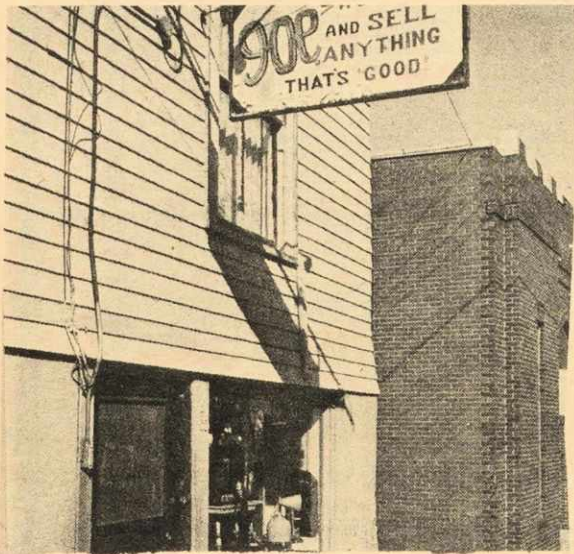


Lots

For



Joe's - 5533 Cunard St.

by Anne Keenan

Bargain hunting rivals church bingo and nights at the races as a compulsive past-time. It's a gamble. The stakes are your time, energy and busfare; the winning ticket is that \$10 spongy chesterfield or, a slightly crinkled Harris Tweed jacket at \$1.25.

The hunt takes place in the world of castaways. The devotees are not allured by exaggerated advertising claims; fresh-from-the-factory-soon-to-be-obsolete merchandise does not entice them from their search. It's not that these intrepid travellers are necessarily opposed to the mint condition-it's more the principal of the thing. It's the money. As inflation soars and buying power tumbles, people from all walks of life are giving the second hand a second look.

Halifax offers the bargain hunter a few financial oases and collection centers for the good, the bad, and the ugly. The distinction is in the eye of the beholder.

Harry's

Guitars, amplifiers, brass cymbals, electric irons and stereo sets fill the plate glass window of **Harry's General Store-Buy, Sell, Exchange** at 2266 Gottingen St. The display merchandise inhibits the passage of light into the small shop so, even on a sunny day, the interior is illuminated by an incandescent bulb. Harry sits behind a long glass case three shelves deep. Men's and women's rings and watches are featured under glass; pocket knives and switch blades fill row two; portable radios of AM, FM, SW banding are on the ground floor. The wall across from Harry is stacked from floor to ceiling with new-looking, Naughahyde-type suitcases and carry-alls. "We're sort of a pawn shop," explains Harry, "A place where men come when they need money-fast."

The store has been operating in its present location for fifty-six years, but Harry despairs that his means of livelihood will die out within the next generation. "The young fellows don't want this kind of business."

Harry is selling luxuries at a time when people are concerned with necessities. Most of the trade off the street is interested in exchanging goods for quick money. So Harry is willing to bargain if you are interested in buying.

New irons sell "five dollars less than retail"; the only electronic calculator in the shop-a Didgimatic T-8 with six operations is tagged \$49.95. A "half-way decent diamond" which might sell new for \$200, would be priced at \$100; a Sanyo Cassette-Stereo Recorder-\$225 when new is listed at \$125. A Webcor turntable and eight-track tape recorder with two speakers is marked at \$89.95; a Traynor rhythm-guitar amplifier-selling new at \$200, is offered at \$125. Luggage is from \$25-\$50 a piece.

The **Buy, Sell, Exchange** carries hand guns and rifles -- but since the time a prospective buyer loaded a .38 caliber revolver in the store, Harry keeps his artillery in the back room. He has fifty hunter's traps back there too. These he refuses to sell, explaining that he is "in favor of ecology and saving the environment and all that..."

"I'll sell a man a gun, but I'll tell him I hope he doesn't get a deer."

Joe's

On the sign outside 5533 Cunard St. is painted, **Joe's Buy and Sell** -We buy anything that's good. A few pieces of cumbersome furniture occupy sidewalk space in front of the store. Their condition relegates the statement of the sign to wishful thinking.

The store is small, and crowded with mattresses, springs, box springs TVs, lamps and sundry small appliances. Conspicuous in their absence are bureaus, desks and bookcases. Joe's back room is filled with large appliances such as fridges and stoves. Crates upon crates of hubcaps fill dark corners.

When questioned about his sources, Joe explained that he "used to collect furniture from his friends in Cape Breton. He hasn't been there in the past six months, because, "The furniture down there is getting harder to get -- and I'll tell you why -- people aren't parting with their old stuff anymore. They'd rather keep the old one, because the new one that they buy today is so expensive and it's only junk!" The second hand market for furniture is growing. "People want to buy more -- but you can't get it."

Joe proclaims that he sells his goods at "Cape Breton prices". An eight-month old-"like new"-GSW McCleary electric stove, priced at \$110, is in such good condition, that, according to Joe -- "You can eat out of the oven..." A fridge, selling new at "\$239", is also priced at \$110. For \$100, one can buy a six-month-old sewing machine in a mahogany cabinet -- which, if new would run "more than \$229." An Admiral TV is for sale at \$60. A portable seven-month-old Smith-Corona Classic 12 typewriter, which according to Joe --"has everything on it - two ribbons, back space, tab-everything..." Joe calls it a bargain at \$100-a hundred less than its selling price.

