

French Cellar moves to new Machias location

BY JOHANNA S. BILLINGS
BDN STAFF

MACHIAS — A few things have changed for Ryan French in the past couple of months.

In December, he left his job as manager of the Machias Hanaford so he could manage his family's business, the French Cellar, which features wine, craft beers and cheese. He did this so his parents, Rob and Betsy, could move to Halifax, Nova Scotia, for his father's job in shipbuilding.

As it turned out, he also ended up managing a nearly 14,000-square-foot, six-unit commercial building with four apartments.

The French Cellar had been renting its location at 7 Water St. since Rob and Betsey French started

ed the business in 2011. When Machias Savings Bank took ownership of the property last fall, the Frenches considered their options.

"We looked into buying the building, but it needs a lot of work," Ryan French, who lives in Cutler, said. Contractors told the family it would be cheaper to tear the building down than renovate it. So they decided to pass.

Before they made plans to move to another location, however, they learned Michael and Patricia Sansing were selling the commercial and residential building at 4 Colonial Way, where their business, Whole Life Natural Market, is located.

After doing their research, the Frenches decided it made financial sense to purchase the building and move their business to

the only empty commercial unit. Now the French Cellar is located next door to Whole Life. Other commercial tenants in the building include Columbia Falls Pottery, Coastal Soundwaves Music Store, Ray Foster Antiques & Fine Art and Susan West of Northwest-ern Mutual.

Patricia Sansing said the food market, which has been open since 2003, is staying put. She and her husband decided they no longer wished to own the building with all its rental units.

"We both work full time, and it's one less burden," she said, adding she was surprised the building sold so quickly.

French said closing on the \$365,000 property was in February.

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JOHANNA S. BILLINGS | BDN
Ryan French puts beer on the shelves at the French Cellar recently. The business, which specializes in wine, beer and cheese, just moved from Water Street to Colonial Way in Machias.



GABOR DEGRE | BDN
Bangor developer Roy Hubbard held an open house at the recently renovated Dakin building apartments in Bangor.

Downtown dwellings

Developer unveils renovation of former Dakin building in Bangor

BY NICK MCCREA
BDN STAFF

The renovation of the long-vacant former Dakin Sporting Goods building overlooking downtown Bangor's West Market Square is complete after two years and a \$2 million investment.

On Friday, developer Roy Hubbard opened a trio of ground-level, loft-style apartment units at 28 Broad St. as a stop on the Downtown Bangor Artwalk.

"We put all this hard work into it and now we want to show it off," Hubbard said Friday night as people milled around munching on chicken wings and eyeing artwork mounted on the exposed brick walls of the apartments.

Originally, Hubbard planned to build retail space on the first floor, but based on the success he had filling the 15 upstairs units earlier this year, he decided to stick with residential.

"I was really impressed by the quality tenants we got and the excitement they had about being downtown," Hubbard said.

Hubbard said he recently started marketing the three new "super luxury" ground floor units, which are larger than the ones upstairs. Rent ranges from \$2,200 to \$2,500 per month. Most of the tenants are people from out of state who come to Bangor to work at the hospital or pursue a doctorate at the university. Others just want to be downtown.

The site has been largely vacant since

the late 1990s, when it briefly housed a coffee shop, cafe and TCBY yogurt shop. Since then, it has occasionally served as temporary headquarters for political campaigns.

In spite of several rounds of rehabilitation to the building's facade and an overhaul of its roof more than a decade ago, nothing significant happened in terms of development at the building until Hubbard purchased it from its former owner.

The address is the latest long vacant downtown Bangor structure to receive a sorely needed facelift and reuse. After decades of vacancy, the former Merchant's Bank building across the street opened last year with more luxury apartment units, and Evenrood's Restaurant on the ground floor.



Payday loans: Risk vs. reward

BY RUSS VAN ARSDALE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NORTHEAST CONTACT

Just two weeks ago in this column we wrote about some debt collectors who bend rules or break laws. Last week, the Federal Trade Commission warned that some collectors are trying to capitalize on bogus payday loans.

A payday loan is a cash advance given to a consumer. The consumer hands over a check or agrees to have a deposit account debited. Either transaction takes place at a future date when, the theory goes, the consumer can repay the loan plus interest.

Those short-term loans tend to carry high interest rates. In Maine, a supervised lender license is required, and lenders cannot charge more than \$25 on a loan of \$250 or more. If a consumer can't pay back the loan — often due in two weeks — it might be renewed, incurring another \$25 fee. If the loan were renewed every two weeks for a year, the consumer would pay \$650 in fees on that \$250 loan.

