

The honor of your presence is requested at STONEHEDGE Proper

Early American settlers didn't bring much with them to the New World. It wasn't until later that they began to make their homes a bit more comfortable. They used the finest quality wood — maple, oak, cherry — to create heavy, solid furniture with straight simple lines and little ornamentation. The tradition of early American furniture was born.

Drive to Dorchester to visit STONEHEDGE Proper, and you'll feel like you've stepped back into time. Proprietor Edie Heath offers a wide selection of reproduction early American furnishings. Near the front of the "shoppe," there is a Vermont chair fashioned from a ladder back. Its high back

and sides surround you, making it the perfect chair for escaping from reality for a moment. (Early Americans were fond of it because it provided a shield from drafts of cold air.) There's a similar chair with flared wings, called a Sandwich chair, that provides a bit more arm room.

"I love Pilgrim furniture — big, chunky oversized furniture; early American primitive painted pine," says Heath, a 22-year resident of Dorchester. Her mainstays are reproduction Early American, such as Windsor chairs by D.R. Dimes, colonial lighting fixtures by Authentic Designs and classic American country sofas by Johnston Benchworks.

"People like functional furniture. With reproductions, it looks antique but stands up to wear and tear," says Heath. The reproduction furniture that Heath offers is made by hand, frequently out of the same woods the colonists used, and creates a decor that is comfortable and historical. Although she shows what she likes in the shop, but you can browse through catalogs to buy anything you'd like — even a leather couch from one of her distributors in the Carolinas.

Antiques and modern items are creatively displayed in the shop,

such as a new wooden hutch holding a stack of Shaker-style wooden boxes,

handcarved wooden bowls and antique metal milking pans. "STONEHEDGE Proper is not an antique shop, but I do mix them in," says Heath.

Heath has been interested in antiques since she was a child. "My parents, driving our black station wagon, would take us to the Barter Barn," says Heath, who grew up in East Bethel, Vt. "Something must have held because I've always liked to collect — I've been an antiquer my whole life."

Antiquing was relegated to a hobby as Edie and her husband Jere raised two sons, Cole and Christopher. Heath worked in accounting, reception, technical support, sales and marketing at large, international companies such as Clifford of Vermont in Bethel, Luminescent Systems in Lebanon, and, most recently, Hypertherm in Hanover. "Christopher said to me, 'You can't read another book. Why don't you just open the shop?' I had to do it or stop talking about it," says Heath.

Jere built a post-and-beam carriage house on their property for the shop, and Edie worked in retail over the holiday season to gain direct customer experience. They opened the doors to STONEHEDGE Proper in June 2005.

It's a shop that sparks inspiration for your own home. A bench table is set with hand aged Redware pottery and surrounded by bow back chairs with New England vase legs. An 18th century style chandelier hangs overhead, and matching sconces hold beeswax candles. There's even a heavy-duty, patterned sail cloth on the floor. "Rugs were expensive; people used to put them on tables," says Heath. "No one put them on floors until later."

Not only can Heath help furnish your home, she can fix up your furnish-





ings. She provides upholstery services with free consultations, pickup and delivery, and a selection of more than 200 fabrics. Heath recently reupholstered an antique furniture set — a couch, two wing chairs and a side chair — for a Norwich, Vt., couple. “The set was handed down in the family. Some were in storage, some were being used, all were in dire need of restoration,” says Heath. She researched the furniture so she could see the nuances of the original set. “I wanted to put the curvature and the art back. It’s not just a reupholstering job — we take the time to pay attention to detail.”

It’s a drive to get to STONEHEDGE Proper, but it’s worth the trip. There’s a gorgeous view of Cardigan Mountain, you don’t have to fight traffic and Edie loves to chat with customers. She’ll even give you a pineapple welcome — but you’ll have to visit the shop to learn more about this colonial symbol of hospitality.

WHO: Edie Heath, proprietor

WHAT: STONEHEDGE Proper, LLC, purveyors of Early American furniture

WHY: It’s like taking a back road and discovering a little shop that you can’t wait to tell your friends about

WHERE: Take I-89 North to Exit 17, then take Route 4 to Enfield/Canaan. In Canaan, take left on Route 118. The shop is approximately 6.5 miles on the left, and clearly marked with a sign.

WHEN: Wednesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

CONTACT: 523-9601

WEB: www.stonehedgeproper.com

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