

Godfrey's Party Magic and Gifts recognized as Business of the Month

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By [FRED POLLARD](#)

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GODFREY - Sunbathing Santa ornaments are jet-skiing and plastic palm trees are dancing as word has gotten out Party Magic and Gifts in Godfrey has been recognized as the River Bend Growth Association Business of the Month for December.

Owner Brenda Fink said she feels the RBGA is a crucial addition to the community.

"I think it is very beneficial for any business to be involved," she said. "If you don't get involved and get yourself out there, you won't succeed in business."

The party supply store will be celebrating its 20-year anniversary in 2011.

"I started the business out of my home basement," Fink said. "For three years, I decorated weddings and events like that, then I moved to my first location in Wood River. When I outgrew that space, I moved across the street."

Fink said the larger location at 44 E. Ferguson in Wood River was where most people came to know and frequent the business.

In 2000, she opened her Godfrey location at 5761 Godfrey Road. After running both locations for a couple of years, she decided to close the Wood River store.

"This store was bigger, and the (customer base) kept growing, so I decided to keep this one open," she said.

Today, Fink's showcase of supplies offers a wide array of party favors, cards, plates and tablecovers, wine glasses, Mardi Gras beads and masks, "Over the Hill" items such as gravestones, silly string, party games, luau and New Year's party centers, and traditional and foil balloons in every shape and color imaginable.

"Party Magic does not just sell party supplies," Fink said. "We try to create a unique experience you will not find anywhere else with our custom designs and creativity. I think what sets me apart from other party stores is the fact that we do custom work, including centerpieces. We can take a foil balloon and coordinate colors to create something special and unique."

The store also can make "balloon totems" using several shapes, sizes and designs of balloons to create a kind of "inflatable tower" for parties. Fink said the Grinch totem has been popular this year.

Fall also is a popular time for Yankee Candles.

"We carry most of the fragrances, and we probably have the largest Yankee Candle selection in Madison County," Fink said. "I think it is a combination of the quality and variety that makes them so popular. They are always coming out with new fragrances, and we have a line of between 20 and 30 Christmas choices right now, including candles that smell like Christmas cookies and an evergreen fragrance for people who want their homes to smell like a live tree.

"Candy and cupcake supplies are something people are also really looking for this time of year. Cupcake toppers would not have sold 10 years ago, but now that is a hot product. It just shows you how trends change. I go to a lot of shows and I listen to my customers to see what their needs are."

For local high school sports fans, seven local high school logos, including Jersey Community, Roxana and Bethalto, are featured on items such as hats, signs, stickers, balloons and megaphones.

Retro party supplies from the 1950s to the 1970s also are hot right now. Fink said she carries graduation supplies all year long, as well.

"It is very rewarding and makes you feel good when customers say their event was a success," she said.

It has not been all parties and games for the business, however. Last summer, consistent flooding problems culminated in a decoration disaster.

"I came in with a friend on July 4 to do some work and he said 'I didn't realize you had a lake in here,'" Fink said. "The (north side) of the store was underwater. We had to tear out fitting rooms, rip up carpet and renovate that side of the store. It took over three months to do the physical work, and another two or three months to get the store back to where it should be."

Today, the store is bigger and better than ever. Fink also has branched out into rentals, including archways, pillars, and table skirting and sashes.

"I had always wanted to have some kind of business," Fink said. "I tried a couple of different things, and this just really seemed to click."

For more information, call (618) 466-2222 or visit the website at www.partymagicandgifts.com.