

Joe's closing a 'bum' deal

Sporting goods giant to shut 31 stores by June

By Shannon O. Wells
staff writer

At Joe's Sports & Outdoors in Gresham, one word on Thursday afternoon, April 9, seemed particularly appropriate.

"I'm bummed, totally bummed," said Carolyn Teague as she walked out of the store in the Gresham Town Fair shopping center with golf clubs, shoes, hiking boots and other items.

The Brightwood resident was among many bargain hunters there the day the iconic Northwest retailer, which filed for bankruptcy in early March, announced it was selling its stores to a liquidator. After 57 years in business, the former G.I. Joe's is closing its 31 stores in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

A going-out-of-business sale began Friday, April 10, at all stores, including nine Portland-area outlets. The stores will cut prices on all inventories and remain open until June 30.

"This historical event will mark the end of an era," said Thomas Lonabocker, a principal at Gordon Brothers Group, the investment firm taking over the bankrupt company.

Joe's, which employs approximately 1,600 employees, failed to attract a buyer during the 30 day period called for in its bankruptcy plan.

It is unclear what the fate of Joe's employees will be, although the company's Portland spokesman left a message with *The Outlook* indicating he was no longer in his position



staff photo by JIM CLARK

Customer Carolyn Teague is disappointed that Joe's is closing.

since Gordon Brothers took the reins.

Founded as an Army surplus outlet in 1952 by Edward M. Orkney, a young Army Air Corps pilot returning from World War II, G.I. Joe's grew to include sports and outdoor gear and automotive goods.

Gresham Station developer Fred Bruning, who was once affiliated with the company that owned Gresham Town Fair, said it's unfortunate a store so ingrained in Oregon culture is closing. However, he's confident the vacated space will make way for another outdoors-oriented retailer.

"I think there's going to be a great opportunity to re-let that space," he said, speculating on names such as Vic's Sporting Goods

or Sports Authority. "Retail has always been to me like a great subduction zone where, as one concept gets ground under, something else comes up to take its place."

John Hayes, 61, a Thursday sale shopper at Gresham Town Fair, said he's a Joe's customer going back to the original Portland store. Picking up a generator for \$20 off the original price, he said he's not sure where he'll shop from here on out.

"It's gonna leave a hole," he said. "I'm trying to think where else to go."

Reporter Shannon O. Wells can be reached at swells@theoutlookonline.com or by calling 503-492-5118.



G. I. JOE'S



NORTH PORTLAND
8900 N. Vancouver Ave.
285-5271

ROCKWOOD
18400 S.E. Stark
285-5271

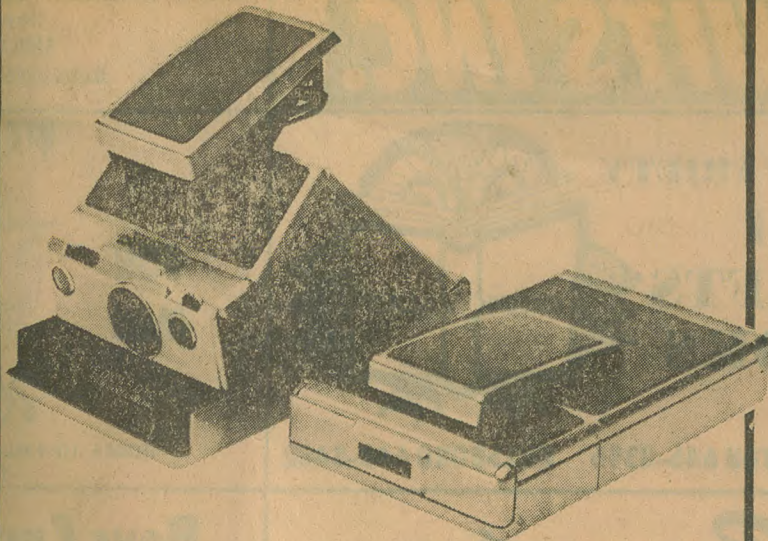
OAK GROVE
15600 S.E. McDoughlin Blvd.
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3485 S.W. CEDAR HILLS BLVD.
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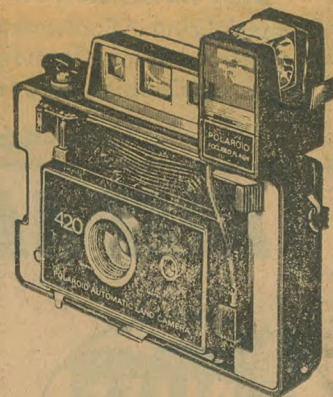
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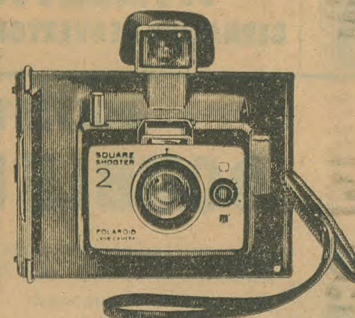
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w/neo. insert
5" extension all 1/2" drive in-
cludes metal box

18⁸⁸

price good Wed May 22 thru
Monday May 27 While quantities last.

