

**Profitable Hobby**  
*Trumansburg Free Press*  
**June 18, 2008**

The collection of earrings, bracelets, necklaces, watches, rings and glass etchings covering the Lowe Designs table at the Trumansburg Farmer's Market started as a hobby only nine months ago.

Sandra Lowe began making jewelry to keep busy at home after an illness forced her to leave her full time job.

"It got bigger and I had more inventory and more stuff than I could give away," she said.

Moving from Christmas gifts to local craft fairs, Lowe's pieces can now be found weekly at the Trumansburg Farmer's Market and at the Vine Garden flower shop on Elm St. Vine Garden has been carrying Lowe's jewelry since around Christmas, said owner Marica Horn.

"[Lowe's pieces] are really unique and different," she said. "People comment about them all the time."

People not only comment about the jewelry in the flower shop, they also go out of their way to stay up-to-date on Lowe's work, Horn said.

"Regulars stop in just to see if she's changed her rack," she said.

No two pieces from Lowe Designs are the same, Lowe said, though they may be similar. While her husband, Brad, would like to produce more than one of each design, Lowe feels part of what makes jewelry special is its uniqueness.

"I try not to duplicate anything exactly," she said. "No body wants to see that same pair of earrings or that necklace on everybody, especially with this type of stuff."

Lowe said she gets most of her inspiration from watching home shopping networks on TV and keeping an eye on what's popular in other regions when she and Brad travel. Following a recent trip to San Francisco, CA, Lowe is looking to incorporate wire wrapping into her earrings – following a popular trend she saw on the west coast.

“If I take something I definitely don't copy it exactly,” she said. “I just kind of get an inspiration and rework it.”

After jewelry became too routine, Lowe moved to making diamond-cut glass etchings. Inspired by a piece of etched glass from a craft show, she bought equipment and began making images herself, despite not having formal art training. Lowe said she usually looks at a picture and simply transfers the image to glass. Sometimes, though, the figures appear from her mind.

“I did a set of a deer and a bear and I thought, ‘How am I going to do this bear,’ I had no idea,” she said. “I looked at the photographs and I didn't like them, then [the etching] just came out. I have no idea where it came from.”

Glass etching allows Lowe to be more creative. Beyond matching bead colors, there's not much creativity in the jewelry she makes, Lowe said.

Brad Lowe has also gotten in on the home-based operation, occasionally helping Sandra make jewelry but also contributing his own colorful hand-made pottery.

“He's been doing pottery for years, then he took a couple of years off and I convinced him to go back,” Sandra Lowe said.

Brad Lowe is going to have to start making new pieces because the four-shelves of pottery on display at the farmer's market is the entire stock for the summer, she said.

Sandra Lowe has tried her hand at pottery, but has decided to leave that branch of Lowe Designs to her husband.

“I tired pottery,” she said. “I took a class and I’m terrible.”