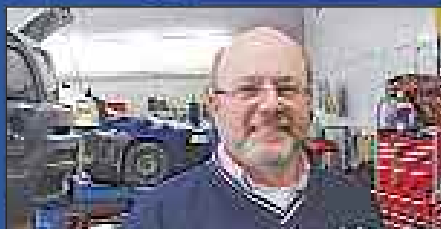
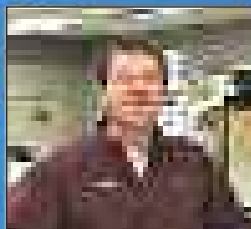




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A special supplement to The Caledonian-Record & Orleans Record
January 2011

Celebrating 125 Years ... Jenks Studio Of Photography — Portrait Of An Evolving Business In The 21st Century

BY TAYLOR REED
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — Like a presidential photographer for towns, Jenks Studio of Photography has encapsulated on film more than a 100 years of St. Johnsbury history.

If you grew up here in the 20th century it's a safe bet the Main Street business snapped your photograph, and might even still have a copy of it. Jenks Studio — which is now celebrating its 125th anniversary and is likely the oldest family-owned photo studio in the country — maintains an archive of historic glass-plate images and pho-

tos that could fill a museum.

Bob Jenks is the present owner/operator. He's the fourth generation of Jenks men to fill the role.

Jenks' great-grandfather, grandfather and father witnessed huge changes since the studio started snapping pictures with equipment so primitive it required using braces to keep people still long enough for the old-style cameras.

The 21st-century Jenks, however, may be in the throes of the most massive change since the electronic flash, and it's steamrolling the demand for his studio's services.

"Digital photography screwed so many photographers," Jenks said. "People have shut down studios all over the place because everyone is just shooting stuff themselves and not going to the photographer. The whole world has been turned into everyone being a photographer."

Before digital cameras hit the market, Jenks handled up to 500 portraits a year for high school seniors. It's presently down to about 100.

The same goes for weddings. It's typical for couples now to hire a friend for a few hundred dollars to take wedding photos and copy the images to a CD, Jenks said.

He hasn't been forced to close shop,

but the changes have exacted a steep toll. The studio — prior to the digital age — maintained five or six employees. Now, it's just Jenks.

However, he plans to rejuvenate business by taping his extensive archive — which includes hundreds of historic glass-plate images and thousands of pictures. He's set to create an Internet store to sell prints.

Jenks envisions organizing the photos by year. They date from the 1930s to modern times, and include family portraits, school photos, landscapes, and wedding pictures.

"If your parents got married here in town we probably took their pictures," Jenks said.

There are also a number of photos — including some that are a century old — of Vermont icons like Mount Mansfield, Lake Champlain, Killington Peak, Pico Peak, Burke Mountain, Willoughby Gap and The Old Man of the Mountain in New Hampshire's Franconia Notch.

Jenks loves the old stuff and still prefers to shoot in black and white versus color, though he does own a digital camera for school photos.

"I love doing the old black-and-white stuff the way they used to way back when," he said.

Jenks started working at Jenks Studio in the summer of 1979 after earning a culinary arts degree at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I.

"I didn't want to work in a hot kitchen so I started working for my



Robert C. Jenks holds a glass plate negative of his great-grandfather, William H. Jenks, who in 1886 founded Jenks Studio of Photography in St. Johnsbury.

dad and never stopped," he said. "I learned by finding good fun people who knew what they were doing and I would hang out with them a lot."

One of them is Jay Kennedy, owner of Catamount Studios in Elmore. The pair are fast friends.

"Bob is definitely one of the best photographers in the country," Kennedy said. "That's not to be taken lightly. He's known in big circles. He's a master of seeing light and put-

ting it on an image-capturing tool." Jenks' relatives were masters as well. His grandfather Zenas was taking portraits after going blind.

"Nobody knew he couldn't see," Jenks said. "He just knew the studio so well."

Studio History

William Jenks opened the Jenks Studio of Photography in Newport in 1886 and operated there until 1902 when he moved to the O. Dean Hale Building on Main Street in St. Johnsbury. The building was suitable because it had a skylight.

Curtains were used to control the skylight on bright days. On gloomy days, subjects used braces to keep still. William handed off the business to his son Zenas, who was Bob Jenks' grandfather.

In the 1940s Jenks Studio got elec-

tronic strobe flashes, a huge advance. It allowed the business to abandon the skylight studio and move a few doors down Main Street to its present street-level location.

In 1968, Zenas gave the business to his son Charles, a World War II veteran who served in the South Pacific doing reconnaissance and developing pictures in a mobile darkroom. Charles operated Jenks Studio until 1986, when he passed it to Bob.

"I like to think that I brought us through the end of our first century, and now it's up to my son to take us into the second," Charles, who is now deceased, is recorded as saying upon handing over the business. "Neither Robert nor I were determined to go into photography when we were young, but it has turned out that both of us decided to go into it."



Zenas Jenks, grandfather to current owner Bob Jenks, was the second generation to own and operate Jenks Studio of Photography.

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Celebrating 70 Years ...



PHOTO BY LORNA COLQUHOUN

More than a place to grab coffee and the morning newspaper, the Franconia Village Store is a gathering place for locals to discuss daily events and, if necessary, solve the problems of the world.

Decades Of Down At Franconia Village Store

BY LORNA COLQUHOUN
 Special to
 The Caledonian-Record

FRANCONIA, N.H. — The morning crowd thinned out a while ago, leaving Bob Gilbert and Ron Flynn to ponder the crossword puzzle on a counter in the back of the Franconia Village Store.

"What's a five-letter word for comic queen?" Flynn asked no one in particular.

The question went unanswered, cast aside for conversation and another cup of coffee. The coffee costs a couple of coins, but the conversation is free.

"It's a gathering spot," said Steve Heath, whose family bought the little brown store on Main Street over 50 years ago.

Up until the late 1920s, the Village Store was a blacksmith shop and sometime in the 1930s, it became a store.

William and Ruby Heath, Steve's parents, bought the place in 1956 and since 2000, after his brother, also named William, retired, Steve Heath has kept the store going.

It's the kind of place just about every town has, a place where you can duck in for the morning paper and cup of coffee and the gallon of milk you forgot on the grocery store run.

It's the kind of place where everyone does know your name – and your claim to fame, or infamy.

"Every town has a local gathering place and this is it for Franconia," Flynn said.

Observers will tell you that there are two distinct types of people who gather daily at the Village Store, which opens at 6 a.m.

There are the folks who never go past the coffee pot, the ones who pour a cup and jaw for a few minutes about the weather.

Then there are the ones, like Gilbert and Flynn, who head to the back of the store and take a seat at the small counter, under a huge poster of local son Olympic skier Bode Miller.

"Back here, people talk about town affairs because they know they are amongst friends," Heath said, as he sliced meat to make sandwiches for the upcoming lunch crowd. "Out front, it's more

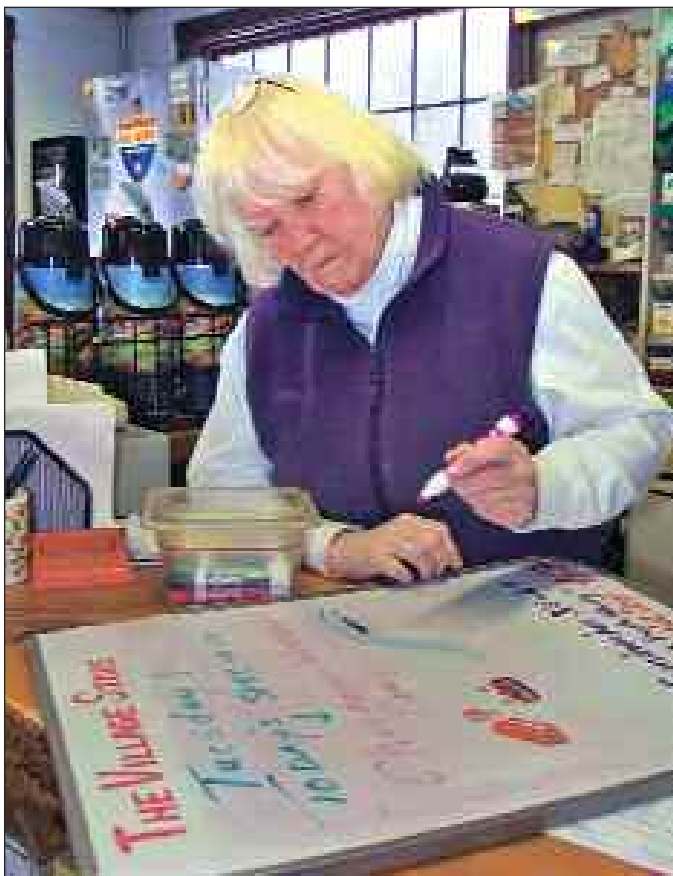


PHOTO BY LORNA COLQUHOUN

Ellie Lovett, who has worked at the store for over 30 years, lets customers know the soup special this day is chicken noodle.

neutral, like job talk."

Gilbert interrupts, "If it's in-season, they talk about fly fishing," a sport to which Heath is a devotee. "Sometimes it gets to the point where non-fishermen have to leave."

If anyone does wander back, Gilbert and Flynn joke they'll offer up their seats "for someone limping or good-looking."

If the store depends on regulars for its livelihood, then the regulars depend on, and likely expect, the comfort of a routine – that you can reach for the newspaper when you come through the door and grab milk from the cooler with your other hand and that more than likely, Ellie Lovett is going to ring you up at the front of the store.

"Gosh," the slight woman with really blue eyes said, "I bet I've been here 30 years."

She knows everyone by name and if not, welcomes them just the same.

"I like the tourists," she said. "They come in from England, Germany, France and most of them

haven't seen a little village store like this. They say, 'You have everything here.'"

"Everything" includes T-shirts, of which one of the best selling is one that says "Franconia – a small drinking town with a big skiing problem."

And then there is the wine selection and a nice selection of imported beer, which you may not expect to find at a little village store.

Like a lot of people who grew up in the North Country, Heath went away to school and thought he was leaving his hometown behind when he went off to college.

But he came back and now he wouldn't want to go anywhere else.

"I love it here," he said. "The customers are my friends."

What is left behind on this morning is the newspaper, opened to the crossword puzzle, with a sharp pencil resting on it.

And no answer for the five-letter word for comic queen.

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Celebrating 60 Years ...



