

# Local entrepreneur in business 20 years

By BRUCE STAPLEY

February 12 marked the 20th anniversary of Card's Hardware in Stouffville. And for owner/operator Graydon Card, success, satisfaction and country-wide recognition just keep on building.

The former president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce has always stressed service and the personal touch. He makes it a point to take time from each busy day to pull himself away from endless administrative tasks, coming up front to waiting customers.

"That's where the fun is," insists the man who has become so well known for his wit, good humor, and ability to remember his customer's names.

That's the bottom line for Graydon Card. He's found what it is he wants to do, and he's doing it well.

"I thought when I first opened up in the new location I could always sell the whole thing in a year or so if I chose to," he says. "But when I thought about it, I realized how much I really love what I'm doing—the hardware business, the people who work for me, the customers—and I knew I'd never want to leave it."

Since moving to the new location in Stouffville's west end in 1983, the store has fully blossomed.

"We came here because of the parking problem (on Main Street) and because the old store had no growth potential," says Graydon.

"When we moved here, we rectified those problems. We've exceeded our projections, and we're hoping to add another 5,000 square feet by the end of 1988 or by the spring of 1989."

He's equally pleased with the plaza as a whole. "It's had a real impact on the community," he claims. "Bargain Harold's is a tremendous draw. Some people were sceptical at first, but they've succeeded in attracting people who were going out of town to shop. I think the plaza has allowed the town to grow up a little, and to offer a broader variety of shopping options."

So what does a dedicated hardware entrepreneur do to expand his own personal horizons after revolutionizing both hardware and business in general, in a town whose time has finally come? For Graydon Card, the answer to that question came when he was approached by the prestigious Canadian Retail Hardware Association this past August to be a director representing Ontario.

He accepted the posting, and now looks forward to his 10-year term.

The function of the director is to look after the concerns of individual hardware and building supply dealers in Canada. The association

works toward the unification of that group of businesses, acting on their behalf as a governing body and as a voice.

"We meet with members of the World Iron Mongers Association, and the (American) National Retail Hardware Association has asked us to attend their meeting in Orlando, Florida in July."

He's also enthusiastic about the people he has been able to meet. "It's great exposure to some awfully capable people," he says. "There's contact with government people as well. You learn a lot just listening to those people."

The Ontario chapter of the association, reports Graydon, has initiated the formation of a coalition against Sunday shopping.

"Hardware people are traditionalists. They have always been devoted to the community, and Sunday shopping goes against their beliefs."

He reports the association has the support of several other significant entities on this issue. "At the recent meeting, we had the support of Canadian Tire, Loblaw's, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the churches, and we even had a professional lobbyist."

Graydon personally believes the issue to be far more than one of emotions. "It's a cost issue," he says, citing the case of Alberta, which has opened the door to Sunday shopping. "In Alberta, costs have gone up to the consumer, (since Sunday shopping began)."

He also feels it's just a matter of time before more and more segments of the working population would be dragged in if Sunday shopping was allowed.

Graydon says while the directors will meet as needed to deal with issues such as Sunday shopping, they schedule their main annual business for two separate weeks of intensive meetings. The first week centres around the Canadian Retail Hardware and Home Improvement Show at the Coliseum in Toronto.

The second week varies each year, and sees the board gather in the province of the association's president.

So while his own horizons continue to expand, life in Stouffville also continues to get better and better for the man who has come to realize his dream. "I've been here for 20 years," he says proudly. "I hope I'm here another 20."



Stouffville's Graydon Card has been in business successfully for 20 years and hopes to continue for another 20.

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