

**BUSINESS** Business desk at 905-526-3420

# Still cleaning up after 126 years

Radigan Bros. has been a fixture on Ferguson Street for four generations

BY MARY K. NOLAN

The Radigans kicked the buckets years ago.

From the late 19th century, when the Canadian Pacific Railway opened up the West, buckets were their stock in trade.

The Salem, the Minneapolis V, the Rialto, the Buffalo, the Nehin, the Goderich and the self-named Radigan, elevator buckets in every conceivable length, width, depth, capacity and gauge of steel were manufactured here in Hamilton by John Radigan and his descendants.

First, it was buckets for the grain elevators that were sprouting on the Prairies. Guaranteed to be "modern, well designed, graceful in appearance" and "first-class in every particular," according to an early catalogue, Radigan's buckets would be attached to conveyor belts and carry the grain from railway cars to the top of the granary.

John Radigan was soon making buckets for moving huge volumes of ear corn, stone, ore, sand, coal and ash at mills, foundries and factories across the country.

Born in Preston, Ont., (now Cambridge) in 1852, he was baby No. 6 for Irish immigrants Patrick and Bridget Radigan.

Details of his schooling are sketchy, but it seems he apprenticed at a foundry on the Grand River before moving to Sault Ste. Marie to work on construction of a CPR freight terminal.

At 28, he married the handsome, American-born Sabina Cahalan, whose father brought the family to Canada at the start of the American Civil War, saying he'd seen enough war in his native Ireland.

In 1884, Radigan opened John Radigan & Co. at 44 Wilson St., where he made and sold all kinds of tinware, including pots and pans and the ingenious, all-purpose Radigan safety lantern: "A real necessity for every delivery wagon — no more Coal Oil Fumes on your produce or on drivers' hands."

Sabina was the brains of the operation, says great-grandson Paul Radigan, the current proprietor.

"He was the inventor," he says, "but she was the businesswoman."

It was Sabina who bought the four lots on Ferguson Avenue where they built a new factory and warehouse with "Radigan Building 1905" proudly engraved on the facade.



CATHIE COWARD, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Paul Radigan and son Paul Valentin in the office of Radigan Bros. Ltd., founded by John Radigan in 1884.

He went on the road selling elevator buckets, but when he came home in the 1920s, he put an end to manufacturing and began selling hardware, tools, war surplus metal and other furnace brands.

When Sabina died in 1933, a requiem mass was said across the street from her home, at St. Patrick's Church, where she'd attended mass every day.

Emulating his parents' good Irish tradition, Frank and wife Nell had 10 kids of their own and, in 1948, four of the boys assumed control of the company and changed the name to Radigan Bros. Ltd. to reflect the new ownership.

Joseph (Paul's father) and his brothers Bill, Bern and Jim capitalized on the post-war building boom and started selling paint, floor waxes, cleaning supplies, vacuums and floor polishers to cleaners and painters.

A fourth generation of Radigans joined the business in 1977 with Paul, who was armed with a university degree in biology. He joined his mother, Luella, the bookkeeper for more than 40 years. He eventually bought out the Bros., but kept their well-established name.

There is no manufacturing in the Radigan Building today — just sales, service and distribution to a clientele that includes the city, school boards, hospitals and companies such as Dofasco and Maple Leaf Foods.

Yes, Paul sells urinal pucks, toilet paper and trash cans from a showroom filled with mop tops, degreasers, air fresheners, dustpans, door mats, hand sanitizer, floor waxers and jugs of products with names like Compare, Resolve, Defence and Disappear (the latter being a "malodour counteractant").

But he'd rather be known for the big-ticket items — the state-of-the-art industrial machinery that vacuums and sweeps and washes and scrubs and buffs and polishes the region's buildings.

Time will tell if Radigan Bros. will see a fifth generation of the family behind the boss's big oak desk, says Paul, with a nod to 12-year-old son Paul Valentin Radigan.