Unscrupulous lenders don't bother with licenses or with obeying the state and federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Acts. The FTC last week alerted state regulators nationwide that several companies either are trying to collect nonexistent loans or that they're trying to collect on loans that were never turned over to any third-party collector.

The FTC alert stated that some suspicious portfolios of alleged

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Friend & Friend buys Polaris franchise from B&D Marine

ORONO — Friend & Friend Inc. recently announced the acquisition of the Polaris franchise from B&D Marine in Brewer.

Friend & Friend immediately relocated Polaris to its location at 29 Stillwater Ave. in Orono.

"We are incredibly excited to add the Polaris brand, the off-road market leader, to our operations here at Orono. The addition of Polaris Rangers, Razors, ATVs and snowmobiles will give our customers an unparalleled choice when selecting an off-road vehicle," Lou Fraser, general manager at Friend & Friend in Orono, stated in a company news release. "We cannot overstate how enthused we are. We already carry the Polaris Slingshot and Victory motorcycles."

Friend & Friend, one of New England's largest dealers in the power sports industry, is celebrating 100 years in business during 2016. The company's franchises include Polaris, Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Suzuki. It is located at 227 State St. in Ellsworth, and 29 Stillwater Ave. (just off Interstate 95's Exit 193) in Orono.

Polaris designs, engineers,

Friend & Friend, which is celebrating 100 years in business in 2016, has moved the Polaris franchise from B&D Marine's Brewer location to its Orono business at 29 Stillwater Ave.

manufactures and markets off-road consumer and military vehicles, including all-terrain, side-by-side, snowmobiles, motorcycles and on-road electric/hybrid vehicles. Polaris also has established a presence in the heavy-weight cruiser and touring motorcycle market with the Victory, Indian Motorcycle and Slingshot brands.

Friend & Friend, led by company president and owner Cooper F. Friend, has been a powersports dealer since 1964. Harry Friend, Cooper Friend's great-grandfather, started the business in 1916 in Newport, selling Ford automobiles.

Gas prices rise 9 cents in Maine

BY DARREN FISHELL
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — The average price of a gallon of regular gas rose about 9 cents in the past week, to put the statewide average back above \$2 per gallon.

The national price rose about 6 cents per gallon during the past week. As of Monday morning, the average national and Maine price for a regular gallon of gasoline landed at \$2.04, according to the price tracking website GasBuddy.

Patrick DeHaan, a senior analyst for GasBuddy, said the price increase is driven by refinery maintenance costs and a drop in gasoline reserves.

"Until the bulk of refinery maintenance season wraps up in late May, we likely won't see the lower oil prices immediately bring relief to the pump as oil and gasoline inventories continue to move in the opposite direction," DeHaan said, noting that crude oil inventories rose while gasoline reserves fell.

On the Job

The National Art Education Association in Alexandria, Virginia, has given the 2016 Maine Art Educator of the Year Award to **Carolyn Brown** of Appleton. The award, determined through a peer review of nominations, honors an outstanding member from each state or province association whose service and contribution to art education merits recognition and acclaim. The award will be presented March 17-19 at the NAEA National Convention in Chicago. NAEA is the professional association for art educators at all education levels.

Sarah Cowan has been promoted to vice president, regional manager, at First National Bank in Damariscotta. Cowan began her career at Camden National Bank holding various roles in retail banking. In 2010, she joined Key Bank where she held the position of client service manager and branch manager. Joining First National Bank in late 2014, Cowan's previous role at the bank was branch operations manager, overseeing branch operations and the phone banking de-



Cowan

partment. In her new role, Cowan will oversee the bank's four Lincoln County branches — Damariscotta, Waldoboro, Boothbay Harbor and Wiscasset. Sarah lives in Rockland with her husband and two children.

The Mitchell Institute has elected **Joseph Foley** chairman of its board of directors and added **Dan Coyne, Robert "Sandy" Ervin, Brenda Garrand, Eric Haskell, David Hines and Michele Martin** as board members. Foley is senior vice president of corporate marketing and public relations for Unum Group; Coyne serves as senior vice president of community impact at the United Way of Greater Portland; Ervin is vice president of Spring Brook Ice & Fuel Co. and is a retired superintendent of schools for the Bangor School District; Garrand is founder and CEO of GarrandPartners; Haskell is a physician at Maine Medical Partners; Hines is director of research at H.M. Payson & Co.; and Martin is a senior manager of customer satisfaction and business support at L.L. Bean. Established by Sen. George J. Mitchell, the Mitchell Institute awards a four-year scholarship to a graduating senior from every public high school in Maine. Haskell and Martin are both past recipients of the Mitchell Scholarship.

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