

# Store's cheques often bounced: fraud trial

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**  
*The Champion*

The owner of a furniture manufacturing business told Oakville court November 22 his store is out in excess of \$25,000 after numerous cheques from the Village Pine Shoppe failed to clear.

Larry Vokes testified in the ongoing fraud trial of Charles Currie, 43, of Campbellville.

Mr. Vokes, co-owner of Frontier Furniture in Owen Sound, testified he dealt with Mr. Currie from 1996 to 1999 regarding manufacturing furniture for the Village Pine Shoppe in Campbellville.

Toward the middle of 1998, he told the court, Frontier Furniture began to receive bad cheques from the store.

"Most of the time I dealt with Charlie, sometimes I dealt with Oriena (Currie, Mr. Currie's mother)," Mr. Vokes said.

"At the end of 1998 I told Charlie he had to pay down the account before we delivered him more furniture. He told me if I sent him more furniture, he would be able to get the down payments from customers and would be able to pay. I was surprised — most people would be apologetic, but he said to send more furniture."

In 1999, Mr. Vokes testified, his store received several returned cheques from the bank for lack of sufficient funds from the Village Pine Shoppe.

He continued his testimony in Burlington court last Friday and told the court throughout 1999 his business continued to accept cheques from the Village Pine Shoppe and continued to deliver to the store because operators wanted the money to pay down the account.

"It was important to us to collect the funds," he said.

Mr. Vokes continued his testimony in Burlington court Tuesday and testified the last time he spoke to Mr. Currie was over the phone this past January.

"He seemed in a panic. He said he wanted as much furniture as we could give him but he didn't push hard. Normally he was assertive but this time he seemed distant. I asked if he could pay and he said he had no money. So basically I told him no money, no furniture."

During cross examination, defence lawyer Anthony Bryant suggested a line of credit had been established between Frontier Furniture and the Village Pine Shoppe, to which Mr. Vokes disagreed.

"It was our understanding that our driver would receive a cheque from the Village Pine Shoppe upon delivery or we wouldn't deliver."

Mr. Bryant pointed out no where on any document did it say furniture wouldn't be delivered until the amount owing was paid.

He also suggested a delivery time of one month from Frontier Furniture to the Village Pine Shoppe wouldn't be unreasonable.

"As our business was expanding, the prediction of a delivery date was less certain," Mr. Vokes said. "But the only recollection I have of an extended delivery time was in July of 2000, when it took 10 or 11 weeks for us to deliver. Prior to that, I don't recall any period of an extraordinary delivery time."

Charles Currie is charged with 25 counts of fraud under \$5,000 and one count of fraud over \$5,000.

He remains in custody.

The trial will continue January 11 in Burlington court.

## CORRECTION NOTICE

"We wish to point out that a printing error appears in The Canadian Champion Phone Book regarding the location of the place of practice of Dr. Debbie Hawkins. Please be aware that Dr. Hawkins ONLY operates from her own Veterinary Hospital, located at 550 Ontario Street South (the Pizza Hut Plaza). (905) 875-6888

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