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G.I. Joe's

FOUR LOCATIONS

Automotive Phone 283-4173

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8900 N. Vancouver Ave.

Rockwood

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Oak Grove

15600 S.E. McLoughlin Blvd.

Bernard's Beaverton Mall

3000 S.W. Cedar Hills Blvd.

Gresham Out



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Saturday, March 1, 1986, Gresham, Oregon

G.I. Joe's will anchor new

by TONY KNEIDEK
of The Outlook staff

G.I. Joe's, the Portland-based retail corporation, will move its Rockwood store to the proposed Gresham Towne Faire shopping center on the old fairgrounds.

The news was the best to hit Gresham in at least 20 years, said Bob Bergeron, president of the Downtown Boosters Association. "I haven't seen so much excitement in town in 20 years," he said.

In Rockwood, though, the move was viewed with little enthusiasm. "It's going to hurt," said Paul Thalhofer, president of the Rockwood Merchants Association, when informed of the news. "How much it's gonna hurt, I don't know. But it's gonna hurt."

However, Charles Martinez, the California-based developer who purchased the 26-acre fairgrounds for \$3.5 million in November, said he is discussing with G.I. Joe's a lease, trade or purchase of the Rockwood store.

"We would replace them with someone else of equal

quality," Martinez said.

Duane Mellen, vice president of operations for G.I. Joe's Inc., said the company has signed intent papers with Martinez. Mellen said the commitment to move to Gresham is firm and that G.I. Joe's hoped to begin construction on a new 55,000-square-foot store this summer. He said he did not know how much the store would cost.

Mellen said G.I. Joe's planned to open the Gresham store in February or March of 1987. "If we get possession in February (1987)," he said, "it will probably take us two or three weeks to fixture it and another two or three weeks to transfer the merchandise."

The Rockwood and Gresham stores both will remain open for a short time early in 1987 when merchandise is moved to the new store, Mellen said. About 65 employees at the Rockwood store will be transferred to Gresham when the new store opens. Employment will remain about the same.

Six of 11 of G.I. Joe's stores are in the metropolitan area and all of them are in Oregon. Mellen said the new store

will be a duplicate of one recently opened in Tualatin. It features wider aisles, modern fixtures, more varied colors and new floor plans.

"It's a completely different look, but no different merchandise," said Wayne Jackson, controller for G.I. Joe's. "It's what they call the race-track plan," added Mellen. "It's wider aisles that allow the customers to take a quick lap around the store."

Mellen said the firm has been seeking a new home for the Rockwood store, 18400 S.E. Stark St., because it has poor access and inadequate parking. The Rockwood store opened about 18 years ago.

"Rockwood was our first expansion store," said Mellen. "When we moved out there, that was the edge of town."

Bergeron said G.I. Joe's will mark the renewal of retailing in downtown Gresham. "Everything has been Burnside, Burnside, Burnside," he said. "This represents a big retail move back to downtown — an expansion of the business district."

"It definitely is going to anchor Gresham as one of the

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center

or retail centers on the east side — on this side of
land."

he move has not been formally announced by G.I.
s or Martinez. It caught Gresham City Manager Wally
thwaite and Rockwood booster Thalhofer by surprise.
Nobody expected such a good announcement," said
geron. "It's just sending ripples through the city."

ergeron said the new tenant will help fill in the retail
ngle that is bounded by Powell Boulevard, Eastman
kway and Burnside Road. Until now, he said, the
elopment been on the fringe of the triangle.

Instead of just having the triangle get bigger on the
es, we're filling in the middle," Bergeron said.

he news also should provide the momentum to form a
l improvement district in the downtown area to ex-

Northwest Third Street to Eastman Parkway. The
x will cost an estimated \$720,000.

artinez said G.I. Joe's will be one of three anchors at
800,00-square-foot downtown mall. "We've got some
quality people coming."