PHOTO BY ROBERT BLECHL

Jax Jr. Cinema was recognized from day one as a state-of-the-art theater.

The Corner Never Goes Dark: Jax Jr. Cinema Enters New Age

BY ROBERT BLECHL
 Staff Writer

LITTLETON, N.H. — When it opened in 1951, the Jax Jr. Cinema received a Merit Award from the motion picture theater industry for international recognition for being one of the most modern and well-appointed of all current theaters.

In the intervening decades, the quest to stay modern has continued, and the Littleton movie house just became the first all-digital 3D movie theater in New Hampshire.

"It's the most modern movie-going experience at yesteryear's prices," said owner Jack Eames.

Eames began working in the theater at 8 years old, taking tickets and doing post-show cleanup, and by the time he was 16 he was a projectionist as well as a summer-time manager.

Located in the 30 Block of Main Street, Jax Jr. Cinema was preceded by the Premier movie theater, owned by Eames's grandfather, John B. Eames Sr., which opened Thanksgiving Day 1926, but was destroyed by fire in 1949.

The day after the fire, John B. Eames — known as Jack — set up a sandwich board on the 30 Block that said, "watch this corner grow."

Grow it did, and the elder Jack Eames opened the Jax Jr. Cinema in 1951 in a new fireproof concrete building.

Two world premieres have taken place at the Littleton movie theater, including "The Great Lie" (1941), starring Bette Davis, who was friends with Jack.

"Two world premieres is quite unique for any movie theater, let alone a small town theater," said current owner Eames.

Jax Jr. Cinema also received a telegram from Bob Hope and other luminaries congratulating them on the opening.

During his own lifetime, Eames said the first "Harry Potter" installment in 2001 drew the most sales at the theater.

"We have yet to surpass that," he said. "We were sold out for every show for the entire first week."

1997's "Titanic" was also a hit at Jax Jr. and some moviegoers had to be turned away for lack of seats, he said.

In 1982, the single-screen movie theater was twinned for two screens. In the late 1980s, the sound was upgraded, and in 1999, when Stars Wars: Episode I" was



PHOTO BY ROBERT BLECHL

Jack Eames inspects a new digital 3D movie projector.

released, it was upgraded once again to Digital Theater Sound (DTS), which features five speakers.

In 2002, Cinema One in Jax Jr. went to Dolby digital sound, which Eames said is better for digital sound than DTS. "It's a little more precise," he said.

The DTS is now being phased out at Jax Jr. and the new 3D digital system will soon feature Dolby digital sound for both screens.

Other upgrades have continued into the new century as well.

In the past 10 years, the marquis has been redone with all neon and the interior lobby revamped. The seats installed in 1951 were replaced in 2007 with rocking-type chairs that total 225 per screen with a total theater capacity of 450.

Eames employs Gordon Fisher as a full-time manager and six part-time people, including Gordon's wife, Barbara, and Phil Rivera, of WLTV, who serves as projectionist.

"What makes this place special, like all the businesses we've been a part of, is the staff," said Eames.

A theater can have all the technology in the world, he said, but it's the staff that makes it a friendly and welcoming place.

In the intervening decades since Jax opened, movie theaters across the nation had to contend with competition, such as the advent of television in the 1950s, video home systems in the 1970s and 1980s and, more recently, the birth of Netflix and Redbox, which offer movie rentals as early as two months after a theater release.

But digital 3D offers an experience that can't be replicated at home, said Eames.

"The beauty of digital is you get a perfect picture every time you play the movie," he said.

Each time film is played it tends to degrade, he said, and some reels incur emulsion scratches.

And 3D is becoming more available. Eames said it appears the dam for 3D films broke in 2010 with more than 20 being released.

"That was the catalyst that made me realize the time was now," he said. "Just about every animated family movie and action movie is now being released in 3D."

The movies that do well in Littleton are family movies, comedies and action-comedies, he said.

While ticket prices remained static for 10 years, they did go up last year and are \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors and children.

Buddy nights are Mondays, when two moviegoers can buy tickets for \$4 apiece. The only time buddy night is not available is when the movie company prohibits it through a contractual obligation, he said.

The technology is ever-changing, and for the future of Jax Jr. Cinema, Eames sees the possibility of streaming in live concerts on screen and perhaps even Broadway plays.

Jax Jr. Cinema is open every day of the week, and since February 2010, has been offering matinees showings every Saturday and Sunday.

"The corner never goes dark," Eames said.

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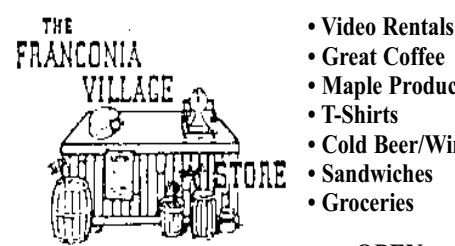
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Celebrating 50 Years ...



PHOTO BY JAMES JARDINE
 Owen Wilson, 4, Shilo Wilson, Angela Daniels, Tracy Lamotte and Toby Merchant are the sales and service team at Rod's Used Cars in East St. Johnsbury, celebrating 50 years in business.

Rod's Used Cars In St. J Celebrates A Half Century

BY JAMES JARDINE
 Staff Writer

EAST ST. JOHNSBURY — It sometimes seems as though it's the big businesses that grab the headlines, overshadowing the everyday heroes who sustain our communities — the small businesses that are actually the heart of our economy.

It would be hard to find a more rock-solid example of a successful small business than Rod's Used Cars, still at the same location on Route 2 in downtown East St. Johnsbury.

Founded by Rod Lamotte 50 years ago when John F. Kennedy was our new president and setting foot on the moon was an impossible dream, when General Motors next big thing was the Corvair and a company called Studebaker was selling the Lark, Rod's Used Cars is still going strong.

Lamotte started the business in 1961 after his discharge from the U.S. Air Force. Immediately after leaving from the service, he worked at the Gilman paper mill, then learned the local filling station was available. He leased the garage and began servicing cars. A little later he began dabbling in used car sales. When he began Rod's Used Cars, Lamotte and his wife lived in an apartment up over the garage.

Lamotte says he got a lot of help sustaining his business and one of the local businessmen who taught him a great deal about the car business was the late Harold Warren, the owner of the local Ford dealership in St. Johnsbury. Warren used to tell Lamotte the

money wasn't in fixing cars; it was in selling them, Lamotte recalls.

He took Warren's advice and began getting into used-car sales in earnest. For the last 50 years, Rod's Used Cars has sold used vehicles and has always serviced what they sell. In 2006, Rod sold the business to his son, Tracy Lamotte and his daughter, Nicole Wilson and her husband, Shilo Wilson.

Wilson learned the sales game selling cable television door to door for Charter Communications for a few years before starting to work at the business with Rod in 2004. He and Tracy took over the business in 2006. Tracy Lamotte runs the mechanical end of the garage while Shilo Wilson manages the sales end.

The service department is full service — including brakes, exhaust, tires, state inspection or mechanical work. The only thing they don't do is alignments. Rod's service customers can get the whole range of work done in one stop. Rod's will do all the service work after the sale on the vehicles they sell, but customers need not buy from Rod's in order to get a vehicle serviced there. Rod's welcomes all customers to their shop.

Lamotte notes cars have changed during the past 50 years. He believes the vehicles sold today are far and away the best-built, longest-lasting, most durable vehicles ever sold. He remembers an earlier time when vehicles were considered worn out with 50,000 miles on them and if mechanical failure didn't do a vehicle in, a few years exposure to

the salt on Vermont's highways could rust a vehicle out beyond repair. Today, Lamotte and Wilson agree, there are more vehicles on the market with over 100,000 miles on them every year and those vehicles still run well and have years of economical service still left in them. Wilson comments that when he attends wholesale auto auctions picking out vehicles for the sales lot, he finds most of the vehicles offered for sale have high mileage. Wilson concludes, however, that 100,000 miles on today's used cars is nothing.

Wilson tries to keep 50 to 60 vehicles on the lot at all times, with the majority of those vehicles in the 2000-2006 range. He puts all of the vehicles on his lot through his own repair shop to make certain he knows the condition of each one and makes any repairs needed before the vehicle is put in the front row. Wilson puts a warranty on just about every one of the cars and trucks he sells. If the vehicle a customer is looking for is not in stock, Wilson is more than happy to locate just the right vehicle for the customer.

Financing can be handled right at the dealership with the customer never having to go to the bank. Rod's Used Cars works with the Passumpsic Savings bank, local credit unions and other lending sources to put together the best financing option for the customer. Rod's also offers "buy here, pay here" financing where the customer can make weekly vehicle payments right at the dealership.

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Celebrating 40 Years ...



Owner Mark Hayes and all the employees of Hayes Ford on East Main Street in Newport City. The company is celebrating 40 years in business.

Hayes Ford Has Been And Still Is A Family Affair

BY ROBIN SMITH
Staff Writer

NEWPORT CITY — Mark John Hayes II, known as John, started the family car business in 1958.

But the Hayes name became the fixture it is in Newport City when the Hayes family purchased its current building on East Main Street from Fernand Poutre.

The home of Hayes Ford, established in 1971, is now a landmark dealership in Newport City. Hayes Ford is celebrating 40 years this year.

Mark Hayes III and his brother Michael took over from their father. Michael Hayes left after 12 years for Washington, D.C.

Now Mark, 59, leads the company, after buying the business from his father in 1994.

Although he is the only Hayes still involved — and he has no children to continue the family name — he still considers it a family business.

Hayes served in the U.S. Navy and went to college before joining the business. He has put 33 years into the company.

He has more than two dozen employees, with about 20 full-time and six part-time.

Many of his employees have been with him for decades. He is able to spend more time with family in the morning because his key staff members cover early mornings. And then he can work later in the evening to meet with customers, who come in after supper many days. That's a good time to sell vehicles, he said.

His father retired and has since passed away. But Hayes said his mother is still the source for historical information about the company and family history. He checked in with Alice Hayes, 86, who had details about dates of the company history.

Hayes said he doesn't sit in the office. He likes working with customers.

"I still sell," he said. "My dad told me years ago: 'Don't get stuck in the back office. Sell.' Sales is the fun part."

Ford Products

And it is even more fun now, because despite the past two years of a down economy, the Ford market is doing well. "Our products are better than ever," he said.

Ford Motor Company survived the Great Recession, Hayes said, because Ford had already begun to develop new products and change its way of doing business.

Ford also did not need to accept a federal handout, which Hayes said has made a big difference in customer perception of Ford as a company.



