

Home-based business thriving after one year



By Sarah Sobanski

Mystical Paths just outside of Bancroft has celebrated one year in the community.

‘It’s been going well. Business has been gradually growing,’ said owner Darryl Marks.

‘People come in here and first of all they don’t expect to find a garage that looks like this on the inside. They come in like wow. They’re a little bit surprised. It’s crazy. Time just seems to disappear, and I love it because I know [customers are] enjoying it. If I didn’t have a place like this I think I’d want to run a museum,’ Marks said noting he’s always been a student of world religions and enjoys the history of what’s included in his store.

Mystical Paths got off the ground in May of last year. Marks said the home-based business has taken off as a resource for the community, providing access to a variety of religious and spiritual cultures and workshops.

‘We do not close during the winter months because we’re a resource for the community,’ he said. ‘A resource in the way of a place to find information regarding specific spiritual [and] esoteric religious paths that one may want to follow or at least be interested in.’

The shop has been hosting workshops to 'dispel negative rumours and inform and advise' on its featured religious cultures including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and new age elements such as healing with crystals. Examples include an introduction to Wicca and an introduction to modern paganism.

'Giving you a general understanding for those who would be interested and those who would rather be better informed as opposed to misinformed,' Marks said of the workshops. 'There's not that many places like this around anymore.'

Marks is hoping to expand to give free, one-hour instructional seminars. He gave examples such as how to use a pendulum, a voodoo doll or candles for various rituals.

With these workshops Marks said he hopes to dispel negative connotations surrounding some religious practices and create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all types of worshipers.

'If someone is investing the energy in a voodoo doll they would use it for healing purposes,' he said. 'If someone had neck pain, things could be done to the voodoo doll to sympathetically help the person with the ailment. That's what it's all about. It's about sympathetic magic.'

He added, 'I believe that really evil doesn't exist in isolation. I believe that there's good and bad in all. It all depends on how the energies want to focus. I think time will prove time and time again that you're a lot better off focusing on the positive.'

Marks suggested that there isn't a huge demographic to draw from locally for his business but he's had visitors from larger centres including Peterborough and Belleville. He doesn't mind travelling to collect things people can't find in rural centres.

'You can't beat living in Bancroft,' he said. 'We embrace all forms of spirituality.'

Marks said the best way to find out about the store is to visit its **Facebook page**. Its website is currently under construction.