



Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Newsletter

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Business Plan Competition Finalists

Seven companies are finalists in the \$25,000 competition, winner to be awarded \$20,000 1st place prize on March 16

Ironwood Brand

Eli Gould who holds BA degrees in forestry and architecture from Yale University and currently operates a sawmill business in W. Brattleboro, hopes to expand his company with advanced design work using native lumber.

The business will span both architecture and forestry. Gould intends his business to both cut lumber and shape it and design and build structures from the lumber that he has milled.

Should his proposal become the final choice, he would use the prize money to purchase a European structural wood measurement tool set that is used to measure the strength qualities of wood before it is cut. This tool would allow Gould to work with others to help measure the structural capabilities of their wood, expanding his business capabilities as a consultant for other architects, builders and designers.

Ironwood Brand, he says, would be one of very few businesses in the region that would take this approach to use of



Eli Gould

native lumber.

"I'm trying to make it possible for us to use our local resources in fully engineered structures," says Gould. "I will be creating jobs out of market development as more sawmills and builders use fully engineered structures."

Gould brings experience working for national timber frame companies doing architectural design.

Children's Music Hall of Fame

Parents need a web site dedicated to quality children's music, says Bill Shontz who is developing the Children's Music Hall of Fame.



Bill Shontz

Shontz, a musician and educator, was formerly a member of Rosen Shontz, a performing duo who produced children's music for 20 years.

He says there is a big gap between the quality artists who have dedicated their lives to children's music, and those he terms "wannabees." According to him, parents and educators have a difficult time knowing what music to buy since many of the best children's musicians are not on major recording labels and get minimal promotion.

"There is a gap between the good stuff and the mediocre but no way to

access it or how to get it."

Shontz's business is a website dedicated to "quality" children's music. It will be similar to the I Tunes website with downloadable music and the ability to order custom CDs of specific music tracks that could include a printed personal message to the child. The website will also allow the purchase of the artist's original CD.

The website will be established as a brand name and everything on the website will meet a quality standard, says Shontz.

Should Shontz win the competition he will use the prize money for web site development an office, public relations and advertising expenditures.

Against the Grain

There is an increasing need for gluten free baking, primarily to supply those who are afflicted with Celiac a genetic disease where gluten is not digested and severe health problems result.

Tom and Nancy Cain of Marlboro have identified this need and are planning a baking company, Against the Grain, that will produce frozen, gluten free rolls.

According to Nancy Cain, no one has been able to come up with a satis-

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Company News

Do you have news of interest to the Brattleboro business community? Has your company expanded, introduced a new product, won an award?

Send your information to:

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From the Executive Director

As you read this special newsletter you will learn about the seven finalists in our \$25,000 Business Plan Competition. This competition has been very well received by the business community. We had 44 applicants submitting the two page executive summary. They were split into two major categories, 11 generally in the arts or artistic production field, and 11 food and food related businesses. Others were split among manufacturing and consulting businesses.

We had a tremendous response to the competition and we're thrilled with that. It was a very difficult decision for the judges to get down to six finalists. At the end of the judging, the competition was so close we decided to add a seventh finalist instead of the original six. These



are all experienced, qualified, quality applicants and it will be extremely difficult to pick the winner.

Two important criteria the judges will use to make their final evaluation will be the number of jobs created by each finalist, and the strength of management each finalist shows. In this final stage of the competition, each finalist will work with a counselor from the SBDC or SCORE. They are due to have their full business plan written and submitted by February 23. The final presentation before the judges is March 16. Each applicant will have 15 minutes to make their presentation and answer questions. This will be held at Marlboro College Graduate Center. The winner will be announced later that same day.

Isaacson Leaving BDCC

BDCC Executive Director Kurt Isaacson has submitted his resignation and will leave his post in early February. "His leadership, vision and community involvement will be sorely missed not only by BDCC but the greater Brattleboro area as well," said Debbie Boyle, President of the Board of Trustees. "We're obviously disappointed that he will be leaving us but happy for him and wish him well in his new position," she added.

Isaacson has accepted an offer to run a behavioral health hospital in the Midwest.

Boyle said that transitional planning is underway and will likely involve an interim Executive Director. "Kurt will be leaving BDCC in the best financial and structural position in our 51 year history," Boyle noted.

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factory substitute for wheat, rye, barley and oats free bread.

There are an estimated 1 in 133 people with this disease in the US and the

incidence is increasing. The Cains have identified a US market with a \$600 million sales potential. Currently, the only acceptable manufacture of gluten free bread in N. America is Canadian.

"I'm opening the bakery," says Nancy Cain, "because I invented a different process using different ingredients to

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create a bread that has more the look, taste, and crumb of traditional artisan bread. It's food manufacturing and we will ship baked and frozen rolls to stores wherever we can sell it."



Tom and Nancy Cain

The Cains bring expertise as former executives on Wall Street and as former college professors each holding a doctorate. "We don't have the baking background but all the pieces around that," says Cain.

