

Business Watch

BY GAIL PISON MONTANY

Snag yourself a copy of **Vermont Magazine's** July/August issue, which features the Northeast Kingdom throughout with page after page beautiful photography and stories on a number of familiar landmarks in our lovely little corner of the universe, including the whole town of Barton, the **Wildflower Inn** in Lyndon and the **River Garden Café** in East Burke.

"Efforts like this bring out the best of what we have to offer, which will help others discover what we already know – that this is a great place to visit and live," said **Anna Rubin**, director of external relations at **Fairbanks Museum** in St. Johnsbury.

According to Rubin, **Linda Fogg**, executive director of St. J Works, and **Ann Nygard**, executive director of the Northeast Kingdom Travel and Tourism Association, negotiated with Vermont Magazine for discounted advertising rates, so local businesses and cultural institutions could join forces to create a presence over three pages in the issue.

By the way, the newest edition of "1,000 Places to See in the U.S.A. and Canada Before You Die" by Patricia Schultz mentions the Northeast Kingdom and **Jay Peak Resort** in its Vermont chapter.

In **New Hampshire**, she devoted more than a full page to the White Mountains in her new book, highlighting Mount Washington, its namesake hotel in Bretton Woods and the 8-mile Auto Road to the summit of the Northeast's highest peak. She also touted the famed **Kancamagus Highway**, connecting North Woodstock and Conway through the White Mountain National Forest and the Conway Scenic Railroad.

Things are moving and shaking in Bradford this summer. (See business section story by Jacob L. Grant.)

The 101-year-old **Bradford Veneer and Panel** mill has recently transferred all of its operations to its Mill Street location in Bradford, closing its Haverhill N.H. location.

Bradford Veneer and Panel manufactures cut-to-size veneer plywood and laminate plywood. Working with everything from oak, cherry, maple and ash, the company custom produces its product to fit the customer's request.

Lindsay Brainard, vice president of operations, said the mill sells mostly to the furniture in-

dustry, which, in these days of a daunting competitive importing market, is a tough notch to fill. The company has been forced to rethink its plans and objectives a little bit.

"It's been a tough year for businesses like ours who supply to the furniture industry," Brainard said. "We've gone through some changes and some downsizing... came back to our roots, so to speak."

The company used to have a finishing facility in Newport, but that closed several years ago. The Bradford location has been primarily a manufacturing location, while the Haverhill facility has also been used for finishing. In the last six months or so, Brainard said the company has decided to stop its finishing business, thus closing its Haverhill location.

To quote owner **Rick Parkin**, Brainard said, "'Right this minute, we're just happy to be here and be employing people.'"

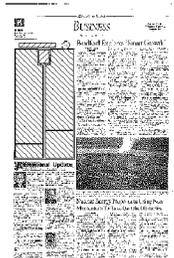
Wendel's Deli & Cafe opened this week on Main Street in Franconia, N.H. The business is owned by **Wendy Manning** of Franconia.

Manning wasn't available for comment Thursday, but employee **Johanna Greenlaw** said even though they were conducting basically a non-advertised soft opening while they iron out the kinks, there were still "plenty of people coming in" to sample Wendel's offerings, which she said include great meats and cheeses, build-your-own sandwiches, special homemade soups and salads using local produce. "It's just good local food," Greenlaw said.

When **Dave** and **Nadine McCue** opened **Mountain View Nursery** at their Sutton greenhouses back in June of 2004, their concentration was on perennials and shrubs. A year and a half later, they opened **Mountain View Nursery & Florist** on Route 5 in Lyndon near the **May Store**, adding house plants, hanging baskets and seasonal arrangements, garden accessories, wreaths, vases, pots, gift sets, etc.

Now, as their business has evolved over the past couple of years, the McCues have decided to change the name of their Lyndon operation to **Buds & Blooms**.

The new name, Dave McCue said, "reflects more of what we do in the florist line – [we're] more of a florist business now. The direction has changed from when we first opened." The name change officially takes effect Sunday.



Aside from some planned interior renovations at the Lyndon store, nothing will change, he said. They'll continue to carry hanging baskets and seasonal flowers as well as a limited supply of perennials from their greenhouses. Signs will be going up in the next few days, he said, though Buds & Blooms will be closed next weekend while the McCues take a much-needed mini-vacation.

By the way, Mountain View Nursery, located on Underpass Road off Calendar Brook Road in Sutton, still exists – but it will be open only on weekends or by appointment.

Marina and Doug Labounty, the new owners
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of **Max's Dance Hall** in Sutton, do not plan to make any major changes to the business.

Marina Labounty said last week the building will get a new coat of paint and some general maintenance.

"When we bought the business our goal was to keep things about the same," Labounty said. "It's been a successful business for years."

The dance hall will open the second weekend in September, Labounty said. Live music with country music will still be provided on Saturday nights.

One difference customers should note is the age limit has been raised from 16 to 18.

The Labountys bought the popular dance hall from **Jesse Nelson** and **Kirsten Klocke** a few weeks ago.

Two men from Virginia are moving to this area to open a new sports bar in St. Johnsbury. **Tim Cole** and **Dan Zentz** have filed an application with the town seeking a site plan approval for change of use at 397 Railroad Street to open **Front Row Sports Tavern**.

Actually, the space was occupied in 2005 by **The Underground**, a bar owned by local entrepreneur **Blake**

Jenkins. A year ago, building owner **Dennis Laferriere** said he was trying hard to bring in a good sports bar that would attract a nice clientele.

According to **Priscilla Messier**, St. Johnsbury's zoning administrator, the "change of use" requirement is being evoked for **Front Row Sports Tavern** because even though it was a bar in the past, it has been vacant for some time, plus **Jacques Mackay** has been using the space for her dance studio, **Dance Express**. The public hearing for this application is scheduled for July 10.

By the way, Mackay is planning to move **Dance Express** to another building in town, but isn't ready to reveal the location publicly, as the lease hasn't been signed yet.

Kim Trillo Easter of Concord, along with her sisters **Lori Tabacco** and **Jeri Steinbrenner**, has started a new online business **Brutus Boutique & Barkery** (www.brutusboutique.com), offering a selection of unique handmade items for that special dog or kitty.

Easter said **Brutus Boutique** sells cedar log dog beds made by a local craftsman, **Jon Badger**, handmade wedding attire (yes, you read that correctly, wedding attire), snugglesacks, blankets, clothing and accessories, plus pet treats from their "barkery," which uses all-natural ingredients for both cats and dogs.

The three sisters, who are separated geographically, came up with the idea when they got together last Christmas and realized they missed their old day-to-day connection. Now, with their new business, they talk on the phone every day, "which is nice," Easter said. Steinbrenner, who lives in California, handles the "barkery" portion of the business, creating the pet treats, and Tabacco, who lives in Connecticut, designed and maintains the Web site and handles the bookkeeping. Easter, apparently, does everything else.

Some people are just so remarkably clever.

Here's another clever idea: a business card-posting service that's an economical alternative to, say, the Yellow Pages for the smallest businesses to get the

word out about their product.

J.E.M. Advertising is the brainchild of **Tari Gingue** of St. Johnsbury, who puts together spiral-bound notebooks filled with business cards. These notebooks, or “community bulletin boards” as Gingue calls them, are distributed to area homes and local businesses.

Gingue, a freelance court stenographer by profession, named her business after her children, **Jennifer, Eric and Matt**. Although she’s had the idea for years, she was prompted to finally get it off the ground by her fiance, who makes butcher-block cutting boards.

Have an enjoyable and safe Fourth of July!

*Staff writers **Jeanne Miles and Jacob L. Grant** contributed to this week’s column.*