

First strike victim

Local business shuts down

by

Adrienne Graham Gardner

The continuing strike by inside postal workers has forced a small local mail order business to lay off its three employees.

Swallowhill Dolls of Midland is owned by Joy and Wayne Parker who normally employ three helpers making reproduction porcelain dolls.

Swallowhill is "100 per cent mail order" according to Joy Parker. Their products are advertised in magazines and through a newsletter which Joy writes and mails each month.

In a normal month the Parkers and their employees ship 1,000 doll kits to customers through the mail. This volume and their monthly newsletter represent over \$500 in stamps each month.

Almost 30 per cent of Swallowhill Dolls are shipped to Great Britain, France and Germany; the remainder find homes in North America.

"After two weeks without any money coming in, we're right on the edge of borrowing," says Joy. The Parkers had just returned from a working holiday to visit their supplier in England when the mail strike took effect.

As a result, their employees have been without work for close to a month. Although applications have been filed for unemployment insurance benefits, it will be another month before any UIC cheques can be collected. This is a result of the normal two-week waiting period and processing time required by the commission.

The Parkers could take their shipments to Buffalo and mail them from there. But U.S.

customs regulations would require taking the doll kits across the border open for inspection and packing them in the States. In addition to the risk of breakage involved, the kits would be hit with customs duty, making the idea impractical.

Although the immediate effects of the strike on the Parkers' business have been repairable, the long-term effects may prove disastrous.

An advertising campaign is underway now, to be followed by another later this summer to offer customers a chance to send for the Swallowhill catalogue. Of course, with the strike continuing, no results are expected in spite of the expense of these advertising campaigns. "This future business will also be lost and difficult to recover," Joy predicts.

A final blow dealt by the post office to the mail order business is the stamping of all orders from abroad as "Returned Because of Embargo." This means that orders from customers who may not know of the mail strike will be returned without further explanation. The wording of the stamp leaves an undesirable impression that means "U.S. customers may feel their government doesn't want them to deal with us."

"Those returned orders are lost orders completely," says Joy.

The only hope the Parkers have is that they can mail their monthly newsletter from Buffalo to their regular customers explaining the situation. But there is no way of calculating the amount of business lost from customers who are not yet on the Swallowhill mailing list.

Three cars involved in King/Yonge accident

A three-car accident in Midland at King Street and the Yonge Street off-ramp last Friday at 8:05 p.m. resulted in \$2,400 damage.

One driver, James Latour, 34, of Lindsay Street, Midland, was taken to Huronia District Hospital with minor injuries. His car had been northbound on King Street. Damage to his car amounted to \$1,000.

The second of the three drivers, Barbara Hebner, 16, a Manly Street, Midland, resident, was southbound on King Street at the time of the collision. Damage to her car was

\$800.

The third driver, Siefried Detambel, 35, of Heritage Drive, Midland, had been eastbound on Yonge Street West and was crossing King Street to Yonge Street East. Damage to his car was \$600.

Detambel has been charged with making an illegal crossing.

No injuries resulted from a noon hour two-car accident last

Thursday in Midland. Involved were a car driven by John Slawny, 63, of Azilda, Ont., northbound on Eighth Street, and a car driven by Mary Marshall, 35, of Richard Street, Victoria Harbour, westbound on Hugel Avenue.

Subsequent to the accident at the intersection of Eighth Street and Hugel Avenue, Slawny was charged with failing to yield at a stop sign.

Contract awarded

Town council has approved the entering into of an agreement with Don Sherk Construction to place a sewer under Midland Avenue between Ellen Street and Colbourne Street at a cost of \$68,930.50.



Talking politics, maybe?

Linda Lewis, wife of Simcoe North MP Doug Lewis, and former Simcoe East MPP Gordon Smith chat during the opening night of the 16th annual Summer Antique Market. The

market is held every year in the Country Mill and is organized by the Huronia District Hospital Auxiliary.

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