



City of Cambridge

28.

IN CITY COUNCIL

October 2, 1995

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
MAYOR REEVES
VICE MAYOR RUSSELL

WHEREAS: This City Council often times recalls the achievements and experiences of the Citizenry of Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: In continuing this tradition, this City Council now pauses to remember the life of **Benjamin F. Oaken**, entrepreneur, and founder of the Bicycle Exchange; and

WHEREAS: Ben was born on January 11, 1910, attended Cambridge Public Schools and graduated from the Harvard Grammar School (now City Hall Annex) and Cambridge High and Latin School, Class of 1928; and

WHEREAS: Ben studied architecture as a member of MIT's class of 1933 and with his brothers, Ben worked in a number of entrepreneurial ventures during the Great Depression, one of which was a bicycle renting businesses; and

WHEREAS: The Bicycle Exchange was founded in Beck Hall at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street in 1934 and in 1936 it moved to 3 Bow Street, the site it occupied until it closed 55 years later in 1991; and

WHEREAS: Ben Oaken was always a doer and a builder, he was a founding member of the American Youth Hostels in 1934 and also a founder in 1947, of the National Bicycle Dealers Association, an organization of which he was later president and in the early 1950's he served as president of the Harvard Square Business Association; and

WHEREAS: During the late 1950's and through the 60's, Ben worked closely with Dr. Paul Dudley White and was the moving force and principal architect of the bicycle path around the Charles River Basin which bears Dr. White's name; and

WHEREAS: Ben died in 1994 leaving a void in the lives of all his surviving family; his wife, Roselyn; his sons, Charles, Jonathan J. and Richard; his brother, Dr. Harry; and his six grandchildren; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That this City Council go on record designating the new bump out on Bow Street as Benjamin F. Oaken Plaza; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to make the necessary arraignments for a suitable dedication ceremony.

In City Council October 2, 1995

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy; *D. Margaret Drury*

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

October 2, 1995

Councillor Sullivan

Whereas: This City Council oftentimes recalls the achievements and experiences of the citizenry of Cambridge; and

Whereas: In continuing this tradition, this City Council now pauses to remember the life of Benjamin F. Oaker, entrepreneur, and Founder of the Bicycle Exchange; and

Whereas: Ben was born on January 11, 1910, attended Cambridge Public Schools and graduated from the Harvard Grammar School (now City Hall Annex) and Cambridge High and Latin School, class of 1928; and

Whereas: Ben studied architecture as a member of MIT's class of 1933 and with his brothers, Ben worked in a number of entrepreneurial ventures during the Great Depression, one of which was a bicycle renting business; and

Whereas: The Bicycle Exchange was founded in Beck Hall at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street in 1934 and in 1936 it moved to 3 Bow Street the site it occupied until it closed 55 years later in 1991; and

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builder, he was a founding member of the American Youth Hostels in 1934 and also a founder in 1947 of the National Bicycle Dealers Association an organization of which he was later President and in the early 1950's he served as president of the Harvard Square Business Association; and

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ORDERED: That this City Council go on record designating the new bump out on Box Street as Benjamin F. Oken Plaza; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to make the necessary arrangements for a suitable Dedication Ceremony.

Richard M. Olken

53A Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02138-5724

September 26, 1995

TO: Mr. John E. Flynn

9 Pages

Deputy City Clerk
City of Cambridge

By FAX: 349-4307

Dear Mr. Flynn,

When we spoke, you said that it would be helpful in relation to naming the proposed plaza after my Father if I would provide you some biographical material. I enclose a few pieces including:

Obituary from the Boston Globe of April 4, 1994

Obituary in Harvard Square Business Association Newsletter of May, 1994

Obituary from Bicycle Dealer Showcase, June 1994

Article on the closing of the Bicycle Exchange from the Boston Globe of
November 2, 1991

Article on the closing of the Bicycle Exchange from the Harvard Crimson of
November 4, 1991

I would also like to give you a brief review of Ben Olken's life and accomplishments as they relate to his love for Cambridge, and the relevance of naming a site near the former location of The Bicycle Exchange for him.

