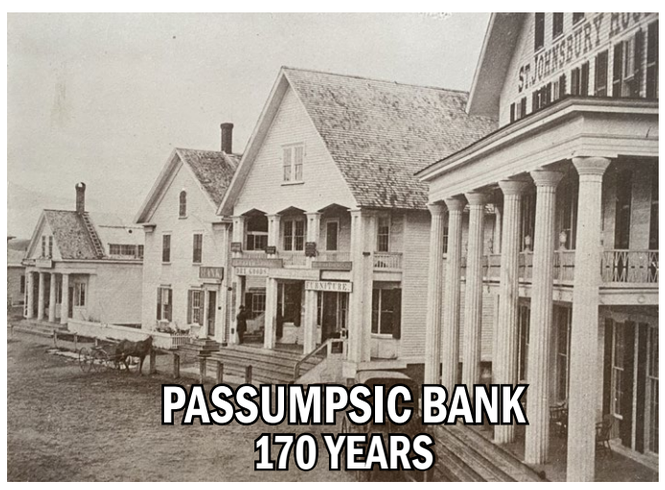
THE RECORD SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT • WEEKENDER, MARCH 25 & 26, 2023

BUSINESS RECOGNITION



A Special Supplement To The Caledonian-Record Highlighting Milestones For Some Of The Many Successful Local Businesses Of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom And The New Hampshire North Country

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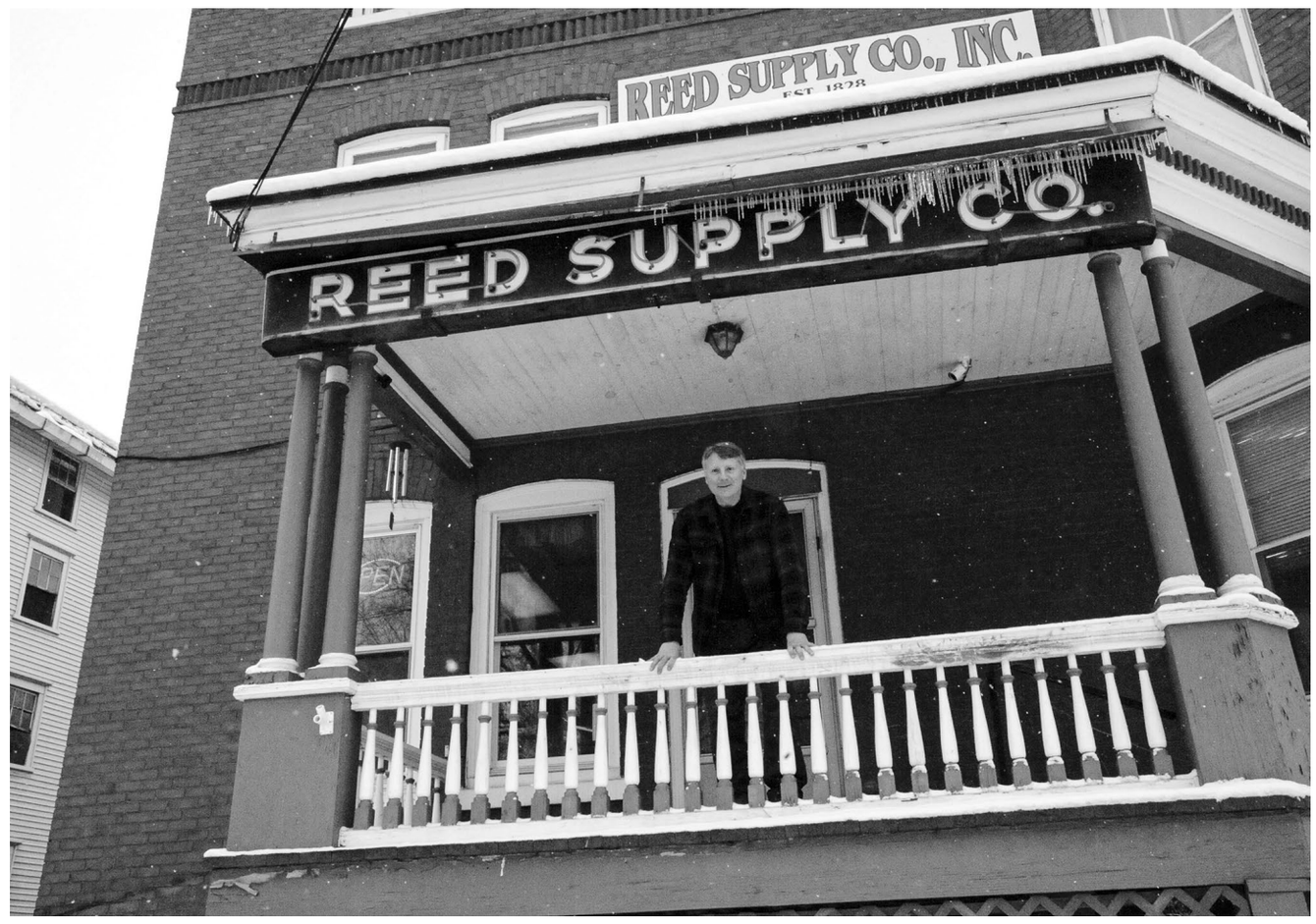

Reed Supply Co. owner Kevin Johnson stands on the porch of the business on Wednesday, March 15, 2023. Located at the corner of Mill and Perkins streets in St. Johnsbury, Reed Supply Co. is a business that started operating in town in 1828, making this year its 195th year of continuous operation. (Photo by Dana Gray)

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195 YEARS

Reed Supply Courts, Supports Customers Since 1828

BY DANA GRAY
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — The oldest business in town marks 195 years in 2023.

Reed Supply Co., at the corner of Perkins and Mill streets, started as the Paddock Iron Works in 1828 and has been in continuous operation ever since.

Nearly two centuries of business has meant several different owners, a few business name changes, evolving product lines, on-site water-generated power to electric grid access, and a relocation, to name some of the changes, but the focus that current owner Kevin Johnson has is a timeless one likely shared by Huxham Paddock in 1828.

"I think that's what it's about, developing rapport and developing relationships with your customer base, and I think that's a big part of what we do," Johnson said.

Walking through the business on a recent morning in the building the business has occupied since 1903, Johnson said there's a certain amount of added pressure to succeed when you're the owner of the oldest business around. Even the Rabbit Hill Inn, which boasts a beginning year of 1795 in Waterford, can't claim continuous operation, he said.

Johnson, of West Danville, said that means thinking about the future.

"Eventually I'm going to be looking for an exit strategy," he said.

Next year will be Johnson's 20th year as owner of Reed Supply Co, which provides industrial, safety and logging supplies along with fire extinguisher sales and service.

It operates out of a four-story building that former owners O.V. Hooker and Frank Hooker built in 1903 and operated as O. V. Hooker & Son. A street located on a hilltop above the business is called Hooker Hill Road; a foot bridge from the road extends to the Reed Supply building.

The location is not ideal for walk-in retail customers, said Johnson. Parking isn't great and shelves and racks of merchandise occupy space on multiple floors. The owners who preceded him, Doug Hamilton and Wes Emerson, said back in 1993 that they wished to relocate.

Relocation is something Johnson has been considering, as well.

"Our business is 20 percent walk-in and 80 percent on the road," he said. "I think the business would grow probably 25 percent if we had a decent retail location."

Customer Carroll Ainsworth, of Wells River, checks on an order at Reed Supply Co. in St. Johnsbury on Wednesday, March 15, 2023, with assistance from long-time employee Beth Montgomery. Located at the corner of Mill and Perkins streets in St. Johnsbury, Reed Supply Co. is a business that started operating in town in 1828, making this year its 195th year of operation. (Photo by Dana Gray) Right: This ad for Reed Supply Co. in St. Johnsbury appears in the July 25, 1953 edition of The Caledonian-Record.

Reed Supply employs seven people. Much of the business has Reed sales people making deliveries and sales and service calls to the customer. Johnson said they cover most of Vermont and the western side of New Hampshire.

Longevity in the business means the company has a lengthy list of vendors (400). "Based on our number of years in business, we have a lot of sources (for products)," said Johnson. "A lot of people end up here looking for some oddball thing that they can't get anywhere else."

The company's website notes 26 product headings with categories like "Abrasives," "Facility Maintenance," "Steel," "Safety Equip/Personal Protection," "Logging Supplies," and "Wood/Metal Cutting." Beneath each heading is a list of specific items that fit within the category. As a total, the site notes 338 specific items that Reed Supply sells.

And that's not all; above the list it states, "Below are just some of the products we offer." On the homepage is the sentence, "We are an industrial supplier of pretty much anything to anyone."

In addition, Reed Supply is home to St. J Fire Extinguisher Sales and Service LLC. The business sells and services extinguishers. It will do on-site inspections and will provide free training in the use of a fire extinguisher.

In Johnson's 19 years of ownership, he has added tire chains to the product line, increased welding supplies and grown the Personal Protection Equipment product offerings - partially out of necessity and opportunity that the pandemic brought.

During his time, the company struggled through the recession of 2008 and 2009 and is currently working through product delivery delays and the pressures of inflation.

Johnson plans to keep Reed Supply moving forward, extending its "oldest" business status further. If the right opportunity comes along, he said there could be a relocation, but at no point will they deviate from the focus on customer relations.

"We're very service-oriented," he said, to the benefit of a "phenomenal" customer base. "We've got really good customers who are like salt of the earth type people," he said.

Reed Supply, with an address of 12 Perkins St., is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The website for the business (reedsupplycompany.com) provides chronological details about the company.

"From 1828 to the Present"

"Reed Supply Company Inc. is the culmination of what began as the Paddock Iron Works in 1828, a machine shop in St. Johnsbury, VT. It was taken over by O.V. Hooker and Frank Hooker and operated as O. V. Hooker & Son until the Hooker family took over completely in 1878 changing the name again to Hooker Manufacturing Corporation. The Hooker family had one of the best equipped machine shops in New England at the time while also producing their standard products of smoke stacks, draft tubes, spark arresters, saw mills, etc. Dupont hammers and Howard saw tables were also manufactured there, both of which were St. Johnsbury inventions.