Joe likes to bargain, and many of his customers are students. --"mostly from New Brunswick". He tells the story of the girl who came in to buy dishes, knives, forks, pots and pans for her apartment. Collectively they came to more than three dollars, but the girl



John's - 5675 Cunard St

announced that she had only sixty cents in her pocket. Joe sold her the lot for sixty cents--"And you know, she has been back many times since then. It's a good way to do business..."

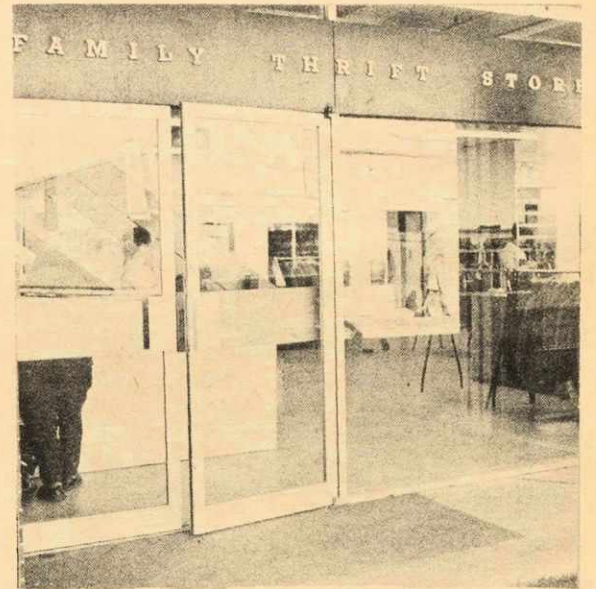
John's

The outside of "**Honest John's**" at 5675 Cunard St. is covered with billboard-like proclamations: "We buy junk and sell what we buy!" "An honest deal-always the lowest prices!" If we can't get it -- nobody can!" "Mattresses, chesterfields, chairs, bureaus, chests-of-drawers, lamps, pots and pans, tables, fridges, stoves, Hard-to-get-Items."

Judging from the contents of the shop -- most of the items mentioned are apparently in the "Hard-to-get" category. John relies on estate closures for most of his merchandise, but feels that it is becoming more difficult to find used furniture -- "People are hanging on to what they've got."

John sells a single mattress and spring for \$25; lamps are anywhere from \$4-\$10; knives and forks for 25-35 cents a piece. One of the few remaining solid-wood chest-of-drawers on the Halifax market was priced at \$35.

John's abounds with those genuinely "hard-to-get-items". A circular black and white wall clock with a three foot diameter is for sale at \$35; three bird cages are



Salvation Army - Gottingen St.

suspended from the ceiling. On your way in and out, you bypass a vending machine designed for dispensing women's hose.

D and R

D and R Buy-Sell-Anything-of-value at 2353 Agricola St. has been open for only two months, and already, the new owner-Mrs. Coolen- has felt the pressures of the narrowing second-hand market. She runs ads in the local papers, but finds that people "expect too much for their used furniture ... Sometimes I sell something for only two or three dollars more than what I paid for it."

Her assortment of furniture is utilitarian and sometimes fairly priced -- however, Mrs. Coolen is open to bargaining. A chrome set would range from between \$35 - \$40; a set of two table lamps is \$15 - a davenport is \$45. A scratched vanity table is referred to as "Victorian antique" by Mrs. Coolen, and prices accordingly at \$60. A double bed consisting of box spring and mattress is also \$60. An attractive set of two comfortable chairs is \$50.

If you have an interest in old **Mechanic's Illustrated, Popular Science, or The Baseball Digest** - the **D and R Buy-Sell** has issues of all three, dating back to the late forties.

Corkum's

Corkum's-Wholesale-to-You, 2739 Agricola St., offers a 39% savings from the retail price on manufacturers seconds, "ends" and "odd lots" of carpeting. The co-owners of the store tried to buy their merchandise directly from the factory and sell to the retail market at wholesale prices, but, "the manufacturers didn't like it." Now they just deal in specials. Cushion flooring can be purchased at a dollar a yard savings.

Corkum's also sells antique rifles and shot guns. Their collection includes a Synder (circa 1880) rifle - \$125; a hundred year old musket-\$75, and a World War 1 army rifle for \$65. The **Wholesale-to-You** also has used electronic equipment - a Darius amplifier at \$125; a Garrad turntable and speakers for \$128.

Miller and Johnson

At 7:30 every Wednesday night for the past five years George Miller has auctioned off antiques, used furniture and household goods at 2882 Gottingen St. Miller, and his sister, Mrs. Johnson, rented space in the industrial building at the forum, before moving to their present location, -- the old St. Joseph's Parish Hall. They renovated the stage area to create room for display, and by the addition of bleachers, created a bidder's gallery.

The large neon-light sign in the front of the building reads "Antiques" in foot-high script, but, as Mrs. Johnson admits, only "25% of what we sell would be considered