Should the Cains win they would use the prize money to accelerate the time frame for production of their product.

Vermont Woods Studios

As the rainforests are depleted of their woods, there is a growing interest and market for sustainable solid hardwoods and certified smartwoods for furniture production.

Ken and Margaret Farabaugh operate Vermont Woods Studios making furniture using all sustainable solid hardwoods. Located in Vernon in their home they would use the prize money to move their operation to Brattleboro for warehousing and shipping.

Sustainable certified hardwood furniture market is growing rapidly, says Margaret Farabaugh. Consumers are becoming more aware of global warming and their LOHAS (lifestyles of health and sustainability) market segment.

Consumers are now moving in that direction, she says. "People are realizing



Ken and Margaret Farabaugh

there is a consequence to their purchases and purchasing methods. We've done quite extensive research and have identified this as a growing market segment."

The Farabaughs will team with other local small scale furniture builders. The company will do some furniture building and also design, market and sell through a website Vermontwoods.com, currently under construction.

Ken Farabaugh has built furniture for 25 years part time. Margaret Farabaugh teaches an online Masters program in Occupational Safety and Health Management and has been a business consultant for 20 years.

Ken Farabaugh builds "typical Vermont style furniture, which is simple, clean and linear." He uses two contrasting tones of wood, maple or cherry accented with darker mahogany. The company will build coffee, end, and occasional tables.

Nimble Arts

Identical twins Elsie and Serenity Smith run a circus school, Nimble Arts Trapeze and Circus School. Based at the Cotton Mill in Brattleboro, the sisters teach children as young as 18 months of age and adults in acrobatics,



trapeze, and juggling. "We teach them life skills through the tools of circus," says Serenity.

The school is three years old and the Smiths would use the prize money, should they win the competition, to get to the next level in their business. Currently the sisters do all the business work as well as teach. They also tour nationwide as performers. "We'd like to hire others to do business management so we can focus on product development and teaching," said Serenity.

The school has 100 local students in ongoing classes and an additional 150 in private lessons and workshops. The Smiths also perform with the Nimble Arts Troupe when not teaching. The Smiths grew up on a farm in Western Massachusetts and got into circus work at age 18. They have been performers and teachers for 17 years and have worked for Ringling Bros. and with Montreal-based Cirque de Soleil.

A circus school, said Serenity is not such a far out idea for Vermont. "More people are doing circus. People want to get fit and be in shape but are bored with gym or do not like competitive sports."

Solinglass

Randi Solin is a glassblower and her studio and business, located at the Cotton Mill is Solinglass. Winning the competition would allow her to expand, do live glassblowing demonstrations and add retail space. She would hire retail sales people and additional glass blowers to work at her studio.



Randi Solin

The prize money would additionally

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be used to create more of the infrastructure and marketing she needs such as signage on I-89. The money would allow her to market her studio in magazines. She would also purchase lighting to make her gallery more retail and visitor friendly.

Solin has been a glass blower since 1995. Her work is represented in over 100 national galleries and has been sold and exhibited worldwide and is currently on display several US embassies in Africa.

She categorizes her work as “one of a kind art glass that is sold through galleries, at high end museum craft shows and retail shows.” Seventy-five percent of her business is wholesale sales to galleries. Her prices range from \$350 to \$5000.

Solin said art glass is a popular item. She works with designers, and customers buy her work for their homes as artwork. “Anyone who would go into a gallery and purchase artwork is my market.”

She describes her work as “very painterly, very thick, and its all about the optics. It’s all cut and polished. It has an Asian aesthetic.”

OK Tools

OK Tools sells and services tools and radius grinders. Principals Fred Bullock and Robert Morris say there is a need for their company. Currently there are more than 3000 grinding machines operating that need service and parts rebuilt. The product hasn’t been marketed in a decade and there is a need in the machine tool industry for this product to be maintained and produced, said Morris.

There is also a need for a training program for new operators to learn the appropriate skills to use this machinery. These are manual pieces of equipment developed before computerized tools were introduced.

The radius grinder was originally designed by Pratt & Whitney who later transferred the rights to William & Hussey in New Hampshire. OK Tools

purchased the rights to the equipment pattern drawings. These machines will be used by large machine shops who regrind and sharpen machine tools and small sharpening companies that grind tools.

“Part of our strategy is to develop a training program so people can acquire the skill to use these machines,” said Morris.

OK Tools will be located in Saxtons River where the company will rent 4,000 sq feet in a former industrial building. Morris does the company’s sales and marketing and Bullock is in charge of operations. With the prize money the company would purchase inventory (raw castings), do advertising, purchase office supplies and computers.

Morris worked as a production manager for 25 years in medical device manufacturing. Bullock has worked as a design engineer for the machine tool industry. They worked together at Kingsbury Machine Tool in Keane, NH.

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