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In 1916, Frank and Ralph Hooker sold their interest to Perley Hazen, Louis Smythe, Alexander Dunnet and Morton J. Reed. Mr. Reed had been employed by Hooker Manufacturing Corporation as a bookkeeper for 10 years and gradually began acquiring the stock of the other owners. During this time, the business operated as Hooker – Reed Co., until 1926 when Morton Reed acquired all of the stock and interest in the company and the name was changed again to Reed Supply Co., Inc.

While operating as Reed Supply Co., Inc., there have been several ownership changes. Morton Reed died suddenly at the age of 56. His son, Carlyle, took over the business and gradually shifted its operations from a machine shop to dealers in machinery, industrial and mill supplies.

Carlyle Reed sold the business to Doug Beane and Eugene McDonough. Doug Beane had been an employee of Reed Supply Co., Inc. Eugene McDonough at that time was married to Carlyle Reed's daughter, Barbara. Upon their retirement in 1991, R. Douglas Hamilton purchased Reed Supply Co., Inc., from Doug Beane and Eugene McDonough. He began adding a line of logging supplies to the business sometime in 1998. On July 1, 2004, Kevin and Pam Johnson purchased the business from R. Douglas (Pam's father), who retired one year later. Kevin remains today as owner of Reed Supply Company, Inc."

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The origins of Thayers Inn stretch back 180 years ago in Littleton. (Contributed images)

180 YEARS

Thayers Inn Anchors Downtown Across Generations

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

One hundred and eight years ago in Littleton, Thayers Inn, a downtown anchor at 111 Main St. with a rich history that includes visits from U.S. presidents and presidential hopefuls as well as writers and movie stars, took shape.

It began in 1843, when Henry L. Thayer, a Littleton merchant who aspired to build a modern hotel, bought a Main Street lot near his store.

On Jan. 14, 1850, following construction, the building opened as Thayer's White Mountain Hotel.

It would soon benefit from the new railroads that came to town a few years later.

With stagecoaches owned by Thayer, guests were shuttled from the hotel to the Franconia and Crawford notches and other local attractions.

As the 1800s advanced, the hotel became a popular visit for United States presidents and presidential hopefuls, among them presidents George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Richard Nixon, Franklin Pierce and Ulysses S. Grant, and candidates who included Bob Dole, Barry Goldwater, George Romney, Estes Kefauver, Nelson Rockefeller, and Gen. George B. McClellan.

Also dropping in were New Hampshire governors who included Hugh J. Gallen and Sherman Adams.

Other guests were Ford Motor Co. founder Henry Ford, movie star Bette Davis, New York Tribune publisher Horace Greeley, Barnum and Bailey Circus founder P.T. Barnum, and a Japanese spy who lived at the hotel for several months in 1940, before the 1941 Pearl Harbor bombing, and worked for Japanese Intelligence.

Eventually, the "White Mountain" part of the name was dropped, the apostrophe removed from Thayers, and, in 1984, the change from "hotel" to "inn."

Today, just as early guests did, 21st-century guests book stays to enjoy the nearby recreational opportunities as well as the town of Littleton, ranked among the top Main Streets in the nation, and the history of the inn itself.

Guests have their choice of four "distinctive rooms with historical charm" that include superior rooms, classic rooms, family suites, and kitchenettes.

They also have inn-suggested programs and activities, including Main Street adventures, museums and historic adventures, family fun, action adventures, and outdoor and hiking adventures.

Listed are local restaurants and stores for shopping.

Events hosted in space in the inn include small wedding receptions, anniversary and birthday parties, corporate gatherings, business luncheons and meetings, and training events.

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The original home of Passumpsic Savings Bank was in shared space in a building on St. Johnsbury's Main Steet near where the firehouse is now. The building, second from left in photo, was adorned with a sign that simply said "Bank." (Photo Contributed by St. Johnsbury History and Heritage Center)

170 YEARS

Passumpsic Bank Serves Community, Supports Vitality Throughout Region

BY ANDREW MCGREGOR
Staff Writer

Recent days have been interesting ones for the banking industry. The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in California and Signature Bank in New York, as well as the unprecedented steps taken by officials in the U.S. and abroad to allay concerns about the banking system have resulted in myriad headlines about potential problems in the industry.

These events coincided with the 170th anniversary of a local landmark and major institution in the community: Passumpsic Bank. Passumpsic, which has seen its share of banking crises over the decades from the Great Depression to world wars, is thankfully well-removed from the current concerns, says President and CEO James Kisch, who noted the fundamental differences in Passumpsic's business model and the banks making current headlines.

Throughout its history, Passumpsic has been focused on serving the needs of the community and continues to fill that niche, as it evolves to meet expectations of modern customers, said Kisch.

Founded as Passumpsic Savings Bank by prominent members of the community as a mutual savings bank, which has no stockholders, it was chartered by Gov. Erastus Fairbanks of St. Johnsbury in November 1852.

This marked the formation of the first savings institution in St. Johnsbury, and the new bank started business soon after that, opening its doors for the first time on Feb. 24, 1853.

At that time, the fledgling bank was essentially a squatter, as it shared office space with the older Passumpsic Bank, a commercial bank, in a building on Main Street near where the fire station is now. While the commercial bank would eventually close, Passumpsic Savings Bank flourished and would rebrand itself Passumpsic Bank in 2018 in recognition of the many additional services the institution now provides.

On its first day of operation, 17 people deposited a total of $863 in the bank. The first depositor on the books was Samuel W. Slade, a prominent St. Johnsbury attorney and one of the bank's original corporators.

The creation of the bank filled a void for residents of the burgeoning town, who before that had to travel to Danville to save their money.

Town and Bank Grow

The birth of the Passumpsic Savings Bank coincided with an era of notable growth in the town of St. Johnsbury.

On Nov. 28, 1850, the first train arrived from Boston on the newly completed railroad. In 1851, St. Johnsbury was further connected with the world by the stringing of the first telegraph line to town, and in 1855, St. Johnsbury became the county seat and construction of the Caledonia County Courthouse was completed.

Population was also on the rise during this time as St. Johnsbury had a population of 2,760 people in 1850, and by 1860 the population had grown to 3,470.

In the early years, the bank moved back and forth across Main Street several times, bouncing from room to room and house to house, depending on who the current treasurer was and where there was space.

The bank generally enjoyed continued growth throughout this time until it was strong enough to construct its own building.

In 1884, the bank obtained the deed to a piece of property on the east side of Main Street and began construction of the three-story brick structure that was completed in 1885. The building was Passumpsic's first permanent home and still houses Passumpsic Financial Advisors today.

The bank continued to grow in customers and business through its centennial celebration weathering world wars, recessions and even the Depression, and in 1953 the bank boasted assets of over $6.2 million.

Geographic Expansion

Since then, the bank has had even more growth both geographically and financially. The bank expanded to Newport when it opened its first bank in 1964 and then grew into Lyndonville with the opening of a branch on Depot Street in 1974.

Additional branches followed on East Main Street in Newport, in 1979; Railroad Street in St. Johnsbury, in 1983; Route 5 in Lyndonville, in 1988; Route 5 in St. Johnsbury Center, in 1995; Danville in 1996 and Island Pond in 2002.

In 1995 the bank also opened a loan center in Littleton, marking its first expansion out of state. A full-service bank followed in 1999.

All told, Passumpsic Bank now has 11 branches, including the more recent additions of Berlin, Vt., and Lancaster, Groveton and Whitefield, N.H. It has its Financial Advisors service, a subsidiary firm in Northeast Home Loan, and has opened a loan production office in Williston.

Passumpsic Bank now offers all the products and services associated with the banking industry and in 2021 reported $886.45 million in assets and over $9.4 million in earnings. Passumpsic also employs 135 people through the bank and another 38 through Northeast Home Loan.

Community Role

Kisch says Passumpsic's purpose is to serve the needs of the community and to support the economic vitality of the region.

"We've got 170 years behind us, and centuries ahead of us," said Kisch. "We are always making the right decisions for the long term growth, and the best interest of our customers and the best interest of the communities we serve."

Kisch described a steady but cautious evolution to the bank. Noting that the bank only introduced the ability to open an account online last year, and one of the first customers to take advantage of that feature lived on Railroad Street in St. Johnsbury, near an existing branch.

The bank also recently introduced the ability for customers to connect with bank services via chat through its app and online platforms. "An important part of the business is connecting with one another," said Kisch, highlighting how Passumpsic and its employees are integrated into the community they serve - between volunteer hours on area boards and charities, support of local organizations, and providing financial expertise to the region.

Kisch also noted the bank's efforts to support the community through investing its earnings in community needs and projects and to identify and reach underserved populations, such as through its efforts to ease the process for foster children to open accounts.

And while digital services have seen a steady growth, especially after COVID forced the adoption and implementation of many online services, Kisch sees a need and an opportunity for physical banks. "Our belief is to create a network of locations and meet people where they are at and help people," said Kisch. "And to really focus on finding areas that are underserved and to also provide premium services to those that still want to interact with people."

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Hopkins and their trucks through the generations, include, from left, Leon E., George B. and Peter. (Contributed Photos)

130 YEARS

Hopkins & Sons Thrives Through Five Generations

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — There are not a lot of companies around anywhere that can lay claim to being in business for 100 years - and for Hopkins & Sons, Inc., this year marks 130 years for the local business!

The business has diversified a lot over the years and the Hopkins family has owned it since the early 1920s.

The original Hopkins to own the company, Leon E. Hopkins, would be proud to see that today his business continues to thrive under the talents of his descendants, and though the word 'sons' is in their name, a Hopkins daughter, Amber Hopkins Macek, is one of the owners keeping the family business going strong.

According to Amber Hopkins Macek, daughter of Peter Hopkins, and a fourth generation owner with her dad uncle, Greg Hopkins (the longtime fire chief of the Lyndonville Fire Department), "Hopkins & Sons Inc started about 1893 under the names Blodgett & Hopkins."

Leon E. Hopkins purchased the coal and wood part in the early 1920s. It became Leon E. Hopkins. Then he purchased an insurance business, shared Amber.

