

# Neighbors

## Country Flowers in Full Bloom

By Suzanne Veh

For Edward's Schoenherr family, business is blooming.

Gord and Diane have just expanded into Embrun with their Country Flowers and Gifts, at 375 Notre-Dame, allowing them to provide better service to the area.

The Schoenherrs started eight years ago with one small greenhouse; there are now four greenhouses on the 14-acre Edwards site.

Gord's father was in the marketing business and Gord started full time at age 16 to work with him. His mother was a floral designer and still helps out at the Schoenherrs today. Gord then spent thirteen years working for well-known florists in the Ottawa area learning and perfecting his flower arranging talents.

The Schoenherrs built their first greenhouse to grow flowers for market purposes but were soon getting so many requests to make flower arrangements for weddings, funerals and other occasions that the business quickly expanded.

Running your own business is a 24-hour job full of rewards and but not without pitfalls. The nursery business, perhaps even more than farming, depends to a great extent on the weather. The working year really starts in December, at which time the Schoenherrs start all their mums in anticipation of Easter and Mother's Day.

These tender cuttings are nurtured through winter's coldest months under two strings of 100-watt light bulbs (along with oil heat) to speed the growing process.

Gord and Diane well remember the near disaster one December when the wind blew the outer layer of plastic off the greenhouse, destroying the insulation pocket and allowing heat to escape. They were able to save their mums but the heating costs were heavy that year.

In March, asters, zinnias, bachelor buttons, and more seeds are planted and kept in a well-heated greenhouse. The seedlings are then transplanted to the fields where they are completely vulnerable to a wet or dry summer, heat waves and late frosts.

Diane recalled how once, three years ago, the greenhouse froze three times due to heating problems, each time forcing them to start their seeds all over again.

As is the case for everyone making their living off the land, the work is plentiful, tedious, back-breaking, yet richly rewarding. Gord and Diane have three children, all of whom participate in the family business. Greg, 18,

works full-time with his father; Wendy, 17, and Susan, 16 both attend Garneau High School but put in their share of work after school and summers.

During summer months, naturally the busiest time, the days start at 6:00 a.m. and end at 10:00 p.m. The Schoenherrs plant about one half of their fourteen acres with flowers and the weeding is mostly done by hand, as is the cutting and bunching. Just cutting flowers in the field is a job that takes all day. Another job that takes the greater part of a day is watering the greenhouses. (The Schoenherrs have two wells and are installing a third this year).

Diane, Wendy and Susan do most of the cutting, bunching and weeding while Gord and Greg handle the deliveries and the market end of things. Most of the fresh flower arrangements are done by Gord; Diane does some and Mrs. Schoenherr senior of Ottawa helps out in a pinch.



Diane Schoenherr arranges Blooms (Suzanne Veh Photo)

## Russell Airport To Stretch

### No Fear of Flying Fortresses — owner

Fears over the prospect of big passenger planes roaring in and out of Russell Airport are unfounded and inaccurate, says owner Gordon Thomas.

Although he plans to extend the airport's longest runway to a point where it could accommodate a plane as large as a 737 in an emergency, he said the largest planes which might routinely use the strip would be DC-6 or DC-4. But traffic would consist mostly of lighter freight and commuter craft, he said.

News that the airport runway was to be expanded caught some local residents and politicians off guard at a recent Russell Township planning meeting.

John Athey, who has lived three-quarters of a mile north of the airport for nine years, wondered at the safety factor of larger aircraft landing and taking off over farm houses and well-travelled roads. The airport is located one-and-a-half miles north of Embrun between St. Pierre and St. Guillaume (Embrun to 417) Roads.

Mr. Athey recalled an incident when a light aircraft with engine trouble barely cleared his barn before flopping in a neighboring farm field. That doesn't happen too often, he said, but if it had been a larger plane needing more clearance, it could have "cleaned out" his barn.

He said he lived far enough away not to be bothered by the current air traffic but felt that more and heavier planes could change that. "It's not what's happening now, I'm concerned about the future."

Mr. Thomas who has owned the airport since 1967, said he was stretching the main runway from one-half mile in length to almost the full distance between concessions in the hope of luring largely light aircraft traffic that is being squeezed out of Ottawa Airport by the growing number of big planes. He also plans to extend a secondary runway and possibly add a third.

He is also looking at setting up a small aircraft-oriented industrial park on the 165-acre airport site. It could attract executive jets, training and twin-engine machines.

"I don't see any problems. There is plenty of room and very few approaches over any houses," he said. Mr. Thomas' firm, Golden Triangle Air Services, owns three planes and offers flying courses. The airport has hanger room for 11 craft.

Russell Township Councillor Baird McNeill chairman of the planning board, approved of the airport's expansion plans but stressed that Mr. Thomas could not proceed without council approval. He said residents neighboring the airport would have a chance to officially express their concerns before any expansion was endorsed. He said any changes to the township plan and zoning bylaw could take six months or more.

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