It's an idea that has appeal for both father and son, but "I've got to do some studying first," junior says wisely.

mnolan@thespec.com  
905-526-4689

## STORE FIXTURES

Hamilton and area retailers and businesses that have stood the test of time

**Who:** Radigan Bros. Ltd.,  
46 Ferguson Ave. S.

**What:** Industrial cleaning  
equipment and supplies

**Established:** 1884 by  
John Radigan

**Owner:** Paul Radigan

**Did you know?** The Radigan Building houses Hamilton's oldest elevator, a wooden 1905 Otis-Fensom lift, hand-operated with a braided cable.



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Above: A photo of Paul Radigan's grandfather at the horse races that hangs in the Radigan office. Left: An old truck used by the company.

The company had branched into its own line of "Radco" furnaces and was growing so rapidly, it had already outgrown two other loca-

tions since Wilson Street. Frank Radigan, the second of John and Sabina's 11 children, was 21 when his father died suddenly of

pneumonia, leaving him to support a mother and a collection of siblings that included a sister with three children of her own.

**BRIEFLY**

**Ford gives layoff notices to nearly 400 workers**

WINDSOR, Ont. ♦ Nearly 400 employees of Ford Motor Co. of Canada will be laid off this fall when the company cuts one of the two shifts at its Windsor Engine Complex in southwestern Ontario.

The Canadian Auto Workers union says 489 of its members will be laid off from the complex Nov. 1. About 135 if them will get jobs at the Essex plant, also in Windsor, Ont., which is adding a shift in September.

The news came a day after General Motors of Canada closed its transmission plant in Windsor, ending a 90-year history in the border city near Detroit and putting 1,100 people out of work.

**Toyota issues voluntary recall on Avalons**

TORONTO ♦ Toyota Canada will conduct what it calls a voluntary safety campaign involving about 4,200 Avalons from the 2000-04 model years.

The automaker says there is a possibility the steering lock bar could break under certain conditions, and that no other Toyota or Lexus vehicles are involved.

Toyota says because of improper casting of the steering lock bar, a minute crack may develop and expand over a long period. The lock bar could break and then the interlock system may become difficult to unlock when the vehicle is stationary.

Toyota says it will replace the steering column bracket on involved vehicles, a procedure that takes about two hours to complete.

The Canadian Press

# Google says search engine in China blocked

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE

SAN FRANCISCO ♦ Google Inc. said yesterday that its search engine was abruptly cut off from mainland China, raising more questions about the Internet company's ability to operate in the country while trying to work around the government's online censorship policies.

It's unclear why Google's search engine was suddenly fenced off, or whether China's government was blocking the service with technology tools known as the "Great Firewall."

The notice on Google's website reporting the China barrier provided no details and a spokesperson at the company's Mountain View, Calif., headquarters was unable to elaborate.

The blockage could signal China's communist government has finally decided to retaliate against Google for taking a stand against its

effort to control what its citizens can see and read on the Internet. If that's the case, Google might have trouble maintaining and cultivating other services, including mobile phones and mapping products, in the world's most populous country.

The relationship between Google and China's government has been tense since the company announced in January that it would no longer censor search results that the ruling party considered to be subversive or pornographic.

Google had co-operated with the government's restrictions for four years, but said it had a change of heart after uncovering a computer hacking attack that it traced to China.

Even as it took a moral stand, Google sought to keep a foothold in one of the Internet's most promising markets by automatically shifting search requests from mainland China to its

service in Hong Kong, which doesn't fall under the same censorship rules.

But that detour eventually riled China's government, prompting another change that required visitors to Google.cn to click on the page to get to the Hong Kong search engine. That compromise paid off three weeks ago when China's regulators renewed Google's Internet licence in the country for another year.

China isn't a moneymaker for Google yet, accounting for an estimated \$250 million US to \$600 million of Google's projected \$28 billion in revenue this year. But China is expected to become far more lucrative as its economy matures and more of its population comes online. There are more than 400 million web surfers in China, exceeding the entire U.S. population.