Mark Hayes took up the family business and continued it, and is celebrating 40 years in Newport City.

Also, Ford focused on its key brands, Ford and Lincoln. It shed foreign brands it picked up in the past and even is closing down its Mercury line in favor of emphasis on the Fords.

The new Fords and Lincolns have a distinctive American look, he said.

"We've got a lot to be proud about of being American," he said. "In the last two years, we've seen more of our old customers come back in. We have great customers."

It's important to have a good product to sell. "It's my name on the building," Hayes said. "When your name is on it, you feel differently."

Future Expansion

Nobel Craft built the current Hayes Ford building in the 1950s during World War II. Hayes Ford is the fourth car dealership on the site.

Hayes plans to expand the front of the building to create a new showroom for his Lincoln line. The dealership currently does not have a showroom. Hayes said that the addition would enhance the dealership.

Hayes Ford is the only Lincoln dealership in eastern Vermont north of Route 100, he said. Hayes Ford also is only one of two dealers authorized to sell and service Class 6 and 7 Ford trucks.

The commercial truck sales and shop segment is a benefit to Hayes Ford, he said.

Hayes loves working in this area, with Quebec out the back door, even though that means the potential market for the dealership is cut in half by the U.S./Canadian border.

"I just love where I live in the U.S.," he said. But he also enjoys being so close to the playground of Montreal.

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Celebrating 40 Years ...



Thelma White, a resident at the St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center, sings along with a song at a recent karaoke event, enjoying herself, and moving her wheelchair back and forth a bit with the music.

St. J Health And Rehabilitation Provides Years Of Patient Care

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — By 40, we all need a little makeover, and we're not so shy to admit there are things about ourselves we can improve upon.

It's like that for St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center, too, which marks its 40th birthday this year.

For the last few years, the center, located on Hospital Drive, has been getting a face-lift, a few rooms at a time. In December, the physical therapy rooms were made anew and are now filled with new equipment and sunlight streaming in, making a cheerful space for staff and patients recovering from injuries or setbacks because of illness or aging.

There are plans for blocks of rooms to continue to be made over until the entire facility has seen a makeover, said Shawn Hallisey, administrator of the facility, where there are 110 beds, about 80 housing permanent care residents, and the remainder for short-term rehabilitation patients.

In the rehabilitation program, people can come and stay for a short time, or however long is necessary, and receive full in-house care for everything ranging from physical therapy to occupational therapy, speech and respiratory therapy, explained Hallisey.

In addition to wing by wing plant makeovers, the 40-year-old building, which began as the St. Johnsbury Convalescent Center according to a more than 30-year employee, has also been working hard on improved patient care outcomes, communications with doctors, safety track records for employees and more, stressed Hallisey. The results are bringing in commendations, including an award from the American Health Care Association for dramatically improved patient care.

Just how to celebrate a full four decades of patient care in St. Johnsbury is still being planned, said Hallisey. He said the health center is the kickoff concert each spring for the St. Johnsbury Town Band, and that the 40th birthday bash may just coincide with the concert, but there are other ideas floating, too, including a car show after last year's first-ever, successful classic car show, or perhaps even a fireworks display on the Fourth of July.

St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center has had a handful of owners over its four decade history here, and is owned today by Canadian-based Revera Health Care Systems, said Hallisey. The health care provider owns 30 homes in the United States, and in Canada, he said, they are the largest provider of elder or senior services in the country, providing everything



Clarence Ash, a patient at the St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center, works with physical therapist Todd Rexford during a session in the center's recently remodeled PT room.

from long-term care to home health care in more than 250 facilities and services in Canada. The company is headquartered north of Toronto, he said, and puts a high value on improving patient care, investment in their facilities, and employee appreciation efforts, all of which contribute to a better quality of life for the residents and patients.

Special programs and activities are offered every day, from entertainment to trips outside the center, noted Hallisey. Last year, he and a nurse took two elderly gentlemen to Fenway Park to see their beloved Red Sox, he smiled. One of the two gentlemen has passed away, the other one has been assured if the Sox make the World Series, he'll be going again, Hallisey said, smiling.

Last year, about half the residents of St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center were taken out to Crystal Lake for their first annual summer picnic, said Hallisey.

"It was a really good day, they really enjoyed it," he said. Two buses were rented from RCT and made multiple trips each to accommodate the number of residents who attended the outing, he said.

For more information about St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center, visit www.reveraStJohnsbury.com.

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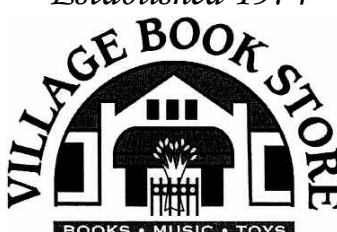
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Celebrating 30 Years ...



PHOTO BY JAMES JARDINE
The "Team" at Maple Center Motors includes, from left, Mike Smith - reconditioning, Doug Stetson Jr. and Dave Greenwood Jr. - mechanics, Serena Parker - administration, Kevin Sanborn and his father Gary Sanborn - sales.

It's A Team Effort At Maple Center Motors

BY JAMES JARDINE
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — Buyers looking for a used car, sport utility vehicle, van or pickup should include Maple Center Motors in St. Johnsbury Center on their itinerary.

Gary Sanborn first opened his used-car business about 30 years ago and has become one of the best known car dealers in the Northeast Kingdom. Gary ran the business on his own up until about 16 years ago when Gary's son, Kevin Sanborn, joined on.

Today, the father-and-son team sell used vehicles, arrange financing for the customer through a wide selection of auto finance sources and offer comprehensive service in their own mechanical repair shop.

Someone buying a car at Maple Center can get everything done at the dealership, from purchasing and financing the car to following up with maintenance and repair work. Whether it is buying a new set of tires for the vehicle, replacing the brakes or installing a complete exhaust system, Maple Center Motors can do it all at its St. Johnsbury Center garage. Gary Sanborn points out that after 30 years in the used-car business, he's gotten good at figuring out how to keep costs low when it comes to repairing one of his cars. His networking pays off for his customers because he can arrange to have specialized shops perform certain repairs his own shop is not equipped to handle. He stresses the amount of money that can be saved by the consumer as a result of picking the right repair shop can be substantial.

Gary and Kevin have a constantly changing inventory of cars, trucks, vans and sport utility vehicles that generally range in price from \$5,000 to \$24,000. Gary has a range of financing sources for his customers, with interest rates as low as 3.9 percent for qualified

buyers. Of course, not everyone will be able to take advantage of that low interest rate, but he is able to line up financing for most customers. In today's economy, with many customers facing financial pressures, Sanborn's flexible financing can be an important component of the car purchasing decision.

Gary Sanborn is a St. Johnsbury native and St. Johnsbury Academy graduate who enlisted in the U.S. Navy after graduation. Following his discharge from the Navy, Sanborn returned to the St. Johnsbury area and began working for the Beneficial finance company in St. Johnsbury. His next position was with the Prudential insurance company. He broke into the car business as a new-car salesman for the local Ford dealership in 1974 and sold new and used cars and trucks until 1981 when he decided to go into business for himself.

"I liked the car business," Sanborn said. "I wanted to do it my way."

He liked the idea of running a small business, saying, "I worked for too many big businesses."

Sanborn's first used-car lot was on Route 2 east in St. Johnsbury near the Route 18 and Route 2 intersection. His next business location was on Portland Street in St. Johnsbury where he shared space with a Midas muffler shop. In 1984, he acquired his present location on Route 5 in St. Johnsbury Center and built a new building designed as a retail car lot and mechanical repair center. Since then, he's added onto his garage and his lot.

Sanborn said he's been very happy pursuing his automotive career. He has no plans to retire anytime soon, although he might cut back a bit at some point. He likes the small business and likes running a business with a small group of people, compared to some large company with too many people doing too many different jobs.

Sanborn's business is a good fit for him.

"I look forward to coming to work," he said. "I enjoy working with the public. I enjoy it more now than I did 20 years ago."

Sanborn said cars today are more durable and better built than they've ever been and that today's driver puts more miles a year on a car than ever before. As a result, many used cars on the market today may have 100,000 miles or more on them and still be a good choice as a used car. He said buyers are adapting to the idea that a high-mileage car is not a worn-out car, and still has many miles of life left on it.

Another change in the business is that many more women are car buyers today and Maple Center Motors understands the importance of recognizing a female buyer who is increasingly the one controlling the pocketbook and making the purchasing decision. Sanborn and his son Kevin look forward to assisting the woman buyer who is in the market for a car for herself or for her family.

His two full-time mechanics, Doug Stetson Jr. and Dave Greenwood Jr., have each been with Maple Center Motors for more than 10 years and the dealership can do any repair work except transmission overhaul, but even then Maple Center can take in your vehicle and have the transmission shipped out for an overhaul by a local transmission specialist.

Kevin Sanborn has been a key member of the Maple Center team for more than 16 years, going on the road to buy used vehicles for the dealership and selling vehicles at the dealership. Kevin Sanborn is "a car guy" who can still get excited about some of the cars on the market and he enjoys working with his father because he finds he's not doing the same thing everyday and the variety keeps the job interesting.

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Celebrating 30 Years ...



Oralie and Larry Lefaire, owners of Burke View Garage, are marking the 30th anniversary of the founding of their business this month. They opened on Jan. 12, 1981.

Burke View Garage Has Seen It All

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — Oralie Lefaire said her husband Larry has always wanted to be a mechanic, and have his own garage, and that dream came true for him 30 years ago this month, on Jan. 12, in fact.

The owners of Burke View Garage, Oralie and Larry have been at the same spot since opening in 1981, renting for more than a decade, then buying the property on Route 114, which also includes a vintage home and a snack stand, now empty. He ran a shop on his parents property for just a summer before coming to the spot the business has been in for three decades.

"It's all he ever wanted to do," Oralie said of Larry. "He tore things apart and put them back together as a kid, lawn mowers, and making dune buggies. My sister-in-law used to always say she could remember her dad yelling, 'Larry, you've got to get inside, you've got school tomorrow,'" because he'd be outside tinkering, learning and get lost in his latest project.

Larry Lefaire took auto classes at Lyndon Institute and worked with another mechanic for perhaps five months in a business that didn't have a future as a partnership, so he moved on to his own shop, but is mostly self-taught, said Oralie.

They met when she moved here to attend Lyndon State Col-

lege and was working at the old Shop and Save.

