

## Something New At Deep Creek Lake



*The new Bear Creek Traders in Market Square with Foodland Fresh and Perkins Restaurant.*



Shopping at Deep Creek Lake has just become more exciting with the grand opening of Bear Creek Traders. A general mercantile store designed to appeal to all age groups and shopping tastes, it is located at Market Square, along Route 219 in McHenry. The 15,000 square foot facility features a natural wood decorum, quality merchandise, and a unique glimpse into the Lake's past, making Bear Creek Traders a destination point for residents and tourists alike. Step inside Garrett County's newest store and experience quality shopping in a distinctive atmosphere.

Shoppers at Bear Creek Traders are not only able to examine the latest in quality lines of merchandise, but also view a historically significant part of Garrett County's past. Located near a large window, facing Route 219, is a vintage airplane formerly owned by Garrett County resident and Army Air Corps veteran, Charles "Skeeter" Bowman. The red 1940 Taylorcraft Model BC 65 is suspended from the ceiling. The creative aircraft display originated with Hugh Umbel, storeowner and President of Umbel Enterprises, who grew up in nearby Friendsville. "I had been toying with the idea of an attraction with historical significance

to our area. Different ideas were considered before I settled on this one. I remembered the planes coming into Skeeter Bowman's airfield, while shopping at Walt's General Store in McHenry."

After deciding on an aircraft theme, Hugh Umbel approached Skeeter Bowman, whose family operated a small airstrip in McHenry, about purchasing his vintage aircraft for display purposes. "I told him what I wanted to do at the store, so we had a meeting. Skeeter's opening remarks were, 'These are the rules; you talk and I listen, then I talk, and you listen.' After a two hour meeting, Skeeter Bowman was still undecided on my plan. I remember him saying, 'I'll tell you how I feel; 50% of me is not for it, but I'm not sure if I'm 50% against it'."

Eventually plans were finalized and Mr. Bowman's plane was purchased for Bear Creek Traders. Suspension of the 65 horsepower aircraft, with a weight of 784 pounds, required special engineering for the ceiling and roof. Hugh Umbel contacted the Air and Space division of the Smithsonian Institution for recommendations on suspending and displaying the aircraft. Special instructions from the Smithsonian included using oil free, stainless steel cables

*Written by:* **Dan Whetzel**

*Photography by:* **Lance C. Bell**

## *Out of the Blue!*



*Above: the plane after it was hoisted into place—the store was not finished at the time.*

*Right: The plane as it was on its way up, wheels have just left the floor. The man in the foreground is on 2-way phone to the person overhead operating the lifts.*

*Far right: Skeeter Bowman and his plane at Garrett County Airport, just before turning it over to Hugh Umbel for display.*



and a hoist system to lift and hold the plane approximately 10 feet from the floor. Four trailer winches were installed in the ceiling; 3 were designed to hold 900 pounds separately. One winch, rated at 600 pounds, supports the plane's tail section.

On July 24, 2004, at 9:00 am, a work crew escorted Skeeter's plane through the main entrance, while a small crowd assembled to watch the event. Both wings had been dismantled from the fuselage until the plane was situated under suspension points. Once aligned properly, wings were reattached and, with great anticipation, the aircraft was carefully raised to its present location.

Skeeter's Taylorcraft plane was manufactured in Ohio and features a Continental engine. By 1983 the plane's surface required restoration and Law Aviation applied

a material called "ceconnite" to re-cover the frame. An interpretive display featuring Skeeter's plane, farm, and World War II experiences, will soon be completed and placed under the suspended aircraft. According to Hugh, "The vintage plane will add historical significance to our area that is also an attraction to Bear Creek Traders. It will add to our customer base and create excitement for local people and tourists who visit our store."

A reminder of Garrett County boating history will soon be displayed near the entrance to Bear Creek Traders. Deep Creek Boat Company owner, Matt Storey, manufactured 2 types of boats from 1946 to 1950. One of the original models, a 14-foot wooden runabout, is being restored through the efforts of Hugh Umbel, thereby adding to the local ambience of the store.



*Top: The plane on its way into the store after wings and tail wings are removed.*

*Above: The plane was a tight squeeze coming through the door. Everyone watching was beginning to wonder if it would make it.*

*Right: Hugh Umbel helps replace wings and other parts. After the plane was finally in the building and put back together, everyone breathed a sigh of relief.*

While creative, historical attractions make Garrett County's newest store a reason to visit, so does the merchandise offered to customers. Store Manager, Dawn Stubler, notes that a Woolrich clothing line is stocked along with handmade, Icelandic wool sweaters. Nationally acclaimed glass manufacturer, Simon Pearce, and Bear Creek Traders will present unique, hand blown crystal glass products. Table Top handmade pottery, a division of Simon Pearce, is also displayed, and according to Ms. Stubler, "It is functional pottery from oven to microwave." Krups small appliance, All-Clad and Circulon Cookware, complements the houseware department.

Traditional toys will capture the attention of all age groups. "We have Lincoln Logs made with real wood, wooden yo-yo's, marbles, dominoes, tiddly-winks, and jacks." Grandparents and grandchildren will appreciate the toys of yesterday not commonly sold by today's mass-market retailers.

Along with old-fashioned toys, Bear Creek Traders also features a candy department reminiscent of a similar era. "We have a candy counter with 100 different choices. Two gallon apothecary jars, with a scoop, bring back the old days at our store."

A gourmet foods department includes sauces, mixes, and samplings for customers to enjoy, thereby adding yet another dimension to shopping at Market Square. Manager Stubler summarizes the merchandise line by stating, "Anyone can shop here because we offer a variety of products and great service. All packages will be properly wrapped for our customers. Our service also extends to credit card and debit card purchases.

Adjacent to Bear Creek Traders are four new stores ranging in size from 1,200-2,600 square feet. Pilates Balanced Body Studio; Deep Creek Salon, a full service hair and nail facility that also offers therapeutic massages; McHenry Book Store; and Nu-View Video, adds to shoppers choices. Foodland, Grand Central Station, and Perkin's Restaurant complete the plaza making it a one-stop shopper's destination.

Shop at Market Square, enjoy the displays, and stop back again. Umbel Enterprises' exciting plans for the future promises to make every visit an experience to remember.



*Top photo: Some of the beauty of the new store after completion—notice the plane hanging in the background.*

*Bottom left and right: Unique and hard-to-find items, as well as a nice collection of items by local artisans.*

