

ART & ANTIQUES

Cold weather can bring a break in the action

BY NANCY SUNDSTROM
Special to the Record-Eagle

It's a scenario that locals know well, and visitors to the region may not.

When the weather turns colder, some of the favorite little shops and galleries we enjoy frequenting close up for the winter, only to return with the spring.

To some customers, it can look as if the lights were never off and the doors never closed. But store proprietors, primarily those who run smaller, niche and often season-based businesses, say that the break is usually welcome.

That's the case for Audrey

Shapiro, who has owned Gallery 704 in Charlevoix for a few years now. Shapiro is a potter who specializes in functional porcelain works that are the centerpiece of her inventory. She also carries the handmade, original work of about 50 Michigan artists at her store, along with collectible antiques.

She moved from the Farmington area four years ago after retiring (somewhat) from a longtime career as a teacher, because she wanted to live in Charlevoix and pursue her passion for pottery. Gallery 704 is open May through New Year's Day.

"It's wise for me to close



Record-Eagle/Meegan M. Reid

Marvel Money in front of the shop she runs next to her family's restaurant in downtown Honor.

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down for a few months simply because it's too quiet and it really doesn't pay for me to stay open," explained Shapiro. "I mostly cater to tourists and guests to the area, and that's not the time that they're here.

"Every year, I find that I have more townspeople supporting me, so I stay open as long as I do to be there for them for gifts for holidays, but after that, it's time to take a break."

Well, not exactly. Shapiro stays busy in the winter, mainly making stock for the coming season and then readying the store to reopen. She also seeks some kind of part-time work to keep paying the bills, such as substitute teaching.

"I stay where I live, as opposed to going south somewhere, because I love winter," she added. "For me, the whole thing is a perfect match. I cater to the summer guests, stay open for the locals, and stay busy in the winter, seeing friends I'm too busy to get with otherwise and playing outside, going snowshoeing, walking and skating. I couldn't be happier with how everything is working out."

Marvel Money is the 83-year-

old owner, along with some other family members, of Money's in Honor, a combination restaurant and gift store. Her sons run the eatery, which has been around for more than 50 years (and known as Snoopy's in a previous life), but the gift store has been under her domain since it started a number of years back as an attraction for visitors coming to the village's annual Coho Salmon Festival.

Originally, the store carried consignment items. Money, who was born in Elmira Township, found that she "liked new things better" and gradually began changing her lines of merchandise. There are still a number of collectibles and antiques mixed in with a wide range of items ranging from bath and body and kitchen supplies to home accessories and toys. Money said that primarily, the store is there for people to browse through as they're waiting to eat at the adjoining restaurant.

"The store was never the main attraction, but people do like coming in to look and we have a lot of regular customers, as well," she

explained. "And I have fun with it, or I wouldn't be doing it at all. I like to go to auctions, yard and estate sales and flea markets and see if I can't pick up something that's unusual or unique, and I think I've gotten pretty good at knowing what's going to appeal to folks. And I try to keep the prices low. I'm not there to sock it to folks and what we have is there to be enjoyed, not part of some high pressure sale."

Unlike Shapiro, Money said she eagerly looks forward to closing down the store for the winter months, and seeking out warmer climates, including visiting a son who lives and works as a college professor in Corpus Christi, Texas. Around the start of November, she begins putting sale prices on merchandise as an incentive to clear out what's left and make room for new wares.

"Sometimes I can't wait to get away and then the time goes by so quick and I'm ready to come back and start over," she said. "It's always good to see the regulars and the friends and then meet the new people who wander in."