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182 Main St., Milton 878-6962

**THE
CHANGING FACE
OF
DOWNTOWN
MILTON**

**MILTOWNE
CENTRE**

The face of downtown Milton is changing—for the better. Recent improvements to the streetscape have made it a more attractive place to shop, and several new retail shops are coming to complement the good mix of existing stores. Milton's charming town core boasts a variety of goods and services, friendly clerks and comparative prices. Each week on this page, we invite you to meet and learn a little more about the background and philosophy of the individual stores, their services and their people.



Zella Bonin of Harris Stationery

Harris Stationery

By Jane Muller
"We've had some customers for over 20 years and are getting new ones all the time."
Zella Bonin, daughter of Ron Harris who opened Harris Stationery in 1963, is one of few local merchants who can boast such a record.
The stationery store outgrew its first location at 162 Main St. only four years after it opened and the second and current location at 182 Main St. has over the years been expanded on four occasions.
Until two years before she married B. A. Bonin in 1959, Zella worked with her father. In 1963, Mr. Bonin began working with Mr. Harris and went on to buy the business three years later.
About the same time as Ron Harris retired in 1970, his daughter returned to the work force as a salesperson and part-time administrator at the store after raising three boys.
In keeping with the store's family tradition, each of their sons aged 16, 18 and 20 have worked in the store periodically.
"They've learned to deal with the public and have a better idea of what Mom and Dad do at work."
"It helps them to understand the long hours we put in," Mrs. Bonin explains.

Product lines and personal service have not changed over the years of serving Milton, but Mrs. Bonin says certain items have changed with the times.

Color has been introduced to office supplies and wedding invitations. Card companies have diversified by adding stuffed animals, ceramics and greeting books to their assortment. "Offices were typically gray and drab, but now a little color has dressed them up and the environment feels better to work in," Mrs. Bonin said.

There has also been a trend away from the traditional white wedding invitations. Varied designs, a more casual approach and the option of wording of your choice has changed the look of wedding stationery over the years.

"We can be a one stop shop for wedding supplies," says Mrs. Bonin.

Customers are allowed to take sample books home with them for consideration and when a decision is reached, orders will be looked over by staff to ensure every aspect has been considered.

Besides office stationery, calculators and typewriters are available for sale or rent.

Office furniture may be ordered and a bond copier service is performed for the customer. A duplicating service, used largely by small businesses for internal forms, is also offered.

Harris Stationery is also a book store offering a selection of cook books, a wide range of paper backs, bibles, general interest and children's literature.

"We have a good selection of reading material for young teenagers, something which is usually hard to find," Mrs. Bonin suggests.

The store's art supply department contains the well known Grumbacher line which has been part of this specialty line since the store began.

Mrs. Bonin said she has noticed a change in recent years which has made acrylic paints more popular than traditional oils.

She attributes this to its quick drying qualities which allow the modern painter in a busy society the opportunity to leave the work and return to finish it at a later time.

Oil paints as well as all petroleum products have seen major price increases which is also a deterrent to their use.

Personalized service is an attribute of Harris Stationery which Zella Bonin can't stress enough.

She said customers, once they become used to being known in the store enjoy it.

"This is what small towns are all about," she said.
Mrs. Bonin, a member of the Downtown Business Improvement Area, is hopeful when Main St. improvements are completed the public will be encouraged to browse.

She said the key to the downtown's survival is a "matter of everyone pulling together. Merchants should have a knowledge of their product and offer personalized service."

Harris Stationery is open for business four days a week from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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