

Owner who wanted to keep store loves keeping busy

By ARLA SHEPHARD
MASON COUNTY LIFE

To her family and friends, Linda Archambeau is the spontaneous one, always up for an adventure.

"She's always picking up new things," said Archambeau's son and business partner, Mike Garrison. "She can't stand still. She started a farm and has 40 chickens, four pigs and four cows. She's always helping people. If there's any idle time, she goes nuts."

Perhaps the desire to always keep busy is what motivated Archambeau to purchase Belfair Dollar last April, rename it Belfair Variety and Nursery, and persuade her family to take part in a new venture to help revive the business.

"I am adventurous," admitted Archambeau, who also has a mail run with the Post Office and teaches canning twice a month for the North Mason Canning Corps. "I wanted to do something different. The community loves the store and they want to keep it here."

Catherine Buckley opened Belfair Dollar in 2009, but for the past couple years, she had been looking for new owners to take over the business.

"We knew it was going to close and we wanted to keep the store open," Archambeau said. "But there was no one capable who wanted to take it on."

For three months, Archambeau talked with Buckley about taking over the store, going over all of the different processes it takes to purchase wholesale items for the store.

"I don't have a background in retail, just adventures," Archambeau said. "I could see it growing. I wanted to expand the store and offer more food and EBT items."

On April 1, Archambeau quietly took over the store with her son, Garrison, and



PHOTO BY ARLA SHEPHARD

From left, Belfair Variety and Nursery stocker Matthew Garrison, 12, owner Linda Archambeau, cashier Anna Dunks, co-owner Mike Garrison and stocker Michael Garrison, 14, work together to make the store successful. Running the store is a family affair, said Archambeau, who works with her son to run the store and employs her grandsons as stockers.

retained longtime employee Anna Dunks to keep a familiar face around for customers.

The business owners didn't throw a big grand re-opening celebration, but customers have noticed the difference in ownership — for one, not every item costs \$1 anymore.

"It's hard to keep prices at \$1," Archambeau said. "We renamed the store Belfair Variety and Nursery and have added more food and a lot more variety items."

Archambeau remembered visiting the old variety store in Belfair growing up as a young adult, and wanted to replicate the experience for new people.

"Belfair used to have a variety store, and I remember as a young woman living in the area, I used to love it because you could find one spool of thread or a pack of needles," she said. "You can't find that in Belfair. That's my vision."

Belfair Variety now offers

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Top right: Belfair Variety and Nursery owner Linda Archambeau organizes spices at the store. Archambeau took over Belfair Dollar in April and now sells more food items, some of which are not priced at \$1.

Center right: Belfair Variety and Nursery is home to May Acidal's purses, of the former Purse-onality. Acidal is also working with the store to offer more vendor fairs.

Bottom right: Belfair Variety and Nursery sells everything from mylar and helium balloons and party supplies to cosmetic supplies, food items and garden starts in the spring.

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