

The DCS Trading Company's Grand Opening

Nick Cibrario

The public is invited to the Grand Opening of the DCS Trading Co. (Bookstore), 5144 – Douglas Avenue, Racine, WI on Saturday, July 24th, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm. The store is located west of the 4 Mile Road across from Pick'n Save. Nick Cibrario, the author and artist, will read excerpts from his new manuscript, *Return to Kathmandu: Murder in the Mountains*, at 11:30 am and 2:30 pm (publication this fall). This novel is set in Nepal during the massacre of the royal family, allegedly by the Crown Prince in the spring of 2001. Carl Brecht, the anthropologist, returns to Kathmandu with his daughter, Kathy, to attend a convention prior to the assassination.

Nick will also have a Book Signing of his four novels at \$12.00 each plus tax and an Art Exhibit of his paintings and sculptures at reduced prices. Those purchasing his work will receive a free copy of *A Visit to India* by Mary Ann Lackovich, poet and photographer. Cibrario wrote the following article.

When I received a message from Cindy Johnson on my answering machine inviting me to spend the day at her bookstore, I was pleased. She is now the manager of the DCS Trading Co. in Caledonia. Cindy informed me that she loves books and was currently reading *Scarpetta* by Patricia Cornwell. She had read all 23 futuristic mysteries from *The In Death Series* by Nora Roberts. She said that her store has many romance and mystery novels with some biographies, autobiographies, children's books, and a collection of CD's.

Cindy advised me to visit the place, giving me the directions. From out of town – Take I-94 to Hwy 20 Exit- east. Go several miles. Turn left on Hwy 31 and go north. At the 4 Mile Road turn right. Go east until Douglas Avenue and then turn left. Go north about a city block. Turn left after passing Cricket (See map below).

As I drove along, I was intrigued by the name DCS Trading Co. I could visualize ships from the British East India Company landing in Bombay (Mumbai) engaging in the spice trade until the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, which resembled the Boston Tea Party. I thought about Kipling's *Jungle Book*, Forester's *A Passage to India*, and Fisher's *Gandhi's Truth*. My favorite is Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*. There was also Haley's *Roots*, dealing with the Dutch East India Company trading and transporting African slaves to the colonies in its ships.

It occurred to me that Caledonia also has a unique history. A friend lent me a copy of Nicholas P. Weber's *Caledonia: Journey to a Village*. I discovered that Caledonia had twelve pocket communities. Among them were Husher, Caledonia, Franksville, and at one time Wind Point. My friend said the Kaspers settled in Wind Point. Her Grandfather Kasper married a Simpson, whose ancestors lived in Virginia prior to the American Revolution. The Kasper family had an extensive farm at 3712 North Main, now the Atrium. They earned their living marketing cabbage, apples, and strawberries. The family had dairy cows and chickens for their own use. A Kasper eventually married a Wishau, whose relatives had built the first schoolhouse in the area which had 37 pupils in 1867.

Since Franksville is also part of Caledonia, I read that the Jambou Brothers were French fur traders. They came to Franksville in the 1790's, married Potawatomi Indians, and established a Trading Post at Skunk Grove. The Potawatomi inhabited all of Racine County until 1833. After the Blackhawk War, they were deported to a reservation west of the Mississippi River.

Our government bought the land from the Native Americans and sold it to settlers from New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. The next wave was German, Irish, and Bohemian farmers and traders. By 1899 Caledonia added Welsh, Danish, Scandinavian, French, Swiss, and Dutch to the township.

When I finally arrived at the DCS Trading Company, which is connected to the Cricket Building, I recognized Dan Dehling, who previously worked at Martha Merrell's for three years. He was now behind the desk on T, W, Th, 12:00 am-6:00 pm. Cindy and another employee are there Fri. and Sat. 12:00 am-5:00 pm. Dan informed me they recently purchased 350 books, dating from 2006-2009.

After a tour of the store, he introduced me to Gordon Klema, the facility manager of the property, which includes a warehouse. Gordon offered me a seat on wicker furniture beneath a canopy outside, a perfect place to read and socialize over coffee. He informed me his mother, Beryl Klema, owned the property. I was intrigued by his family history. Gordon's great-grandfather was a Bohemian farmer and tradesman who immigrated to Racine County to escape persecution from the Austrian Empire. He established an extensive family farm north of the store although only the original house was now standing. A relative, Martin Klema, bought the mill in Franksville in 1919 shortly after World War I and ran Klema Feeds until 1960.

While touring the warehouse behind the store, Gordon mentioned that he intends to convert the building into a miniature golf center (Black Lite Mini-Golf). His father, Kenneth, was an engineer, who worked for Case and Johnson Wax. The warehouse changed hands numerous times. Among them were: Easterday Paint Factory, Norco Aircraft, producing hanger doors, and The National Hoist & Equipment Co. Inc., making steel girders.

Gordon pointed out that the nearby railroad tracks once played a strong part in the history of Caledonia. The Chicago and Milwaukee Road was linked to the quarry on the 4 Mile Road, transporting stone and lime used for the construction of buildings, roads, and railroad beds. At one time farmers clearing their land of trees sold cords of wood to run their steam engines.

Gordon was hoping that in the future the Metra (KRM) would link Chicago to Madison and stop in Caledonia. He showed me the field of daisies alongside of the property where the road could be extended from across the street to the tracks. He said that Caledonia was now a village with over 50,000 people. I added that the village needed a bookstore and a train station.

While we were talking, the name Downtown Caledonia Trading Co. made sense. I imagined people buying a novel or biography to take on the train going south to Chicago or west to Madison. While waiting to board the train, their children could enjoy a round of miniature golf, leaving their parents to relax with a book under the canopy.

