



**KISS CUTTER** — Ruth Andrews, counter woman at Weese's Candy Store, demonstrates hand operated machine used to cut kisses. After cutting, kisses are individually hand wrapped.

## 63 Years in Home-Made Candy Business Will End In March for Ralph Weese

A career of 63 years in the "home made" candy business has just about ended for a Belleville man whose Front Street business still turns out sweets with the same equipment used at the turn of the century.

At the end of March the Weese Candy Store, 392 Front Street where up to 20 different kinds of home made sweets are sold, will be closed.

And when it does many Belleville residents who over the years have enjoyed Weese's humbugs and cream taffy pull, will be sorry.

Ralph C. Weese got into the home-made candy business more or less by accident. The "accident" was the offer of 50 cents more per week.

Sixty-three years ago the going rate for a "chore boy" at Front Street stores was \$1.50 per week.

### GOT BIGGER OFFER

But Mr. Weese, then a lad of 16, got the offer of \$2.00 per week from the Marsh sports store.

That was one part of the accident which eventually was to turn Mr. Weese into a candy maker.

The other was the attempt on the part of his boss to win back some of the teen-aged trade which was being attracted to a competitor's store by an imported type of taffy.

So Mr. Marsh set out to duplicate the imported taffy and the result was the cream taffy pull which was so successful that it still has the biggest volume turnover of any single item of candy at Weese's.

Following the success of the cream taffy, the Marsh sport store soon turned to full time confection making and was the forerunner of Weese's Candy Store.

### BOUGHT IN 1930

The store, at that time, situated on Front St., near Victoria Ave., was later purchased by the McCausland Bros., who in turn sold out to William Dickens.

In 1929 the store was moved to its present location and the next year Mr. Weese purchased the business.

Now 79, Mr. Weese has all but retired and the operation of the store has been turned over to Ruth Andrews, who has been the store's No. 1 assistant for the past 38 years.

"I've made my last batch of candy," Mr. Weese said yesterday, but he feels the store could still offer a bright future for some young person interested in candy making. Miss Andrews says the store will be

continued until the last of March.

### OLD EQUIPMENT USED

One of the interesting pieces of equipment at the store is the kiss making machine which is still used to turn out hand-made kisses.

The taffy strip is fed through the hand-cranked cutter with the kisses later being hand wrapped.

It's slow going, but Weese's kisses, humbugs, fudge, chocolates, Christmas candy canes, and cream taffy pull are all still in heavy demand.

At least high school students from nearby Nicholson College think so.

Groups of students drop in daily at noon hour and after four to sip softdrinks and enjoy store goodies. It's been the custom for years and is still continued.

Two years ago for Christmas, 1961, a group of eleven students combined their monetary resources and purchased a plaque, complete with name plates. It was presented with their appreciation to "Ruth Andrews and Ralph C. Weese."

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 1964!

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This Christmas Box with which we greet you contains a kind of candy which has all but vanished in these days - "home made" candy by Mr. Ralph C. Weese, for the last 15 years or so the only candy-maker in Belleville, and one of the very few left in Ontario

For 63 years Mr. Weese has made candy on Front Street, starting when 16 years old with J. Arthur Marsh opposite Victoria Avenue, and moving to his present location at 392 Front Street in 1929. In 1930 Mr. Weese became sole proprietor of the business. Now 79 years old, Mr. Weese recalls the days when there were several candy-makers in Belleville: Clapp's, Legault's, Black's, Moore's, and the two separate Dickens brothers.

For the Christmas season only, Mr. Weese makes CINNAMON HUMBUGS (red), SPEARMINT HUMBUGS (green), and CLOVE APPLES, which we hope you will enjoy. It is an art to make these humbugs - striped on the outside and clear in the centre - a novice can easily finish with the 16 stripes mixed up on the inside!

Mr. Weese cools his candy on a large slab of limestone quarried at Point Anne, and it is interesting to learn that his father, who was a monument maker, shaped this slab for Mr. Dickens years ago, never suspecting his own son would spend a lifetime over this same stone, making candy for the delight of young and old!

TOM RANSOM

WALT WATSON

Ontario Land Surveyors