

Helen Martin,
Kas Monson,
Carolyn
Denning, Beth
Bosmans,
Margaret
Biggs, Mickie
Fowler, Richard
Sheldrew,
Marge Buttles
and Julie
Belosic at
gadZooks on
Thursday. Not
pictured is
member Nancy
Raven
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gadZooks!

Artists blossom in downtown Gardnerville

by Scott Neuffer
sneuffer@recordcourier.com

There is a new business in downtown Gardnerville called gadZooks. The name itself is enough to inspire curiosity. The fact that the business is a new partnership between 10 well-known artists could easily convert that curiosity into foot traffic.

"We are a new business of artistic collaborations offering fine arts, collectibles, creative furnishings and vintage unusual objects," the company said in its first press release.

On Thursday, gadZooks Vice President Margaret Biggs, a painter, and gadZooks Secretary Kas Monson, a stained glass artist, elaborated on their vision.

"We wanted to create something new and different," said Monson. "It's not just a gallery. It's more. It's a creative place." Biggs explained how the concept came to florescence about a year ago.

"It started with good friends just talking," she said. "We wanted a place to do creative things. We

GADZOOKS FOUNDING MEMBERS:

Julie Belosic, Margaret Biggs, Beth Bosmans, Marge Buttles, Carolyn Denning, Mickie Fowler, Helen Martin, Kas Monson, Nancy Raven, and Richard Sheldrew.

know there are a lot of creative people in the community who wanted a place to show their work... Life is short, and we might as well jump to it."

"You can talk about it the rest of your life, but if you don't do it, then it never gets done," added Monson.

The name, a throwback to early 20th Century exclamations, was a product of, first, a card came, during which Biggs made such an exclamation over a great hand, and then the word's resurgence in a three-hour brainstorming session.

"Someone would say a name, and then we'd laugh and wonder if it had already been used somewhere else," Monson said.

With a name chosen, the next step was finding a location. The squat brick building next to the town offices, literally feet from Main Street, happened to be available.

Built in 1945, the building has a storied history. Most recently, it was used as a florist and coffee shop. From the mid-sixties to mid-seventies, it was the home of Valley Insurance and Realty. Biggs' father, Wilfred Jones, worked in that office.

"We're trying to piece together a little history here," Biggs said. "This building has been so many different things."

"Everything fell into place," said Monson. "We were looking at buildings, and this one came up for rent. It was just karma."

The partners started refurbishing in mid-February, "repainting and scrubbing," as Monson described it. Member Richard Sheldrew, a woodworker, installed rustic, reclaimed wood on the wall behind the counter. For an exhibit space, he arranged variegated slats on a sheet of plywood against a brick wall, extending the



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Gourd art created by Teddi Hopkins on display at gadZooks on Thursday.

rustic look but allowing paintings to be hung. In another space, the building's original trusswork looms above the displays. In this way, the interior reflects an interplay between antique, shabby chic and modern.

There are, of course, a variety of paintings from such mainstay artists as 90-year-old Marge Buttles. There's pottery, jewelry, fused glass, quilts, antique furniture, and rare collectibles like a Tiffany Studios desk set — pretty much anything that falls under the banner of "a creative place." In addition to founding members, there are works from roughly 20 consignors.

Because of its diversity, its wide appeal and reach in the community, gadZooks can only enhance ongoing revitalization efforts in

the downtown corridor, Biggs contended.

"I think it dovetails into what both towns are doing to revitalize the downtown areas," she said, as traffic rushed by the store windows. "With Walmarts on both sides of town, we really need to do something. The majority of the money we make goes back to the artists. That money is staying here in the community."

GadZooks is located at 1411 Highway 395, Gardnerville. Regular business hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, and 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday.

A grand opening with live entertainment and refreshments is scheduled for 4-7 p.m. Saturday.

For more information, call 782-9665 or visit www.gadzooksnv.com.