

Open for business

Over the holiday season, finding an open store can prove to be a bit of a challenge. Here is a bit of a guide to help you find what you're looking for at Christmas and New Year's.

Ed's In and Out Variety is open Dec. 24, 8 am to 9 pm, Christmas Day, 9-6 and Boxing Day, 8 am to 10 pm. The store is also open Dec. 31, 8 am to 10 pm and New Year's Day, 9 am to 10 pm.

The Smoke Shoppe will be open Dec. 24 from noon to 5 pm but will be closed both Christmas Day and Boxing Day. On Dec. 31 the store is open noon to 5 pm and is closed on New Year's Day.

Jug City is open Dec. 24, 7 am to 11 pm, Christmas Day, 8 am to 11 pm and Dec. 31 and New Year's Day from 8 am to midnight.

If it's groceries you need, keep in mind **Acton Foodland** is open from 10-5 Dec. 24 and closed both Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The store will also be closed New Year's Day but will be open Dec. 31 from 10-5.

Acton IGA is open from 8-5 Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 and is also closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

If you want to get a jump on Boxing Day shopping, the **olde Hide House** is open 9-9.

Actonite publishes musical biography

Jean Somerville writes of the musical career of the Sod Busters – her father, aunt and grandfather

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

Jean Somerville wished she asked her dad, Andy Frank, more questions about life in the early 1900's before he passed away 10 years ago.

She says he had a terrific memory which could have added a lot of colour to her first book *The Bands Play On: Music and the Frank family*. Jean held a book signing at her Willow Street home on Saturday.

Community musicians were an integral part to social life of residents in rural Ontario before the days of radio and television. The musical Franks – led by Jean's grandfather William McLaughlin Frank, her dad Andy and Aunt June first entertained around their home in Nassagaweya Township before hitting the airwaves and performing in southwestern Ontario.

Frank's Orchestra – including William (violin), Andy (harmonica) and June (pump organ and later piano) – was in demand in the Mills and later appeared at garden parties. Community halls, street dances, outdoor events and house parties were other popular venues in this time.

After appearing on Hamilton's CKOC radio for three years and



BOOK SIGNING: Acton resident and now author Jean Somerville, 66, held a book signing at her Willow Street home on Saturday. Here, she signs a copy for June Doberthien. (Eve Martin photo)

changing their name to Sod Busters – named after pioneer farmers who cultivated new areas of Canada by breaking up sod – William, Andy and Co. enjoyed their busiest schedule during the Depression.

From 1929 to 1931 they had 791 engagements and 90 radio broadcasts.

"I didn't realize how busy they were. I appreciate what dad did

more now and grandpa, too. Dad often said that's how they survived the Depression," says Jean, 66, whose family was provided food, since they ran a fruit and veggie farm. "Plus, he enjoyed it. It wasn't something he had to do."

While writing the book, Jean was both thankful and encouraged by the accurate accounts provided by her aunt, the only band member

still living. June had kept a diary full of entries from 1932.

"Reading this book, I think the older people will remember happy times associated with the music events, while the younger people will learn a bit about the social life of the past," explains Jean, who initially started writing a biography about her dad before being convinced to focus on the family's musical talents.

The former Rockwood Centennial teacher was inspired by the numerous mementos – posters, pictures and newspaper accounts – her father filed that detailed the band's popularity and successes.

