

A new face occupies a familiar place as Village Store reopens

BY DONNA RHODES
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BELMONT — The new owner of the Belmont Village Store has been putting in long hours stocking shelves and being the smiling, friendly face behind the counter of his business, as he tries to get a feel for the community and explores the needs and preferences of his customers.

Wishing to be known as simply Ramzi, he may be a new face in Belmont, but he is not new to the grocery industry. Coming from previous jobs in stores in Manchester, Pittsfield and other locations, Ramzi is proud to finally branch out in the business world, where he can be his own boss.

"I've worked for independent grocers for about eight years, but this is the first store I've owned," he said.



Donna Rhodes
Ramzi, the new owner of the Belmont Village Store, waits on Dennis, one of his regular customers, who said the sandwiches and baked goods at the new BVS are fresh and delicious each day. Ramzi hopes many will stop by to sample his soups and other lunch items, and let him know what else they would like to see at the Main Street business.

And Ramzi is now reaching out to his customers to see just what the new serv-

ices of the Belmont Village Store will be. Patrons have begun stop-

ping by regularly for this month's special on cups of Green Mountain Coffee, which are being sold for 99 cents a cup, no matter the size. He also offers the option of bringing your own favorite cup or travel mug to fill up on the way to work, and a counter top case offers tempting homemade brownies, muffins and cupcakes to sweeten the morning commute or lunch hour.

"We'll also be offering more home made baked goods in the future," said Ramzi.

Lunches are now available at BVS, and his cooler is stocked daily with all types of homemade sandwiches and subs, containers of macaroni and cheese, or perhaps a salad for those who are dining lightly. Future plans are in the works for daily or weekly take out luncheon specials to include

items such as drinks, chips or desserts.

"The sandwiches are great," said one happy patron stopping by for the noon hour: "I come here all the time, and everything is fresh and really good."

Besides sandwiches, Ramzi and his family also have chili and a variety of soups each day. He said the soup selection will change every three days or so for the immediate future, as he offers new recipes to be sampled by his patrons.

"I'm waiting to get feedback from the customers as to what they like, then we'll come up with a menu for our soups once we hear back what people want," he said.

Besides other household staples and fresh farm goods as they are available, BVS also offers DeNutte's Delights candles and air fresheners, and currently has a

sale on a variety of greeting cards. A new ATM machine is due soon, he said, to add another line of service to his customers.

Ramzi and his wife, Angela, have two children, and currently live in Pembroke. The children keep them busy, but the couple also spends a lot of their day working on their new business, too. While Ramzi puts in many long hours to get the store established, he said they are getting assistance from his mother-in-law Donna, too.

"Everyone (in the family) pitches in when they can. It helps a lot," he said.

Belmont Village Store, located on Main Street, across from the junction with Route 140 in Belmont, is open daily at 6 a.m., closing at 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 p.m. on Saturdays, and at 8 p.m. Sundays.

Sanbornton Public Library holding open house

SANBORNTON — The Sanbornton Public Library will hold an Open House Saturday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The community quilt will be dedicated and on display at the library. The semi-annual book sale will be held in the front hall and entry way, while local crafters and artists offer demonstrations in the rest of the library. For the children, a local entertainer will be creating balloon sculptures between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

The community quilt, pieced and quilted by volunteers from the town, is now on permanent display in the main stairwell. The dedication of the quilt will take place at 10 a.m., with some of the quilt's creators on hand to discuss their work. In the library is a book showing the stories behind each square, as told by

each designer. The book sale will have hundreds of volumes on offer, from children's tales to adult non-fiction and fiction, including a large selection of mystery novels. We also have books on tape and videocassettes to offer shoppers. Prices are reasonable, and winter time is coming; a perfect time to pick up something to read by the fire.

There will be a selection of Sanbornton artists and craftspeople showing off their creations and offering their wares to early holiday shoppers. Handmade goods and crafts will be on display for you to admire and discover just how they are created.

For further information about the Open House, please contact the Library at 286-8288 or SPL@metrocast.net.

Authorities shut down regional drug ring

BY JEFF FERLAND
GILFORD STEAMER

Gilford police, along with state law enforcement agencies, executed a search warrant after a four-month-long investigation at the Mardi Gras North Cabaret Tuesday, Oct. 18, just before 9 p.m.

According to a press release issued last week by Det. Christopher Jacques, Gilford Police arrested Kyme Locke, 37, of Concord; Dana Zizzo, 22, of Laconia; and Sherry Barnhart, 21, of Campton, all at Mardi Gras North in Gilford.

Additionally, Holderness police arrested Shauna Martin, 23, of Holderness; Franklin Police arrested Scott Tripp, 39, and Jessica Sargent, 35, both of Franklin; and Tilton Police arrested Justin Ainsley, 21, of Norwood, Mass.

According to Jacques, all were arrested on a felony

warrant for the sale of controlled or narcotic drugs.

In addition to the seven arrests, Jacques stated that sizeable amounts of cocaine, unlawfully possessed prescription medication, cash, and a stolen firearm were seized. Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, Jacques could not specify as to the amount of controlled or narcotic drugs seized.

Assisting Gilford Police in executing the search warrant at Mardi Gras North were the New Hampshire Attorney General's Drug Task Force, as well as the New Hampshire State Police Special Weapons and Tactics Unit and the Belknap Regional Special Operations Group.

According to Jacques, all official documents pertaining to the investigation have been sealed by court order for 120 days in case police are to make additional arrests.

Jacques said this was typical of this sort of investigation, though the length of time may vary.

As to the accusations of police misconduct during the investigation that have been circulating in the local press since last week's raid at the Mardi Gras, Jacques said he stands by Gilford Police Chief Kevin Keenan's word that officers acted appropriately given the nature of the situation.

"I have no issues with what law enforcement officers did that evening," said Jacques.

Jacques explained that in that sort of situation, there are certain variables, such as people hiding behind locked doors with weapons, which may threaten the safety of officers involved. Their safety, he said, is the number-one priority.

According to Jacques, offi-

cers are trained to get through locked doors in the most timely manner, and eliminate any possible threat.

"Efforts were made for keys," said Jacques.

He explained, however, that when the keys requested were not produced, officers were forced to employ alternative measures to accomplish their goals.

According to Jacques, these highly trained officers had a detailed plan prior to the execution of the search warrant, and they stuck to it. Gilford's Board of Selectmen planned to discuss the revocation of the Mardi Gras North Cabaret's entertainment permit at their meeting Wednesday, Oct. 26. A full report on that meeting, which took place after the deadline for today's edition of the Steamer, will appear in next week's issue.

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