

AUGUST CLEARANCE SALE

Save on Patio Furniture - Swimming Pools & Supplies - Billiard Tables - Hot Tubs

Our goal is 100% customer satisfaction.

It is always our intention to have all advertised items readily available for sale. Occasionally, an advertised item may not be available because of sales above anticipated demand or circumstances beyond our control.

Whenever reasonable and possible, rainchecks are issued or a comparable value will be offered.

While we do our best to avoid printing errors, we do reserve the right to correct any inaccurate prices or descriptions at the point of purchase. All items are not necessarily sale items or mark-downs, but all represent significant values.

Warranty information is kept at all stores for your inspection. It is our advice never to buy an item strictly on the basis of the warranty alone, but to consider the product's quality and reputation.

We will make every effort to fill every order, and to issue rainchecks when they are available.

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Seasonal Specialty Stores* News, "Newsletter Lite" Volume 8, No. 2 • August Clearance Sale Edition • Sale ends September 3, 2000

What's New at Seasonal

by Dennis DiPaolo

The first summer in our new store has been an amazing experience, and I really have to thank you all. In the first place, people are spending money like it wasn't their own! Much more important, I am overwhelmed by the comments and congratulations from our customers on the new building. As we get larger, I am trapped in the office more, and I'm on the sales floor less. Even so, many of you have tracked me and Jeanne down with awfully nice words of encouragement. Thank you.

It's been a big year so far. Sales since January first are up by 40%, and we'll be up even more by the end of the year. That's not on purpose, either. I only projected for a 20% increase, and I really did try to hold it down to that. You may remember that our advertising this summer (what little we did) basically just said "Here's what we carry—don't come in the first two hours of the day." That actually worked great! We began experiencing a first four hours that were bus but we could actually concentrate and help people solve problems. Previously, it was two hours of craziness followed lunch. You folks definitely get better service when there are not six other folks waiting impatiently until we can give them our undivided attention!

Staff Levels

I'm sure it's no surprise that staffing is an issue everywhere in Southern New Hampshire—particularly if you need intelligent, personable, hard-working people willing to work long hours for way less money than computer programmers make. Actually, for retailers, we're holding out pretty well. Our senior staff is more senior than ever (five of us were here in 1981). The new staff (we hired almost a dozen new people this year) is catching on quickly. Even in today's job market, we still reject 60% of applications, including two this year that were assistant managers for our competitors. Sometimes no training is better than bad training.

We are always willing to hire good people, though. If you or someone you know might be interested, please call or come in and see Kip. We're a store with a reputation and store policies that you can be proud to associate with. Staff is empowered to do what's best for the customer. We bring in

catered lunches on busy days, have room for some flexible hours (we work around child care for several people right now), and there's lots of other benefits. Rich and Jessica, for instance, are receiving scholarships from us this year, and I expect to give out three or four more in 2001.

Vito and Valentine

The dogs were in the store a lot more this summer, though they may have been harder to find in the larger space. They are usually near Jeanne (Vito's such a mama's boy), so look down in the Patio Furniture Department for them. Jeanne's getting more involved with breeding and showing Boston Terriers. Two of Valentine's from the first two litters are already champions. Three more from the second and third litters plus two of her grandchildren (grandpuppies?) are due to make champion in the next year. Another "grandpuppy" is an American **and** Canadian champion. Valentine is done breeding, but her progeny are now in very high demand from as far away as California.

The Sale

Don't miss this year's August Clearance Sale. Jeanne and I both got carried away ordering product this summer. After eight years of always being on the verge of running out, we could finally stock up a really big warehouse. Reorders were really easy this year, but we still guessed wrong on plenty of things. There's a great selection of patio furniture and pool supplies, especially heaters, filters, motors, and hose. They are marked way Yow because we're going to need lots of cash to pay the bank, the IRS, and all of the year-round help this winter.

Do not wait for spring. I haven't raised pool or billiard prices in three years (at least) and there have been lots of small increases that we absorbed. However, starting last October, we began seeing billiard increases at 6% to 12%. Raw plastics have gone up several times this year, and we are already seeing 5% to 15% increases in our pool supply costs for 2001. Obviously, the largest increases are in oil-based plastics and products requiring labor to manufacture.

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If you want something installed or repaired, do it now — do not wait until spring. The more expensive local contractors are only working for their existing customers. The cheap contractors are doubling their prices or just getting out of the business. No one returns calls any more.

We've already sold out of inground liner installations for the rest of this year, and we know that we'll run out of

above ground installation dates before every pool is in. The Nashua-Manchester pool service market is due for a serious shake-out between now and spring. Look for fewer contractors and much higher prices.

Baquacil Ultra

Yes, it's here now. They got their EPA number last week, and Baquacil agreed to release some to us the next day. It's too late for an experiment, so we're just letting

anyone buy it. My advice? If you use Baqua Plus Tablets or Granules, you will want to switch to Baquacil Ultra as soon as you run out of regular Baquacil Sanitizes. If you're stocking up now, stock up on the Ultra instead. It's usually about 25 % more expensive, but Ultra is on sale right now at \$99.97 per case, which is only 14% more. Logically, the two products will always go on sale together.

If you do not use Baqua Plus Tablets right now, don't bother changing anything.

We are the only store in New England that has Ultra, so if you want to get started as soon as possible, come see us right away. I won't run out on purpose, but I don't exactly have a basis to guess inventory on a brand new product in the last month of the season.

Using Ultra will not preclude using Baqua Plus Tablets for bioslime treatment, but it should prevent continual double-shocking. I can't see spending the extra money (about \$65 per 10,000 gallons per year) for pools that have never had a problem. I hope to know more next spring, and certain after a year of using it in pools.