



# Weare in the World

August 2021

Special Edition: The Business Issue



Stephanie Zydenbos of Micro Mama's (courtesy photo).



## LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### Micro Mama's: "Living Food for Living Beings"

By Alyssa Small

The heart of Micro Mama's is tucked away by a stream and a farmhouse in historic Tavern Village. You wouldn't even know it's there unless informed by a knowledgeable neighbor or enticed by the aroma of garlic wandering down the driveway. But maybe you've seen the colorful jar labels with a sweet maiden peeping at you from a local shelf.

What is in those jars? Lacto-fermented vegetables. Despite the 'lacto,' the fermentation has nothing to do with milk. It refers to the lactic acid formed when the starches and sugars break down in the vegetables. The See VEGGIES, page 2

## Editor's Note:

In our regular bimonthly issues, *Weare in the World* focuses on community news: the goings-on in our town and schools; features about local people and their accomplishments; the activities of civic groups, clubs and non-profits; poetry, prose, humor and photography. We occasionally profile a Weare-based business in our spotlight feature, although we refrain from publishing ads. But, in response to many requests, and because *Weare in the World* realizes the tremendous value our local businesses offer the community, we are dedicating this special edition to them.



We see this as a unique opportunity for local businesses to shine and to connect with our ever-growing readership. Inside, there are several features on a selection of hardworking, innovative operations in town, plus a healthy listing of local business cards. Readers can bookmark this edition and use it as a handy resource for when their sink springs a leak, the car starts making cringey noises or when shopping for a thoughtful, handcrafted gift.

Finally, contributions for this special edition were made by our volunteer staff members and guest writers, but the lion's share of work was done by Sharon Czarnecki, our Community Relations reporter. Sharon dedicated countless hours to tracking down and contacting businesses owners, collecting and formatting cards and even reporting two feature stories. Her tenacious energy and passion for the community drove this project to represent every Weare-based business possible. We thank her heartily for her efforts, and know you will appreciate them, too.

Enjoy,

Karen Lovett, Editor

**VEGGIES, continued from page 1**

process, which can take up to six months, makes the vegetables easier to digest. Your stomach will thank you for eating Silly Dilly Carrots, Mama's Kraut, Mild or Spicy Kimchi and other fancifully named goods.

Who is Micro Mama? Weare native Stephanie Zydenbos started Micro Mama's in 2012. Zydenbos had been buying probiotics for some time when she realized, with help from a farmer friend, that she could make her own probiotic products out of vegetables. As her home production increased, turning the enterprise into a business was a natural progression.

Micro Mama's has a strong focus on promoting holistic wellness. All of Micro Mama's products are raw, vegan, gluten free,



certified organic and made from locally sourced produce. Even though the product ingredient lists are short, Micro Mama's processes up to 100,000 pounds of vegetables each year. They try to use every part of every vegetable and donate any remains to local farmers for animal feed and compost. They ferment in glass instead of plastic. Their commercial containers are returned and reused. Micro Mama's products are nutritionally dense, promote increased veggie intake and preserve local produce for year-round enjoyment.

Micro Mama's local commitment extends to sales. A customer might be served a Micro Mama's product at Intervale Pancake House, Country Spirit, Tucker's, or Tooky Mills Pub. Jars can also be found at the Concord Food Co-Op, Henniker Farm Store, Benedict Dairy, or even Whole Foods. Upon request, Zydenbos would also leave a few jars in a cooler on her steps, which is about as local as it gets.

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 **LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT**  
**Clayton's Way Farm Soaps**  
By Diane T. Padilla

Clayton's Way Farm Soaps (CWF) are made by Richard (Rick) Gunn. Rick is the fourth generation to live on the Gunn property in Weare. Clayton, Rick's dad, was third generation. Clayton's father, George Gunn, was second generation. The image on the CWF website, soap label and most of the logos are a picture of Rick's dad and grandfather, George and Clayton, taken in the late 1930's.

According to Sheryl Gunn, Rick's wife, the Gunns were all hard-working farmers or worked in the trades. Rick had great respect for his father and named the business

as a tribute to his dad after he passed. In Sheryl Gunn's eyes, all the Gunns were men of great integrity.

"CWF Soaps got its start in our kitchen in the fall of 2007," Sheryl Gunn said. "Rick had been making his own biodiesel fuel, which in order to make, you have to make sure and remove something in the process, or the diesel fuel will become soapy. This process, along with a desire to have a good natural soap without chemicals, got him thinking about soap making. And so, CWF Soaps was born."

