

GOLDEN STORE

Audrain Hardware marks 50 years on Gaylord's Main Street

What was life like on Gaylord's Main Street 50 years ago, before the rebirth of the Alpine Village, before golf, before skiing?

"It was lonely," remarked Bob Audrain, who's hardware store has stood on the corner of Main and Court streets for those 50 years.

"You had to watch out for the horses," he quipped, then noted the only horse and buggies remaining at the dawn of World War II were those of the coal deliveryman and the garbage man.

Fifty years ago, from the best current Gaylord / Otsego County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bill Wishart can determine, Bob and Helen Audrain were among the charters of the chamber of commerce which this year celebrates its golden anniversary.

Audrain said he joined the chamber "because I was starting in business and they asked me (to)." Just like chambers of today, the old chamber helped the community and the business.

Audrain Hardware, 148 W. Main St., was the first business in the community to put on a new face when the town decided to become the Alpine Village.



Standing in the office area of Audrain Hardware are Bob and Helen Audrain along with their son, Biff (l). Audrain's was the first store on Main Street to undergo the Alpine facelift a quarter century ago. The hardware has operated in the same location and under the same family name for 50 years, and the Audrains were among the charter members of the old Otsego County Chamber of Commerce.

Along with neighbors, Guggisberg's and Denholm's, a new, joint front was designed for the trio of buildings. In 1971 or 1972, heavy snows took their toll on the overhang above the sidewalk and

it collapsed. The front which stands today was erected a couple of years later.

What has been Audrain's for the past 50 years had been a hard-

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