When Larry decided to venture off on his own, Oralie and he had talked about the old gas station property on Route 114 owned by Bill and Phyllis Tower, which had sat empty for perhaps a decade. The Towers did not have children of their own, and both have since passed away, but they knew Larry growing up. When Oralie and Larry went to talk to them about renting the garage, the two couples sat down at the kitchen table of the old house next door to the garage which was the Towers home, remembered Oralie.

"Bill had closed it (the gas station and auto shop)," she said. "He had given away too much credit."

From the Towers, Oralie and Larry got a lot of wisdom passed along about not making the same mistake. A cardboard sign hangs inside the garage that Larry made at one point when there was too much credit out. It reads: "Banks give credit. We fix cars. No vehicles will leave until repairs are paid in full."

Asked about the sign, Oralie smiled and said, "That pile was just too thick for Larry's happiness," the week he made the sign and hung it up.

That day in the kitchen the Towers "told us how not to run a business," she recalled. "They made us promise that we would never let a car go without having it be paid for. We have to pay for

the parts and he's not here to work for nothing."

Mr. Tower had told them plenty of stories about being taken advantage of, such as people filling up their gas tanks and promising to come pay on Friday. "He said he didn't ask them which Friday they meant, trying to make light of it." Or the man who pulled up with a car load of kids at Christmas with bald tires and a story about how little he could afford for his children for gifts; Tower put new tires on the car and that was the last he saw of the man.

The front office where Oralie works full time managing the garage is filled with history of the three decades in business: pictures of their two kids growing up, of cherished pets, cartoons, funny sayings, and more. In the garage, a collection of donated license plates from customers who moved here and added to the wall décor decorate the inside of the garage.

One funny old cartoon mounted on the wall says, "Your car doesn't leak oil; it's just marking its territory."

Oralie has a part-time helper out front, and the garage employs three full-time mechanics and one part-time mechanic.

"Thanks to our loyal customers for their many years of business," said Oralie, helping a man with his invoice. "We would have nothing to do if they didn't come in to see us occasionally!"

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Celebrating 30 Years ...



PHOTO BY SALLY COOK

Valley Floors Vice President Ryan Chase shows off the store's newly expanded showroom tile section that features a huge assortment of natural and man-made tiles along with built in shower models.

Valley Floors Celebrates 30th With Expanded Showroom

BY SALLY COOK
News Correspondent

BRADFORD — Valley Floors is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a newly designed and expanded showroom. The new space allowed the family-owned company to add new flooring lines and a new tile showroom, complete with high end, custom tile shower built-ins now in high demand.

"We started in January and finished the new showroom in November," said Vice President Ryan Chase, who joins brother Chris, and father Dean Chase in running the business. "We did it so when business turned around, we'd be ready. The goal was to open up more space and make it more consumer friendly."

The three Chases have combined flooring experience of 55 years: Dean with 30 years, Chris with 15 years and Ryan with 10 years. Many of the company's 18 employees have many years of experience and even the store's mascot "Cooper," a friendly boxer rescued at 3, has years of floor testing under his feet and seat.

The business was originally opened in a store front about a mile away 30 years ago, then moved to the all new quarters built in 1991 at the route 25 and 5 intersection that hosts the only traffic light in town. The business now boasts 12,000 square feet including a 5,400 square foot warehouse space.

"We really offer the best of both worlds with a lot of in-stock laminates, wood, carpet, area rugs, vinyl, and tile," Chase said. "We have a lot of customer sales with installations from the showroom, but we also have a lot of cash and carry with bargain sales in the warehouse for do-it-yourselfers. We rent all the tools they need and answer any installation questions they have. We also supply contractors."

Their customer base is about 30 miles in all directions, farther to the north where they do a lot of business with Lyndon State College in Lyndonville.

Most flooring stores contract out installations, but Valley Floors is different since all installations are



COURTESY PHOTOS

Bradford's Valley Floors' employees are ready to serve customers with their expertise in design and installation.

done by employees who are trained in house. That requires an investment in people, Ryan said, because it takes about two years to fully train an installer.

"But, it's a lot better, because we can control the quality," he said. "We also offer floor sanding and refinishing. That's new, we never used to do that."

While the store is poised for the next economic boom when construction is expected to pick up, the business has continued to grow despite the ups and downs of the economy.

"When I started here we had four vans. I thought that was enough," Ryan said. "We have eight vans on the road today. Thirty years ago we had one installation crew and now we have eight crews."

New home construction may be down but there are a lot of homeowners who are making upgrades and doing renovations to existing homes.

"People are just investing in their homes," he said. "Right now it's one of the best investments you can make."

New lines reflect demands for high quality and environmentally friendly products such as wool rugs, hard wood and cork flooring along with tile of all kinds. The face of tile has changed too with many more decorative details, nat-

ural stone, and even pebbles of all shapes and sizes that look great with water flowing over them reflecting the look of nature.

While the expanded showroom and its countless offerings can be overwhelming for buyers, Valley Floors showroom is consumer friendly. Ryan pointed out new features that help put products in perspective.

A refreshment area where shoppers and their children can enjoy coffee or juice and view a large screen where wireless Internet sites show how rooms can look when products are put together well.

And out front designers Debbie Elliot and Jen Brougham help people find the products and look they want with their expertise and friendly personalities.

On a cold day in January, the showroom was warm and brightly lit. Groups of family members were busy feeling different kinds of carpet and tile including frosted glass. Elliot was busy answering questions, but not too busy to greet a familiar face who hadn't been in since hunting for products for a new house five years ago. Cooper remembered too, wagging his tail and looking for a familiar pat.

"We're all a big family here," Ryan said. "We even have customers like yourself, who just stop in to say hi and pet Cooper."

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Celebrating 30 Years ...



Wes Ward takes a moment in the main car repair bay of his shop at 1193 Portland St. in St. Johnsbury.

Local Boy Does Good: The Wes Ward Story

BY TODD WELLINGTON
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — Wes Ward didn't have a problem getting a job after college.

After graduating from Lyndon State in 1986 with a degree in business administration, he quickly landed a position with a growing St. Johnsbury company that would later become a marketplace leader.

Of course, getting the job wasn't all about being young, educated and hard working. Wes Ward also had the inside track to the job. He already knew the boss: an enterprising young fellow named ... Wes Ward. "I wanted to go to college and I needed something I could do on my own time," said Ward. "I needed something I could work around my school schedule."

So it was incoming college freshman Wes Ward who started Wes Ward Auto Repair as a part-time endeavor in May 1981.

Three decades later, he's still at it. Wes Ward, 53, was born in St. Johnsbury at Brightlook Hospital and is a 1975 graduate of St. Johnsbury Academy. He enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he spent three years as a heavy equipment operator stationed at Army posts in Virginia and Washington State. He came home in 1978 and supported himself doing a series of odd jobs – including a stint as a milkman – before starting his business and entering college on the GI Bill.

Ward worked part time and went to school part time. He got his education and built his little start-up business into what is now the largest independent auto repair shop in the area, with 16 employees, eight bays and enough high-tech equipment to service nearly every size and kind of vehicle. He's also found time to raise two children, remain active in the community and become a national leader in the world of independent repair shops.

But it all started with two rented bays in 1981.

Wes Ward Auto Repair opened its doors 30 years ago at a service station on the site of what is now the Valero gas station on Portland Street. While attending school he built his business and soon had three employees and two tow trucks. After graduating from Lyndon State he just kept going.

"Things were going really well so I just decided to stick with it," said Ward.

He's relocated twice and now oversees a repair shop that not only



Wes Ward Auto Repair at 1193 Portland St. in St. Johnsbury.

services nearly every kind of vehicle known to man but also includes a mobile heavy equipment repair division that services equipment that other repair shops use across New England.

In 1995, his original landlords at the service station decided to sell and he needed a new place to work. So Ward moved his shop from St. Johnsbury to his home in Danville and stayed there until the former Sumner Tire building at 1193 Portland St. became available – and he jumped at it.

"I wasn't looking for a new space," said Ward. "I just saw the potential of that building."

The shop, just up the road from where he started out, features six automobile bays with lifts as well as two truck bays. The truck bays are equipped with a pair of heavy-duty lifts, including a 30,000-pound lift used to service large vehicles and a 60,000-pound lift that can handle even larger vehicles such as commercial tractor-trailer trucks.

The shop and its staff of ASE-certified technicians also do commercial fleet maintenance, alignments and even work on recreational vehicles such as boats and RVs. The shop provides full-service repairs including tire, exhaust, brake repair, engine and transmission repair and overhaul. They work on all makes and models, both foreign and domestic, and Ward has a client list that includes the Vermont State Police, the Vermont Department of Corrections, CALEX Ambulance, Federal Express and scores of local businesses such as Dead River Corp., Palmer Brothers, Vermont Tennis Corp. and

A.D. Rossi Inc.

His other business, Wesward Equipment Service, is a regional heavy-equipment repair division that services clients across New England. The equipment-repair division, started in 1991, maintains and repairs heavy shop equipment used at other repair facilities such as wheel balancing machines, bulk oil systems, large scale machinery for corporate customers and even conveyor belt repair.

Ward is civic minded, serving as past president of the St. Johnsbury Kiwanis Club and the Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce. He also volunteers as a guardian ad litem in the Vermont court system. A Vermont guardian ad litem advocates for abused and neglected children going through the court system.

"I like to help kids and that's what that job is," said Ward. "I'd like to think I can make a difference."

Ward also keeps busy on the national level serving as one of just six members of the Parts Plus National Advisory Council.

"We're from all over the country," said Ward. "I represent the Northeast. We get together a couple times a year and talk about trends in the industry and how we can improve the industry."

But as busy as he seems to be, Ward said his success is less about the complex world of business and more about the simple element of human interaction.

"I've always tried to treat people honestly and ethically," said Ward. "I've found that if you do that, they'll come back."