From there, the entrepreneurial spirit of Leon Hopkins saw Amber's great-grandfather embark on yet another diversification, "In the early 1930s he added fuel oil and kerosene which was delivered in 5 gallon buckets with a horse and wagon/sled," said Amber.

"The coal was carried in canvas bags of about 100 pounds," she said.

Hopkins & Sons in Lyndonville.

Her grandfather, would join his father after the war.

"George Hopkins entered the business in 1946 when he returned from the Marines having served in WW II," said Amber, and it was then that the business added "& Son" to its name. "The business then became Leon E. Hopkins & Son. Peter and Greg (George's sons) joined the business after serving in the Air Force. The business then became Hopkins & Sons."

The office was located on Church Street and moved to Raymond Street in the 1980s when the Church Street building was sold along with the insurance business. It was about this time, Amber said, that the concrete and masonry products business was added.

"In the 1990s a building was added to house a precast area to produce septic tanks, and other concrete products," she shared.

Amber began working in the family business about 1995. George, her grandfather, and the second generation of Hopkins to run the family business, retired.

The oil division of the business was sold about 2008.

"Since then, the precast has expanded along with the vast supplies we carry for masonry, concrete, drainage and landscaping needs," said Amber.

In 1994, these remarks were shared with Amber by her grandfather, George Hopkins: "The business now offers concrete, masonry landscaping supplies. We precast our own septic tanks, manholes, oil tank slabs, landscaping block for retaining walls. We carry PVC pipe, culvert, fittings. All the things you would need for a septic design . Brick, block, mortar, cement, etc any thing you would need for chimneys and foundation walls. We also carry pavers and other landscaping needs for patios and walkways. Real stone for walls, chimneys, granite, blue stone."

Amber stated, "I believe that our business is unique because we carry many different needs that most people do not realize. Some of the big challenges we face during the pandemic was getting some of our supplies. We still find things hard to get now although it is becoming less challenging each season."

"We are continually adding new lines of veneer stone and landscaping needs," Amber added, "Along with other new things that come into play with septic designs or commercial jobs."

Today, Hopkins & Sons is owned by Peter C. Hopkins 3rd generation (son of George), Greg B. Hopkins (son of George) 3rd generation, Amber Hopkins Macek (daughter of Peter) 4th generation and Amber's son, Ashton Gould, the 5th generation, is an employee of the longstanding proud family enterprise.

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125 YEARS

Storied Country Club Poised For Its Next Rounds

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

The Bethlehem Country Club celebrates 125 years in Bethlehem. Here, in 2021, Kim Koprowski, BCC owner-manager, enjoys an ice cream outside the clubhouse. (Photo by Robert Blechl)

BETHLEHEM — What began as a 9-hole golf course in Bethlehem more than a century ago has evolved into an 18-hole course with a clubhouse and restaurant that for generations has drawn area residents and visitors alike and is now poised for its next chapter.

An anchor enterprise in the middle of town at 1901 Main St., the Bethlehem Country Club, once owned by the town for seven decades until a local couple bought it in 2020, celebrates 125 years in Bethlehem.

"It's a nice blend," said Kim Koprowski, the manager who bought the BCC with her husband, Mark. "I feel it's supported by both the local people and tourism."

Golf has been played at the location since 1898, when the 9-hole course first opened to the public, minus the clubhouse, which would be built later, in 1912.

With what had been dozens of hotels in town at the dawn of the 20th century, Bethlehem had already been established as a summer tourist destination, and the country club became ever more popular.

According to the BCC's history, it cost $5 in the early years for an entire summer of golf.

Looking toward the future, Donald Ross, a Scottish architect and golf course designer, was enlisted in 1909 to redesign and expand the course to 18 holes, making the BCC the first "Donald Ross" golf course in New Hampshire to be designed by him. Many more Donald Ross golf courses in the Granite State would follow.

In 1949, the town bought the BCC and, with a number of managers and Select Board liaisons through six decades, owned and operated the property until 2020, when it was bought by Mark and Kim, with the intent to have the BCC continue as a golf course and to keep the property undeveloped and not subdivided and essentially as is.

Since their ownership, the clubhouse, which has had years of deferred maintenance, and parts of the green, which has had drainage and flooding problems, have undergone renovations and upgrades.

Kim Koprowski expanded the menu offerings to include ice cream. This summer, with her goats, she plans to have ice cream and cheese made with goat milk.

In 2022, the El Mirador Restaurante opened inside the clubhouse.

When the Koprowskis bought the country club, their original plan was to own it for five years.

But, after decades of deferred maintenance, the property needs more investments, and the Koprowskis, not keen on dipping all the more into their retirement money, have decided to sell it to a group of investors, a transaction that could occur this year to take the BCC to its next level under new ownership.

"I'm talking with a couple of investors who I'm supposed to meet at the end of this month or early April," said Koprowski.

While a possible change of ownership nears, Koprowski plans to remain the manager.

"They would like me to stay on, so I'm probably going to continue to run it," she said. "I have goats that are pregnant and I'm hoping to go in that direction and still work at the golf course in the summers."

It appears the investors' vision is also to preserve the BCC as a golf course and keep the property and its activities viable into the future, said Koprowski.

Going forward, they will look at which business components will make money, such as light development, and which ones won't, she said.

One idea is to develop the property's outer fringes with stay-and-play cabins for visitors during the golf season and have the enterprise run by local residents, she said.

Beginning this summer, and with help from a local resident, Koprowski has plans to expand the disc golf course, market it, and offer tournaments.

Night golf with glow discs is also being advanced.

"We're pretty excited about that," she said. "It will be fun."

BCC membership hovers about 100, up from the 80 to 85 members when the town owned it.

But non-member activity is strong.

"I do pretty well with a lot of the out-of-state visitors," said Koprowski.

Working with a new mentor, she also plans more work and improvements on the greens.

Inside, one plan is to renovate the bottom floor of the clubhouse and have a lounge and snack area.

Last year, she had a staff of 13 and is looking at up to 15 staff members in 2023.

"It's a good group," said Koprowski.

To celebrate the 125th anniversary, she plans prizes throughout the summer, one every 12½ days, and a large celebration some time in the summer.

Koprowski is looking forward to working with the new investors.

"I think we're going to figure out some other viable activities," she said. "We definitely want to keep things moving along and have other ideas to get people to come and enjoy it. There's plenty to do figuring out what will bring more people in."

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120 YEARS

Cottage Hospital Meets Rural Healthcare Challenges

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

Rural healthcare can be tough.

Cottage Hospital is tougher.

For 120 years, the 35-bed critical access hospital with a Level IV Trauma Center has risen to the challenge of providing high quality medical care to 26 communities in the rural Upper Valley.

Through the work of dedicated administration and hard-working staff, Cottage Hospital has overcome economic hurdles to offer cutting-edge services at a reasonable cost.

CEO Holly McCormack summed up the hospital's character and culture shortly after taking over in 2021.

"We're called the little engine that could, because we're a small hospital and we make great things happen," she said. "It's all a testament to the hard work that happens here every day."

Located in Haverhill, Cottage Hospital offers an array of services.

Those include a designated trauma center for adults and pediatrics, a multi-specialty rural health clinic the Rowe Health Center, the Center of Orthopedic Excellence, a transfer-center accepting medical/surgical/intensive care patients from other hospitals, and the Ray of Hope Geriatric Mental Health facility.

Ray of Hope demonstrates the hospital's ability to tailor services to meet local needs.

Opened in 2016, Ray of Hope is a 10-bed voluntary short-stay unit for adults 65-and-over struggling with mental health concerns that addresses a regional shortage in geriatric psych beds, and is often at capacity.

For its efforts, Cottage Hospital has received many national awards.

Among them are Healthstrong Award for Excellence, HealthStrong Top 100 Critical Access Hospitals by iVantage Health Analytics, and a Top 20 Best Practices in Quality Designation by the National Rural Health Association.

Cottage Hospital staff at the Woodsville-Wells River Fourth of July parade. (File)

Cottage Hospital is also a major economic driver.

It is one of the top two employers in town, with approximately 300 full- and part-time employees, and is a vital component of regional economic development efforts.

Cottage Hospital's importance was made clear during COVID-19, when staff braved the unknown as front line workers.

When the pandemic evolved and restrictions were eased, Cottage Hospital was crucial in vaccination, outreach and community education efforts.

Moving forward, Cottage Hospital looks to grow services, address staff shortages, meet cost increases, and meet local health needs.

In the hospital's 2022 annual report, McCormack wrote, "2022 was an exciting year for Cottage Hospital. Our team demonstrated the quality and expertise necessary to renew its level IV pediatric and adult trauma designation. Cottage is the only hospital in the North Country with this designation. In May, we hired a second full-time surgeon, allowing us to have uninterrupted general surgery coverage 24/7. We saw a favorable return to our workforce. Our vacancy rate for full-time positions has decreased by 40% and 70% for part-time positions."

However, she noted, "the hospital closed the fiscal year with a negative bottom line. This loss can be directly attributed to a dramatic expense increase — some key drivers: contract labor, supplies, utilities, and cost of drugs."

"In the coming year, we will be busy developing our 2024-2027 strategic plan and implementing a new electronic health record (EHR). This new record will allow us to provide an even higher level of quality and efficiency. The expected go-live date is late Spring."

In addition to ongoing efforts to maintain and improve healthcare, the hospital will address major infrastructure needs.

Last year Cottage Hospital received a $1 million grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission towards a $2 million sewer line replacement. The hospital will raise the remaining funds through various means, including its annual Any Which Way 5K.

The problem was discovered when a small section broke, requiring emergency repairs. While a cheaper solution exists, it would require closing the in-patient unit and breaking open the ground underneath it. That would pose too great a risk to public health, and the proposed project will allow the unit to remain open.

For more information visit https://www.cottagehospital.org/

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120 YEARS

Morrison Communities Continue Founder's Mission

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

The Morrison assisted living facility in Whitefield, N.H. (Courtesy Photo)

Dr. George Harvey Morrison founded Morrison Hospital in 1903 to care for the community.

One-hundred and twenty years later, the mission continues.

Today the Morrison Communities in Whitefield operate skilled nursing, assisted living, and senior living across two campuses.