Rick Gunn did a lot of research to come up with a formula that would produce a bar that is moisturizing, long lasting, and lathers well -- all things that many homemade soaps came up short on, said Sheryl Gunn. To this day, he makes all the soap, as well as all of his equipment and tools necessary: lye, tank, bulk oil tanks, his molds, and cutters.

Once the soap is made, it gets poured into large molds where it sits for approximately 24 hours before being cut into logs, then into bars. A single batch of our soap will produce 64 bars.

From there the soap sits on racks and cures for three weeks before being packaged. Sheryl Gunn is responsible for the rest, along with two or three part-time local student helpers.



Up until about five years ago, Rick's mother, Edie Gunn-Chase, wrapped all of CWF soap, and proudly called herself a "rapper."

"She is still a young-at-heart, 93-year-old positive influence over all she comes in touch with," says Sheryl Gunn.

With many other natural soaps currently available, what makes CWF soap different?

"Customers tell us (the soaps) are more moisturizing, some have medicinal qualities (for eczema, psoriasis), great lather and last longer than others," said Sheryl Gunn. "We believe it's our formula, and the fact we put six plant oils to start."

"Felted soap" is a CWF soap encased in wool roving (wool roving that has been processed but not yet spun into yarn), and agitated for a short time while wet to bind the wool fibers tightly together, then dried.

"It creates an exfoliating scrubbing bar, ... It actually

**See SOAP, page 4**

**SOAP, continued from page 3**

makes the soap last longer," Sheryl Gunn said. "We grow, harvest, and dry our own calendula, peppermint, and lavender herbs that go in our soap. We also harvest native jewelweed in the spring for our poison ivy soap."

As with many businesses, CWF was hit hard by the Covid-19 Pandemic. During the spring of 2020, all shows, farmers markets and fairs came to an abrupt halt, causing lost revenue. Sheryl Gunn said the website helped with online sales.

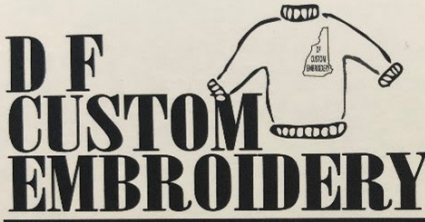
"Some of our smaller retail accounts closed completely and a few never re-opened," Sheryl Gunn said. "Our bigger retail accounts picked up once stores figured out how to make things safe. We figured we fared OK, in spite of loss of sales. However, we have recently felt the aftermath of rising prices as so many others have, and now find the need to raise our prices if we are to stay in business. The oils we use to make our soap have all increased, some dramatically! We never expected this."

Currently, CWF offers about 50 varieties of soap, numerous lip balms, Shea butters, felted soaps, and some other soap accessories.

"We (are in) about a dozen or so brick and mortar stores around the state, all of which are listed on our website," Sheryl Gunn said. "Most of them are in New Hampshire...about 70% of our sales are from New Hampshire and the remaining 30% are out of state."

As to what soaps are the most popular, Sheryl Gunn says it depends who you ask: lavender, citrus breeze, healing need, unscented. Her own favorites are orange cream and gentle complexion.

Clayton's Way Farms products can be ordered online at: [www.claytonswayfarms.com](http://www.claytonswayfarms.com).




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Sheila Allatt, left, and Tina Bell work on a piece in their new shop in July (Karen Lovett photo).



## LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### WeAre Upcyclers

By Karen Lovett

Something old, something new.

When you get down to it, that's the essence of WeAre Upcyclers LLC, a furniture makeover business taking up a new home at 464 South Stark Highway in Weare. Its grand opening was scheduled for Aug. 14.

Sister owners Sheila Allatt and Tina Bell take in aging, "well-loved" wooden pieces and with some cleaning, sanding, paint or stain, breathe new life into them.

The venture started when the sisters each found themselves wanting a career shift at the beginning of 2020. Allatt, 39, spent 10 years in law enforcement, and Bell, 35, had worked in a dental office.

"We were ready for a change," Bell said. "We just didn't know what."

They shrugged, thinking they'd try what had been – until then – a now-and-again hobby: painting furniture. Years before, Allatt had refinished a desk for her daughter, and Bell was always rehabbing the odd dresser or end table in her basement.

That's where they started working together. Early furniture improvement projects were soon noticed by friends, who encouraged them to post pictures online.

"I thought, 'Who knows? Maybe we'll make 50 bucks,'" Bell recalled.