Benjamin F. Olken was born January 11, 1910 in Boston and moved to Cambridge, with his family, as an infant. He attended Cambridge Public Schools and graduated from the Harvard Grammar School (now City Hall Annex) and Cambridge High and Latin School (class of 1928). He studied architecture as a member of MIT's class of 1933. With his brothers, Ben worked in a number of entrepreneurial ventures to make ends meet during the Great Depression. One of these ventures, a bicycle renting business, caught on and the Bicycle Exchange was founded in Beck Hall at the corner of Mass. Avenue and Harvard Street (now site of the Inn at Harvard) in 1934. In 1936 the Bicycle Exchange moved to 3 Bow Street, the site it occupied until it closed 55 years later in 1991.

Ben Olken was always a doer and a builder. He was a founding member of the American Youth Hostels in 1934. He was also a founder, in 1947, of the National Bicycle Dealers Association, an organization of which he was later president. In the early 1950's he served as president of the Harvard Square Business Association and has been credited with introducing Christmas lights and decorations to Harvard Square.

In the late 1950's and through the '60's Ben worked closely with Dr. Paul Dudley White and he was the moving force and principal architect of the bicycle path around the Charles River Basin which bears Dr. White's name. Ben never sought the limelight for this and other achievements. He always concerned himself with the results, not the glory.

I think this will give you some feeling for the man and his achievements for Cambridge and for the wider world. I will be happy to provide any other facts or anecdotes that you may find helpful. And of course I will be pleased to assist you in any way to achieve the permanent recognition which my Father has earned.

Thanks for your help in this. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any help. My phone number is 495-9639.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Olken". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letter of "Richard" being a large capital 'R' and the last letter of "Olken" being a capital 'K'.

Richard M. Olken

Boston Globe
4-4-1994

Benjamin F. Olken, 84; founded bicycling firms in Cambridge

Benjamin F. Olken of Longboat Key, Fla., founder of The Bicycle Exchange in Cambridge, died Saturday in Sarasota, Fla. He was 84.

Born in Cambridge, Mr. Olken graduated from Cambridge High and Latin School in 1928 and from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1933. He also studied at the Boston Architectural Center. He retired to Florida in 1988.

Mr. Olken's professional career was dedicated to the sport of bicycling. He founded The Bicycle Exchange in Harvard Square in 1934. In the same year he was a founding member of the American Youth Hostel Program. The living room at the Boston Youth Hostel is named in his honor.

In 1950 he founded the Dawes Distributing Co., which imported the first racing bikes from England. In 1952 he began importing Italian motor scooters into the area through his company, Lambretta of New England. Another of his companies, Ben Olken Inc., began importing high-quality Asian bicycles into the region.

Mr. Olken was a past president of the National Bicycle Dealer's Association, past president of the Harvard Square Business Association and he served on cardiologist Paul Dudley White's Committee for Safe Bicycling. Harvard University annu-

ally presents an award for entrepreneurial spirit named for Mr. Olken and his late twin brother, Henry.

He leaves his wife, Roselyn (Rogatnick); three sons, Charles of Alameda, Calif., Jonathan J. of New York City and Richard of Brookline; a brother, Dr. Harry of Swampscott; and six grandchildren.

Funeral services will be today at noon in Levine Chapel in Brookline. Burial will be in Sharon Memorial Park in Sharon.

