



VERMONT COUNTRY STORES

As Seen in VERMONT MAGAZINE

Deli Supreme

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Spreading the good food word about the Newbury Village Store.



Maggie and Gary Hatch bought the Newbury Village Store on May 15, 2003. They closed on the property at 10 a.m. and turned on the cash registers at noon.

FOUR YEARS AGO, Margaret Carlan of Bradford made her first trip to the Newbury Village Store. “It’s the finest deli in the state of Vermont,” she says. “The first time, I came because somebody told me the food was fabulous. It has never disappointed me. The desserts are very good. The bread pudding is fabulous. The chocolate cake is without peer.” She praises the chili and her favorite meatball sub. “And the cinnamon buns, oh, my dear,” she says. “I try to spread the word. This is a meeting place, a stopping place, a goal.”

With enthusiastic customers like

Carlan, it’s no surprise the doors at the store start swinging in the early morning and don’t stop until the shop shuts down in the evening. Everybody gets a friendly greeting and many customers are on a first-name basis. Owners Maggie and Gary Hatch operate the busy store with a staff of 12. “As a staff, we’re pretty close,” Maggie says. “If anybody has a bad day, we help them have a good day.”

THE HISTORY OF the Newbury store dates back 168 years. The white clapboard building, with its inviting front porch, was built in 1840 as a gen-

eral store by the prominent Keyes family. At the time, Newbury was a thriving farm community, its location on the high plateau above the Connecticut River ideal for agriculture. The village is still quintessential New England, with a spacious commons surrounded by a church, a school, a brick bank, town offices and, of course, the store.

Features of the building reveal secrets of the past. Gary proudly shows off the vault—a tiny, high-ceilinged room with a safe and remnants of safe-deposit boxes. Tucked into a corner in the back, the Hatches discovered the



Clockwise from left: The Newbury Village store was built in 1840 by the prominent Keyes family; Edee Thurston has been running the checkout register since the early 1990s; the desserts and baked goods keep customers coming back; Maggie shows off the top-selling deli sandwich—the Mount Pulaski, with shaved roast beef, sweet roasted red peppers and horseradish sauce on a crusty baguette. Maggie and Gary opened the deli two months after they purchased the store.



vault when they renovated. They picture an active side business, long ago, when the store served as a bank and a place for people to safeguard valuables. Up front, on the wall above the nook—with its cozy sofa and chair, where folks are welcome to sip coffee or eat a sandwich—is a framed advertisement from the 1870s, when the mercantile offered everything from parasols and paints to groceries.

“This store has good karma,” Maggie says, noting that the building long ago survived a fire that wiped out most of the village structures. “We envision ourselves as caretakers of this building and this business. Our time here will someday be done and somebody else will

come along, and so it passes through the generations.” “That’s the essence of why we wanted this in the first place,” adds Gary. “Any little community is glued together in three ways. One is the church, one is the school, and one is the community store. Take any one away and it’s not the same.”

MAGGIE REFERS to herself as “an original flatlander, born in New Jersey and raised in Pennsylvania.” She came to New England to attend the University of New Hampshire. “I believe a little in reincarnation,” she says. “My soul feels good in New England.”

Gary is originally from Woodsville,

New Hampshire. In 2003, he was living in Haverhill, where his three children lived, and was working as a sales manager for Real Log Homes. Maggie worked for Tally Systems in New Hampshire. Both jobs involved a lot of travel and stress. “We didn’t have any more [energy] to give and still be true to ourselves,” she says.

With this feeling growing stronger, one by one they quit their jobs. For a while they shared a job, launching a product for Resource Systems Group in White River Junction, and realized they could work together. Then they saw a little “For Sale” sign in the window of the Newbury Village Store.



Just the facts

The Newbury Village Store menu offers some selections named after prominent local landmarks. It's a great way to enjoy an outdoor day: Order a sandwich and head out to snowshoe, ski, picnic or hike.

- The top-selling sandwich is the Mount Pulaski, named for the mountain that overlooks Newbury village. A homemade crusty baguette is filled with horseradish sauce, tender slices of shaved roast beef, sweet roasted peppers, Swiss cheese, red onions and green leaf lettuce.

- Hall's Lake is named after the little body of water west of Newbury village. The sandwich involves prosciutto, Genoa salami, provolone, lettuce, onions and roasted red peppers dressed with olive oil and balsamic vinegar and presented on a baguette.

- Bedell Bridge once connected Newbury and Haverhill. Plagued by storms, the site has been home to five bridges, the last of which was destroyed by bad weather in September 1979 only two months after it was rebuilt and reopened. Its namesake Bedell Bridge sandwich is made with hickory-smoked turkey accented with fresh vegetables, garlic-laced cream cheese, and a light drizzle of olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

The Newbury Village Store is located on Main Street on Route 5. The store is open daily, Monday through Friday 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sunday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.. It is closed Christmas and New Year's Day. For information, call (802) 866-5681 or go to vaics.org/vaics-newbury.html.

"We asked [owner Jim Collins] what was for sale and he said, 'The whole thing,'" Maggie recalls. "You know when karma is just right."

After six months of making careful plans and talking with other country store owners to get advice, they closed on the property May 15, 2003. "That was at 10 in the morning," Gary recalls. "At noon we turned on the cash register. Two hours later, I said, 'I guess we're storekeepers.'" Two months later, they opened the deli that has become the centerpiece of the business.

THE DELI MENU and store merchandise cater to a diverse group of customers, from farmers and loggers to teachers, artists, writers and summer folks. "A Jaguar and a tractor hauling manure were parked side by side one day," Gary says. "Everybody has a good time here. We try to be a cut above the ordinary on every level."

To make the store work, the owners rely heavily on the staff. Edee Thurston brings 16 years of experience to the

checkout register. "I'm one of the fixtures, I think," she says. In 1969, she and her husband moved to Newbury to farm. She worked at area grocery stores before Jim Collins hired her in the early 1990s. She likes the camaraderie of the store. "It's so friendly and close to home. This is my community," she says.

Deb Noonan has been working in country stores for 13 years, five of them in Newbury. "I love the country store atmosphere," she observes. "It's just like home." She is joined in the deli by Kelley O'Donnell of Newbury, who came to her job two years ago. "I love people, making them happy, seeing the smile [our food] brings to people's faces," O'Donnell says.

Love of the country store atmosphere, with its reliance on relationships, is what keeps Maggie and Gary going. "This is not about business. It's about people," Gary says. "We're high-energy; we feed off this and it's still fun." "This has far exceeded what we thought it would be," agrees Maggie. "We've had to grow our minds to keep up." 🐻

