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WHO IS THIS GUY? Baby Frances (right) looks to her sister Amelia for reassurance during Saturday's visit with Santa in Rockport. Amelia, 4, and Frances, 1, are the daughters of Kathy and Rob Merrill of Camden.

French & Brawn New Ownership, Same Store

by Amy Rawe

Ownership of Camden's French & Brawn, Inc., grocery store has officially changed hands, according to former owner Jeff Brawn.

"I made an announcement to the staff last Friday," Brawn said, "that Todd Anderson would be the new owner. Todd came on last January 1st as my partner, and this plan for transition was established back then. We wanted a period of evaluation first."

Brawn adds that he will retain a continuing relationship with French & Brawn in a consulting capacity. "We'll focus on long-range planning for French & Brawn," comments Brawn, who explains, "I've had personal ambitions of becoming a grocery store consultant. There's a real void of services available to small and mid-size retail grocers. It will take me several months to get the consulting underway, but I'll always have a long-term vested interest in French & Brawn."

New owner Todd Anderson has no plans to change French & Brawn's inventory, hours, or name.

"It's unusual to walk into a business that's doing well," says Anderson, "and the key is to keep it running as well as it is. It's not broken, so it

doesn't need fixing. The hours will remain the same, and the name will remain the same. French & Brawn is an established and known name with so much history."

Indeed, the history of French & Brawn is deep. Established in 1868 as Cleveland and Simonton, the grocery is the fifth-oldest operating business in Camden (the oldest being Wayfarer Marine).

In 1869, French & Brawn was bought by Carlton Norwood, and in 1917 by Carlton Pascal. From 1927, with the arrival of Jeff Brawn's great-uncle Alton French, the grocery was known as Carlton and French until 1963.

Bill Brawn joined the team in 1953 first as part-owner, assuming full ownership in 1963. The name was then changed to French & Brawn.

The management team will remain the same as it was under Jeff Brawn, says Anderson. Chuck Brawn is assistant general manager and beer and wine departmental head, Dale Dare heads the meat department, Stephanie Sala manages the bakery and deli, George McLean is in charge of the grocery department, Betty Whitney manages produce, and Lorrie Deering is head cashier.

"We will be replacing three freezers and the produce case," says Anderson, adding, "Those changes have been in the works for a year. Any changes that people see within the next six months have been in the plans for at least the past six months."

Anderson, who spent his year in training with Brawn after moving from

Chicago, says, "I'm still learning, and appreciate that Jeff is staying on as a consultant, giving me advice on options."

Brawn noted that the change in ownership is positive, and that French & Brawn will continue to be the village grocery on which so many residents rely. Brawn will continue his

current schedule at French & Brawn until Jan. 1. He and his wife Robin, and sons Tristan and Ryan, will remain in Camden. Meanwhile, Anderson, who lives in Lincolnville, settles in for good. "I moved to Camden to get to a village," he says. "I want to be in a place where I know everyone by name."



Former owners Robin and Jeff Brawn (left), with new owner Todd Anderson (center, right), and assistant manager Chuck Brawn (far right).

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Officials Agree On Library Pact

by Robert Leuner

Camden selectmen heard a review from representatives of the library expansion project, who, expressing a sense of urgency, asked town officials to approve a motion to begin the planned renovation.

Jack Sanford, representing the library group, outlined specifics of the project including an estimated completion date of July 15, 1996, and an estimated cost of \$1,934,000. Sanford also announced the name of the contractor, Nickerson and O'Day, from the Bangor-Brewer area.

The library expansion project will add nearly 9,000 square feet underground to the current building of 4,800 square feet.

Sanford stressed that the group had raised "more than enough funds to pay" for the project and just needed approval from town officials to enter into a contract with the contractor. Not covered in the almost \$2-million price tag are some interior modifications and furnishings that will occur at a later date.

Town Attorney Terry Calderwood citing that a motion to approve was not on the agenda, suggested the selectmen reconvene at a special meeting to act on the library expansion project's request. Per Calderwood's suggestion, town officials met at 7:30 Wednesday morning, Dec. 6, and approved the contract agreement with Nickerson and O'Day for the library expansion project.

Parker Laite, Sr., chairman of the library building committee, reported that a concerted effort was made to keep the price tag as inexpensive as possible. Laite stated that the initial 67 items to be addressed had been trimmed to "40 or so" in the project's final presentation. "Replacing the carpeting and bookshelves in the main reading room will need to be done, but they are not included in this project," said Laite.