IN MEMORIAM

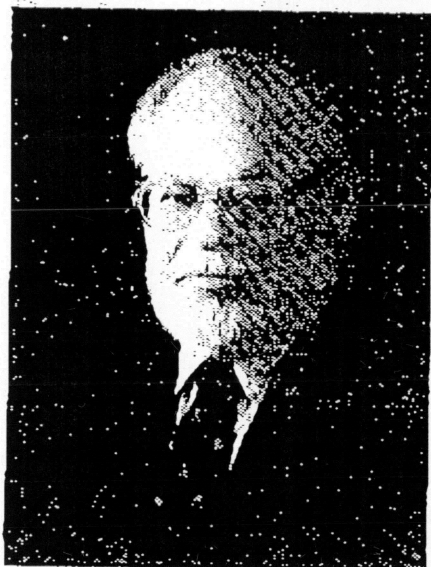


Photo by Eadweard

Benjamin Olken

The Harvard Square Business Association mourns the passing of Benjamin F. Olken: Cambridge born and educated entrepreneur, founder of the Bicycle Exchange in Harvard Square, and past president of the Harvard Square Business Association, 1951-1953.

A graduate of Cambridge High and Latin School and M.I.T. (Class of 1933), Ben Olken made a career from his lifelong passion for the sport of bicycling. A year out of college, he founded the Harvard Square Bicycle Exchange on Bow Street, finding a community of adult bicycle enthusiasts in Cambridge that existed in few other places. He founded companies to import racing bikes from England, motor scooters from Italy, and high quality bicycles from Japan. Olken himself got around happily on his bike, not buying a car until he was in his mid-thirties. He served as a president of the National Bicycle Dealer's Association, was

named by cardiologist Paul Dudley White to his Committee on Safe Bicycling, and was a founding member of the American Youth Hostel Program.

To his Harvard Square business neighbors, Ben Olken was an astute businessman and a congenial friend - wise, funny and generous. "When he walked into anybody's shop, everyone would perk-up," says Justin Slate (Bob Slate Stationers), whose father, Ben Olken, and Orman Humphrey (Briggs & Briggs) were "closer than brothers." Ben donated 10-speed bicycles as prizes for bikathon fund raisers for the Diabetes Association - and as raffle prizes at HSBA outings. "His passing marks the end of an era in Harvard Square," Says Slate.

Ben's son, Richard Olken, is the General Manager of Harvard Student Agencies and serves on the Harvard Square Business Association Board of Directors.

Ben Olken will be missed.

Member News

Check Out A Museum: To make the Harvard University art museums more accessible to Cambridge residents, Harvard has issued two adult passes to each of the seven Cambridge system public libraries. Library card holders can check out the one-day passes, like they would check out a book, and use them for entrance to the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M.

Stars in their Suites: On one weekend in April, guests at The Charles Hotel included: the rock band Pearl Jam, former president of Haiti, Jean Bertrand Aristide, Winnie Mandella, American Red Cross Director Elizabeth Dole, Jurassic Park author Michael Crichton, actor and playwright Steve Martin, and gun control advocates James and Sarah Brady.

New Members

Serge Delisle, Bow Street Flowers, 30 Plympton St., 492-0080. A unique new flower shop, specializing in stunning garden-look arrangements.

Gail Pettiford Willett, Savanna Books, 1132 Mass. Ave., 868-3423. Specializing in books about children and young adults of color. Savanna also offers a bookmobile, workshops, and...

Ben Olken Dies; Pioneer Distributor in New England

Bike Dealer Showcase 6/94

①

Benjamin F. Olken, both a bicycle dealer and distributor during his long, successful career, died in April after an extended illness in Sarasota, Fla. He was 84.

Mr. Olken's bicycle ties go back to his college days. Longtime friend Armand Antolini, owner of Malden Cyclery in Malden, Mass., remembers the fledgling entrepreneur renting bicycles at 25 cents an hour. In fact, while in high school, Antolini worked for him for the princely sum of 10 cents an hour in those Depression days. "On a busy day, when all six bikes were rented, he would commandeer mine to rent," Antolini related.

When it proved impossible to find work as an architect in 1930s Boston (he studied at the Boston Architectural Center after graduat-

ing from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1933), Mr. Olken eked out a living by taking tourists around Boston area historical landmarks. This led to the purchase of a few bikes for weekend rentals and eventually to the founding of The Bicycle Exchange on Harvard Square in 1934. Ben Lawee, owner of a small distributorship at the time, used to call on him in those early days. It was the beginning of a 60-year relationship. "He was a delightful person," Lawee said. "Normally, dealers don't treat salespeople very graciously, but he would always take me out for coffee or lunch."

