

Lilybee brightens homes in large area

By Mark Sherry

Lilybee Flowers, Inc. of New Holstein has a long history of brightening homes, weddings and other venues from Lake Winnebago to Lake Michigan.

Customers from New Holstein, Kiel, Chilton and beyond have long been visiting the flower and gift shop at 2126 Wisconsin Ave. (STH 32/57). Lilybee Flowers also delivers to Sherwood, Stockbridge and Hilbert to the north and west, as well as to Elkhart Lake, Newton and Cleveland to the south and east—and all points in between.

Carrie Strobl started Lilybee Flowers in 2009 and has a crew of part-time employees to help her run the busy shop, especially when holidays and events roll around—such as Mother's Day coming up on May 9.

Ordering via the Lilybee website at <https://lilybeeflowersinc.com/> is another great way to brighten the day of someone—even if that someone is yourself—or to brighten one's home with fresh, beautifully scented flowers. The website is mobile friendly and people can be assured that orders come directly to Lilybee Flowers and not to a third-party site.

Houseplants are hot

Carrie said the store also offers a large selection of houseplants, both "run-of-the-mill and exotic" varieties, she said. "There really isn't any place that you can get well-cared-for houseplants around here," she said.

Interestingly enough, Carrie said younger people are especially into houseplants these days and tend to gravitate toward the more unusual varieties.

Houseplants in general have been more popular as of late, she said, and that might have something to do with the pandemic. As people spent more time in their homes in the past year, they decided a great way to redecorate and bring more of nature into the home is with houseplants.

By the way, scientists have found that an increase in the volume of houseplants leads to a decrease in air contaminants, particularly if these plants are placed in the sun. Plants also can metabolize toxins, rendering the by-products neutral and safe. And some people will remember their grade school science lesson about how photosynthesis removes carbon dioxide from the air and converts it to oxygen. Carrie added one more reason to get more plants: "They make you happy," she said.

Flowers for all occasions

Lilybee Flowers also offers flowers for all occasions—weddings, funerals, anniversaries, and any other event. Some small weddings took place last year during the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of the larger weddings were postponed. Carrie said she has quite a few lined up for this year.

Carrie describes her floral offerings as a diversified portfolio. Rather than working with just one wholesaler, Lilybee Flowers come from four or five wholesalers. That helps keep prices in check while also bringing a huge variety of flowers to the tri-city area. Carrie said many people are surprised to learn about



Fresh flowers, silk flowers, houseplants and gift items are just some of what is offered for sale at Lilybee Flowers, Inc., owned by Carrie Strobl.

Pam Mathes photo

Lilybee

the choices they have right here in this Calumet County shop.

People also might be surprised to learn that most flowers sold in the U.S. are grown in South America. They often are shipped here on available cargo space on passenger flights, with Miami as a hub. With fewer of those flights in the past year because of the pandemic, the supply of flowers and shipping methods were challenged at times which also drove prices up. Other issues can affect supplies as well; for example, most roses come from Ecuador where a volcano and political unrest have affected shipments.

But Lilybee Flowers is well stocked and ready to go for Mother's Day, proms, weddings, graduations and more. Current challenges seem minor compared to this time last year when Lilybee was closed for two months during the pandemic shutdown. Carrie said she continued to operate via website orders and safe deliveries and pickups. Customers also supported the small business by purchasing gift certificates. "I think we're lucky," Carrie said. "Our community was very good."

Gift offerings keep growing

While Lilybee Flowers is best known

for that second part of its name, it is an ever growing gift shop as well. Carrie said the gift part of the business is as strong as ever.

That includes a line of Nora Fleming products; Michel Design Works products including diffusers, shea butter soap and scented drawer liners; Cardthartic gift cards made with soy ink on recycled paper; multiple wine and liquor options; as well as chocolates.

As the only gift shop in the city, Lilybee has unique items and an ever-changing selection. "It's always different—not the same stuff," Carrie said.

Custom silk flowers are available from Lilybee Flowers for everything from weddings to home wall hangings. The store also assists bridal parties with wedding invitations and rental of decorations for receptions.

The store also has increased its offerings of memorial items including plaques, statues, and stone pavers. A religious section with baptism, confirmation and other items is being added as well.

For flowers and gifts, Lilybee Flowers is the region's one-stop shop. It is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (closed Sundays).