



Onondaga Historical Association

MICHAEL LEMP (second from left) and employees of M. Lemp Jewelers line up beside a delivery truck in front of the store at 113 N. Salina St. in 1907.

MUSIC OF BELLS GOOD NEWS EVERY HOUR

The good news first.

The needle notes of a new carillon twinkle across downtown. Syracuse Rotary Club donated the new system to the city in November. The bells sound on the hour. At noon, there's a concert of carillon music. This week, it's songs of the holidays, according to Lindsay McCluskey, Mayor Stephanie Miner's press secretary.

The new system is entirely computerized. It replaces one Rotary gave to the city 23 years ago. It's run from the mayor's office through speakers in the "bell tower" of City Hall.

When I gave out the news about the new carillon back in September, Ken Mokrzycki, chief administrator, told me the old system hadn't worked in about five years. "It wore out," he explained.

Except for church bells, this is the first time we've had the music piped over downtown in a while. The new carillon was dedicated the day before Thanksgiving and has been tolling ever since. The building most of us still call the "Chimes Building" (officially the 500 Building) at 500 S. Salina St. hasn't had chimes in years. It did when it opened in 1928.

On dedication day for the new chimes in City Hall, officials gathered on the steps of the building. The mayor proclaimed it Syracuse Rotary Club Community Recogni-



Frank Ordoñez / The Post-Standard, 2001

DON LEMP (left), with Walter Lemp, his father and partner in M. Lemp Jewelers, Syracuse, in 2001. Walter Lemp died in 2007.

tion Day, and the new carillon played its first tune, "Low Bridge," an old song about the Erie Canal.

The old device was donated by Rotary in 1987. Syracuse Rotary has existed since 1912.

The Lemp family are pleased

A little more good news.

Back in December 2009, I wrote about a suggestion by a Syracusan, Helen Gula. Helen wanted the new green space created at East Fayette and South Warren streets to be called M. Lemp Park, in honor of the jewelry store across Warren Street run by the Lemp family more than 120 years . . . downtown.

Helen's wish finally carried the day. The park created by former Mayor Matt Driscoll now is officially M. Lemp Park by order of the property's owner, the Syracuse Industrial Development Agency.

The Lemp family are pleased, according to Donald Lemp, whose great-grandfather Michael founded the business on North Salina Street in 1890.

Michael was a watchmaker who was born in Germany and immigrated to Syracuse.

The park was created on land that

once held a bank and other businesses. The block was demolished by the city. Don Lemp says a dedication ceremony for the park, and Lemp's 121st anniversary, is planned for May.

Now for the bad news.

Lemp's is the only jewelry store left downtown, which once had 15. Downtown Syracuse isn't the exciting shopping district it once was. Stores exiting to the suburbs did the nasty on our central city. The few signs of revitalization sputter and fade.

That includes the future of Hotel Syracuse, where plans for renovation lie in that never-never land of "on hold." The last word we had on the hotel from my colleague Rick Moriarty in November was that a potential buyer, and developer, waited for an Israeli pension fund to drop the other shoe.

Downtown is waiting for many shoes that have never dropped.

This does not seem to be a good time to invest in a hotel project downtown, although the folks who want to put up two new Marriott hotels at Franklin and Fayette streets say they are ready to go in the spring, buoyed by a new bank loan.

Bakehouse to move

The pieces continue to fall. The Pascals, owners of Pascale Cafe & Bakehouse, are pulling out of downtown, for good, apparently. They've already moved their popular restaurant out of Armory Square to Fayetteville. Now they're taking the bakehouse to Fayetteville, as well.

The place was in Hotel Syracuse's ground-floor space since 2007.

Chuck Pascale, one of the owners of the bakehouse, was quoted as saying he hates to leave.

It makes me feel bad, too, Chuck.

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