

Silkweeds has loyal following from across state, Searsport store sees 25 years

7/10/09 10:08 AM

By **TheWeekly**



BY WALTER GRIFFIN
FOR THE MIDCOAST BEACON

SEARSPORT — Lisa Gray loves coming to work.

The owner of Silkweeds arrives at her shop early and stays late seven days a week. Besides managing the business she and her husband, Bill, have owned for the past five years, Gray also makes 150 pounds of home-made fudge each week and doubles that amount at Christmastime.

“Seven days a week, no vacations. When you own your own business that’s what you do, especially with the economy we’re in,” Gray said. “I actually love my job. I think it’s the people I meet. I meet people from all over.”

Silkweeds was founded 25 years ago by fellow Verona Island residents Julie Madison and Christine

MIDCOAST BEACON PHOTO BY WALTER GRIFFIN
Lisa Gray of Silkweeds on Route 1 in Searsport is gearing up for this week-end’s 25th Anniversary Yard Sale 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, July 11-12. Items in the yard sale will be priced 50 to 75 percent off, and most in-store items will be on sale at 25 percent off.
Sherman.

Gray will mark the store’s quarter-century in business by holding an anniversary yard sale 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, July 11-12. Sale items will be priced from 50 to 75 per-cent off, and many in-store items will be on sale for 25 percent off.

Gray described Silkweeds’ wares as “country-primitive” gift and home decor featuring braided rugs, furniture, linens, lamps, prints and many locally made items that keep patrons returning year after year. There also are gourmet food products, jams, jellies, pickles, grilling sauces, soaps, lotions and jelly beans.

“We have quite a bit of Maine-made [items] and it gets to be more and more all the time,” she said. “We don’t take it all but we try to do business with as many producers as we can.”

Silkweeds has a loyal following of customers from all over the state who make as many as six to eight visits a year from places as far away as Fort Kent and York. The store has a mail-ing list of 2,500 patrons and contacts more than 1,000 customers by e-mail. Gray said the store’s unique cluster of rooms makes people feel comfortable and puts them in the frame of mind for having fun.

“For us, it’s a state of mind,” she said. “Most people say Silkweeds is charming. You come in here, there are all these nooks and crannies. There is something around every corner. I have relationships with a lot of my customers. You get to know all the in-state ones and they tend to become your friends.”

The store issues savings cards offering 20 percent discounts to people who shop at least once a month. There is also a monthly \$25 gift card giveaway. New this year is The Gazebo, a lunch cart next door run by Laurie and Shannon Gray that offers lobster and crab rolls, hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks 11 a.m.-5 p.m. seven days a week.

“We get a lot of nice comments from customers,” Gray said. “A lot of times they come in looking for something particular or they just want to browse. It’s a feel-good store. You come in to browse and most times you’ll find something to leave with.”

Silkweeds is located at 191 East Main St. in Searsport. For information, visit shopsilkweeds.com or call 800-711-1136.