The Morrison Skilled Nursing Facility is a 57-bed nursing home that provides skilled nursing, rehabilitation, assisted living, long-term and respite care services.

Meanwhile assisted and independent living options are available at Summit by Morrison, an 85-unit senior living community.

When it was founded, Morrison Hospital was the only hospital located north of Hanover.

According to a company history, it quickly became known for its advanced medicine and innovative surgeries. At the same time, the nursing school, which was led by Mae Morrison, the head nurse and administrator, and Dr. Morrison's wife, was graduating more than 100 women from its rigorous program.

In 1926, Dr. Morrison gifted the hospital to Whitefield on condition it be maintained by the town in perpetuity.

The facility changed its name to the Morrison Nursing Home in 1970, added Sartwell Assisted Living in 1993, and opened the 12-bed Dana Rehabilitation Wing in 2010.

In 2015 the $1.2 million Physical Therapy Wing began operation. The two-story, 4,000 square foot rehabilitation and wellness center aims to keep the area's seniors healthy and active and in their own homes as long as possible.

In 2018, the $25 million Summit at Morrison opened with a ribbon-cutting.

It was built over two years and funded primarily through low interest rural development loans from the U.S Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency with additional funding provided by the David S. Dana Foundation.

The Summit — which functions as a campus of the nearby Morrison nursing home — offers multiple housing options with 47 independent living units (14 cottages, 33 apartments), 24 assisted living apartments, and 12 memory care studio units.

The Summit addresses a regional lack of senior housing, which had forced many seniors seeking independent and assisted living to re-locate south of the notch.

The only such facility in the North Country, the Summit meets growing demand for senior housing, particularly in aging Coos County where two out of five residents will be over 65 by 2030, according to the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies.

During the ribbon-cutting, former trustee Brian Fogg said, "Summit's opening and its future success are the cornerstones of our plans to continue to important charitable mission of the Morrison — of our plans to provide care and a home for our parents, our spouses, and maybe even for ourselves."

Moving forward, the Morrison Communities remain dedicated to their mission.

During the past year the non-profit took a step to improve working conditions and attract/retain staff by introducing a four-day, 32-hour work week in November.

In the 2022 annual report, Morrison officials President Douglas Shearer and Executive Director Shannon Lynch wrote, "The employee retention and recruitment initiative grew out of our long-held belief that we must find a balance between providing exceptional care for our residents with increasing retention and satisfaction among our staff. Throughout the pandemic, resident health and well being was our primary focus. The 4-Day Work Week initiative re-balances our focus equally on both residents and our employees."

"The 4-Day Work Week has been months in the making as we considered a number of options to increase employee retention and satisfaction, recruit quality employees, streamline efficiencies and continue to ensure quality care for our residents."

"All full-time employees will work 32-hours a week, while continuing to receive 40-hour equivalent weekly pay. The 4-Day Work Week schedules were implemented in phases to ensure the level of service we provide remains consistent and of high quality. The 4-Day Work Week enables our employees to spend more time with their family and friends and engage in their favorite activities outside the workplace. Returning to work they are refreshed and ready to deliver the exceptional resident-centered care they are known for."

Moving forward, Shearer and Lynch said, "We remain committed to continued excellence and innovation, and as our Mission Statement promises, "empowering our residents, their loved ones and our staff in achieving their optimal well-being."

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110 YEARS

Hastings Store Continues Proud Family Tradition

4th Generation Now Operating Country Store At Joe's Pond

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

WEST DANVILLE — This year marks an incredible 110th birthday for the locally beloved - and Vermont-celebrated Hastings Store, still operated by the same family who founded the country store at the junction of routes 2 and 15 since 1913.

The Hastings Store has been in business far longer, though, 170 years, founded in 1853.

The store has been in the family of the late Jane Larrabee since 1913; she passed away in 2020 after running the store for many years with her husband, Garey, making the couple the third generation owners.

In 2019 the store was sold to their daughter, and the fourth generation owner, Jenny Larrabee Rafuse. Her husband James helps out a lot, as do the couple's two daughters, Alyssa, 14, and Ava, 10.

Garey still is a daily presence in the store, as well, and lives on the right side of the country store building, just to the right of the post office within the charming local institution.

Both Jenny and James work outside the store, too. She's a nurse two days a week for Caledonia Home Health and Hospice, and he works in the granite business.

The entire family remains committed to keeping Hastings Store humming.

Alyssa and Ava have told their parents that they plan to go off to college, but they will be back, and they have plans to be the 5th generation owners of the family store they've been raised in.

Jane passed away just as COVID-19 was hitting, and the girls had to begin learning remotely, and they were acutely missing their beloved nana.

Losing her mom was "huge," shared Jenny on a recent late afternoon.

During COVID, the store pivoted to deliveries and curbside orders; they've maintained deliveries with Jenny herself delivering a good chunk of the time. The store in recent years has added liquor to their offerings, with the store in Danville that formerly served that role no longer operating, and the offer to hold the liquor license presenting itself.

Jenny said her mom was a teetotaler and would not have appreciated seeing the liquor come onto the premises. When the store was about to embark on selling liquor and the state liquor department officials were there, Jenny recalled, a bottle of rum from the top shelf came crashing to the floor.

Jenny Larrabee Rafuse, owner of Hastings Store in West Danville, poses with photos of family who came before her. (Photo by Amy Ash Nixon)

Like her mom before her, Jenny is serving as notary public and a justice of the peace at the store; the services are longtime traditions and important ones that Hastings has long provided to the community.

"I couldn't let it fizzle out," said Jenny of taking over the family store. She said she's had a lot of big repairs to make in her few years owning it, including a wind storm tearing off a section of the roof, the furnace, and more. James, she said, does "a lot of the heavy lifting."

The store is offering a range of homemade hot meals both for pick-up and delivery, and has a selection of pies, cupcakes, maple candies and all sorts of local treats along with a selection of souvenirs for visitors; the area is known for its summer tourists to Joe's Pond.

In 2005 Hastings was recognized officially by the Vermont Secretary of State for having been in operation continually for 100 years or more.

On the store's Facebook page, Roger Hamilton, a customer wrote, "You can't get more family-oriented than Hastings Store. It's the one-stop shop for everything. A gallon of milk, fresh-cut steak, fresh hots with natural casings right on the link, pick up your mail, fresh maple products … you name it, they have it."

A Visit With The Late Jane Larrabee

A few years ago, Jane Larrabee sat down with a reporter to share her family's long history with the store.

Her grandparents bought the store in 1913, Jane said. Her grandmother, Jennie Underwood Hastings, had put herself through college, business school, and was working at a women's dry goods store in St. Johnsbury, her grandfather, Gilbert Hastings, too, was working at a mercantile in town, so together they brought a strong foundation to running the store.

That hardworking sensibility was passed down, and is evident still. "My grandparents were very big on efficiency, get your work done, do it right, and then play," Jane said.

Although her grandfather had come from a farm, he had a hay allergy, so was unable to work the farm, said Jane, but her grandparents kept a beautiful garden, she said. The store still makes its own sausage with fresh sage, her grandmother's prized recipe.

Her grandparents began operating Hastings Store on Oct. 13, 1913, just two weeks after her grandmother had given birth to Jane's aunt, she said. The next year, her grandmother was named the post mistress, a job she kept from 1914 to 1946. "When she retired, my father was just home from World War II, and he became postmaster."

Jane's parents, Ralph and Mabel, would go on to run the store after her grandparents retired, but even in retirement, her grandparents were often at the cash register and helping out.

The family has all lived together at the store, too, through the generations, though daughter Jenny and her family live just around the corner; though Jenny is a full-time nurse, she helps out often, and her two daughters, Alyssa, 8, and Ava, 5, can be seen at the store frequently.

Jane shared a charming story of how she would say good night to her dad.

There was a hole in the floor above the counter from where a stovepipe had once been, and a grate was over the hole that you could see into the family's upstairs apartment through. Her mom would lower a tiny Jane through the hole to be received by dad, running the store downstairs until 9:30 p.m. every night, to kiss him good night.

Back in the day, the store had a party line, "That was a pain!" recalled Jane.

She recalls the ice house the family had adjacent to the store and how much fun she had jumping in the wood shavings in the ice house!

Many people in the camps around Joe's Pond didn't have phones, and the family store was often called on by police when a family emergency needed to be reported to someone staying in a camp, and the Hastings would run to inform the person, said Jane.

"If they needed something, they'd come to the store," said Jane.

She said a poem called *The House by the Side of The Road*, has long been quoted by her family, and it included this line, *"The reason you're here is to serve other people."* It's a mantra the family maintains to this day.

Jenny was told about that line her mom had shared earlier, and she smiled, and said, "That is 100 percent us."

Jane and Garey took over the store in 1974 from her parents. They hadn't planned to, but that's how life worked out, she shared in that earlier interview.

Charming as growing up in a country store sounds, and is, "When you're working for yourself it is a lot of work," said Jane.

Jane was also a Justice of the Peace, and she said she's performed about a dozen weddings right in the Hastings Store! One couple, who had been together for 45 years, decided to finally tie the knot, right in front of the ice cream freezer, "because it was the sweetest place in the store!" said Jane with a laugh. Others purposely were married right in front of their charming vintage U.S. Post Office box, to help the men remember anniversary dates.

"Great old time general store, a little bit of everything. Employees are so friendly. Visit every time we are in Vermont," one visitor commented on the store's Facebook page.

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110 YEARS

Palmer Bros. A Cleaning Fixture On Eastern Avenue

Palmer Brothers owner Frank Rothe is surrounded by dry-cleaned clothing at his shop at 179 Eastern Avenue in St. Johnsbury.

BY STEPHEN GARFIELD
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — Palmer Brothers marks 110 years in the dry cleaning business this year.

Located at 179 Eastern Ave., maintaining its impressive longevity has been a challenge in recent years. "COVID hit us hard like most other places," owner Frank Rothe said. "So many people began working from home. You can't work from home in our business," he said with a laugh.

Rothe bought the business in 2012 from Charlie Palmer, a third-generation Palmer who inherited it from his father, Cy, who in turn had inherited it from his father, Cecil Palmer.