The Associated Press

# Newest Kindle comes with Wi-Fi

SEATTLE ♦ Jeff Bezos isn't just confident you'll want a Kindle e-book reader. The CEO of Amazon.com is bracing for a future in which you'll also want ones for your kid heading to college, your spouse in a book club and perhaps even Grandpa.

And despite increased competition from Apple Inc.'s flashy iPad and other e-readers, that future could be coming within a month, when Amazon.com Inc. releases two new Kindle models.

With both versions costing less than \$200 US, and one not far above the \$99 psychological tipping point for gadget-buying, Bezos expects people to buy multiple devices for their households.

Sitting at the head of a conference-room table at Amazon's new headquarters, Bezos flips over a skinny, dark grey device.

It's the upcoming Kindle.

Bezos zips through the new Kindle's features, rattling off a bevy of percentages. It's 21 per cent smaller and 15 per cent lighter than the current Kindle, he says, though its display is the same size. Its electronic ink display has 50 per cent higher contrast for improved reading in low and bright light. It turns pages 20 per cent faster.

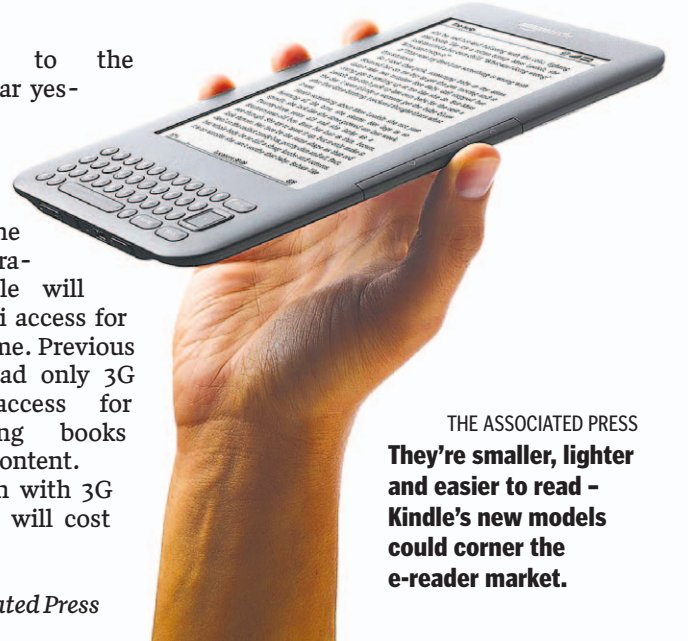
Amazon began taking pre-orders this week for Aug. 27 delivery. The device will be available in Canada and 139 other countries, Amazon spokesperson Kinley Campbell

confirmed to the Toronto Star yesterday.

Available in dark grey or white, the third-generation Kindle will have Wi-Fi access for the first time. Previous versions had only 3G cellular access for downloading books and other content.

A version with 3G and Wi-Fi will cost \$189.

The Associated Press



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
They're smaller, lighter and easier to read - Kindle's new models could corner the e-reader market.

▲ DOLLAR 96.51 US +0.22	▲ EURO 1.355 Cdn +0.61	▲ TSX 11,728.64 +32.01	▲ TSX VE 1,422.28 +11.66	▲ TSX 60 686.20 +2.31	▼ DOW 10,467.16 -30.72	▼ S&P 500 1,101.53 -4.60	▼ Nasdaq 2,251.69 -12.87	▲ GOLD \$1,168.40 US +\$8 US	▲ OIL (FUTURES) \$78.36 US +\$1.37 US
-------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------

**THE MARKETS | Jittery investors worry about economic recovery | Full stock listings on Go 12**

A batch of upbeat earnings from key resources companies failed to entice investors, who were waiting for today's reports on Canadian and U.S. gross domestic product data. The U.S. market

closed lower after James Bullard, the president of the U.S. Federal Reserve in St. Louis, warned that the United States could tip into a bout of deflation if the economy weakens. Deflation is a

widespread and prolonged drop in wages, prices of goods and values of homes and stocks.

— The Canadian Press