"He took great joy in teaching all those Harvard kids how to select the right bike," said John Auerbach, director of the Cycle Parts and



Ben Olken

Accessories Association.

Mr. Olken started Dawes Distributing Co. in 1950. The company imported Dawes racing bikes from England, the first in a succession of lightweight bikes from Europe and Asia that Mr. Olken introduced to the East Coast. His bicycle distributorship became Ben Olken Inc., a major regional distributor of Motobecane and later Univega bicycles. Mr. Olken sold

Continued on page 19

JUNE 1994

Ben Olken

Continued from page 11

this business to Lawee Inc. in 1988 and retired to Florida.

"Working for Ben was like going to Ben Olken University," said Bernie Kotlier, now a vice president at

Service Cycle Supply Co. "He knew everything about the bicycle industry. He was really a great guy—intelligent, sincere and an astute businessman."

Kotlier, who joined Mr. Olken's firm in 1976, said the wholesale operation grew out of a container-load of Motobecane bikes that Mr. Olken ordered through his business associate

Lawee. Because of the scarcity of product in the boom years of 1971-72, dealer friends clamored to get the bikes. Mr. Olken started selling them to other dealers, and this blossomed into a full-fledged distributorship.

For four years, Ben Olken Inc. was basically a one-person operation. As the business grew, its territory gradually expanded to all of

New England, then to the mid-Atlantic states. "He was an important figure to young dealers entering the business," Kotlier said. "He helped with credit and site selections for dealers who wanted to open new stores."

As a distributor, Mr. Olken was always willing to help entrepreneurs involved in start-up ventures.

B.D.S.
(2)

whether they were dealers or manufacturers. "He was always right there when you needed advice," said Mike Zane, president of Kryptonite Corp., the Boston-based security device manufacturer. "He was very motivational in helping you and letting you know how he perceived the market."

Mr. Olken was active in the early years of the National Bicycle Dealers Association (NBDA) and served as president in the mid-1960s. "Some of the stuff in the early years was quasi-political when it didn't need to be," said Harley Phillips of Harley's Cycle Supply in Hutchinson, Kan., who served on the NBDA board with Mr. Olken. "Ben would always cut to the quick and get the meetings back on track."

Don Wares, president of Wares Cycle Inc. in Milwaukee, who also worked closely with Mr. Olken in the association's early years, remembers it as a somewhat rambunctious time. "We'd try to bluff our way through Robert's Rules of Order over some hot issue," he said. "I'd argue with Ben. 'You don't know anymore about it [parliamentary procedure] than I do.' 'They don't know the difference either,' he'd reply, 'so let's get on with it.'"

"He really wanted to take the NBDA in the right direction," commented Wilbur Scott, owner of Campus Bike Shop in Columbus, Ohio, who also worked with Mr. Olken in the association. "He seemed more interested in doing the right thing than going around saying he was president of the NBDA."

Mr. Olken's pioneering efforts in bicycle advocacy are notable. He helped push through construction of a bike path along the Charles River in Cambridge, Mass., and singlehandedly measured the path over a period of months when the municipal government was unable to provide manpower.

Yet his advocacy did not spring only from his business ties and his training as an architect, but also from his having lived through the Depression, and seeing how bicycles could be used for transportation when times were tough.

Mr. Olken was also a founding member of the American Youth Hostel Program. The living room of the Boston Youth Hostel is named in his honor, and Harvard

University annually presents an award for entrepreneurial spirit named for Mr. Olken and his late twin brother, Henry. "He saw a generation of Harvard students go by," Kotliar said, "and most of them were on his bikes."

Mr. Olken was described by his colleagues as a people person. "I found him delightful to work with when we met at distributor meetings," said Harry Manko, president of Service Cycle Supply Co. Kotliar added that Mr. Olken was an early believer in Norman Vincent Peale's power of positive thinking philosophy. "He always said things were great no matter how bad they were."

