

GRAPE VINE

Doll Emporium nearly done
It is just a matter of days before the finishing touches are put on the new second floor at the Doll Emporium on Mill Street. Owner Elly Snels now has a new home for her School of Dolls and her students have a bright new workroom and classroom.

Snels had hoped the work would have been finished by now, but the final outside work can't be done until the weather improves.

No word on Y proposal

Still no word from the Province on plans to convert the old YMCA building on Mill Street into inter-generation housing.

Acton's Baptist Church has applied for Provincial funding and is waiting for word on plans to turn the vacant building into six units for young mothers and seniors.

Those involved with the project say they are "working, meeting and hoping" and expect to have word on the funding this week.

ASSIC thanks volunteers

About 40 dedicated volunteers are expected to attend ASSIC's annual appreciation afternoon Friday at its Willow Street offices.

Acton Social Services and Information Centre spokesperson Sue Haggith says this year's theme is "You're a Class Act," and the afternoon will include music, refreshments and games to honour the people who give their time to run local social service programs.

"We want to say a very public thanks to the unsung heroes — those who do everything from offer rides, deliver Meals-On-Wheels and sit on the boards of local agencies," Haggith says.



COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS: Bob and Kay Hart lived in both Toronto and Muskoka prior to moving to Acton in 1956. Both have made a significant contribution to the community over their years in town. On Dec. 26, this well-known couple celebrated a partnership of 50 years. (Eric Balkind photo)

Good news on Mill Street

Not only does Sears have a new home, now that Elizabeth's Fashions is closing at the end of the month, but a move to Leathertown Fashions means that business will stay on Mill Street as well.

"This means that we are shelving plans to move to Ballantyne's on Highway 7 on the way to Guelph. I was considering an offer to move there because business was so slow here in town. Now with the Sears catalogue outlet, we won't be forced to move," says Leathertown Fashions owner Peter Vidic.

Vidic plans to expand the existing Sears service so Acton residents can place orders at the store, in person or by phone, and not have to call the Georgetown store.

Balkind's parenting tips

You may think that the *Tanner's* Eric Balkind spends all his time working on our editorial pages. Not so. Eric is also a survivor of four children and 27 years as a principal with the Halton Board of Education.

Eric shared his survival secrets at a parents' information meeting Monday night at Centennial Middle School in Georgetown.

His advise for frazzled parents? "This too will pass — you'll survive it all, and so, likely, will the kids. So keep your chin up!"

The Harts of our town: Laughing their way through life together

BY ERIC BALKIND

Bob Hart remembers vividly the day he "started to become" a J.P.

He had just walked into the middle of a discussion concerning the need for a local replacement for the position of Justice of the Peace (the incumbent had recently left town) when one man (Ivan Harris) pointed at him and exclaimed "That's your man, that's the guy you want." Bob's response was "I don't know the first thing about it; you'll have to give me a couple of weeks to think it over," and he went his way.

Two weeks later, while still in the process of asking questions, he discovered that immediately after that happenstance meeting, his name had been submitted to the local MPP with the comment, "I've found the right man."

Together with wife Kay (as of December '92 they have been married for 50 years) Bob Hart settled in Acton in 1956; in the years since, he has become a well-known, much-respected member of our community and along the way he has gathered a well-deserved reputation for his swift wit.

Bob Hart learned early on to be flexible; he changed jobs a number of times through the years by working as a casual labourer (on highways and in sawmills) and as a technician at War Research Enterprises helping to produce radar, binoculars and range-finders. Later, he spent time in Malton at both A.V. Roe and Orenda.

Many folk will likely remember meeting Bob during the 18 years when he handled life insurance.

Strait-laced and poker-faced

Initially appointed, in 1970, as a county Justice of the Peace, Bob became a provincial J.P. in 1975 and 23 years later, he is still beavering away at the job. As an administrative J.P., Hart usually works three mornings or more weekly, handling paperwork including subpoenas, summonses and private complaints; he supplements

the work of Halton's two sitting J.P.s (in Milton and Burlington) plus a third "borrowed" official from Mississauga who presides in Oakville.

Being in such a position is interesting, although at times aggravating. Bob soon learned that a J.P. has to be, as needed, both strait-laced and poker-faced.

His experiences have prompted him to express concern for the conflicts and subsequent problems which face many immigrant parents who, together with their children, are too often caught with painful results, between differing cultures.

Bob has seen hard-working and usually stoic parents in tears as the result of their inability to understand and apparent helplessness to resolve such troubles. In his words, "It can be a heartbreaker and I try to give them a lift."

Changes in government inevitably also bring changes in the system and these can be difficult to accommodate.

Wherever there was the need

Kay Hart spent long years in practical nursing, including stints when she would move into and work directly in a patient's home, taking over and managing day-to-day affairs wherever there was the need.

There were also occasions, when living in Muskoka where there was then no hospital, that clients came actually to be with her. Kay remembers many a newborn visitor whom she cared for in her own home and laughs wryly at the current move towards midwifery: "It was going on for years up there — although we always had a doctor there."

Kay Hart also worked at the Georgetown District hospital for over 17 years.

After retirement, she took up cake-decorating with such success that she eventually taught her new skills to others; in fact, some

younger locals may well remember that Kay Hart did their wedding cake. She is, of course, also known for other crafts, including quilts which have been shown at the CNE in Toronto.

The Harts enjoy travelling and they have managed visits to destinations as varied as Egypt (where they particularly recall being in the upper chamber in the Great Pyramid and where they also saw King Tut's tomb in the Valley of the Kings), Israel, the U.K. and Cuba. They always enjoyed meeting new folk, observing that "Wherever we went, and despite difficulties with language, the people were always friendly."

Caring and contributing

Every second year, Bob and Kay look forward to a large family reunion (at the last gathering there were no less than 105 participants). Over the years they have played their parts in organizing such family get-togethers but it is gratifying to both of them that nowadays "the younger people are taking over the planning and running of the event."

Bob Hart is well-known for his wit and his love of storytelling, but his secret is now out: he confided that many of his best stories would come home via wife Kay's workday experiences. "She'd start giggling at the breakfast table when she got home after shift and I'd say come on, out with it. Sometimes, we just look at each other and burst out laughing — she's the worst one for that."

The Harts have always enjoyed living in these parts and Bob observes that in Acton (and typical of small communities) people are likely to "talk about you when you're well but they are always there to nurse you when you're sick."

Bob and Kay Hart are looking forward to many more years of caring, contributing and, of course, laughing their way through life — together.

HEY!

Have you been suffering from those mid-winter blahs?



"I don't have the January blues, but a lot of people are depressed because they owe money. You've got to keep your spirits up because it's a long way to go before spring."
Linda Widish, Norman Avenue

"Every once in a while I get the January blahs but as soon as I feel that way, I get out and take a walk and keep busy. It's hard to be cheery when it's grey and cold but spring is coming."
Dorothy Papillon, Cobblehill Road



"I never get the winter blahs. I'm always too busy working to feel sad or depressed. This weather is part of our Canadian winter — it's invigorating."
Bruce Shoemaker, Mill Street

"I do feel down because of the weather. I feel the blahs but instead of complaining I get out and take a walk or find something to do. I shut off the TV and get out of the house."
John Toebes, Brock Street

