

**BELL GENERAL STORE
DELTA**

Years of looking at the old general store building deteriorate on Delta's main street bothered a Delta family, so they decided to buy it and give it the respect it deserves.

The Bell General Store was built before 1861. The store was run by James Bell and served the Delta community until the family sold it in 1956.

In 1960, the building got a new tenant, an apron factory, which operated out of the building for three years.

The building has been vacant for a long period of time. Each year its condition grew worse.

The Penstone family wanted to put a stop to the deterioration, so in the spring of 1987 the former general store and apron factory will become a craft shop.

Bill and Betty Penstone, their son David and daughter Nancy came to the Delta area seven years ago, when they purchased the Cedar Knoll Camps, which they still own and operate. Bill Penstone is a retired vice-president of DX Oil Company in Montreal. His wife worked as a school secretary and recently retired. Their daughter's background is in crafts, and that is the main reason why the building will be turned into a craft shop.

The plan is to restore the building and have it ready to open for the Delta Maple Syrup Festival in March.

"The festival brings about 4,000 people to the area. We want to open the shop on that weekend to help contribute to the success of the festival," said the daughter.

The name of the business will be The Old Apron Factory Craft Shop to try and keep some tradition of the building, Mr. Penstone said. The store will carry a wide variety of items, including knitting supplies, needle point, children's crafts and of course aprons.

Mr. Penstone said he also hopes to carry a variety of kites. He said people love to fly kites in the Beverley Township Park directly behind the old general store.

The family says it likes the Delta area and wants to help promote tourism. "We would like to get postcards with local scenes. People are always asking for them at the camp," said Miss Penstone.

There are some advantages to having a craft shop in Delta, the family says. Now supplies for all kinds of different hobbies will be available right in Delta. Having a shop in Delta will be good for area artists as well. "We will be encouraging local artist's work. We will take their work on consignment," said the daughter.

"We are going to have handmade gifts for the tourists to purchase. These will be gifts made by local artists." The artists will also be able to use the shop as a location for teaching. The shop will offer lessons in various crafts.

Once the store is in operation, Miss Penstone hopes to hire one full-time and one part-time salesman.

The second floor of the historic building will also be renovated, Mr. Penstone said. It will be an apartment, but won't be complete until September.

Mr. Penstone plans to do most of the renovations himself. The first step is to repair the roof. The bricks must be repointed, and the chimney also needs to be repaired, he said.

There was an old shed attached to the building. Mr. Penstone has already taken it down and is going to build a deck for people to sit on during the summer. He joked that his love for building patio decks is the real reason why he bought the building. "I love building decks. I build all these decks around my house. I ran out of places to build. Now I can build some more decks," he said.

RED CROSS HOMEMAKERS

North Leeds and Gananoque Red Cross Homemakers' Christmas dinner was held at RDHS on Nov. 25th. The dinner, arranged by Supervisor Marilyn Moore, was attended by 35 Homemakers and the Volunteer Committee.

After dinner, Marilyn commended the Homemakers, giving them well deserved praise for another year's work with this essential service.

The following received certificates and Red Cross spoons for 5 years service: Sheila Smith, Gail Way and Lois Boon. Certificates and pins for two years service were awarded to Mary Mulville and Marilyn Norris both of Westport. Ethel Moore, Newboro, Homemaker with the most years of service, was presented with a gift. Ken Stewart of Gananoque was presented with a gift for his dedication to the Gananoque Loan Cupboard.

Donated gifts and gift certificates were won in numerous elimination games. Jenny Mattice and Shirley O'Brien who are among Homemakers attending St. Lawrence College in Brockville, are to be congratulated as they are near completion of their course. An exchange of gifts took place.

Draw for the Stereo-record player with speakers, donated by Gananoque Canadian Tire store, was won by Mark Elliott of Westbrook.

Group photographs were taken. Ken Stewart thanked Marilyn for planning such a successful evening.

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