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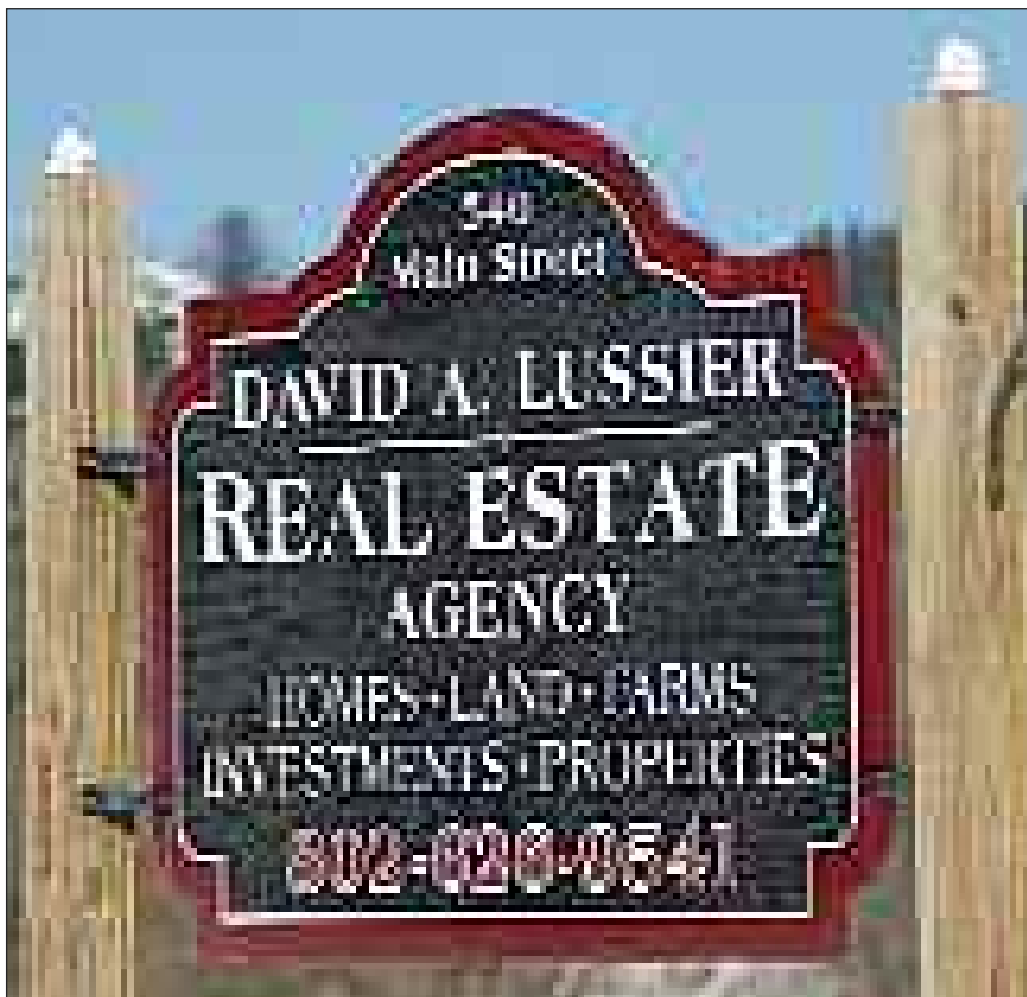


PHOTO BY AMY ASH NIXON

David A. Lussier opened his Lyndonville real estate office 25 years ago

David A. Lussier Real Estate Enjoys Silver Anniversary

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE – In 1980, David A. Lussier first ventured out into the real estate business, working for the first five years of his real estate career for the Gerald Farrington Real Estate Agency, getting enough experience to head out and open the agency in his own name in 1986.

Marking its silver anniversary, the business and Lussier's interest in real estate were a natural outgrowth of the family auctioneering business, he said. "Before he earned his real estate license, he first had obtained his auctioneering license in 1979, he recalled. He said he can't remember the exact moment when real estate became his next step, but said the business of selling property goes well with his family's auction enterprise, which dates to 1953, under his dad Roger's ownership, and his brother Reg's, as well. "They just went together," he said of real estate and auctioneering. "Honestly, I think my father just said, 'It might be nice to have a real estate license to go along with it,'" he said.

"In the late 1980s, things were rocking," recalled Lussier, sitting in his office on a recent morning where outside, temperatures hovered at about 20 below zero. "People were buying, and then came the S & L problems, and then we had a recession." Now, another recession, tied in no small part to predatory lending practices that led to a nationwide foreclosure crisis and to federal intervention in the housing market as a result.

During his 30-plus years as a Realtor, and starting his 26th year on his own, Lussier has ridden the wave of the ups and downs of the real estate market during some of its highest peaks and lowest bottoms.

"The changes? Oh God, you used to go from a one-page listing and a one-page purchase-and-sales agreement, and now the paperwork is just astronomical," from the start

of the process to the mortgage paperwork, which is daunting in its dozens of pages requiring signatures, he said.

In the old days, he said, the saying was "Buyer Beware" and now it's "Seller Better Tell."

Also in the old days, he said, buyers didn't have the ability to come in with their own agent representing them, and now buyer brokers are common – meaning an agency represents the buyer and helps them deal with listing agencies for properties being marketed by any other agency, giving the buyer an advocate in a sale rather than just the seller's representative who is looking out for the seller's best interest.

Lussier said many people are still not aware of the fact they can turn to an agency with whom they feel comfortable to help them in the buying process, and they don't have to simply work with whatever agency is handling a property for the seller.

Another major change over his career in the industry is the advent of the Internet and Multiple Listings Service online – people now can do a lot of their property searching and homework before even getting to the Realtor, and do. Another big change is the level of inspections and the disclosures legally required; inspections are a big issue now, where back then, someone might just have a carpenter go through with them, or an uncle, and now you've got licensed inspectors, said Lussier.

Of the housing boom and collapse and down period that the country is still coming out of in terms of real estate, Lussier said the Northeast Kingdom never got as far out of whack on values as other areas, and people didn't tend to borrow beyond their means as much as in some areas of the country. The credit crunch is very real since the national problems with bad mortgage loans have come to light, and now, Lussier said, he recommends to people before they even start looking that they get

pre-approved, so they know how much their budget is.

"You've actually got to have credit now," said Lussier. Of the problems that have been in the news a great deal the past few years with the mortgage crisis, Lussier said, "People were just spending more than they should have or they just thought that this was never going to end...that the values were just going to go up and up and up. Well around here, people can only afford X amount of dollars," he said.

In this part of the state, "we plug along, and we're fortunate for the businesses and factories we have," he said of the employment sector. "Most people have stayed within their means. There are some foreclosures, but nowhere near what they are in other parts of the country."

As for what's coming? Lussier said the numbers make now an ideal time to buy. Interest rates are low and prices are down. He believes the sun is coming back out for the market and the economy in general.

"Now is the best time to buy," he said.

Lussier predicts that there will be more listings come on the market as spring nears, and he's optimistic that things are beginning to improve.

"I still have some calls or e-mails from people out of the area looking," he said. "Some people wait until spring, and then when things turn green, it looks better. Who wants to move in the winter, anyway? I think people are sick of hearing about all the bad things, and feeling like if we're going to do it, let's just do it."

Of selling in this recovering market, Lussier notes, "You've got to price it for today's market unless you've got something very unique."

Located at 540 Main St. in Lyndonville, the David A. Lussier Real Estate Agency can be found online at www.lussierrealestateagency.com.

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Celebrating 25 Years ... Weeza Much More Than A Bookkeeper

BY JEANNE MILES
News Correspondent

EAST BURKE — Weeza Sanderson is a very busy woman. She is a bookkeeper, farmer, artisan, photographer, fundraiser and volunteer.

Sanderson started her bookkeeping business in 1986 and it grew to 40 clients. Most of those were businesses including Lyndon Rescue. She handles accounts payable and receivable, balances checkbooks, some payroll and monthly statements and quarterly tax filings.

"Right now I'm booked solid," Sanderson said. "I even have a waiting list."

Sanderson works out of her home on Route 114 north of East Burke Village, where she and her husband, Sam, make wooden bowls and other unique wooden items. Their showroom is filled with beautiful pieces that are not only pleasing to the eye, but useful too. Weeza photographs the items for brochures for the business called Sanderson's Wooden Bowls and Sanderson's Woodturning.

"The showroom is doing really well," Weeza Sanderson said. "A lot of customers come here."

They also come to see the 14 miniature donkeys the couple raises. The Sandersons also raise and sell meat rabbits. Right now they have about 50, but that number will grow as the rabbits breed.

"The Mediterranean-Sicilian donkey is the only farm animal that comes to you for love – no treats needed," Sanderson said. They need to have a buddy, she added. "I won't sell one to someone unless there is another animal to keep him company."

While Sanderson enjoys her work as a bookkeeper and artisan, and loves her animals, it's her work for the American Cancer Society that really grabs her.



PHOTO BY JEANNE MILES

Weeza Sanderson, who does a great business keeping books for local businesses, has many other interests. Here, she turns a bowl at her husband's woodshop in East Burke.

"It is my passion," she said.

Sanderson is a two-time cancer survivor. In 1999 she was diagnosed with stage 2 breast cancer. Then in 2001 she developed melanoma. She worked while receiving chemo treatments, which Sanderson described as "intense." She cut her client list down to 20, "which is still plenty," she said.

She got involved with Relay for Life in 2005, an event to raise money for cancer research. The 14-hour event honors survivors and caretakers and also remembers those who did not make it. This year the relay will take place on June 11 and 12. Her team, which she named "The Incredible Journey," has been one of the top fundraisers each year. Trophies in her living room attest to that. In five years the team has raised almost \$50,000.

In 2008 Sanderson received the Spirit Award. Last year she was named Volunteer of the Year. "I was totally blown away," Sanderson said. "I had no idea. It really meant

a lot to me."

Sanderson is a member of Survival Committee, a group that meets monthly and raises money throughout the year. She has good words to say about the American Cancer Society because all the money raised goes to research. Sanderson also volunteers for the society as part of the Reach for Recovery, a group that supports cancer patients by answering questions and listening. "I really enjoy that," she said.

Sanderson also helps out at the Willoughby Dip, an event organized by Fred Laferriere of St. Johnsbury after he lost his brother to cancer. Last year she made the plunge, but once was enough, she said. "It was incredibly cold." Now, she helps with registrations and collecting money.

Yes, Weeza Sanderson is a very busy woman.

Oh, one more thing. Weeza Sanderson is an avid Red Sox fan, which can also be exhausting, she said.

Martin's Cleaning Serves With Pride

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON, N.H. — It began with a little bit of moonlighting.

In 1984, Ed Martin Jr. of Littleton was working at People's Bank, now known as Connecticut River Bank, doing cleaning and maintenance. Good cleaners were in demand then and Martin was soon approached by people seeking his services.

"A couple of people asked me about cleaning, then more people asked and I thought there's not a lot of people in this business and I looked at it as a business venture," he said.