Selectmen also approved an agreement with the state Department of Transportation to accept the maintenance and operation expenses of a traffic light at the IGA. Town Manager Roger Moody estimated the cost

to be approximately \$2,100 annually and expected the light to be installed this spring.

Moody reviewed the budget priorities for the 1996-97 fiscal year. Among those highlighted by Moody include a new pumper for the fire department, "to meet ISO requirements," updating the town office computer system, and hiring a part-time community service officer to assist with police enforcement. Moody also indicated that the town's health care premium was to increase by nine percent, effective Jan. 1, 1996.

In other town news, town officials announced the acceptance of a bid by Coffin Engineering to provide engineering and design services for an aeration building at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Coffin's services were also retained to evaluate and inspect the construction of a facility for salt and sand storage.

Moody indicated that the project would not exceed \$10,000 and that 98 percent of those funds were earmarked for the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The selectmen also announced the adoption of a family and medical leave policy and a drug-free workplace policy as mandated by federal law.

Downtown Shops Make Miracles

by Amy Rawe

This Sunday, Dec. 10, the Camden Downtown Business Group will sponsor the second annual Making Miracles celebration, during which participating shops donate 10 percent of the day's proceeds to United Camden Rockport Charities.

Susan Penner, coordinator of the event and manager of Planet, says, "Last year we raised over \$2,500, in spite of nasty weather. This year our goal is to raise over \$5,000."

According to Penner, participating shopkeepers will display a Making Miracles poster in their window, music will be piped throughout Main Street, and there will be free horse and carriage rides from 12 noon to 3 p.m.

"Making Miracles is an extension of Christmas By The Sea," says Penner, "when our hometown residents and shop owners come together in the spirit of fun and giving."

Coast 102.5-FM will also broadcast live throughout the day from The Smiling Cow. Although closed

for the season, The Smiling Cow will be open on Sunday for the Coast broadcast and for representatives of the many charities involved with United Camden Rockport Charities to set up information booths.

"If someone would like to know more about a specific charity, or would like to explore volunteer opportunities," Penner said, "they can wander into The Smiling Cow and talk to other people who work with the charities."

"We chose to donate the proceeds to United Camden Rockport Charities," Penner continued, "because they contribute 99.9 percent of the donations back to the groups in need, and because they support a great number of different charities."

The United Camden Rockport Charities distributes funds to Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Mid Coast Maine, Camden Area District Nursing Association, Camden First Aid Association, Camden Area YMCA, Camden Home for Senior Citizens, Camden Health Care Center, Coastal Workshop, Inc., The Community School, Community Service Projects,

education." To gather information, Tierney traveled to Washington, D.C., for an annual National Institute of Mental Health conference in November of last year. "The purpose of the conference is to bring 20 mental health orga-

zations into Washington once a year to spread the word and facilitate a greater understanding of the disease. While there, I was talking to a woman who headed the Department of Mental Health in Ohio, and I told her that I knew of five or six people in my community that had committed suicide within the last two years.

"She said, 'That's darn near epidemic for a population your size.'" Tierney continued, agreeing, "We definitely have more than our share."

Why depression and suicide are at high rates in midcoast Maine is something that could be debated and studied for years. "There have been incredible developments in understanding depression," says Tierney, citing new techniques of landscaping the brain, studying DNA and the practice of suicidology.

"However, we're not clinicians," added Tierney, "and DAWN doesn't have all the answers. But we can act as a catalyst for people to acknowledge and talk about the problem of depression. Then with the help of experts at the Pen Bay mental health unit, for example, maybe we can make a difference."

In October, DAWN participated in a National Screening Day for depression, with the help of PBMC mental health unit director Sarah Harvey. Twenty-nine people showed up for the screening, and of those folks seven were referred to further consultation. Northeast Health CEO and PBMC President Gary Daniels urged DAWN members not to be discouraged about "only" 29 people showing up, saying that had there been just one referral out of the 29 the project would have been a success.

"This is a tremendous recognition of the type of people we have in the community," said Daniels regarding DAWN. "These people have come together to work in memory of someone, and the result is a wonderful combination of citizens and providers working together. DAWN just opened the door to the need for depression awareness."

"Our goal is to get people to talk about depression," echoed Fryer, "and realize that people do get cured. There

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