Interviewed in 2018, Rothe said that "utility bills" were the part of his job he least enjoyed. That hasn't changed. "Oil has tripled in price," he noted. "It hasn't really affected the business but it's slowed things down." In terms of incoming business, the falloff of volume that most business experienced because of the pandemic, "is starting to come back now," he noted. "Many people worked from home. That's something we couldn't do," he said.

The business employs six people, five who work in the plant doing pressing, cleaning, spotting and steaming. Palmer Bros. also employs a driver. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Things are different at Palmer Bros. today from what they were 100 years ago. "One hundred years ago, fur was a big deal," Frank noted. Many people wore fur coats. When you look at photos from back then, people went fishing in a coat and tie. People don't dress that way now, he said.

Palmer Brothers still does a good business with shirts and formal clothing, but in the last year or two, it's branched out into the Air B&B business, he said. The laundromat continues with its cleaning of state police clothing for units from Bradford to Derby, "and the state of New Hampshire as well," he added.

Customers also see maple products in the store, a product, Rothe said, of Charlie Palmer's sugarhouse in Danville.

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100 YEARS

Fitch Fuel To Celebrate Customers On Centennial

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LANCASTER — Fitch Fuel Co., a plumbing and heating business run by five generations of the same family, celebrates a century in the North Country.

A customer appreciation day is being planned for Friday, Aug. 11, at the business headquarters at 178 Summer St.

"There will be food and giveaways and a big open house," said Chris Foss, the company's business and service manager. "For any customer who wants to come down, we'll feed them and hand out some giveaways."

Fitch Fuel has about 2,500 customers across a service area that stretches north to about Columbia, south to northern Grafton County, and west across the river to the Gilman and Lunenburg areas.

"We're into Littleton, delivering oil and doing service work and installs," said Foss. "We've ventured over to Sugar Hill and have a good customer over there who has a couple of different properties."

With licensed service personnel and plumbers, the company distributes home heating oil and propane, sells kerosene and diesel fuel, and provides 24/7 emergency heating and plumbing services, even on holidays and weekends.

Technicians are ready to roll at a moment's notice.

"It's 24/7 and that makes a difference for people who have emergencies at night," said Foss. "I had a service tech who just got a call at midnight for a no-heat situation. Customers appreciate the peace of mind, knowing they get that service that goes with the products as well. We're always on call and I think customers appreciate that."

Fitch Fuel was founded in 1923 by Foss's great-great-grandfather, Charles Fitch, in the family home on Winter Street.

Fitch began by distributing range fuel, coal, and ice for ice boxes.

In the 1940s, the business was shifting to fuel oil, though coal was still delivered into the 1970s.

In 1976, Fitch Fuel, which had purchased several plumbing businesses in the area, expanded to include plumbing and heating services.

Today, it offers year-round boiler and furnace cleanings to keep equipment running safely and efficiently.

"The last couple of years, we've really just been sticking with what's been working," said Foss. "We have the propane, we have the fuel oil, we have the plumbing, we have the heating as far as service goes. It's really been steady."

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a slight change to the business.

"We noticed a change when the pandemic started and people were home a lot more," said Foss. "When they're home more they notice things more, maybe a leak here, or a noise over there. It's always been busy, but has really been steady since people have been spending more time in their homes than they have in the past."

The price of fuel oil spiked about a year ago.

"But people still needed it," he said. "Some do different alternatives, but at the end of the day they are still burning their oil. We stay very busy with that."

Foss is the son of Fitch Fuel Co. secretary and treasurer Marilyn Fitch Foss, a fourth-generation Fitch who owns the business with her brothers, Charles Fitch III, the company president, and John Fitch, the vice president.

Chris Foss's brother, Derek, runs the fuel department, and their cousin, Josh Fitch, John's son, is the certified service technician for heating, propane, and plumbing.

The company has 13 employees, six of them family members.

Foss reflected on 100 years of the family business.

"You start off with coal and ice and here you are now taking fuel oil and propane and plumbing and heating," he said. "It's really evolved. It's been quite the change, but we're still the same family and have been for 100 years now and hope to keep moving forward into the future. We wouldn't be here without our customers and we certainly appreciate their loyalty. It's a tribute to them for sticking with us and supporting us all of these years."

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95 YEARS

Orleans Country Club's Commitment To Relaxing, Friendly Golf Experience Is Par For The Course

BY DANA GRAY
Staff Writer

ORLEANS — Among the silver linings to the COVID cloud was a surge of people seeking fresh, virus-free air and open outdoor spaces making their way to golf courses.

One of those destinations was and still is Orleans Country Club, which is celebrating 95 years in 2023. When Gov. Phil Scott modified a pandemic-inspired stay-at-home order early in May 2020 to allow some public activities to resume, golf courses were among the first places to open, and lots of people went to OCC.

"Everybody seemed very excited to be here," said general manager Josh Olney at the time. "It was a success."

Bob Granfors, of Derby, president of the OCC Board of Directors, said average annual membership in the three years since the beginning of the pandemic is up from around 200 to 220 to over 300.

"With COVID and the resurgence of people getting out and doing something outdoors, it's been huge," said Granfors.

The club, which has been billing itself as "the best little golf club in the world" since it first opened, and practices frugality in an effort to keep the cost of a round of golf as low as possible, was able to put some significant money into recent upgrades, Olney said.

Among the investments were a fleet of new golf carts purchased last year. Olney said the increase in golfing throughout the pandemic made the purchase possible.

"When COVID hit in 2020, that really catapulted a lot of courses, including Orleans," he said.

But he said he's not willing to give all the credit to COVID.

"It's also Orleans (Country Club) being a great place," he said. "We've got a great superintendent (Frank Barsalow), and the course is in great shape; people are seeing that and coming back."

OCC is an 18-hole course with a clubhouse that includes a restaurant and lounge. It's located on Country Club Lane, accessed via Rt. 58 in Orleans.

Creation of the club began in 1928. A story published in the Aug. 14, 1928 edition of The Caledonian-Record noted the club came about through the efforts of incorporators Charles T.R. Taplin, L.D. Turnbull, Preston C. Skinner, A.W. Fletcher and A. W. Kipp, all of Orleans.

Supt. Frank Barsalow, left, and Josh Olney, the club's GM and PGA Pro, show a sign noting "100" for the one hundred holes of golf in one day they were about to play last year for Folds of Honor, a national organization that provides scholarships to family of military and first responder personnel who die in the line of duty. (Contributed Photo)

The land at the time it was purchased in September 1928 was locally known as "the Old Fairgrounds" on what was part of a 135-acre farm. Among the features of the landscape attributed to its use as fairgrounds was a half-mile horse racing track.

The club opened to golfers in 1929, surprising many with how quickly the landscape was transformed from farmland to fairways, according to a story published in July 1929. "Out of town golfers, more or less familiar with the time and work necessary to build a satisfactory golf course, invariably express surprise that so much has been accomplished in so short a time and many consider it a big undertaking for a club in a town no larger than Orleans," the story notes.

In the early years, OCC began marketing itself as "The Best Little Golf Club in the World," noting on letterhead at the time "Where Good Folks Get Together and Enjoy Each Other."

Some things never change, according to Granfors. "We've got a great, diverse group of players of all ages, all abilities who are always friendly, kind and ready to bring in somebody new. They just want to go out and have fun, enjoy themselves and meet new people."

It's that kind of atmosphere that drew Olney to the course to manage. "When I started interviewing and getting to know some of the members I could tell it was kind of a tight-knit membership," he said. "It kind of feels like a big family."

Olney has served 11 years as OCC general manager and PGA Pro. He grew up in Derby and graduated from North Country Union High School in 1995.

Much work goes into maintaining the club, which relies heavily on volunteers.

"Our club has a strong volunteer base that handles a lot of everything," said Irene Farrar, a board member who, among other things, handles public relations. "We just love our club and we take care of it."

Course Kudos

"Conditions are always great," said Granfors. "It's an easy-walking course, and it's challenging in the sense that you can use almost every single club in your bag, but what I like most are the people, the staff and the (volunteers) who take care of the course and the clubhouse."

Olney said OCC is a classic.

"The course itself is a very classic layout," said Olney. "The general overall feel is a very relaxing and welcoming environment."

Among the particular holes that they are most fond of is number 18 for its view coming back to the clubhouse. Granfors said he also likes number 8, a downhill par 3. Olney said hole no. 13 is one of his favorites. It's referred to as the "saucer" or the "donut hole" because of a berm that rings the green.

One hole that Granfors left off his list of favorites is number 10, his most successful one. Last year, he was one of nine golfers to record holes in one at OCC. It was a record number for any single year in the club's history, said Granfors. He used a 5 iron and holed in from 200 yards tee to cup. It was Granfors first swing of the day during a two-man best ball tournament that had his foursome starting on 10.

Season Plans

April 15 is listed as a possible opening day at OCC provided the snow melts in time for the course to dry out enough, said Farrar. The first tee time would be noon and it will follow a time of volunteer labor to clean up around the course and in the clubhouse.

More information can be found online at orleanscc.com

75 YEARS

Westaff Remains Full Service Staffing Agency

BY TODD WELLINGTON
Staff Writer

Westaff is a light industrial staffing company that started in California and has been around for 75 years.

It specializes in a dual mission of finding jobs for workers and finding employees for local companies.

The local Westaff franchise in Caledonia County began in 2003 and now has its headquarters at 61 Depot St. in Lyndonville, which is staffed with job recruiters.

"We actually have many employers in the area that need help finding the right employees," said General Manager Jeannine Erpelding. "And that's what we do. We find the right employees for the job."

Workers of any kind looking for jobs are also welcome to stop by the Lyndonville office.

"We have people that come in - in person - and apply with an application just like any other employer in the world," said Erpelding.

You can also apply online by going to www.westaff.com.

"We do a lot more on online," said Erpelding. "You can apply right online. One of our recruiters will reach out to you if you do that and we'll have a quick phone conversation and set up an interview time…We interview people for any position that comes to us."

Erpelding grew-up in the Northeast Kingdom and is now General Manager of all Westaff locations in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire.

