with the color to match the order. A color that seems to be popular among manufacturers this year is khaki, Mr. MacPhee said.

For the range of colored leather that has to be produced, Frank Heller needs a research department. The number of researchers fluctuates depending upon the orders.

Researchers are also needed to produce samples for customers, Mr

MacPhee said. Business has been steady at Frank Heller. But like the now closed Beardmore tannery, Frank Heller is experiencing the effects of the relaxed tariffs on imported foot wear. "There are no tariffs any longer and shoe manufacturing in Canada is

next to nil," Mr. MacPhee said. Work boots and winter boots are the stronger areas of the Canadian foot wear industry.

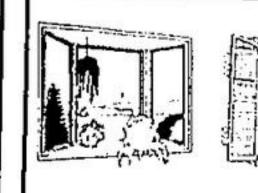
The Beardmore closing did not affect Frank Heller, Mr. MacPhee said. They did hire some Beardmore

employees though. Mr. MacPhee does not predict any major growth for the company in 1987. "The company has good orders logged for 1907. I am optimistic

about the product," he said. Frank Heller's markets are mainly in Ontario and Quebec. They also have customers across Canada and in the United States.

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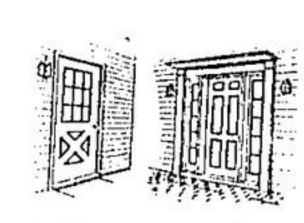
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