



**CALVERT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sisters Bring Cheery Gifts and Locally Made Crafts to North Beach

“Sisters’ Corner” Adds to Beach Town’s Growth

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – January 8, 2008 – While their shop officially opened in October, 2007, sisters Kathy Brookes and Carol Koenig really started their business decades ago when, as children, they passed the time making handcrafted gifts, trinkets and sewn items for family and friends. Brookes says, “For the longest time, we just considered it a fun way to stay in touch with our other sisters, Darlene Schessler and Jan Trecki, in Pittsburgh. We would work on a number of projects and merchandising ideas together as a family.”

They have since parlayed that love of unique gifts and locally handmade products into a storefront in North Beach that is attracting the attention of visitors and residents alike. “Now our hobby has officially changed into a business and we couldn’t be happier,” said Koenig. “We’ve been getting good reviews and repeat customers.”

The store offers a variety of gift and specialty items including wreaths, spices, jams and jellies, Laurel Burch fashion accessories and jewelry, handmade textiles, stationery, flower arrangements, quilts and organic food products. “The very first product we sold from our new store was a jar of pickled eggs,” Koenig recalls.

The two sisters cut their business teeth for nearly two years as a tenant in the former Calvert Country Market in Prince Frederick. It was there that they honed their business

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Sisters Bring Cheery Gifts and Locally Made Crafts to North Beach

January 9, 2008

Page 2

management skills, inventoried customer preferences and developed a plan for eventually striking out on their own. “The Calvert Country Market was an excellent place for us to start out,” says Brookes. “The rent was affordable, we were encouraged and had good business support from Jim Shepherd at the Department of Economic Development, we grew our customer base and it allowed us to take baby steps toward our eventual desire to have our very own storefront.”

Kelly Robertson-Slagle, business retention specialist with the Calvert County Department of Economic Development worked with the sisters to find a suitable location and develop marketing ideas for their new venture.

“Kathy and Carol did everything correctly in starting their business,” Robertson-Slagle said. “They started small and used all the tools and resources that were available to them to methodically turn their hobby into a viable business. There is a much higher success rate when entrepreneurs take a talent or passion they already possess and turn it into a business venture; they are more committed, more enthusiastic and better able to gauge customer desires and buying habits,” said Robertson-Slagle, “which are all key components for developing a winning business model.”

In addition, the sisters credit their children with their business success. Brookes says “We have gotten a tremendous amount of support, manpower and encouragement from our children; we are hopeful that by keeping them involved in our enterprise, perhaps another generation of crafters and entrepreneurs may develop.”

Koenig and Brookes are happy to now be part of the North Beach scene and look forward to forming partnerships with their business neighbors. “This is truly a beautiful little town,” says Brookes. “It is walkable and friendly, close to the Bay and restaurants and we’ve been pleasantly surprised by how receptive the other business owners have been to us. There is a feeling of camaraderie that exists here and a sense that, by working together, each of us can succeed.”

Sisters’ Corner is located at the corner of Chesapeake Avenue and Second Street in North Beach, Md., and is open Wednesday through Friday, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.; Saturday, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Sunday 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. For more information, call 410.286.0074, e-mail sisterscorner@yahoo.com.

Sisters Bring Cheery Gifts and Locally Made Crafts to North Beach

January 9, 2008

Page 3

For more information on the Calvert County, Maryland, Department of Economic Development and the services available to assist County businesses, call 410.535.4583, 800.331.9771 or 301.855.1880; send an e-mail to info@ecalvert.com, or visit our Web site at www.ecalvert.com.

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