She said Westaff was founded in 1948 and was originally known as "Western Staffing Services."

The goal of the company is to successfully match the right workers with the right jobs and the right companies.

"That's why we interview everyone about their individual strengths and weaknesses and what they want to do," said Erpelding. "And then we have that information."

Westaff does all kinds of recruiting and are a full service staffing agency. They do temporary employees and temporary-to-permanent employees.

"Try before you buy," said Erpelding. "It tends to be something the Northeast Kingdom prefers."

Westaff also handles direct hires which is known as "professional placement."

"For our clients, we're able to find them the right person no matter what level they need," said Erpelding.

There are many different shifts and jobs available through Westaff.

According to the Westaff website, there's lots of jobs posted in the local area including warehouse workers, tool assemblers, machine operators, CNC operators, maintenance mechanics and production supervisors.

Westaff has won ClearlyRated's "Best of Staffing Client & Talent Excellence Awards" which is presented in partnership with CareerBuilder.

The winners are quality industry leaders based entirely on ratings by their clients and the candidates they've helped find jobs. Less than 2% of all staffing agencies in the U.S. and Canada have earned the Best of Staffing Award for service excellence.

Westaff has also achieved the "Safety Standard of Excellence" mark from the American Staffing Association and National Safety Council.

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70 YEARS

Lussier Auction Ongoing With 'Client Care'

BY PAUL HAYES
Staff Writer

Auctioneer Reg Lussier turns on the charm at the Caledonia County Fair.

Going once, going twice.

Going for seven decades strong.

Lussier Auction celebrates its 70th year in the bid-and-sell business, marking a half-century of bargain buys and successful sales.

The third generation business was founded by Roger Lussier in 1952 and his son, Reginald, joined him in 1973.

Roger retired in 1992 and "Reg" has been running the business ever since. Today he is assisted by a third generation, son Toby.

Based in Lyndonville, Lussier Auction conducts sales throughout New England and is currently licensed, bonded and insured in Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut.

Based in Kirby with a physical address in Lyndonville, the company has membership in the Vermont and New Hampshire Auctioneer's Association.

Known for his friendly demeanor and New York Yankees cap, Reg operates on a simple but important piece of advice handed down from his father, "Take care of your clients."

Much has changed in the auction industry and the advent of the Internet and online auctions has changed the auction landscape.

However, many an auction buyer still prefers to gather in a room or under a tent, inspect the objects first hand, and enjoy the full, lively auction experience.

Lussier Auction runs sales of all types — antiques and estates, livestock, farm and construction equipment, real estate, and bankruptcy — and provides all of the necessary equipment including tents, chairs, sound system, cattle rink and sales trucks.

Notably, the company runs the annual benefit auction to kick off the Caledonia County Fair. The auction benefiting the fair began the year after the grand stand burned to the ground on Aug. 18, 1993, just a few days after the annual fair had closed.

Toby Lussier has said a lot of people love to come to the auction for its entertainment value, and his family tries to make it lots of fun.

The next scheduled auction at the VFW Post 10038 in Lyndonville on April 15 features a wide range of antiques and office furnishings.

For more information visit www.lussierauction.com or www.facebook.com/LussierAuctionService

60 YEARS

Wheeler's Is A Building Staple Across Generations

BY STEPHEN GARFIELD
Staff Writer

Wheeler Building Material, Inc. has been in the Wheeler family since its 1963 inception in Lyndonville. At left is owner Mike Wheeler, seen with (l-r) Jonathan James, Connor Cassidy, Tristen Phelps, Anthony Boyce and Greg Hopkins.

LYNDONVILLE — Wheeler Building Materials, Inc. has been in the Wheeler family for all of its 60 years at its Church Street home.

"My mom and dad purchased the business in 1963," Mike Wheeler said. He assumed presidency of the business in 1995, when his dad died. He and his three brothers, Paul, Mark and Rick, are the owners.

For any household/building project that one might want or need to do, Wheeler Building Materials has the materials for the project: home construction, decks, docks, porches, windows, etc. The yard has homebuilding materials.

Said Mike Wheeler, "As we like to say, 'we've got everything to build your castle, including the kitchen sink.'"

"We have a contractor-based yard that goes year round," Wheeler said. "We also help do-it-yourselfers. We love to have them come in, and we take care of them as well. But our main bread and butter is my contractors. We take care of them, and they take care of us.."

Customers find kiln-dried spruce pine fir framing lumber, pressure treated lumber, plywood, OSB, Advantech, drywall, wood moulding and trim, Eastern White Pine trim boards and primed trim boards.

Wheeler Building Materials has updated equipment in recent years, including delivery trucks, and truck-mounted forklift they deliver materials where builders want it on site. That's worked out really well for us."

The business at 152 Church St. employs seven people, and is open 7 a.m.-5 p.m. on weekdays.

55 YEARS

Caledonia Home Health & Hospice Cares For Community

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

CEO's who have led Caledonia Home Health & Hospice at the Memorial Gathering for Dr. Mark Lichtenstein at the Hardwick Area Health Center in 2021. From left to right: Dr. Brendan Buckley, Patrick Flood (CEO from 2013 – 2016), David Reynolds (founding and longtime CEO), and Michael Costa, current CEO, who started in 2019. (Courtesy Photo)

ST. JOHNSBURY — Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice is celebrating its 55th anniversary this year.

The organization's roots lie in the leadership of Dr. Ralph Jardine, who began Caledonia Home Health Care with a group of community members in 1968, according to Brynn Evans, spokeswoman for Northern Counties Health Care (NCHC).

In 1981, hospice services were added to the health care provided through the home care organization, and at that time, it was "one of only a few hospice demonstration sites in the country."

In 1985, an "Analysis of Organizational Options" was completed by the Vermont Health Policy Corporation, recommending a merger between Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice and Northern Counties Health Care, the first Federally Qualified Health Center in Vermont (FQHC), founded by David Reynolds (Evans' father) in 1976.

Northern Counties Health Care, Inc., had grown out of the Northern Counties Comprehensive Health Planning Council (1968-1976), a federally-sponsored organization charged with developing plans to enhance health care delivery, according to Evans.

The name Northern Counties Health Care was chosen to reflect the broader mission of the merged agencies.

The formal merger of Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice and Northern Counties Health Care, Inc. was completed in 1988.

The merger occurred following the retirement of longtime Caledonia Home Health Care and Hospice Executive Director Joan Blankenship.

Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice is the designated home health agency for Caledonia, Southern Essex, and the town of Greensboro.

"This means that our teams are required to provide care to everyone who needs us," Evans said, "We consider it a privilege to care for our community and to work with our patients and their families. We hear time and again about the positive difference we have made for our patients – as we work with patients to help them meet their goals and have the best quality of life possible by providing comfort, choice, hope, connection, independence, dignity, and more."

Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice provides comprehensive in-home care and support services to people of all ages throughout Caledonia and southern Essex counties through a variety of programs. Maternal and child health nurses provide medical treatment and preventative education to pregnant women, new mothers and children.

Long-term-care case managers coordinate homemaker, personal care services and community resources affecting the social determinants of health to chronically ill individuals to allow them to remain at home. The home care and hospice team includes highly skilled nurses, medical director, rehabilitation therapists, medical social workers, clergy and nurse aides who work together to promote healing and independence for some, and comfort, guidance and assistance with end-of-life decision making for others.

Information shared by the organization states, "The evolution of NCHC is centered on a tradition of innovation in providing access to health care. The organization now provides care to more than 20,000 individuals; more than one-third of the region's residents. Over 64,000 encounters are made each year through the rural network of five community health centers, two walk-in primary care (Express) locations, and a certified home health care and hospice division. Partnerships with three critical access hospitals and several human services organizations are also an important part of their work to help build healthy families and thriving communities."

Evans noted, "We often hear gratitude from our patients because we are there for them, listen to them, make them feel welcome, include them in their care, are professional, and knowledgeable. We pride ourselves on being patient-centered and that we care for the whole person."

She said ongoing efforts include making sure rural health care remains accessible and community-oriented. There's a focus on finding and retaining "the best people to carry on our mission of high quality care," said Evans. "We are here for our community and look forward to many more years of service providing high-quality, accessible, patient-centered health care and working to build healthy families and thriving communities."

"Another project we are expanding is our community dental program. Our Community Dental Hygienist is working with schools throughout the NEK to provide hygiene services for students at the school, including screenings, cleanings, and portable x-rays," shared Evans.

Said Michael Costa, CEO, "The Northeast Kingdom is a special place, and we want everyone here, whether for a lifetime or quick visit, to have access to extraordinary health care services. We've been working hard for our communities and region for nearly 50 years, and we look forward to at least 50 more."

NCHC was the first to integrate oral health; was a pilot site for Vermont's Blueprint for Health; and the first in the state to become a Patient Centered Medical Home.

Today

NCHC is currently renovating the Caplan's Building to relocate Northern Express Care – St. Johnsbury this summer. "This will enhance our ability to provide walk-in care to the community now and into the future and improve the experience for our patients," said Evans.

Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice/Northern Counties Health Care, Inc. is located at 161 Sherman Dr., St. Johnsbury.

For more information, go to www.nchcvt.org; email info@nchcvt.org; or call 802-748-8116.

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45 YEARS

Miss Lyndonville Diner Still Offering The Basics And The 'Best Pies For Breakfast'

BY ROSIE SMITH
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — When Ashley and Janet Gray decided to move from Massachusetts to Vermont, they chose the Northeast Kingdom because of family ties. A picture of Lake Willoughby on the cover of a magazine was also an inspiration for them.

While dining at what was once the Town & Country Restaurant, they made the decision that the Lyndonville area would be their destination, for many reasons, including the great school system and community atmosphere. Lyndonville became the hub of their future restaurant enterprise.

At that time, the Rustic Restaurant was up for sale – an original Sterling diner which was formerly known as the "Miss Lynn Diner." A Sterling Diner is described as "a restaurant in the shape of a streamlined train, named after the Sterling Streamliner in 1939. These diners were typically small, informal, and inexpensive restaurants that had an extensive menu and that is often made from or designed to resemble a modified railroad dining car." Miss Lynn featured the railroad design, which was modified after the new owners purchased the property.