But after developing a Facebook page, they grew a following. They shopped at estate sales or in online marketplaces, or received donations from people who were moving and wanted to lighten the load. Along the

way, Allatt and Bell learned about using certain tools and techniques through trial and error. Online tutorials and inspirations also proved instructive.

Over time, they also began receiving custom orders to revive hutches, kitchen tables, chairs, night stands and dressers.

"Custom projects are my favorite because they're so rewarding," Allatt said. "People will say, 'Oh my god; my grandfather owned this piece and now it matches our décor.'"

The sisters' makeovers - most in a simple, neutral "farmhouse/boho" style - picked up steam. In the year and half since they began upcycling, Allatt and Bell have taken on some 130 furniture projects. Earlier this spring, they added kitchen cabinet painting to their list of services.

With that growth and momentum, they began looking for workshop and sales space.

Both Allatt and Bell live in Weare with their families, and so they often drove by the empty building on South Stark Highway, which is owned by its neighbor, Sanel Auto Parts. The sisters made some calls and struck a lease deal, getting the keys on June 4.

"We did not expect to be opening up a shop," Allatt said.

"That was a dream," Bell added. "It was like, 'Can you imagine it?'"

By mid-July, the paint-flecked sisters were in full showroom rehabilitation mode, working on floors, walls and trim to the tunes of The Spice Girls and Vanilla Ice. They had already given the yellow exterior a fresh coat of gray and they imagined lining the walls with a selection of pieces and decorating with items by other local artisans, such as hexagonal shelves by a father/daughter duo at C&C Wood Studio in Goffstown.

As for the future, Allatt and Bell envision providing customers a bit of fresh nostalgia, supporting other local artisans and hoping their "shop small, shop local" mentality will help them thrive.

WeAre Upcyclers Facebook page can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/WeAreUpcyclers/>





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## LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### Kings Corner

By Sharon Czarnecki

If you love design, art, history, detail and nature and you can find all of that in a piece of wood, then perhaps you should consider a career as a master wood turner. Michael Fonner has loved working with wood since he was 12 years old and has now spent 40 years of his life doing exactly that.

He is a sole proprietor, but sometimes takes on one or two helpers for a really large job. Most of his work involves custom staircases with beautiful balusters. But, he also does replacement balusters, columns, porch posts, kitchen center island legs and other lathe work. Making molds for metal working out of hard maple is another of his talents. Products produced by King's Corner right here in Weare are sold worldwide.



Often the work brings challenges: historical restorations, duplicating a damaged antique part or creating a staircase built around an architectural feature. On one occasion, Fonner was selected to design and build a walnut staircase around a three-story waterfall *inside* the home. Another favorite project involved replacing a damaged spire, but at the same time making certain it perfectly matched its remaining twin with features like an octagonal portion and a carved pineapple at the top.

Fonner did comment that he is disappointed few school systems have the money to put current equipment in their shops and maintain it. He himself was fortunate enough to have an excellent mentor – Mr. Leroy Gibson – and to learn on updated equipment. These days, if a young person is interested in the field, Fonner recommends he or she either apprentice to an accomplished craftsman or attend North Bennett Street School in Boston. He is also willing to talk to anyone wanting to pursue such a trade.

Fonner's work has been featured in many prestigious magazines and papers including the "Los Angeles

Times," "The Boston Globe," "The Concord Monitor" and "Fine Woodworking," to name a few. He is proud of being a founding member of the Guild of N.H. Woodworkers which is another source of information and support for the art of woodworking.

Fonner can be contacted at 502 Barnard Hill Road in Weare; by phone at 603-529-0063; or by email at [woodturner529@gmail.com](mailto:woodturner529@gmail.com) For more information, visit the website at <https://kingscorneronline.com>.

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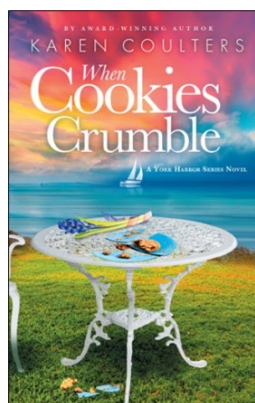
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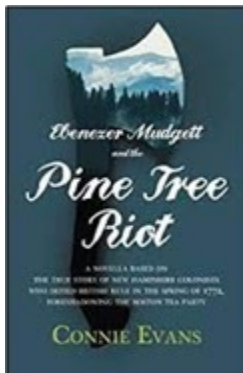
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## Weare's Early Industries and Industrious Settlers

By Connie Evans

The list of businesses in *The History Of Weare (1635-1888)* is extensive. William Little devotes thirty-five pages to Weare's industries. It is easy to see why Weare was steadily settled; the river and many brooks supplied the much-needed water power for the 62 mills. Our early residents recognized a good place to build a house, raise a family and utilize the natural resources. The first businesses provided materials for basic subsistence; there was little need for something that didn't contribute to essential well-being or survival.