Taking his brother, Scott Martin, as partner, Martin's Cleaning Service was born in 1986.

"We offer carpet and upholstery cleaning and janitorial services," he said. "We are fully insured and part of the Better Business Bureau."

The company currently employs a mostly full-time staff of 10 and has more than 50 contracts in a service area that includes Littleton, Lancaster, Whitefield and, for the past seven years, St. Johnsbury.

Janitorial services are commercial and the company does not clean homes or offer a maid service, though Martin said the company does residential steam cleaning for carpets and upholstery cleaning.

Martin said the company could be a lot bigger than it is, but he prefers to be close at hand and not hire com-



PHOTO BY SYLVIE WEBER

Ed Martin is all smiles as he shows off one of the service trucks for Martin's Cleaning Service of Littleton.

plete strangers.

"Our best advertising has been word of mouth," he said. "People trust us. When they talk to me, they know I'm not trying to oversell them. Everybody has a budget and it's my job to keep the business flowing."

Despite increases in the price of fuel and cleaning solutions, Martin said, his rates have not increased dramatically through the years, but have remained competitive.

"I've always managed to keep my rates below everyone else's," he said. "We just find faster and better ways of doing things."

For half his life, Martin has been cleaning and his Littleton-based company has stood the test of time.

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Celebrating 25 Years ...



Store owner Deb King, left, and West Barnet Quick Stop manager Sue Robinson talk with Janet Locke as they take her order over the deli counter.

Store Owner Finds Success By Adapting And Growing

BY SALLY COOK
 News Correspondent

The Barnet Village Store has been part of the fabric of town life since the 1890s and in the same building where the Odd Fellows Hall was located on the third floor. Customers can still buy a selection of custom-cut meats, dairy products and groceries, as well as a variety of meals to go.

Deb King, celebrating her 25 years of ownership this year, has kept the tradition alive by adapting to changing customer demands.

In 2008, she branched out by buying the Barnet Quick Stop in West Barnet that added gasoline, propane, a large game weigh station and an ice cream window to her offerings.

"You have to be able to adapt, or you won't stay in the business," she said. "When I first bought the store, I was doing custom-cutting meat for people who were raising their own animals for food as well as deer, moose, elk and bear for hunters. I mostly did the wrapping, but I did some custom cutting too."

Eventually Deb's brother Brian Adams took over the custom-cutting part of the business at his Joe's Brook Road facility, and King put in a deli to respond to the growing demand for deli foods, custom made sandwiches and other ready-to-eat dishes.

Deb and her brother grew up in Barnet on the family farm with their parents Winston and Burnice Adams. The farm has been in the family for more than 200 years, King said. Of Scottish descent, the family was one of Barnet's founding settlers. And Burnice still supplies the store with personal-size pies.

Things were going well until her father died the same day the store's cooler quit, she recalled.

"My husband Armand took a few days off from his job and built a walk-in cooler for me," she said, explaining Armand works for Morrison's Custom Feeds in Barnet. "He can fix anything. He keeps things around here running from changing light bulbs to welding the furnace, doing the mechanics for the van and cutting wood to feed the furnace."

The couple has also beefed up the energy efficiency by insulating the large three-story building so it only takes about three cords of woods to heat, instead of 10 cords it took to heat when she bought it. The building is double-walled which helps, but there is an electric energy cost to run refrigeration compressors that also contribute to the interior heat.

"When I bought the business, I bought only the first two floors," King said. "I bought the Odd Fellows Hall only five years ago."

The third floor was a good place for her two teenage stepsons to be playing pool. But one day they decided to explore and found that the stairs to the stage were movable. Behind the stairs under the stage their exploration revealed a coffin. Then they opened the coffin and much to their surprise – and perhaps terror – they found a skeleton.

As it turns out, it was a fake skeleton and not the real thing, although it was real enough to later fetch \$175 along with the coffin at a cleaning-out auction.

The West Barnet Quick Stop also has a history, but not as long. It was once a machine shop owned by John Bishop, then renovated into a convenience store by Richard and Paula Stevenson. It was later sold to

a couple from Marshfield and known as Aunt Dees before it was sold to King, who then doubled its inventory of groceries.

The ghosts of the past are gone and only the good food and friendly service offered by Deb and her staff of from 12 to 20 employees, depending upon the season remains.

Longtime employee Sue Robinson, who started working for King in August 1998, is the capable manager of the West Barnet Quick Stop. Robinson is a top-notch cook, who is often behind the scenes in the kitchen during regular community benefit dinners.

On the menus are intriguing items such as the Bad Boy Burger (with everything), Jalapeno Poppers, chicken tornado, steak and cheese, meatball grinders, chicken cordon bleu, and of course pizza now in 12- and 16-inch sizes, with a selection of toppings.

Plans for the 25th anniversary year include Thursday's genuine Jamaican nights with Derrick Samuels, a customer appreciation barbecue this summer, and special drawings and give-aways throughout the year.

Regular store hours are in the winter at the village store from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. daily and summer from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. At the West Barnet store, daily winter hours are 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. and from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. during the summer.



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Celebrating 25 Years ...



Carroll Sherburne, Donnalee Sherburne, Scott Hershey, Mike Davis and Chad Bigelow with a customer's hot rod stand in front of the spacious Carroll's Automotive Shop on Memorial Drive at the Lyndon-St. Johnsbury town line. Carroll founded the business 25 years ago when he was 18.

Carroll's Automotive Celebrates A Long History In The Kingdom

BY JAMES JARDINE
Staff Writer

Carroll and Donnalee Sherburne of Sutton, owners of Carroll's Automotive, located on the Lyndon-St. Johnsbury town line at 4772 Memorial Drive on Route 5 is enjoying 25 years of business.

The business was founded at Carroll's home on Sutton River Road in Sutton when Carroll was 18 years old. When he was 10, he began working for the late Warren Fox at Fox's sawmill. Fox mentored the young Sherburne and was always helping him tinker with something and instilling a good work ethic and a love for everything mechanical.

Sherburne followed through on his interest in auto mechanics at Lyndon Institute, where he was fortunate enough to have another great teacher, John Emery, who taught auto mechanics at LI for many years.

Carroll's father, Ronald Sherburne, was an auto mechanic who ran his own shop for many years on Broad Street in Lyndonville before retiring.

After driving a truck for a year to save up enough money, Carroll built a one-bay garage at his home and launched his own business while still a teenager. After building up his business on the Sutton River Road, Carroll decided he wanted to expand and moved to his present location 12 years ago.

He runs the business with his wife, Donnalee Sherburne, who did all the garage's administration and bookkeeping in a small office area at the garage until recently. Now, she's moved into a spacious modular home converted into an office just down the road from the shop. She runs her own business, Northridge Bookkeeping, and continues to be Carroll's partner in the auto repair business.

The one-bay garage has given way to a spacious three-bay garage with a large lot. No longer a solo act, Carroll continues to turn wrenches in one of the bays while Mike Davis does mechanical work in another bay. Chad Bigelow is the garage's service manager and Scott Hershey is interning at the garage and planning to go off to college soon. Hershey has developed an enthusiasm for the repair business and has developed excellent skills while learning on the job, much like Carroll learned on the job 30 years ago.

Keeping up with the times, Carroll and Donnalee added a website for their business at

www.cautovt.com.

The Sherburnes take pride in their legions of longtime, loyal customers who have been bringing their vehicles to the shop for years. To stay competitive, the Carrolls are constantly investing in the business, recently acquiring an all-new, state-of-the-art alignment machine. In addition, they invest in all of the electronic and computer technology needed to read the electronic diagnostic signals sent out by today's newer cars and trucks. Buying new equipment is a constant as automobile technology changes and the multiplicity of cars and trucks, each with their own systems, increases.

There is not much that Carroll's Automotive doesn't fix and, actually, the term "Automotive" may be a bit limiting: Carroll's works on the biggest over the road diesel trucks, log skidders, tractors and even motorcycles. In addition to the kind of car repair one is accustomed to, Carroll's also replaces glass, sells tires, does alignments and diagnostic work, state inspection, brake jobs and everything else except for automatic transmission rebuilding. Carroll will take the transmission out and install an overhauled or new transmission, but he arranges to job out transmission overhauls to a shop specializing in transmissions.

Donnalee laughs as she recalls one of Carroll's earlier mechanical triumphs was repairing a customer's bean pot pressure cooker.

Another large component of the Sherburnes' business is commercial and fleet maintenance and repair with companies owning multiple vehicles bringing their work to Sherburne. He can assist with transportation if a customer would like their vehicle picked up and returned or if they need a ride after dropping their vehicle off.

Since Carroll built his one-bay garage in Sutton 25 years ago, the Sherburnes have seen lots of growth. They've raised two daughters and have always been willing to give back to the communities they serve, participating in food drives and supporting local groups and community projects.

In a world that has seen major economic turmoil over the last few years, with news of economic downturn and business failures seemingly on the news every day, Carroll's Automotive has remained anchored, steadily growing and expanding its services to provide the same quality repairs they've been providing for 25 years.

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Celebrating 25 Years ...



PHOTO BY SYLVIE WEBER

Ray Merchand, owner of Track Side Farm and Garden in Littleton, prepares to forklift some animal feed.

Track Side Farm And Garden Serve The North Country Well

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON, N.H. — For Ray and Elaine Merchand, the downsizing of one business 25 years ago led them to open their own. The owners of Track Side Farm and Garden, the Littleton distributor of animal feeds, celebrate a quarter-century in business this year.

Ray and Elaine were running the Beacon Feeds store in Barre, Vt., before it burned down. "Beacon moved into a small building in St. Johnsbury and we decided we wanted to open a store of our own," he said. After speaking with a Realtor, they found a suitable site on Cottage Street.

They purchased it, and for the first three years sold Blue Seal feed and have sold Nutrena feed ever since.

"We are a distributor for Nutrena and have close to 20 other Nutrena dealers within a 100-mile radius," Ray said. "We have a full line-up of animal feeds. Anything that has to do with preserving or storing animal feeds, we handle it."

The bulk of the clients are dairy farmers and Track Side's deliveries extend as far south as Webster, N.H., and Woodstock, Vt., as far west as Hardwick and north to Derby, Newport and the Canadian border. The company currently serves more than 20 farms.

"We also have some fair-sized horse farms we deliver to as well," Ray said.

The Nutrena product runs the gamut of feeds for household pets, birds, horses, pigs, dogs, chickens, llamas and more. "We also sell a lot of deer feed," Ray said.

