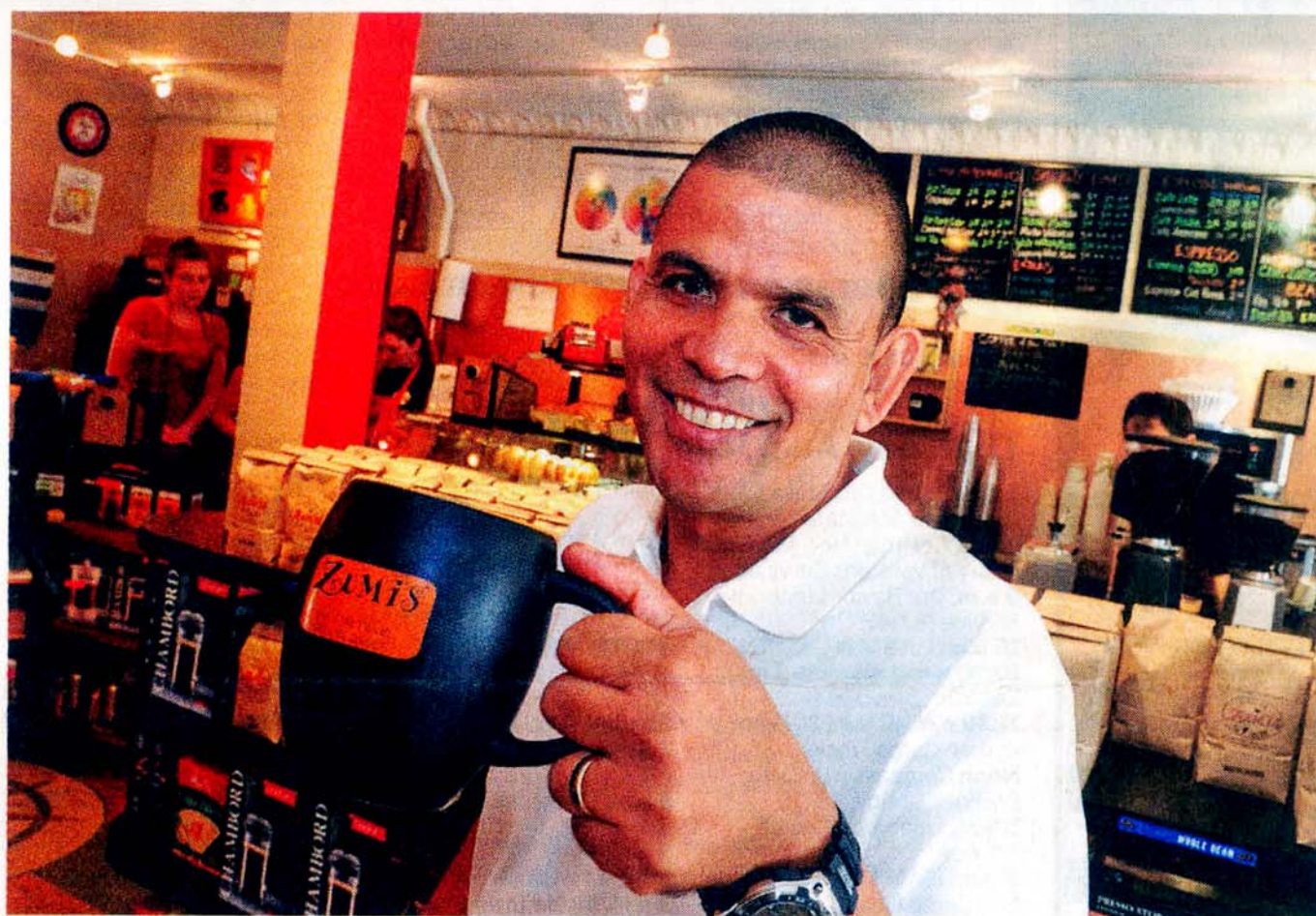


Ipswich Chronicle.

August 18 - 24, 2011

WickedLocalIpswich.com

Vol. 138, No. 47 \$1



Umesh Bhujju, Rotary Club Person of the Year, inside Zumi's Coffee Shop. WICKED LOCAL PHOTO BY DAVID SOKOL

Brewing up a positive vibe

By Beverly Perna
Ipswich@wickedlocal.com

Umesh Bhujju, who owns and operates Zumi's coffee and ice cream shop on Market Street, was recognized for his generosity, infectious spirit and broad community sup-

port as the Ipswich Rotary's "Person of the Year" on July 21. In this interview, Bhujju discusses his life and business experience.

Q: I know that you are a native of Nepal and once guided climbers up Mt. Everest. When did you come to the U.S. and why

did you choose to leave your native land?

I was born in Nepal, in a village called Syangja near Mt. Annapurna, a member of the Newar tribe (which is one of about 38 tribes of Nepal).

