

Couple opens antiques, gifts shop downtown

By CAROLINE BOYER
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Dennis Smith says his interest in collecting antiques began at an early age.

"My grandpa used to go to the flea market and sell coins and stuff, and as a little tyke, I'd tag along with him," the Basehor resident said. "I guess that's where it started."

The lifelong hobby has now turned into a business for Smith and his wife, Connie, who last month opened This and That, 201 Oak St. The new gift shop carries not only antiques from Dennis' vast collection, but also seasonal items, pet supplies, collegiate gifts and Disney collectibles.

Dennis' early experiences with his grandfather led to trolling garage sales looking for interesting items, and eventually, he got interested in collecting Disney memorabilia.

"We grew up watching (Disney movies) on Sunday night. That was one of the things the whole family, everybody watched," he said.

"Those were the movies that everybody could go see ... and Disney himself, I think he was so far ahead of his time."

Dennis became more interested in selling his items recently after taking stock of all he had accumulated, especially the Disney items.

"You're constantly upgrading your collection, buying duplicates of something you already have that are a better quality," he said. "I'd have four or five of the same thing, always getting something in better condition. It was just time to get rid of some stuff, because we've got a lot of stuff."

He started selling at a booth in an antique mall in Claycomo, Mo., and Connie said when they looked at a listing of Kansas City-area antique stores, there wasn't much in the Wyandotte County area.

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Dennis Smith
co-owner, This and That



CAROLINE BOYER/STAFF

Currently on display in the window of This and That, 201 Oak St., is an antique pedal car and sled. The gift shop also sells collegiate items, Disney collectibles and various other items, like dog leashes and candy.

"We thought, 'You know, when you're looking at this, there's nothing at our back door,'" she said.

They were driving through downtown Bonner Springs when they saw the "for rent" sign in the space formerly occupied by Sweet Repeats. They decided the small space would be perfect for starting out their business. The Smiths, who each work full-time at other jobs, have enlisted relatives to staff the store.

The Smiths said the name of the business comes from the broad array of items that they carry — from an antique pedal car or original Disney movie theater posters to a dog leash or a Kansas University purse.

"We try to have a little bit of everything so that anybody who is walking by, and saying 'Hey, I need a gift,' they can find something," Connie said.

The store is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. It will have a grand opening Feb. 29 to March 4, with certain items on sale and special events. Find more information about the store at kcthisandthat.com.

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