

# Western Appliance to close store

Bus-w  
By JONDI GUMZ

jgumz@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — Western Appliance will close its Santa Cruz store at 902 Soquel Ave. on March 17, a move that coincides with the retirement of manager Dale Burdick, whose father began selling televisions some 60 years ago.

"It's about time for me to hang it up," said Burdick, 65, who stayed home this

week to fight the flu. "I hope to enjoy life."

Currently, the store is staffed by "five of us," he said.

A graduate of Holy Cross and Oregon State University, he was a teen when he began working for his father and spent his entire career in the appliance business.

His father Hal, a ham operator who served in the Navy, settled in Santa Cruz after the World War II. He worked for

Thompson Radio on Soquel Avenue, bought the business in 1947, and renamed it Burdick's. He saw an opportunity with the startup of KSBW-TV.

"We put a TV in the front window," recalled Burdick. "There would be crowds out front, and the only thing on the TV was a test pattern."

His father bought and remodeled 902

SEE WESTERN ON C3



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Western Appliance is closing the Santa Cruz store on Soquel Avenue March 17.

## WESTERN

Continued from C1

Soquel Ave., opening Burdick's Television and Appliance in 1955, then built an 11,000-square-foot store at the same address in 1974, demolishing the old store to provide parking.

Burdick's serviced televisions when they were expensive to buy but that changed when the cost to buy a new model became less than the cost of repair.

"Now TVs, there's no money in it," said Burdick. "Costco makes money on memberships."

He's seen the number of appliance manufacturers shrink over the years, too.

"There used to be 60 to 70, now there are five," he said. "It's a little monopolistic."

Burdick took over in 1977 after his father retired, expanding to five locations in Santa Cruz and Monterey.

"The earthquake knocked me out of business," he said, recalling the 1989 destruction of Haber's and Ford's, where he sold appliances.

After filing for bankruptcy reorganization, he sold 902 Soquel Ave. to Western Appliance of San Jose in 1996 and went to work for his former competitor.

Dennis Moir, 77, chief

executive officer of Western Appliance, said he and his partners decided to sell the Santa Cruz property after Burdick gave his retirement notice.

"He's irreplaceable," Moir said.

"Most of the things we bought, we bought at Western," said Santa Cruz resident Eileen O'Shea. "We always had a good experience."

Western Appliance, started by Jacob Neiderauer in 1873 in Bakersfield, has expanded and contracted with the times.

At one point there were 10 locations. Come March, there will be one.

"We will service the market from here," said Moir from his San Jose store. "We really loved our association with Santa Cruz."

The retail environment has changed with the arrival of big-box competitors such as Best Buy and Home Depot and online sales, he noted, questioning whether the so called "brick and mortar" stores make sense right now.

Bei-Scott Co., a local firm that purchased 902 Soquel Ave. for \$1.247 million this month, plans to lease the building.

Follow Sentinel reporter Jondi Gumz at [Twitter.com/jondigumz](https://twitter.com/jondigumz)