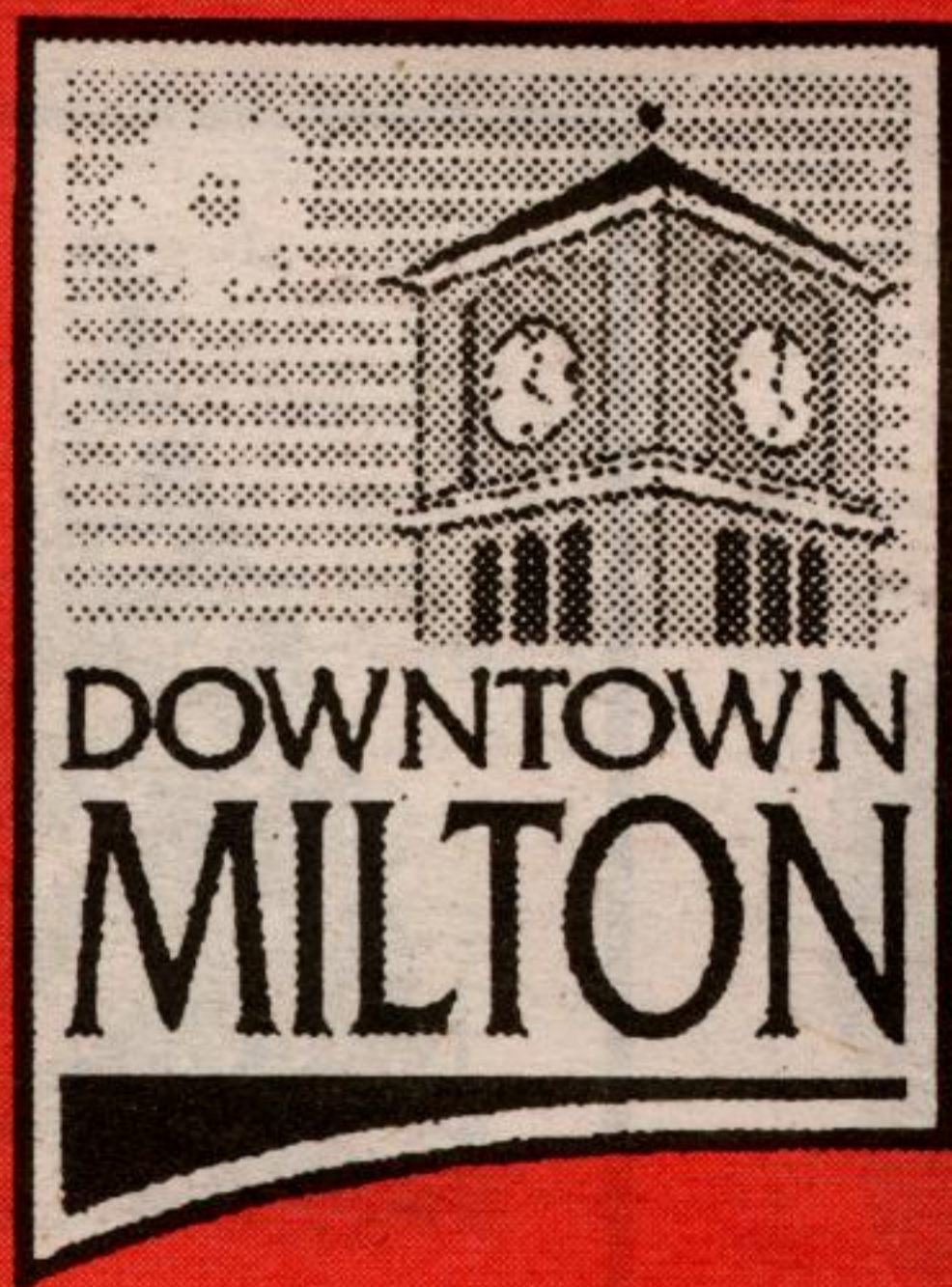
"It was interesting and my obligation to do this. They were an important part of local history."

Jean remembers her dad as a "quiet person and hard worker." He was a plasterer, having worked on her current residence that was built in 1914.

"He was a good musician, who could play an instrument. I remember him bringing home a saxophone," recalls Jean, an Acton resident of 42 years. "He taught himself to play, having realized that fox trots were becoming popular in 1934.

"I think he would probably feel people are missing a lot today. They watch a lot of TV and don't have the good social times like those of the past."

Five hundred copies of *The Band Played On* – by Ampersand Publishing in Guelph – have been printed. Historical societies in Nassagaweya, Guelph, Esquesing and Burlington have shown interest in obtaining the book.



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