For example, on a round-the-world tour the Olkens and Lawee took together, Lawee rejoined Mr. Olken after the latter had spent a day of sightseeing. "How do you feel?" Lawee remembered asking. When Mr. Olken replied "Great!" Lawee said, "How can you say 'great' when you look exhausted?" "Well," Mr. Olken replied, "after you say it, you really do feel better."

A lifelong cigar lover and connoisseur, he smoked them whenever he traveled, including a long European train trip with former bicycle distributor Richard Larsen, president of R.H. Brown Co. "You had to either join him or get off the train," Larsen reported good-naturedly.

His son Richard, who owned The Bicycle Exchange for many years, said his father conducted business almost to the very end. Long before he died, Mr. Olken had fretted over a piece of property that had been leased and then became vacant. Finally a buyer was found, and after many delays, the deal was set to close.

Richard called his father in Florida to let him know that the escrow papers were finally being signed, but was afraid that in his deteriorating condition, his father might not know what was going on. "He was 100 percent clear-headed and asked a number of pertinent questions," Richard said. "When we were finished, he said, 'That's it, I'm not going to work anymore.'" He died the following day.

Surviving are his wife, RoseAnn; three sons, Richard, Charles and Jonathan; a brother and seven grandchildren.

—Walt Jarvis

Bike peddler's goodbye

After 57 years, an entrepreneur wheels out of Harvard Square

By David Arnold
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — When Benjamin Olken started renting bicycles from a small shop in Harvard Square, there was no such thing as a bicycle lock. The two-wheeler of choice was made by a Fitchburg gunsmith and had wooden rims.

The year was 1934. Trolleys rumbled down Massachusetts Avenue and the annual tuition at Harvard University hit \$400. Olken charged 25¢ an hour at The Bicycle Exchange to anyone willing to promise they would not ride through a puddle. Water loosened the shellac that held the tires to the rims.

At 6 tonight, The Bicycle Exchange closes its doors for keeps. And like Derby the Jeweler, Beck Hall, Waldorfs, Crimson Camera and Tailor Sam, The Bicycle Exchange will become another Harvard Square memory.

"Regrets? How can I regret a place that gave me so much?" the 81-year-old Ol-

ken said the other day, dressed — as always — in tweeds and a knit tie. An energetic elder with wire-rimmed spectacles and a beard the texture of fleece, Olken was the bicycle professor of Harvard Square.

For 57 years the small shop at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Bow Street was his life and a livelihood for his children, grandchildren and an estimated 900 men and women who have worked behind the counter through the years.

After renting a small space across the street for two years, Olken bought 3 Bow St. for \$10,000 in 1936 and eventually added three upper floors. Last summer he sold the building for an undisclosed sum to Omni Travel Services Inc. A fellow Harvard Square shopkeeper said that, putting it mildly, "Ben made out just fine."

Olken says that holding onto the business made little financial sense.

"We were paying taxes for a four-floor building to run a \$1.5-million annual business when a travel agent can make the same money from a desk," he

BICYCLE SHOP, Page 24

Boston Globe
11/2/91 (1)

Bicycle peddler closes up shop after 57 years in Harvard Square

BICYCLE SHOP
Continued from Page 21

id, seated in the middle of a store
lose racks, posters, tools and file
binets were disappearing at fire
e prices.

Within earshot was Paul Shea,
e of the bargain hunters and a
ngtime customer now living in
ookline. Shea compared Harvard
uare to Brookline Village, where
said several traditional, family-
n shops had recently been "lost" to
scale cheese, croissant and wom-
's underwear shops.

"The health of a retail communi-
is in its diversity," Shea said,
rning that Harvard Square was
coming "homogenized." The city
Cambridge should have offered
incentives to relieve the pressure
sell, Shea argued.

"Now wait a minute!" Olken
ntered. "Times change. The city
eds that tax money. Schools need

Olken said he had a lifetime
ead of him for his new passion, de-
ning stained-glass windows. It
s time to leave behind a lifetime of
ycles; at 81 years, he said, it was
ie to flip the record.

