

Manes has 'no desire to retire' after 40 years

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

After a short stint as a carry-out and delivery boy for Acton IGA, Dave Manes, then approaching his 17th birthday, thought he'd expand his horizons.

But after seeing the lineups of job-seekers at the Ford plant in

Oakville all those years ago, Manes returned to Acton—and he hasn't looked back since.

"After five years as store manager I was making more money than the guys at Ford," laughs Manes, convinced he made the right choice. "I have no regrets. There's been lots of business. I've

lost money along the way, but it's a learning process."

This year, Manes is celebrating 40 years running Acton IGA.

"I never thought about it until recently when my wife Marnie and I were driving and I said 'By geez, it's been 40 years.' It's amazing how time goes by."

A past president twice and 30-year member of the Rotary Club, Manes feels he was taught by one of the best in the business.

"The late J.B. Ledger looked after me very well. He treated me like a son," remembers Manes, who became produce manager by 19 and five years later purchased the store where Power Entertain-

ment currently sits. "He taught me a lot and anyone who knew him, knows he was a jovial guy and excellent with people."

"He gave me many opportunities, but I was also willing and energetic. I would be at the store by 6 or 7 in the morning and not home until 9 pm."

Over the years, Manes has branched out, expanding his business portfolio to include the lumber business, IGA franchises in Erin and Woodbridge, Jug City stores in Acton, Georgetown and Erin, Acton Bowl and most recently, the soon-to-open Hoops, Pockets & More games centre.

"I just try and run a friendly,

clean service and give the best service and prices I can. Your best customers are your old ones. They're definitely your most important asset."

Business increased over the next two decades, the store was remodeled five times and a large extension, including a deli, was added in 1985. In 1987, construction of the existing 13,000 square-foot store began. A bakery was installed after the completion in February '88.

Manes, a former honorary chair of the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal and member of the Shriners' Club and Legion, has seen many changes over the years.

Merchandising is different and punch-out cash registers have been replaced by scanners. Manes recently saw a credit card service in Florida, where people with a PC at home could order from the store at 9 am and have their goods delivered by 6 pm.

"It's the future. If it was to happen here, this would be more of a warehouse. Some people enjoy shopping; others see it as a chore."

A fan of curling who loves to travel and watch movies on TV, Manes makes it clear he doesn't plan on leaving the family business (wife Marnie, sons John and Mike, among others, are involved) any time soon.

"I'll probably leave when I die," he chuckles. "I have no desire to retire. I can do what I want now. If the kids are still involved in my later years, I'll always come down and see what's going on."

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Dave Manes takes time to stack grapefruits at Acton IGA.

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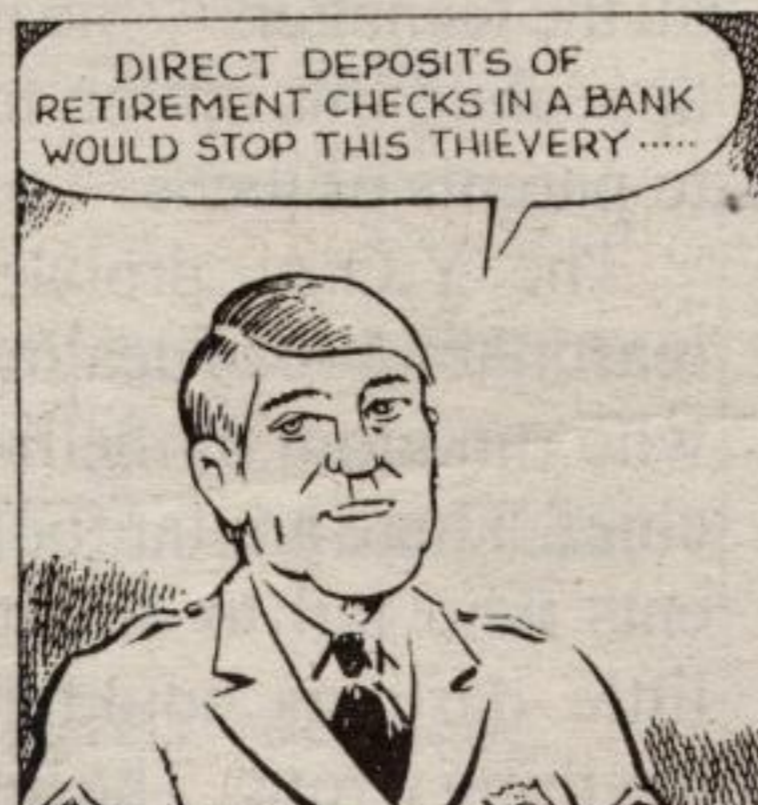
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