They began with one employee 25 years ago and now have four full-time employees and one-part time.

Robin Irwin, who has been with the company since it began in 1986, does all the ordering for the store as well as all the billing.

"For such a small crew, we do quite a bit. We unload a tractor trailer of grain every other day," said Irwin. "That equals 23 tons. The grain trucks go out to the



PHOTO BY SYLVIE WEBER

Elaine Merchand, left, co-owner of Track Side Farm and Garden, and Robin Irwin of Groton, Vt., who has been working for the Merchands since they set up shop in Littleton 25 years ago, take a break from their work day.

different farms every day."

Ray said that equates to about nine trailer loads of feed in a month versus the half-trailer of feed the company when it first got off the ground would unload once a month.

Currently, two delivery trucks take to the road to deliver to the Nutrena sub-dealers. "The customer base is still growing," he said. "We do a lot in hay shavings and straw and sell a lot of bailing twine and bailing wrap. I'm probably the biggest distributor of bail wrap in a 75-mile radius."

Ray also works for Cargill Animal Nutrition, the parent company of Nutrena, selling bulk feed to dairy barns.

Track Side is located at 51

Cottage St. in Littleton, right at the railroad tracks. "That's how we came up with the name," said Ray.

Ray has been in the animal business for 32 years.

"I enjoy working with people who want to do better," he said. "It's been quite a challenge. The dairy industry has been hit hard, but I enjoy working with dairy farmers because they are a good, honest bunch of people and you can help them grow and be more efficient. On the store side, I still enjoy talking with people and answering questions about animals."

This October, Ray plans to retire and pass the baton to his son, Don.

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Celebrating 20 Years ...



Rosemary Gingue displays her hearty Vermont roots in front of one of Begin Realty's St. Johnsbury listings.

St. J Native Keeps Begin Realty Thriving

BY LEAH CAREY
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — Rosemary Gingue is St. Johnsbury born and bred — she grew up here, attended St. Johnsbury Academy, and returned to marry another St. Johnsbury native after attending college in Burlington, Vt.

Now, she's in the business of helping other young families to build their lives here.

Gingue is the owner of Begin Realty Associates on Portland Street in St. Johnsbury. She began working there as a secretary soon after the business opened in 1991. She got her license in 1994 and worked her way up through the ranks. She purchased the business from previous owner Ernie Begin in 2009. Begin remains as a full-time agent and friend.

This is a family business in many respects. Of the 10 agents in the St. Johnsbury and Danville offices, there are two sets of mother/daughter agents. Office manager Annette Keach is Begin's sister. Even Begin and Gingue are distantly related. Gingue speaks enthusiastically about the possibility of bringing her own daughters-in-law into the business to carry on the family dynamic.

The real estate business has changed a lot since Begin Realty opened in 1991. Aside from the obvious housing market bubble and crash of the last few years, their entire work flow has been revolutionized.

"There used to be four big three-ring binders in the office and we'd spend hours with a single buyer going over all of the possibilities," Gingue said.

Now, all of that information is available on the Internet, and buyers often come in already knowing which property they're interested in. They can even stand in front of



Rosemary Gingue checks residential, land, and commercial listings from her desk at Begin Realty Associates in St. Johnsbury.

a house and text-message her for the information.

"I was worried that the Internet would be the demise of Realtors because customers could look up a listing and get all the information on their own. Now you can do a Google search, find the property on Google maps, and do a drive-by." However Gingue says the concern was unnecessary because most people need a Realtor to help them navigate the constantly-changing market.

Last week a woman came in who was new to the market and asked Gingue a whole list of questions about how taxes are paid, what it means to be a first-time home-buyer, how and why to get a home inspection, and what costs there are beyond the selling price. Without a Realtor she would have had to figure it all out for herself.

"What I like best is being able to educate a buyer," Gingue said. "I also like setting up a rapport be-

tween a buyer and seller. Trust is important."

A newly married couple recently came in wanting a house on a large plot of land where they could hunt and have privacy.

"The properties they found needed a lot of work and they realized that's not what they wanted to spend their time doing," Gingue said. "They realized this wouldn't be their forever home. Now they know they want an investment in the right location at the right price." They settled on a smaller home with one acre of land that's 15 minutes from their work. "This is a good home for them."

Gingue said she loves the excitement of leading somebody like this young couple through the process of finding the right home for their needs. Another young couple is now part of the family tradition at Begin Realty Associates.

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Celebrating 20 Years ... Northern Vermont Tent Rental Celebrates Years Of Celebrations

BY JENNIFER HERSEY
CLEVELAND
Staff Writer

NEWPORT — In its 20th year, Northern Vermont Tent Rental's motto is still "quality first," according to owner Wayne Gooley.

In 1991 Gooley started out with one tent. From those modest beginnings, the business now has 24 tents available for outdoor weddings and parties.

"It just kind of grew over the years," Gooley said. "We just keep adding stuff on."

But even with that many tents on hand, people should plan ahead. Gooley said some customers start booking rentals for the coming year as early as October.

Gooley's wife, Becky, does the bookkeeping for the business, and in summers, the Gooleys employ eight to 10 people to assist with setting up and taking down tents and hand cleaning, loading, and repairing all of the many items for rent.

Gooley said the crew once loaded everything onto a barge to set up on an island, and they've set up tents in hurricanes before. "That's a real challenge," he said.

One time the wind was blowing so bad that it took four guys to hold down a small tent. The wind whipped one fellow's hat and glasses right off his head. They flew into the street, where they were promptly crushed by an oncoming vehicle, Gooley said.

Tents come in many styles and sizes, Gooley said, to accommodate intimate gatherings up to large festivities. The business offers on-site evaluations and computer-aided layouts in both 2-D and 3-D.

People need not worry about rain, because the tents come with sides, replete with windows, and



COURTESY PHOTO

Northern Vermont Tent Rental has tents of all sizes to offer.

walkways are available to keep guests dry while moving from tent to tent or from tent to a permanent structure.

May, Sept. and Oct. get a bit cold for outdoor occasions, but Northern Vermont Tent Rental also has heaters available.

"You just turn up the thermostat, like you would in your living room," Gooley said.

While the humble Gooley says he doesn't have every single thing needed for an outdoor occasion, he has just about everything - from

linens in colors ranging from gold-enrod to eggplant to complete place settings, from dance floors to tables and chairs in a variety of styles.

The business offers cooking equipment like gas grills and convection and warming ovens, as well as specialty lighting.

Japanese lanterns are particularly popular these days. "They are a pain to put up, but everyone seems to like them," Gooley said.

Online: www.northernvermont-tentrental.com

Celebrating 15 Years ...



PHOTO BY SYLVIE WEBER

Jackson Corner Casuals owner Holly Ricci shows some of the clothes she carries at her Main Street store in Littleton.

Jackson Corner Casuals Favors The Bohemian Look

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON, N.H. — Located at 50 Main St. in Littleton, Jackson Corner Casuals has a range of clothing and accessories that run the gamut.

"I have jewelry, scarves and

pocketbooks and various things from all over the world," said owner Holly Ricci.

Ricci moved to the North Country 26 years ago. After working in retail for the first decade, she took the plunge and decided to open her own shop, Jackson Corner Casuals, which turns 15 this year.

"I lean toward the Bohemian look," she said. "I like the Indian styles and love the designs they use on their clothes."

Ricci, who keeps the shop open six days a week excluding Sundays, enjoys the creative part of her job.

"I like putting the clothes together and figuring out what some-

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Celebrating 10 Years ...



PHOTO BY TODD WELLINGTON

One of the work trailers used by New England Foam and Coating to service customers across New England.

Bringing The Foam: New England Foam and Coating

BY TODD WELLINGTON
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — New England Foam and Coating on Concord Avenue is owned by Shannon and Buddy Chapman, who founded the company in 2001 after moving to the Northeast Kingdom from Alaska. The spray foam insulation and urethane coatings are available for a wide array of building projects.

They travel all over New England to service customers as far

away as Martha's Vineyard or closer to home, where they have worked on dormitory projects at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, N.H., and the new green dorm at St. Johnsbury Academy. They also do houses of all sizes and specialize in using foam insulation to bring warmth to cold winter floors.

They've even brought their foams and coatings to some places you wouldn't expect, such as commercial methane digesters and even a portable handicapped toilet

that a client was turning into a ice shanty.

The Chapmans have four employees who travel across the New England area to serve customers in the two trucks and trailers they operate. Shannon Chapman said foam insulation is a product that tends to sell itself.

"It's the most energy-efficient and best insulation you can get," said Shannon. "Plus, it works great in both seasons. It keeps your house warm in the winter and cool in the summer."



PHOTO BY ROBERT BLECHL

Benjamin Franklin Plumbing of Littleton celebrates 10 years of business in May.

Benjamin Franklin Plumbing Has Grown Over The Years

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON, N.H. — What began out of a house in Lisbon in May 2001 has evolved into a full-service plumbing and heating company that employs a staff of five and serves the whole North Country.

Now located at 4 Redington St. in Littleton, the business also does replacement and maintenance of water well pumps, sewer drain

cleaning and inspection and pipe lining for both drainage and water pipes.

"I'm also a certified backflow prevention device inspector," said owner Roland Abbott. "As a licensed plumber, I have two sets of skills that are very unique – I can repair them as well as inspect."

On lining water pipes, he uses an epoxy coating that is blown through the lines, and cures as it blows through, so within hours the house is back up and running, he

said.

The company's service area extends Ashland to the south and Pittsburg to the north and covers the towns between Hanover and Conway.

In 2009, Abbott's wife, Carol, joined the business.

"I enjoy taking care of people's problems and getting them fixed," he said. "We strive to provide outstanding service for our customers."

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Celebrating 10 Years ...



PHOTO BY AMY ASH NIXON

Mark and Renee Baxter, in front at left and right, along with the Creative Counters mascot, Bailey, are joined by their employees, from left: Glenn Longley, Jay Sargent, Kevin Benoit, Kevin Lessard, Chad Cole, Steve Lee, Paul Leduc, Harry Sidney, Brian Fenoff, Robert Hamel (man you can not see), Craig McCormick II, Kevin Greenwood, Andrew Neylon and Travis Reed.

Creative Counters Offers A One Stop Countertop Shop

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — Creative Counters turns 10 this year, and in just one decade has seen some major shifting of its market.

