

15 MINUTES

Back to biz in O-Town

Rori Summers couldn't stay retired. Summers formerly owned Our Family Automotive, and more recently, Almost Perfect thrift store in Oroville, before a medical procedure forced her out of the business game—at least, temporarily. After recovering from surgery, Summers found she missed running her own business. By November, after noticing several shuttered downtown Oroville storefronts with "for lease" signs on the windows, she started making some calls. Via social media, Summers tested the waters for an idea for a homemade and custom gift shop and got enough positive response to go for it. She also soon found the perfect location at 1934 Bird St., a 1,700-square-foot space with two large rooms for gift displays, plus a back office. In early December, Summers opened Bird Street Vendors. There, she rents table and booth spaces to local artists and craftspeople who offer "homemade gifts and more"—from apparel and paintings, to dishware and custom embroidery. Call 990-1843, find the shop on Facebook, or pop by Monday-Saturday to check out the rotating vendors.

What sets your store apart?

We have artists, we have sewing, we have decals, shirts, tie-dye So, it's kind of like a one-stop shop of unique pres-



PHOTO BY JOSH COZINE

ents. Everyone has the stuff at Walmart, everyone has the stuff you can get at these big-box stores, but you don't have the personalized stuff, and that's why I think we'll do a lot better. People like that special touch.

How did you find vendors?

Facebook. A totally new thing for me. My old store didn't have Facebook. I first asked if anyone would be interested in selling out of one location, and I posted in a vendor and craft fair group, and I had a great response, so I got a hold of the people who were interested. They're all local, because one of the requirements in order to have a booth here is you have to come work here one day a week.

What caused you to close Almost Perfect?

I have a gene called CHEK2; it's like the BRCA gene for breast cancer, so I had a prophylactic breast mastectomy ... in February.

Why open a new place?

Ever since I closed my store

something was missing. I adopted three boys, and I was still missing something. I like the business end of stuff; I missed that kind of stuff and I missed dealing with people.

How's business?

It's been good. We had our first First Friday event [Jan. 3], and we did really, really well on that day. Everybody here I think is happy and they're all selling enough to make rent.

How much do you charge for shop space?

From \$25 for a 2-foot table, to the largest spot [for] \$125—I think it's about 9 feet. It all depends on the size.

Is that per month?

Per month. I'm not in it to be super rich. I'm in it to try and help people in business—because I know how tough it is to start a business—and to be able to do what I love to do, which is business and [interacting with] people.

—JOSH COZINE

THE GOODS

Beautifying city centers



by
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Well-maintained public art adds a vibrancy to a town that not much else can. Of all the cities in the world I've been to, one of the brightest that comes to mind is Barcelona, with its prominent, colorful, wonderfully weird art all over the place.

I bring this up because there's an awesome new mural in downtown Oroville, near the farming equipment in the parking lot downtown at 2167 Montgomery St. The large depiction of an old gold mine is painted in the trompe l'oeil, 3-D style, and it turned an otherwise anytown wall into a cool link to history. (It's also near the old gold mining equipment store, which adds to the effect.)

The artists behind the gold mine mural are Ted Hanson and Frank Wilson. The former is owner of Brushstrokes Studio and Gallery just a few blocks down Montgomery; the latter owns his own Frank Wilson Fine Art out of Paradise. The project was one of four to receive funding (it cost about \$8,500) last year through the city's Arts Commission. It's a fine addition to downtown, indeed.

SPEAKING OF STREET ART If you haven't been to Durham lately, the building when you first get to the four-way stop on Midway (home to the Durham Country Market) has completely transformed. Chico artist Christine Mac Shane started in April with a farm scene on the exterior. It's since grown and wrapped around the building, lending a joyful pop of color to what used to be a drab corner.

DO-GOODERY I always like stories of businesses and businesspeople giving back to their communities. Most recently, I got word about a gift from the Rotary Club of Oroville to that city's branch of the Butte County Library. Apparently, a group of Rotarians toured the facility last summer and noticed that the large clock on the wall was not functioning (and didn't even have hands), so they decided to fix it. The gift is not only a community service, reads a press release, it's also a symbol of Rotary's dedication to literacy. Cool deal!

NEW LIFE! The corner of Second and Main streets in Chico will soon be a little less empty, with the impending opening of Oya Mediterranean Grill where Pluto's used to be. I could find out little about the place at first, but after additional digging linked it to Emin Tekin, a real estate agent who, along with his family, has owned several Mediterranean restaurants throughout the Bay Area over the years. I'm guessing that means Cafe Petra, which closed its next door space after a kitchen fire last year, won't be reopening.

BACK TO LIFE Fans of Chico's Tacos Tijuana, which closed its doors at 15th and Park in December 2018, will be happy to hear that the restaurant recently reopened in Oroville. From what I hear, it is still the place to go for pozole, that perfectly comforting winter stew (available on weekends only). Check out the new spot at 1835 Oro Dam Blvd.

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