

The Verona business community is seeing the end of an era. Lloyd White of Toppers Convenience is selling the store and gas bar at the end of February. Lloyd has been in business for 42 years – nearly 25 of them right here, and he's seen a few changes since he created that busy corner back in 1984 when he took over Baird's Service Station from Ed and Karen Baird. One of them, interestingly, is watching more American money come through – even with the high Canadian dollar. "Last summer, there was all that talk about fewer Americans coming up," he says, "but we didn't notice any decrease." Toppers has sold lottery tickets since the days of the old Wintario, and is one of the largest lottery depots around. The store has seen a couple of \$10,000 winners, but no big jackpots despite the huge proliferation of games and players. As Verona's only gas bar, Toppers is practically an essential service, but it's the fresh coffee and morning smile that keeps the commuters coming. And commuter business has steadily increased over the years as more people choose to live out to town. "We have our morning regulars," he says, and they commute from south to north as well as north to south. So what will Lloyd do with all his free time? "Well, it'll take me two or three months just to clear up all the paperwork." And after that? "I'm working on my family genealogy." Toppers' new owners – Andy Sawney and his family will arrive soon from Toronto. Be sure to give them a big Verona welcome. And be sure to wish Lloyd all the best in his retirement. He has been a stalwart community supporter since he first opened – one of the original members of the Verona Business Association (a precursor of the Verona Community Association) and generous supporter of dozens of community activities. Happy trails, Lloyd.

February 9 is Market Day once more! Stop in for Valentine treats as well as the usual array of local foods and crafts. Be sure to bring some money for CNIB fundraiser crocuses. \$4 a pot or 3 pots for \$10.

The re-opening of the Market means the end of Trinity Saturday breakfasts. This weekend (Feb. 2) is your last chance to linger over bacon, eggs, potatoes and toast with a friend or neighbour. 9 – 11:00 at Trinity Hall. It's a community thing.

But Trinity's second monthly Friday Night Family Dinner and Movie is fast upon us. Friday Feb. 15 from 6:00. Only \$5 PER FAMILY for a kid-friendly supper and a movie! Call Jillian at Rural Visions before Feb. 12 to reserve your spot. 376-6477.

Last week we told you about Peter Doulas' heart attack. The popular MOM restaurant owner is recovering at home and taking it easy for awhile. About time, Peter!