The boom in the housing market encompassed a little better than the first half of its tenure, then a sharp decline in the housing market led the company, owned by husband-and-wife Mark and Renee Baxter, to navigate to calmer commercial waters in recent years – a move that's proving fruitful and is keeping their crew busy.

With more than a dozen employees, a huge factory space where counters are custom designed and fabricated – stone and solid surface – off Route 122 in Lyndonville, the company is weathering the storm and doing well, report the Baxters.

According to the company, Creative Counters is a wholesale

counter-top fabricator that sells to kitchen and bath contractors, lumber yards and mill works. It started operations in 2001 working in the owner's garage with one employee. Now, with two buildings for their growing operations, the company has 12 full-time employees and one part-time employee. Its sales territory is currently Vermont, New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts.

"We stand behind our workmanship and pride ourselves on our quality and services," the company's website says. "Our motto is that we are a 'One Stop Countertop Shop,' and to meet this, we are continuously adding products and services."

Mark Baxter worked for a Formica distributor before, as did a number of the men employed by Creative Counters today. In 2006 Creative Counters became DuPont®-certified fabricators of Corian™ and Zodiaq™.

The firm is introducing its own line of solid-surface vanity tops under the brand Green Mountain Vanity Tops, a solid-surface product made to look like natural stone.

When the Baxters first got into the business on their own, the housing industry was strong, but the 2008 downturn in the economy turned their focus to commercial work. Last year, Creative Counters was awarded a large commercial project with an architectural mill works company in Quebec, for the Methodist West Houston hospital in Houston, Texas. For that project, the Baxters purchased a huge routing machine, which allows them to improve lead times and work flow for residential work.

Closer to home, they have done work for Central Vermont Hospital and Fletcher Allen, they said. The company today is located in a private location on Northern Circle, off Route 122, in Lyndonville.

Jan's Beauty Supply Thrives In Downtown Lyndonville

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — Jan's Beauty Supply, owned by Jan Austin, will mark its 10th anniversary in April, having spent the full decade in the same storefront on Depot Street, right in the heart of the village.

Austin grew up in Lyndonville, and has always lived here. She graduated from the New England School of Hair Design in West Lebanon, N.H., after high school, and went right to work in Lyndonville, for Pam Peters at The Beauty Mark. Today, Peters is one of five independent stylists who rent a chair in Austin's shop, and have their own clientele and business from Jan's.

Peters' granddaughter, Cendra Hunter, is another of the independent stylists. Three others all have brought their own clientele too, including Teresa Corrow and Debbie Gilman, both of whom formerly had their own shops, and Jayne Rivera, formerly manager of the J.C. Penney Salon, said Austin.

Austin worked for Peters and another beauty shop in town before going out on her own. At first, Austin's shop was strictly a beauty supply shop, but it quickly evolved and today is both a beauty supply shop and a full-service salon. By Au-



PHOTO BY AMY ASH NIXON

Jan Austin, owner of Jan's Beauty Salon and Supply in Lyndonville, marks her 10th anniversary in Lyndonville this year.

gust of the first year, two chairs were added to the supply shop, and a few months later, two more were put in, said Austin. Now, the shop runs with six full-time stylists.

"The hairdressing part of it was doing so well that I cut back on the supply part of it," said Austin. Corrow, too, brings an added dimension, working with patients who are battling cancer with the American Cancer Society's "Look Good – Feel Better" program, for which the shop is both an advocate and a supplier.

Lyndonville is peppered with beauty salons working in close proximity to one another, but there seems to be room for the competition. Jan's

spot, she noted, is across from the Darling Inn so people can walk right over, and because it's in the very center of the business thoroughfare, business could not be better.

"It's an awesome location," she said. The shop is closed Sundays and Mondays, but "with the girls being independent, they can come in whenever they want."

There have been tough times over the 10-year run, said Austin, but for the most part, people are very loyal. She said it's interesting in her line of work to see how hairstyles all come back around as fashion trends swing in and out. "Things come back around," she said.

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Celebrating 10 Years ... New England Home Crafters Builds On Solid Foundation

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — It's hard to miss the model homes that Mark Bean, owner of New England Home Crafters, has on proud display at the prominent junction of routes 5 and 114, where a new chalet-style home with an arched window and front porch was recently added.

In business 10 years this year, this is Bean's second home business in Lyndonville, the other being the manufactured or mobile home business under his surname, on Back Center Road.

There is a big difference between the two businesses, with the modular homes of New England Home Crafters being custom-built homes the customer can design with Bean's staff, from the floor plans to every detail inside and out.

The homes are then ordered as-is, and the cost will not fluctuate at all, said Bean. They are constructed in an all-indoor facility in Maine, never exposed to the ele-



ments or pricing fluctuations or delays.

"They're built in a controlled climate," explained Bean. He said that because the builder in Maine deals with such high volume, building supply discounts are passed onto the customer, quite a different scenario than hiring a carpenter to stick-build a single home.

The homes are built completely in four to six weeks, said Bean. Local customers work with one of Bean's housing consultants, and tweak the plans. The homes are built by KBS Building Systems

out of South Paris, Maine.

New England Home Crafters works across New England, as its name suggests, and has installed projects as far away as Block Island, R.I., a job that required multiple ferry deliveries of the modular homes being installed there one blustery winter, Bean said. The company also is working with local contractors, helping to deliver custom homes in varying stages of completion, that builders can then finish on site to the homeowner's specifications.

"This has become the future," said Bean.

Celebrating 5 Years ...

The Wine Gate – Welcoming Diners For Five Years

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — The Wine Gate has become a favorite lunchtime destination.

The restaurant, located in the former Murray's Meat building off of Railroad Street in downtown St. Johnsbury, is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and offers made-from-scratch panini sandwiches, soups and salads. It also serves dinner on Friday nights from 5 to 10 p.m.

Co-owner Lauren Chamberlin realized a lifelong dream when she opened The Wine Gate in December 2006. She was inspired by her family's passion for cooking and wine. Many of the menu items are based on old family recipes.

"There's a long line of great cooks in our family," said Chamberlin. "A lot of the recipes we use are from my grandmothers [Lucille West and Faith Godfrey]."

Today, she and her husband, Tim, run the restaurant. The dining room seats 65 and an outdoor patio can accommodate another 40.

Popular items include the freshly made soups (including butternut squash and apple, cream of broccoli, mine-strone and tomato bisque), the chicken florentine panini sandwich (grilled chicken, provolone cheese, garlic and herb mayonnaise, spinach, tomato and caramelized onion) and dinner entrees such as the ribeye steak.

The restaurant has experienced steady growth over the past five years. It began by serving local customers. Today it draws passing tourists and people from outside the area. Chamberlin said the secret to its success has been the dedication of its staff.

That dedication has not gone unnoticed. Regular customers have joked that Chamberlin and her staff practically live at the restaurant.

"Everyone jokes that we live here, which is very true, it does feel like we live here," said Chamberlin. "We put our heart into everything that we do."

Barnet TradePost Unfolds A Healing Enterprise

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

Laurajeau "LJ" Stewart and her husband, Jack, used to pass the Barnet TradePost all the time.

"Every time [we passed by] we said 'Gee, that would be a perfect place for us,'" said Stewart, "and one day we saw a for-sale sign."

They quickly bought it and planned to move Stewart's private massage therapy and kinesiology practice there. That was the beginning.

Five years later the Barnet TradePost Wellness Center is a regional hub for Eastern medicine and meditation. Soon after buying the property, Stewart was approached by other potential tenants. The first were a husband and wife who were board-certified acupuncturists. Today the four-building campus houses nine private practices. Others include a Reiki healer, a midwife and a physical therapist.

There is also a workshop space – a converted barn which hosts classes including tai chi, Zen archery and tap dancing – and an art studio where Jack creates art and teaches art classes.

In the beginning, some people questioned Stewart. They wondered if creating a Wellness Center, in the middle of an economic downturn, was a good investment.

Stewart said customers sought out the center, though. She said the Wellness Center met a regional need for alternative and holistic healing. Through word of mouth it has drawn customers from "long distances." Today,

she said, the center's nine practices bring in around 150 people per week.

"We never imagined it was going to grow like this," said Stewart.

The Wellness Center has thrived despite the lack of a clear-cut business plan. Stewart said she and her husband got the ball rolling. Now, the center has a momentum of its own.

"Sometimes you don't have to plant a garden, sometimes it grows on its own," said Stewart. "Somebody handed us an opportunity to make something of this property and it has unfolded."

Caron's Real Estate Owner Fulfills Personal Promise

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

GROVETON — Diane Caron Daley kept her promise. She swore to her brother, Paul, shortly before he died, that she would start a real estate agency. It was something he had encouraged her to do. In May 2006 she kept her word and opened Caron's Gateway Real Estate in downtown Groveton.

"I had promised my brother on his dying bed that I would start my own brokerage in Groveton someday," said Daley. "So I was just making good on a promise."

The business began with three brokers: Jane Duguay, Richard Dupuis and Daley. Today they have eight brokers and plans to expand their office, which is located at the former Ryan's Gas Station building at the corner of Church and State streets. (Daley, a former high school math teacher, jokes that her business is "the separation between church and state.")

The firm handles mostly residential real estate. While Groveton has faced tough economic times in recent years, Daley said business has remained steady.

"We've been fortunate enough to survive in this market," said Daley. "I live on pretty meager means, so, as long as the bills are paid and everyone's happy, I'm happy."

She expects the local real estate market will pick up over the next couple of years as the regional economy rebounds and the real estate market picks up.

"My gut feeling is things will turn around over the next year or two and we're in position to reap the benefits," said Daley, adding that, "A positive attitude goes a long way, anyway."

Dalton Mountain Motorsports Keeps Growing

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

Dalton Mountain Motorsports, located at 475 Main St. in Lancaster, is a growth in progress.

The snowmobile and ATV dealership that opened its doors 10 years ago sells Ski-Doo snowmobiles, Suzuki motorcycles, Can Am ATVs and Commanders, Smoker Craft boats, Old Town canoes and kayaks, and Dixie Chopper lawnmowers.

"We continue to add things," said owner Lisa Nast, who bought the dealership from the family of Dean Walts in 2007 after Walts, who founded it six years prior, passed away.

The business, which employs a staff of eight, also has snowmobile and ATV rentals.

Nast said Dalton Mountain Motorsports has come a long way since it began selling snowmobiles and ATVs "It's very dependent on the economy, but it continues to grow," she said. "And if we keep getting snow like this, it will keep getting better."

Visit www.daltonmountainmotorsports.com for more information.

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