Out of all the bids the Rustic Restaurant owner received in 1978, he decided the Grays offer would be the best choice. He did so because, according to Janet, "He thought we knew what we were doing!"

In May of 1978, the Grays leased the Rustic – with an option to buy — and changed the name to Miss Lyndonville Diner, which is located at 686 Broad St. in Lyndonville. The diner is now celebrating 45 years of serving meals.

Members of the staff at Miss Lyndonville Diner include, from left, Dillon Cloutier, Tyler McMahan, Heidi Sanborn, Janet Powers and Kim Gaboriault. (Photo by Rosie Smith)

In the winter of '78, a fire gutted the restaurant; it was due to a malfunction of a fan attached to an electrical cord. Although it was a disaster at the time, it turned out to be a good thing. Because of the extensive damage, the individual the Grays were leasing from offered them a good deal for purchasing the restaurant. They became the sole owners of Miss Lyndonville in January of 1979.

It took 5 to 6 months for the restaurant to reopen — according to Janet, "the community was so supportive."

The Grays moved forward with their hopes to make Miss Lyndonville Diner special. "The plan was great food at a fair price and extraordinary service. But what happened in addition to that was an amazing energy between us and our customers. We were all having fun and that resulted in a unique atmosphere and then, resulted in a unique experience for our customers.

"People came to see their neighbor, to see the tourists. It was about more than food. We evolved into a reflection of our community. Everything going on outside was going on inside. It became a place to come together."

All of this is what got Miss Lyndonville Diner into the Vermont Life special edition of "Bests and Favorites." "We were mentioned as having the best pies for breakfast," said Janet. The picture used with the article showed Janet holding a strawberry pie.

"That truly was a turning point," said Janet. "We were introduced to many who came as a result of that article. At some point, we became known as a 'Landmark!' I'm proud, humbled and grateful for that reference."

Through the years, the Grays operated other businesses, and at one time had up to 150 employees. But the diner was the start of it. "It evolved and still is evolving," said Janet.

Miss Lyndonville's ties to the community include the employment of generations of workers. "Kids and grandkids of former employees have worked here," said Janet.

"I always want the entire Diner staff to be recognized for their skills … they are the heart and soul of everything we do. Their work ethic is amazing and they never stop," she added. Janet said she always loves hearing from many past employees – one of them saying to her, "I wish my colleagues would have worked at the diner!"

In 2005, Ashley died, leaving the legacy of the business to Janet and her daughters, Heidi Sanborn and Kim Gaboriault. Ashley was always in charge of the kitchen, so that responsibility was taken over by Janet. "I had to put my mark on it now," she said, but couldn't do it without the support of the staff, including Travis Buttes, the kitchen manager. Kim and Heidi became full-time, running the dining room and all aspects of the business.

During COVID, the restaurant was closed for five months. For a short time, take out was offered, but it became too burdensome, so the business closed down. "It wasn't good to be open or closed," said Janet. To utilize that time, some remodeling was done.

Once Miss Lyndonville reopened, a few additional changes were made – going from three shifts (serving breakfast, lunch and dinner) – to two shifts (breakfast and lunch), as well as being closed on Tuesdays (a change from being open seven days a week). The hours are now 5:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays.

The pandemic didn't alter the tradition of serving breakfast all day long. Miss Lyndonville's breakfast menu has grown, from having 12 numbers of breakfast combinations to 37! All the original staple items are still on the menu, with new additions which include seafood, as well as the restaurant's blue-plate special, which is always listed on the "special" board.

Concerning staffing issues following the pandemic, Janet said, "We have been very fortunate." That formula for success included cutting back on shifts, plus keeping loyal employees. One of those employees includes Jenny McKenna, the business's office manager.

When the Grays first took over the diner in 1978, Janet remembers Ashley's words of wisdom concerning making their business plan work: "Don't worry, we'll stand here and do what we know how to do, and it will come."

"All the basics of 1978 are still important today … they are all still here," said Janet. "We will continue the promise of preparing quality food, without the wait for it to be served."

And this celebration of serving the Lyndonville area for 45 years — it's all about the loyal support of the community that surrounds Miss Lyndonville Diner.

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40 YEARS

Carpet Connection Covers Region For Decades

BY ROSIE SMITH
Staff Writer

LYNDONVILLE — In 1980, the building that once housed the N.A. McDonald Blacksmith & Horse Shoer in Lyndonville sat unused, except for storage. That was the year when Bob and Jean Guest, both in their 20s, moved to the area, purchased the buildings on that lot, and began renovations.

For two years they worked on the restoration process, which included creating a living space for themselves in the back of the building. The finished product — The Carpet Connection, located on 199 Depot St. — will be celebrating 40 years of business success in Lyndonville on Sept. 24.

Before coming to Lyndonville, Bob had a lot of experience dealing in the flooring business. According to Jean, they "had a lot of motivation and very little money." The Guests started small, remodeling the front of building for an office and showroom. "We expanded very slowly," said Jean. "We never went into debt … we didn't over extend."

The Guests refurbished a lot of unique features during renovations, including the original carriage doors in the front of the building. They discovered that at one time in history, the area that became their first showroom was the location for Our Husbands Veterinary Products, a business that sold salves and ointments, and was the forerunner of Bag Balm products. "Many of the old timers from town have come in to tell us about the history of this place," said Bob.

A grand opening was held in 1983 and many local folks attended. There was a lot of curiosity about what the Guests had done with the old building. "The town really supported us," said Jean.

The office team at The Carpet Connection in Lyndonville: from left, Melinda Cass, Dan Guest, Bob and Jean Guest. (Photo by Rosie Smith)

Eventually, the house next to the old blacksmith building – built in 1870 — would become the Guest's residence. Because the house was set really close to the road, the Guests had the building raised, turned around 90 degrees, and set down further back from the business.

Once the Guests could move into their new home, the display area in Carpet Connection expanded. In 2016, a warehouse was added to the existing building.

At the beginning of operations, the Carpet Connection sold mostly carpeting and vinyl, and over the years, branched off to area rugs, ceramic tile and hardwood flooring. Now on display in the store are hundreds of samples in styles and colors of carpets, vinyl flooring, tile, laminate and hardwood flooring. In present day, the most popular seller is vinyl plank and vinyl tile. This type of flooring is durable, does not need waxing, and is easy to maintain.

Carpet Connection has been actively servicing the surrounding area, including as far north as Derby Line; west to Morrisville and Stowe (which included installations of flooring on five floors of an apartment complex); south to West Lebanon (also a large apartment complex); and across the Connecticut River to Littleton and Franconia, N.H.

The Guests and crew are involved in many commercial, as well as residential projects. The staff includes five in-house installers for scheduled jobs. Carpet Connection owns its own trucks and runs its own vans.

During the COVID pandemic, the store shut down, but operations did not. The Carpet Connection was involved with a low-income commercial project in New Hampshire, and because the business was considered essential, the company was able to work on the project, completing it in a year and a half.

The office crew at Carpet Connection consists of Bob, Jean, their son Dan Guest, and Melinda Cass. Dan will be next in line at running the business. "Dan is really good with people, good with computers, and with expediating," said Bob. "With Melinda (who has been with the company for a year), it makes for a good team," he added.

Jean has been working in the office for 35 of the past 40 years, during that time frame raising five children. She is contemplating retirement, but adds, "I still come in for full days on Mondays when Melinda is off, and mornings most other days to help get the guys out."

The Carpet Connection has cut back a bit on hours and is now open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays, and 9 to noon on Saturdays.

"We are still standing, said Bob. "We saw a lot of other flooring businesses close through the years … no one bothered to tell us in the beginning that after five years of opening, most flooring stores would close."

Jean added, "If anything, we have quadrupled in size over the past 40 years."

Bob is a hands-on owner. He stills goes out to measure and plan for a job. He has a lot of experience in flooring and assists customers in the planning stages. He's "seen and done it all."

But Bob has a greater passion. He sees his business as a ministry. "This place is a front for sharing Jesus," he said. "I get to go to measure for flooring and end up encouraging and ministering to people … I get to share my testimony … I like to pray with people and share what the Lord has done for me."

Bob and Jean's faith, coupled with the success of the business, they say, will make for a great celebration of 40 years this fall.

For more information about The Carpet Connection, go to its website: http://thecarpetconnectioninc.com, call 802-626-9026, or email: thecarpetconnection@myfairpoint.net.

30 YEARS

Cole's Redemption Pops Top On Third Decade

BY STEPHEN GARFIELD
Staff Writer

ST. JOHNSBURY — Cole's Redemption has been in town for 30 years, all of it under the ownership of the Martel family. Kathy Martel's father bought it in 1993, and Kathy and her husband Dick bought it in January 2003.

In addition to a well-stocked convenience store, and redemption service to redeem bottles and cans, Cole's also has a laundromat on site. No one aspect of the three sub-businesses dominates the bottom line, Martel said. "It's everything, they all go together," she noted. The laundromat previously offered dry-cleaning services as well, "but when the owner, Wayne Whittemore, retired, we took over the laundromat," Martel said. "We discontinued the dry-cleaning part of it and put in new washing machines."

Kathy Martel, left, and daughter Melissa stand by the coffee bar at Cole's Redemption in St. Johnsbury.

The convenience store has a wide selection of items, including sandwiches brought daily to the store by Tim's Deli. "We have lottery tickets, a coffee bar, and a beer cave for larger packages, such as 30-packs and 24-packs," Kathy said.

Also employed at Cole's Redemption is Melissa , who, with her brother, plans to take the business over when her folks retire.

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30 YEARS

Farm & Forest Realty Feels Like Family For Clients, Employees

BY TODD WELLINGTON
Staff Writer

The Farm & Forest Team

Century 21 Farm & Forest Realty is a big Real Estate firm with 26 agents who cover the entire Northeast Kingdom.

But despite its size, it still has that family vibe.

The owners are Nick Maclure, his father and his wife. The company has been in business for 30 years, and their first employee is still with them.

"We're kind of a close-knit team," said Maclure. "We've grown a lot but I think we still have a small family owned mentality. We also would not be where we are today without the support of our customers and clients."

