

James Lazarowicz Carries on Tradition as New Owner of Betty's Gifts

By Sean Ely

Carrying on traditions is important to James Lazarowicz, the proprietor of four gift shops, and he plans to carry on at Betty's Gifts as it has been run for more than 60 years. He purchased the business last November from longtime owner and Island resident Judy Bynoe.

Betty's Gifts is still at the Lilac Tree Hotel on Main Street. "The eclectic mix of gifts and traditional souvenirs will remain much the same as Judy and her family selected over the years," he said.

Mr. Lazarowicz believes that children, teenagers, adults, and senior citizens can all come into this shop and find something that appeals to them.

"The gifts will appeal to all ages, with such items as fun hats that the school class trips love to buy to traditional items like wood toys, bows and arrows, funky jewelry, items we all grew up buying when on vacation," he said. "We also have a large selection of pocket knives and beautiful swords, another tradition Betty's has carried for a long time."

In 1946, Charles and Betty Ross began the shop. They approached Union Terminal Piers to rent the location, originally next to The Big Store, for their Little Prices shop.

Then, in 1952, Agnes Shine, Mary McGreevy, and Mrs. Bynoe's parents, Charles and Sally Dufina, purchased the business in 1952, and in 1968, Mrs. Bynoe's husband, Robert, purchased Ms. Shine and Ms. McGreevy's shares. Her mother stayed on with Mr. Bynoe until 1972, when he purchased her share. Mrs. Bynoe was left with the business when Mr. Bynoe passed away in 2001.

"I'm fortunate to have given the store to someone who has lived and worked here for so long," Mrs. Bynoe said. "I ran out of energy, so now I just own my one shop, Birches. I feel really good about him running it now. It's going to be a little bit different now that he's on Main Street, and he's used to being on Market Street, but he knows business very well. He'll be able to sell the same things that were sold at Betty's in 1946."

Mr. Lazarowicz has already



James Lazarowicz, who purchased Betty's Gifts from owner Judy Bynoe in November 2006, stands outside the store's entrance on Main Street Tuesday, May 29.

Weathervanes Gifts and Gallery, which are both on Market Street. These businesses carry Michigan artworks and up-scale gifts, resort clothing and souvenirs, to give the Mackinac shopper, what Mr. Lazarowicz calls, "a broader selection while on Mackinac Island."

He has operated these businesses for the past 30 years. One of the things he would recommend to tourists is the chance to walk on Market Street, to get away from the business from the next street over.

"Don't miss a stroll on historic Market Street," he said. "It's beautiful and at a slower pace from Main Street, a sometimes frantic or hectic place."

He also owns a 3,000 square foot year-around gift store in downtown Bay City on the banks of the water, appropriately named Wind and Willows on the River. His sister, Janet, operates the store while he is on the Island.

"It's a great location with antique malls, great restaurants and boutiques, and coffee houses," he said. "It's an easy stop on your way up north, just off I-75."

heard the murmurs of satisfaction from customers, so he will keep doing what works.

The positive feedback that the shop gets is one of the things that keep the classic items for changing. Knowing this, Mr. Lazarowicz will continue to sell his items at reasonable costs, so that Betty's Gifts continues to thrive on the main strip of the Island.

"I was told that scouts who serve at Fort Mackinac week to week love our selection," he said. "We hope it is true. I have a lot to sell. The prices are what I think will bring customers back again and again. We will keep them affordable to everyone."

Mr. Lazarowicz will continue to operate his other shops, including The Landing Gull and

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Ancient Manuscripts Focus of Island Conference



East Bluff resident Reverend Ron Smith (right) and Dr. L. Michael White are preparing for the Friends of Herculaneum Society conference, which runs from Saturday, June 2 to Wednesday, June 6, at Grand Hotel. The conference is on ancient manuscripts discovered at Herculaneum, Italy. Dr. White holds the Ronald Nelson Smith Chair in Classics and Christian Origins and is Director of the Institute for the Study of Antiquity and Christian Origins of the University of Texas at Austin. He is a specialist on early Christianity and Judaism in the Roman world, authored "From Jesus to Christianity," and is Director of Excavations of the ancient synagogue at Ostia, Italy, the oldest Jewish synagogue in Europe. (Photograph by Kay Smith)

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