

# The Kearsarge/Concord Connection

BY Laurie Reynolds Rardin

## Kaleidoscope Children's Museum Nurtures Creative Play

Karen McCormack and Michelle Carignan came together with a vision. Both had been working as art teachers in local school districts for many years. They had small children and were juggling the multiple roles required of any working parent. And both recognized Concord's need for a place where kids and their parents could play together in a setting that fostered artistic creativity and stimulated the imagination.

"Once Michelle and I started talking, our ideas took off," McCormack says. "Before we knew it we had a mission statement, a business plan, and were looking for retail space downtown." McCormack and Carignan opened Kaleidoscope Children's Museum on July 19, 2006, and the dream of two ambitious art teachers became a reality.

A family entering the museum is greeted with bright colors and exciting exhibits. From the yellow and blue floor and the beautiful wall murals to the Mini-Main Street, pirate ship, castle theater, and musical tree house, children are instantly captivated. Plenty of puppets and dress up clothes wait behind the scenes for putting on a show, and the open studio area allows kids to paint and color to their heart's content.

Along with visiting Kaleidoscope for spontaneous playtime, art classes and workshops provide instruction and opportunities to explore different artistic mediums. Art camps are offered during

summer and school vacation weeks. Family fun nights are scheduled on a regular basis, providing a great time to enjoy storytellers, folk singers, puppeteers and other performers who appeal to all ages.

An all-day pass is \$6 per person (under age 1 are free), but many families

they could," says Lisa Thorne, mother of three, who travel from Bow to visit the museum at least once a week. "The membership makes it easy to come and go, and I love visiting a place that's clean, neat and provides a safe environment for children to play."

McCormack and Carignan have also arranged mutual discounts with other Main Street businesses and hope to establish new cooperative relationships to benefit customers and shopkeepers alike. Members and visitors often make a day of it, with time at Kaleidoscope in the morning, lunch at Foodee's Pizza next door and a matinee at the Capitol Center for the Arts down the street.

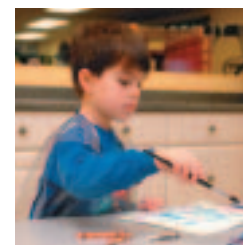
"We're really happy with the success we've had so far," says McCormack, who was recently bought out by Carignan. "By providing an environment rich in the arts, we knew children would automatically use their own imaginations to create and learn. By focusing on family time, Kaleidoscope becomes a place where technology takes a back seat and the only distraction is deciding what to play next."



*Kids and adults alike enjoy Kaleidoscope.*

have opted for the one-year membership, which provides unlimited visits and discounts on classes, camps and birthday parties. Grandparents join at reduced price. The museum has seen steady growth, with more than 340 member families as it approaches its one-year anniversary.

"Our girls would love to go to Kaleidoscope every day of the week if



Photos courtesy of Kaleidoscope Children's Museum

**Directions:** Located at 8 South Main Street, take I-93 to exit 13 toward downtown. Follow US-3 N into Concord and onto South Main Street. Continue several blocks on South Main. Kaleidoscope is located on the left after Endicott Furniture. Parking is available by taking Pleasant Street Extension to Storrs Street. Visit the Kaleidoscope Web site at [www.kaleidoscopechildrensmuseum.net](http://www.kaleidoscopechildrensmuseum.net) or call 229-4KCM for more information on hours, programs and rates.

## Bella Is Full of Surprises

Bella of Hopkinton is not the store you would expect to find nestled in the center of a quintessential New Hampshire town green. The fashionable boutique combines New York chic with European flair and adds just the right amount of its own unique style.

Owners Kim and Dick Harris opened Bella in 2004 and have created an atmosphere that makes Bella both a shopping destination and a meeting place.

“Bella sells a collection of things you don’t find in a typical gift store,” says



customer Trina Richardson. “And visiting with Kim is half the fun.”

As soon as you walk through the door, your senses delight in the calming music, the wonderful scent and the artistic layout of merchandise. Customers can take their time browsing through shelves filled with something for everyone: Unusual jewelry, linen clothing, home accents, Italian pottery, paintings by local artists and one-of-a-kind treasures. Designer clothing and footwear are on sale at reduced prices.

“We want people to feel welcome here,” Kim Harris says. “We look forward to getting to know you every



Photos courtesy of Bella

*Bella has something for everyone.*

time you come back looking for something new and different.”

**Directions:** Located at 390 Main Street, take Exit 4 off of I-89 heading north or Exit 5 heading south and drive into the village of Hopkinton. Look for the green Bella awning. Call 746-6378 for store hours, or visit [www.bellalh.com](http://www.bellalh.com)

## Make Paddling Part of Your Summertime Fun

Take the plunge this summer and try something new. Paddle down river in the warm sunshine, and see the beauty around you.

Strap your boats on the roof or come ready to rent, and the experienced staff at the Contoocook River Canoe Company (CRCC) will ensure that you have a fabulous trip. Vans leave on a regular schedule for the start of a leisurely 9-mile paddle along the flat waters of the Contoocook. Try a 5- or 10-mile trip on the Merrimack River, or put in at the lovely beach at 9 Horse Hill Road in Concord, the CRCC headquarters.

Celebrating their 10-year anniversary, owners Pat and Lisa Malfait are the heart and inspiration for the company. Their organized, thoughtful and detail oriented approach has grown the outfit from a six-boat rental venture to a full service business that also offers sales, tours, instruction and children’s summer camp experiences.

“We are truly family owned and operated, and we take pride in the kind

of personal service we provide,” says Pat Malfait. “People from all over New England keep coming back because they know we will give them the best paddling experience possible.”

Trip reservations are required; please call 753-9804. Visit the CRCC Web site at [www.contoocookcanoe.com](http://www.contoocookcanoe.com) for directions, schedules, locations and more. Convinced you should buy your own boat? The CRCC offers the largest selec-



Photos courtesy of CRCC

tion of canoes and kayaks in the Northeast, along with all of the necessary accessories.

➤ K/C CONNECTION *continued on page 36*



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### Nature Notes: Watch for Turtles

With warm weather upon us, keep an eye out for basking turtles as you paddle in a favorite river, lake or pond. These hard-shelled creatures predate the dinosaurs and use the sun to regulate their body temperature.

The painted turtle has beautiful red and orange markings on the edges of its shell, with yellow outlines around the black plates on top. Yellow and red stripes decorate its head, face, neck and legs, with bright yellow spots behind each eye. Sunning on rocks, logs, tree trunks and beaver dams these turtles are sure to stand out, unless they slip into the water, wary of your approach.



If you see a dark, oval shape floating on the water with a nose poking up in front, it might be a snapping turtle. While they do bask on rocks or logs, they also expose their top shell (carapace) to the sun by resting at the surface. Most of their lives are spent on the bottom of a pond, river or lake where their soft underbelly is safe from attack. During mid-June females move over land to search for nesting areas, making them vulnerable to predators. In the water, the snapping turtle actually avoids confrontations with people by swimming away from disturbances. K

*Laurie Reynolds Rardin lives in Concord with her family. She writes children's books, and continues her environmental protection career by working to link spirituality and earth stewardship.*