BHUJU, PAGE 5

BHUJU

From Page 1

After high school, I became a certified mountain guide and led many groups through the Himalayas. Working with so many foreigners, I was inspired to come to the U.S. through a student exchange in 1990 when I was a rock climbing and soccer instructor at a summer camp in Alpine, Alabama. I liked the U.S. enough to find a way to get my college education here and returned to earn a bachelors in business at B.U. and an MBA at Johnson & Wales University.

Q: I know that Zumis opened in 2003. What made you decide a coffee shop would work well in Ipswich?

My wife and I recently finished grad school and were expecting our first child. We were in Essex at that time working on our business plan and we made a decision that we would establish our business on the North Shore pursuing our passion of fair trade, organic coffee and ice cream in Ipswich and felt it had a lot of potential. A few days later, while we were searching space in Ipswich, we saw a seasonal ice cream space and immediately called the owner and put the wheels in motion.

Q: What was the inspiration for the name "Zumi's"?

When we were expecting our first child, we called the baby "Zumi" during pregnancy, a merging of my name and

wife's name, Zillie. We named the baby Uma, but thought "Zumi" was catchy, simple and fun so we decided to use the name for the shop and have never regretted it. Q: What advice would you give to people starting a business?

Patience! You need to be very determined, and stick to your initial idea, and, of course, it is essential to deliver a high-quality product in order to get high quality, loyal customers.

Q: Obviously, it has worked for you. Zumi's is always busy.

We are very lucky to have a really good mix of regulars, lots of friendly people from all around the town with different types of jobs. Of course, this is a very creative area so there are lots of creative people such as artists and designers who come to Zumi's. We are very lucky to have many loyal customers and friends here. We feel that customers can come here and feel a bit of home. Zumi's is all about quality coffee in a welcoming setting. We make sure our staff are all very qualified. They have to have been working with us for a few months before they're allowed to make espresso-based beverages. We have to ensure every cup of coffee we serve is of a consistently high standard. We believe in our staff and feel that they are the true "face" of our business.

Q: You are committed to

several social/environmental/economic issues. What is your "passion" when it comes to being involved? If you had unlimited funds, what would you want to support?

I enjoy using the Zumi's space as a forum for activism and customer networking and art exhibition as well. I really would like to expand Zumi's to some other towns, but don't know when. For us, it's not about how we do business, but how we do life. How we make business decisions parallels our vision of living in awareness of our coexistence with all beings, and our commitment to communities both local and global. There is no boundary between business and bringing fullness to life.

We like to imagine that everyone and everything that is impacted by Zumi's is impacted in a positive way. If we had unlimited funds we would make our business as "green" as possible — use solar energy, have a composting system as well as recycling, use only packaging made from recycled materials, etc. For the time being we do the best we can with the resources we have and hope that by using our space as a forum for sharing ideas and information about taking care of our environment is a good start.

We provide a place to recycle small electronics and batteries and eyeglasses and even recycle

our coffee grounds for gardening locally.

Q: What have been some of the rewards?

Our biggest reward has been the increasing number of repeat customers. As the number of our regulars grew, so did the many different types of coffee they drink — it became hard to remember their individual drinks preferences in our first years. We have created a simple spreadsheet with the names of over 200 patrons and the coffee they drink — these are only the customers who come in every day. This means that we not only remember the customers' names, but also more importantly their orders. Our customers like this.

Another reward has been the strong relationship that we have formed with our coffee roaster, Dean's Beans. They have been exceptional in keeping regular contact with us, providing fair-trade material, follow up on our order and keeping us up to date with industry changes.

Lastly, the smiles that

we put on customers' faces always reminds us why we do what we do. Receiving great compliments always reminds us why we opened this café in the first place.

Q: What is Fair Trade coffee?

Fair Trade is a voluntary program utilized by coffee importers and food companies to create an alternative market for traditionally disadvantaged producers in developing countries, usually small-scale farmers. Your purchase of fairly traded coffee helps build pride, independence and community empowerment for small farmers and their families. A coffee processing plant in El Salvador, community stores in Colombia, the training of doctors in Mexico, new schools in Peru — these are examples of initiatives co-ops have taken in their own communities with the income from Fair Trade.

Q: Being from another country and culture, you obviously have a larger "world view" than most of the rest of us who have

grown up here in the U.S. If you could advise people on how to be better "world citizens," what would you say?

1. You'll never go wrong with a smile 2. Show your pride, but respect theirs The phrase "it's a small world" has proven itself true time and again.

Q: Do you have a philosophy of life that guides you day to day?

Never take business for granted. Always be forward thinking. I really love serving people and feel like the secret to success is catching a spark with your customers. Let them know you enjoy serving them. I think that is how you get customers for life and this kind of positive energy exchange helps motivate the worker. It is truly a mutually rewarding interaction.

Q: What's next?

I would really like to expand Zumi's to some other towns, but don't know when. But Ipswich will always be where it all began.