Side One had been a long play
lead.

Olken majored in engineering at
Massachusetts Institute of Tech-
logy, graduating at the height of

**In 1936, bicycle
tires were
cemented to
wooden rims with
shellac; if a client
rode through a
puddle, the
adhesive failed and
the tires turned
like greased rubber
around the wheels.**

the Great Depression in 1933 after
financing his tuition largely by sell-
ing and exchanging second-hand
books, clothes - and bicycles, ergo,
The Bicycle Exchange.

Total inventory in 1934, when Ol-
ken rented a small space in a Har-
vard dormitory located at the site of
the new Inn at Harvard, was four bi-
cycles, their brands unknown. In the
autumn of 1934, James Michael Cur-
ley was vying for Gov. Joseph Ely's
job, a bandleader named Ozzie Nel-
son was playing Boston with the
band's new vocalist, one Harriet Hil-
liard, and Davis' Department Store

at 124 Summer St. was offering spe-
cials on Bab-O cleanser and a spank-
ing new toy for the kids called a ve-
locipede.

Bicycles had been around since
shortly after the Civil War, but sel-
dom were considered more than
child's play when the affordable
automobile started rolling off Ford's
assembly line. The velocipede adver-
tised in 1934 Globe editions was a
case in point - "peppy" with ball
bearing wheels and a bell, all for
\$2.98. It was, in fact, a tricycle.

"Practically no one was making
bicycles back then," Olken said. Bik-
ing was then what sky-diving is to-
day. It took courage. And it took les-
sons. Olken started offering instruc-
tion - three hours a week for 14
weeks made you an expert. The only
person who ever failed him was a pi-
ano teacher too fearful of falling on
her hands.

By 1936 Olken owned several bi-
cycles made by Iver Johnson, a
Fitchburg gunsmith. The tires were
cemented to wooden rims with shel-
lac; if a client rode through a puddle,
the adhesive failed, and the tires
turned like greased rubber around
the wheels.

In the late 1940s, business, like
bicycle tires, ballooned with the rush
of war veterans to government-paid
college educations. By the early
1950s, the Bicycle Exchange was



Benjamin Olken, who opened his Harvard Square shop in 1934, and son Richard preside over the landmark's going-out-of-business sale.

selling fat-tired two-wheelers called
Rollfast, Harvard, Sterling, Star and
Lovell Diamond, made by companies
such as Schwinn, Raleigh and Co-
lumbia.

Olken and the Boston and Maine
Corp. railroad initiated the bike train.
The B&M would pick a new destina-
tion each weekend, and Olken pro-
vided the rental bikes from the bag-
gage car. On one such trip to Keene,
N.H., an elderly B&M baggage han-
dler decided to give the sport a try.

"First time in years I've felt so

sexy," Olken recalls the handler re-
porting as he returned his bicycle.

Business peaked for The Bicycle
Exchange in the early 1970s, accord-
ing to Olken's 46-year-old son Rich-
ard, who eventually took over man-
agement of the store. He employe
as many as 80 employees in 1973 a
10-speed bicycles became increas-
ingly reliable and inexpensive.

How does he feel about going on
of business?

"A bit like I'm managing my ow
wake," Richard said.

6-10-95
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Inside

Israel and Palestine Talk
Israelis and Palestinians meet in Madrid to discuss Palestinian autonomy. Page 4

Yugoslav Conflict Continues
Serbian-led forces step up their offensive on two Croatian cities. Page 5

Tying Down the Title
Stanley's victory over Dartmouth puts them in Harvard's Ivy League. Page 7

Brokers Banked
Harvard's soccer loss to Dartmouth moves them out of the Ivy League. Page 7

From 'Fury'
Harvard and Dartmouth tie as opponents of ECAC. Page 8

Never Gets
Wolverine's soccer defeats Dartmouth, dashes their shot at the Ivy League title and hurling the crimson into a possible ECAC berth. Page 8

Bicycle Exchange Closes Its Doors After 57 Years

By JEREMY A. DAUBER

The wheels have stopped turning at 3 Bow St.