Farm & Forest has offices in East Burke (234 Route 114) and in Derby (5043 U.S. 5).

"We are a full service agency - anything from residential, commercial, second homes, lake front, land…auctions," said Maclure. "It's pretty widespread."

The company was founded by Maclure's father but the more interesting story is how Nick Maclure got into the business when he was still in high school.

Maclure went to Lake Region High School and played sports. But then came the spring semester of his senior year when he was 18-years-old.

"I got my (Real Estate) license in my senior year of high school and then I went to UVM," said Maclure. "I was a soccer player and a basketball player but really didn't have a spring sport so I decided, 'Well, there wasn't a whole lot going on,' so I decided to study and get my license."

Maclure then went to the University of Vermont and practiced Real Estate part-time in the summers and then joined the company full-time.

"I've been here ever since." said Maclure. "So I'm 23 years in…"

Maclure's wife, Megan Maclure is also a key part of management.

"My wife basically does all of our accounting and bookkeeping," said Maclure. "She's also a licensed agent and a broker as well."

And the company's first employee, Tamara Pare, started out as a secretary; she's still with the firm in the position of office manager.

The company was started by Maclure's father, Dan Maclure, in 1993. Dan Maclure had a fairly simple goal that ended up growing and expanding.

"I think at that period in time, he was previously working for another firm and he decided to start his own shop doing farms and land which is what he enjoyed," said Maclure. "Hence the 'Farm & Forest Realty.'"

But then it quickly grew and the company began adding on other agents and acquiring other offices.

"Now we've got 26 agents who handle all different aspects of real estate," said Maclure. "We've got agents with all different backgrounds and all different specialties all over the Northeast Kingdom. So I think we're well-suited to serve most anybody that has a dairy farm, a sugar bush or a $3 million dollar home. Or a fixer-upper."

Farm & Forest is now a powerhouse of Northeast Kingdom Real Estate.

"We've got a wonderful team," said Maclure. "We are, and have been, the top selling agency in the Northeast Kingdom since the 2000s."

25 YEARS

PH Landscape & Construction Continues To Grow Across NEK

BY KEVIN DOYON
Staff Writer

Jeff Cleveland turned a college side-hustle into a full-time business and a long-lasting career.

"When I started in 1998, I just thought I'd cut a few lawns for a couple of years and phase out," Cleveland said. "Well, here we are now."

Twenty-five years later and with three employees working with him, a small-scale PH Lawn Care has evolved into the well-known and successful PH Landscapes & Construction.

The idea started in '98; Cleveland was looking for employment during the summer months while on break from school.

"Back then, nobody mowed lawns that I was aware of," he said. "I knew I wanted to be outside, and I thought I could pick up a few lawns to make it worthwhile."

He knocked on a couple doors, picked up an inexpensive riding lawnmower, borrowed his parents' push mower and trimmer and soon PH Lawn Care was in business.

"I think the first year I had 15 lawns," he said. "I hired a friend part-time and we had a blast. Each year the lawns piled up. Soon I had full-time employees."

With the business continuing to expand, Cleveland's customers began requesting his help with additional services such as retaining walls, patios and excavation work. With those requests came more equipment and allowed Cleveland to discover his true passion.

"As the business grew, I realized my main interest was construction and running heavy equipment," he said.

In 2014, Cleveland decided to sell the lawn care part of the business.

"That way, I could focus all my efforts into what I really enjoy doing."

Now, PH Landscapes & Construction offers a number of services, including site work, lot clearing, septic systems, retaining walls, lawn installs and driveway maintenance and repair.

"Just about everything if it pertains to land and dirt work," Cleveland said.

A wide array of services helps PH Landscapes & Construction land jobs and new clients — an attention to detail and always putting the customer first has helped the business thrive for the past quarter of a century.

"It's obvious that the key to success is doing good work," Cleveland said. "But what's equally as important is to have good, clear communication. Get to know your customer and feeling them out; make sure that you're all on the same page; taking the time listening to their wants and make suggestions. Be honest, fair and understanding."

"What people should know about PH Landscapes & Construction is that we show up when we say we'll be there. If there's a hiccup on one job that prevents us keeping our schedule, the customer next in line will be informed that day. Phone calls are always returned, even if we can't do the job. We always have the customer's back. We try to accommodate any needs or wants the customer may have. After all, we want them satisfied so they'll call us back for the next project."

Three years ago, Cleveland purchased a second excavator and each year since, PH Landscapes & Construction has added implements and upgraded equipment.

"We're a small company that gets things done with a great attention of detail," Cleveland said. "Having a small crew, everyone knows their place so we work efficiently together. I learned quickly that you can't do it all and you're only as good as your employees."

Cleveland's role as owner of the business includes meeting with potential customers, viewing their projects, providing a quote and hopefully obtaining the job. He manages his crew and directs and informs of what's on task on a daily basis. With help from his employees, Cleveland also makes sure that equipment is running smoothly and that materials are readily available for each and every project.

"I'm on every job and that's where I want to be.," Cleveland said. "I think the customer has some comfort knowing this and I feel that my employees respect that. Quality and fairness is what we strive for."

15 YEARS

Kingdom Canine Center Follows Scent To Success

BY ROSIE SMITH
Staff Writer

It's been a Dog's World for 15 years now at Kingdom Canine Center. The business, located on 738 Lynburke Road in Lyndonville, is the brainchild and career path of Deanna Baker.

When Deanna moved to Vermont in 2005, she had already owned a business similar to Kingdom Canine Center for five years, while living in New Hampshire. "It was the first 'free roaming' dog daycare in the area," she said.

Once in Vermont, Deanna worked in a veterinarian's office for two and a half years. "Then I decided I missed my career path." She decided to go out on her own and established Kingdom Canine Center in 2008 at a location in Lyndonville, and for the next five years, offered grooming, daycare, training and agility classes.

In July 2013, she purchased a building on Route 5, renovated it and moved Kingdom Canine Center there; the move enabled her to offer boarding for her canine customers.

According to the website (https://www.kingdomcaninecenter.com), Kingdom Canine Center is "A dog's world filled with multiple services, including Doggie Daycare, Overnight Boarding, Grooming, Training and Agility classes."

The motto for Doggie Daycare is "Play all day, sleep all night … dogs get to play with each other, chase balls, and play with humans." For boarding, the building has large, private rooms for dogs — they can be in and out, all day long. The dogs are never alone at night as someone lives on the premises. Weather permitting, dogs can play outside for as long as they want. There is also an indoor play area when the weather isn't cooperating.

Deanna Baker, owner of Kingdom Canine Center, is shown out for a walk with her dog, Pippin. (Courtesy photo)

Kingdom Canine Center prides itself on using only gentle grooming methods. The staff never forces a pet to be groomed; they earn the trust of each dog, so the grooming experience will be less stressful. Grooming includes a bath with all natural shampoos, a brushout, nail trim, ear cleaning and trim if needed/desired. By having regular grooming the staff can help alert owners to any potential health issues.

Agility is a dog sport. Agility classes are held spring through fall. Dogs can learn to run through tunnels, leap over jumps, and maneuver though many other obstacles while being challenged mentally, as well as physically. Agility is great at building confidence in both dogs and humans.

During Kingdom Canine Center's training classes, dogs can learn name recognition, focus, sit down, stay, come, leave it, sitting for the food dish, and more. The benefits of crate training and food choices are also covered. For now, the classes are on hold, due to lack of time and employees.

"I take pride in the fact that just about every dog loves coming here for any of my services," said Deanna. "That passion is evident when owners get to see the wagging tails in front of them as they are being dragged in to see us!"

For more information for Kingdom Canine Center, go to the website, Facebook, or call 802-274-6033.

10 YEARS

T.D. Tax Services A One-Woman Show Offering Personal, At-home Tax, Bookkeeping Services

BY KEVIN DOYON
Staff Writer

Tammi Davis is a one-woman show at her business, T.D. Tax Services, which she owns and operates out of her home in Barnet.

"My business is pretty simple," Davis said. "Just me, myself and I."

The wheels began to turn for the creation of T.D. Tax Services about 11 years ago when Davis moved on from a full-time job to stay at home and help with her husband's business, Scott Davis Cabinetmakers. While in this new position, Davis was primarily responsible for the company's bookkeeping.

After holding that role for a couple years, she decided it would also be beneficial for the company if she could expand her position and be able to also handle the company's taxes, while still maintaining her bookkeeping duties.

Davis then enrolled in a Tax Preparation Class so she could learn to do the business' taxes. Soon after, she began offering her services to others as a way to earn additional income.

What was supposed to be a service that she could help offer to her current position, blossomed into a profitable business opportunity that turned out to have a strong need and desire from its client base.

Thus the beginning of T.D. Tax Services, the business she launched in 2013.

Over time, she's grown her knowledge and expanded her offerings.

She decided to further her skillset and earned an Associates in Accounting. It was then that Davis began offering bookkeeping services as well as tax services.

Her personal, at-home business approach has proven to instill trust in her clients and keep them coming back year after year.

"Trust is huge with taxes and bookkeeping," Davis said. "I have been able to remain successful because I take the time to get to know my clients and treat them fairly."

T.D. Tax Services offers tax services for both personal and sole proprietors (Schedule C). Davis offers drop-off or sit-down appointments, and if necessary, can do it remotely.

"I pride myself with having a quick turn-around with [the client's] tax return," Davis said. "If someone would like help with this year's taxes I would contact me as soon as possible, but at least a week before the deadline would be great."

Davis can be reached by phone at 802-751-9200, via email at tdtaxserv@gmail.com or through the company's Facebook page, TD Tax Services.

For bookkeeping, Davis is not currently taking on any new clients. However, she does offer a full range of services depending on what the business may need.

Davis added that T.D. Tax Services does not have any plans for change.

Tammi Davis has owned and operated her business, T.D. Tax Services, out of her home in Barnet since 2013. (Contributed Photo)

"My plan this year is to finish the tax season smoothly," she said. "No changes in the works."

In addition to tax services and managing bookkeeping accounts, Davis also works part-time at Wes Ward Auto and is on the fundraising committee for the Northeast Kingdom Cancer Action Network.

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