

# HAMPTON *Connects*

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## Hampton General Store

*Something for Everyone*



When Kara Hicks opened the Hampton General Store in 2022, she didn't have all the food permits that would allow her to execute the plan she had envisioned for her new business. That all changed in January, 2023 after she obtained the permits she needed to add the many features that now make the store a destination spot on Main Street.



When you walk into the store, don't be surprised when the canine greeter wags a welcome. This almost two-year-old charmer is a mix of Irish Wolfhound, St. Bernard, and Bearded Collie. But don't let the warm greeting distract you from the array of candy at the front of the store. With a variety of your childhood favorites (Tootsie Rolls, etc.) and an introduction to some new treats (the longest candy necklace in the world), there is plenty for both children and

adults to indulge their sweet tooth.

Even more appealing are the other culinary delights Kara offers. From small items like bagels and buns to delicious entrees, the choices are varied and tempting. Frozen entrees (based on availability) include shepherd's pie, chicken pot pie, turkey pot pie, meatloaf, and others. Add a slice of pie or cake to your entree, and you will be one satisfied (and full) customer. If a complete meal isn't what you're looking for, soups, a selection of ice cream treats, donuts, and some local products make a trip to the store worth it.

Kara also makes her love of cooking and baking available to Hampton organizations and people who need a catering service

for private functions. She caters the Hampton Senior luncheons, private holiday parties, weddings, birthday celebrations, and the like. And if you and your family don't want to spend time roasting that Thanksgiving turkey or thinking of a Christmas menu, Kara has you covered for that too with delicious meals you can pre-order before the special event.

Just as varied as the food choices is the merchandise throughout the store. Craft items, toys, home decor, last minute gift ideas, or something to indulge yourself are on display waiting for you to make your choice.

The store also includes a number of display items that reflect Hampton's history and hometown feel. There is an old map from the library that depicts the "regions" of Hampton such as Centre District, Goshen District, Union District, and others. Some of the display shelves are made of wood from the library, and recently, a chicken coop was added to the store's memorabilia.



Kara is a workforce of one. She has the energy, expertise, and creativity to do it all. So it was no surprise she received well-deserved recognition in 2024 when the store won The Chronicle's Readers' Choice Award for Best Place to Visit With an Out-of-Town Guest. But the accolades didn't stop there. The store also placed second in both The Best Bakery and The Best Dessert categories. To visit the Hampton General Store is to find yourself in a special place. Hampton is fortunate to have this gem in our midst.

Contact Kara at: [hamptongeneralstore.ct@gmail.com](mailto:hamptongeneralstore.ct@gmail.com) for more information.

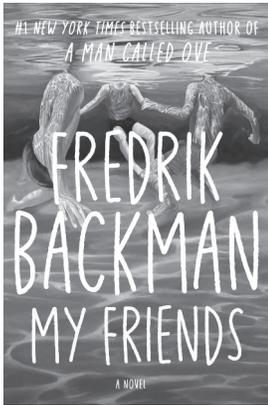
## How Well Do You Know the Hampton General Store?

Take our True or False quiz to find out.

1. The name of the store's canine greeter is Benny.
2. The store closes for two weeks in January.
3. The best selling pie is mixed berry.
4. Brownie sundaes will be available at a future date.
5. Gummies are the best selling candy.
6. Chili is available in the winter.
7. The kitchen was updated in 2025.
8. The bagels are from a bakery in Putnam.
9. The brand of ice cream used is Friendly's.
10. Vegetarian and vegan foods are options.

(Answers below)

## Looking for a Good Book?



If you aren't already a fan of Fredrik Backman, reading his novel *My Friends* will make you one. Intertwining themes of friendship, change, trust, and the power of art, Backman creates heartfelt characters who navigate the peril and promise of adolescence in ways you will recognize and understand.

Backman tells the story of four teens, Joar, Ted, Ali, and the artist, CJat whose friendship binds them

together for life. Twenty-five years later, their story impacts eighteen-year-old Louisa whose life journey is just beginning. Through an unusual set of circumstances, Louisa meets Ted who gives her a world famous painting she has always loved. When Louisa finds out that Ted's friend, CJat was the artist, she convinces a reluctant Ted to tell her the story of his friends. She learns the love the four friends had for each other eased the turmoil each had at home. And as a budding artist herself, she understands why the beauty and mystery of art affected each of them. Backman writes, "Art is a moment. Art is being a reason. Art is coping with being alive for one more week."

At times the pace is slow and the plot contrived, but Backman's dialogue, humor, and wisdom overcome any shortcomings the book may have. Spending time with the characters connects you with their humanity and your own. *My Friends* is both a painful and joyful read and one you don't want to miss.

Contributors to our Spring 2026 issue include: Kara Hicks, Frank Russell, Lena Fontaine of Gulemo Printers, Joan Fox, and Claudette Russell.

Please email your comments/suggestions to [info@hamptonconnects.com](mailto:info@hamptonconnects.com)

## Spring Cleaning: A Necessary Evil

By Claudette Russell

You crossed out March 20th on your calendar, locked your vacuum cleaner in the basement, and hauled all your cleaning supplies to the trash. But that recurring nightmare known as spring cleaning can't be denied. Consider the overwhelming evidence that proves you need to take on this seasonal monster as soon as possible.

Your dust bunnies are as big as boulders and have formed independent communities throughout your house. Your claim that they're decorative orbs isn't fooling anyone.

You still have jars of sprinkles leftover from each of your adult children's first birthday cakes. The gourmet herbs and spices you bought during your chef phase remain unopened and stored next to your DoorDash menus. You need a hammer and chisel to break up the brown sugar you haven't been able to use for years. Time for pantry management.

You have cardboard boxes that form a small mountain range in your basement and contain every memento of your children's lives. But your adult children won't suffer irreparable, emotional trauma if you toss out their entire collection of grade school artwork, kindergarten awards for good behavior, decades worth of broken toys, the potholders they made for you at summer camp, etc. Load a wheelbarrow with these boxes (multiple times) and take them to their final destination. The neighbors don't have to know why you're weeping in front of the rented dumpster.

On a sunny day, a friend drops by to visit. Upon leaving the friend asks, "Why is it so dark in here?" Later that day you find a case of Windex on your front steps. Take the hint.

You fear an avalanche every time you open your bedroom closet. Wear a helmet to avoid injury and start sorting through all the old clothing and accessories that date back decades. Your high school uniform was never stylish and isn't coming back to the fashion world anytime soon. Likewise, your velvet track suit and granny square poncho are nothing more than embarrassments to you and your family. Check to see if there's any more room in that dumpster.

These aren't *all* the cleaning jobs you need to tackle. And don't pretend you don't know what the others are. Liberate your vacuum from the basement, retrieve your cleaning supplies from the trash, pull out some garbage bags, and get started. When you're finished, breathe a sigh of relief and revel in your newfound space.



## Quiz Answers

(No peeking until you're finished)

1.F 2.F 3.T 4.F 5.F 6.T 7.F 8.F 9.F 10.T