The Bicycle Exchange, a family-owned and operated bicycle shop, closed its doors for the last time at 6 p.m. Saturday, ending 57 years of service to the Harvard Square community.

Benjamin Olken, who founded The Bicycle Exchange, sold the building last summer to Omni Travel Services, Inc., for an undisclosed sum. Olken said that they decided to close the shop after they received "an offer [they] couldn't refuse."

The Olken family has owned and operated the store since its founding in 1934. Besides providing service to Harvard bicyclists, the store's ties to the University stem from the fact that more than 20 family members have attended the College, said Richard Olken '67, the store's manager. Sharon M. Olken '93 currently attends the College.

"I used to have fights with my father about whether I should work in the store on Saturdays or go to

Harvard football games, which felt were necessary to my social development," Richard Olken said.

Olken said that due to his spending his whole life around the Square, his experiences with the store are different than those of most area merchants. Olken has been working at the store since 1958, when he was only 13.

"I've led my social life and my developmental life as well as my business life here," he said.

Olken said that operating a store in Harvard Square is more complicated than it is elsewhere. "Because you have a corporate structure looming over you all the time and calling most of the shots."

"[Harvard Square merchants and the University] generally have similar goals, but Harvard makes itself known—usually in positive ways but not always," Olken said.

But in general, Olken characterized his relations with the University as "very positive."

He said that many of his customers

Continued on page 5

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of the council's budget.

"The finance commit
jack about anything bu
Rhew said.

Recycle 1
Crimso

Bicycle Store Closes

Continued from page 1

tomers, including several professors, came from the Harvard community.

"One of our earliest customers was Larry Wylie—then a student, now a professor emeritus—but always a good customer," Olken said.

"It's always very gratifying to

see people like [Thomas Professor of English and American Literature Emeritus] Daniel Aaron, who are always enjoying the *je ne sais quoi* of bicycling that always kept us going," he said.

Olken said Cambridge is "a haven and heaven" for Raleigh bicycles, of which he said he has sold "hundreds of thousands."

Harvard Crimson
11/4/91

Operation Rescue activists arrived at the clinic early in the morning and chained themselves to the doors of the building in an effort to prevent the clinic from opening and performing abortions. Demonstrators from New Haven to New Hampshire gathered across the street from the clinic to protest. By 10 a.m., the pro-choice counter-protesters outnumbered the anti-abortion protesters. On one side of the street, pro-choice groups held signs and chanted "My body, my choice!"

On the sidewalk in front of the clinic, protesters held red octagonal signs reading "Stop Abortions Now, Stop Killing Babies," carried crosses and rosary beads and listened to speakers read hymns and biblical passages.

Up n /c t

WHEREAS: During the late 1950's and through the 60's, Ben worked closely with Dr. Paul Dudley White and was the moving force and principal architect of the bicycle path around the Charles River Basin which bears Dr. White's name; and

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WHEREAS: Ben studied architecture as a member of MIT's class of 1933 and with his brothers, Ben worked in a number of entrepreneurial ventures during the Great Depression, one of which was a bicycle renting businesses; and

WHEREAS: The Bicycle Exchange was founded in Beck Hall at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street in 1934 and in 1936 it moved to 3 Bow Street, the site it occupied until it closed 55 years later in 1991; and

WHEREAS: Ben Oaken was always a doer and a builder, he was a founding member of the American Youth Hostels in 1934 and also a founder in 1947, of the National Bicycle Dealers Association, an organization of which he was later president and in the early 1950's he served as president of the Harvard Square Business Association; and

*Linehay, Maluccio, Reeves,
Russell,*

Consent Order #28

Councillor Sullivan and entire
membership re: Resolution on the
life, achievements and death of
Benjamin F. Oaken, Entrepreneur
and founder of the Bicycle
Exchange.

R-815

In City Council October 2, 1995

Order Adopted