As people began to arrive and thrive in Weare (first named Halestown, then Robiestown), so did commerce. When our first settlers carved out their homesteads, they were mostly farmers, relying on what they could raise, grow or barter with neighbors. The need for mills entered into their lives, and the saw and grist mills soon popped up—22 before 1800. The saw mills provided planks for building; the grist mills provided flour for food. Sometime in the early years, the farmers realized that a tavern or two would be a nice respite from their chores as well as a way to keep up with news and events as told from others stopping by. Travelers passing through on their way to buy and barter in other locations needed taverns and inns to spend the night, feed and water the oxen that pulled their carts, and down a mug of flip—warm rum and mashed apples. As

expected, rum, cider and apple brandy became increasingly popular.

With the abundance of trees, the Weare people were able to make several wood products—at first only by hand: clapboards and shingles were handmade until the first half of the 19th century, when machines took over. Almost as soon as the town was settled, people started making furniture. It wasn't until the 19th century that machines allowed for several cabinet shops to appear and sell furniture wholesale.

Jesse Emery, a son of one of the first settlers, made the first clock. According to Little, James Corliss stole the trade by peeking in Jesse's windows. Abner Jones made large eight-day brass clocks that he sold to the more affluent residents for \$50. More than a hundred years later in 1885, one of his clocks sold for \$83.

From 1770 to 1888, Weare boasted having more than 100 blacksmiths. Since many residents were farmers, blacksmiths were an integral part of their livelihood: They fashioned and repaired farm implements and fabricated any number of tools. They made nails, hinges, door handles and latches, axes, hoes, chisels and augers, scythes, bolts and plow irons. From the beginning, all settled sections of Weare had at least one blacksmith.

Shoemakers arrived as early as blacksmiths. A farmer would pick the cobbler up in his oxcart and take him home to make shoes for the entire family. He stayed as long as necessary to get every family member shod. Then another farmer would retrieve him and bring him home. It wasn't until 1823 that shoes and boots were sold out of a shop.

By the mid 1800s, industry in Weare was growing strong; however, it wasn't going to endure throughout the twentieth century. Enterprising folks were producing small products like baskets, buttons, toys, and matches as well as carriages, sleighs, wheelbarrows, linseed and flaxseed oils, cotton, wool and clothing. Then in 1927, a great flood destroyed homes and Weare's businesses were washed down the Piscataquog and its tributaries. How ironic that the river that started commerce in Weare also ended it.


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## LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

### The Cat's Pajamas

By Sharon Czarnecki

Whoopie pies, cookies, and fudge – oh my! Add brownies, custom flavors and home deliveries and you have a winning combination. Thanks to Jordyn Hotchkiss making a part of her dream come true, all of us in Weare can benefit from someone else making delicious party goodies that bring plenty of comments. “These are fantastic!” and “Where did you get these!?” are but a few.



Hotchkiss has loved baking ever since she was a girl helping her mother, April Hotchkiss (who now helps her). The pleasant memories, the way the house smells, the smiles on faces all make this work something she loves to do. Hotchkiss explained that some aspects of her work are limited by the rules imposed by cottage industry laws, which she strictly adheres to. For instance, she is unable to work with items that require refrigeration. However, she is looking into arrangements for an industrial kitchen to overcome this and give her more flexibility.

What makes her baked goods so sought after? She admitted she has no idea, except to say the teamwork and training with her mom and using the family's well-seasoned jelly roll pans are the only things that spring to mind. She says that her favorite order so far has been when she made 100 whoopie pies for teacher appreciation week here in Weare.

Asked what the “Cat's Pajamas” has to do with baked goods, Hotchkiss said she also loves cats and what she would very much like to do is set up a shop where folks can come and visit with cats who are up for adoption while they enjoy a baked treat.



Baked goods from the Cat's Pajamas Bakery can be found at the Real Food Farmer's Market, 65 North Stark Highway in Weare, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Hotchkiss is also there in person most Saturdays selling her items at the outdoor market.

To get in touch with her directly, email [catspajamasnh@gmail.com](mailto:catspajamasnh@gmail.com); or message her through Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/catspajamasnh/>

Lastly, Hotchkiss will take special requests and is happy to try new recipes. She is also looking for readers' help in sending her their favorite gluten-free brownie recipes.

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