

# ALL 'SIGNS' POINT 'HERE'



By Rob Levey | Photos by Cristin M. Gisler

Citing her great grandfather was in vaudeville, Pam Tomlin says creativity is in her blood, which led her to start Ipswich River Craft this past April.

"Within a month, what had been a hobby before started to take off, and now people in town call me, 'The Sign Lady,'" laughs Pam, who is joined in this venture by husband John.

"In the beginning, John cut all the wood and I did all the assembly and painting," she says. "Now, a couple of neighbors, Emma Bilo and Cristian Scopa, are helping me out with all the production. John also came up with the name, logo and then the website."

Each sign is made from scratch.

"We cut all the wood ourselves, paint the blocks as nautical signal flags, assemble the frames and add 'love' for the finishing touch," she says.

Another craft that has received attention is Pam's location sign.

"It's a bunch of places John and I have been to," she explains. "They all point in the correct direction with actual mileage. Who knew it, too, would be a hit, but everyday people stop and take pictures. It even made the local newspaper."

Making the local papers may just be the start of things, as both Pam and John have deep ties to the television industry.

"My first job was in NYC working for ABC Sports," says Pam. "It was lots of fun, but I really didn't know too much about sports, so I moved over to WABC News."

She was then hired at the nationally syndicated news magazine show, Inside Edition, where she stayed for 10 years.

"I worked myself up to producer and coordinating producer and traveled the world doing all kinds of feature stories," she says. "I flew on the Concord to Paris for Fashion Shows, covered earthquakes, Superbowl's, car shows, OJ's trials, Princess Di's funeral...I was even



Downtown Julie Brown's personal producer and we had a blast."

Pam then hit the talk show world, producing for Maury Povich and Montel Williams.

"At one point, I was an on-air reporter for the world-wide Turner Sports Goodwill Games," she says.

As for John, he created Inside Edition after developing A Current Affair.

"After executive producing tons of television series, he was commissioned to executive produce a bunch of shows for Animal Planet out of Somerville, which is how we ended up in Ipswich," she says.

Currently, John is senior producer for This Old House, a position he has held for more than 6 years.

As for how the two met, Pam says a stint in Reality TV led her to reconnect with her former Inside Edition boss, John Tomlin.

"After a few years working together again, he asked me out and we were engaged 6 months later so, yes, I married my boss," she laughs. "It's now been 15 years."

In commenting on living in Ipswich, Pam says they both love the water.

"John is a sailor and I grew up on the beach with motorboats," she says. "A friend invited us to Ipswich for an overnight, and we went out to Crane Beach and fell in love with the area."

She credits John with finding their current home.

"He found what we call our Clam Box for rent on Craigslist in 2008," she says. "We eventually sold our main house in Briarcliff Manor, NY and finally bought the Clam Box in 2012."

When not making signs, Pam stays busy with the Ipswich Town and Country Garden Club.

"We also play golf, and I am now the social co-chair at the Ipswich Bay Yacht Club," she adds.

As to the future, Pam says she looks forward to time spent with family, including their 11-year old dog, as well as the continued growth of Ipswich River Craft.

"Making all these signs has really allowed me to meet and get to know even more people in the area – and I love that," she says. "Ipswich has great people."

To learn more about Ipswich River Craft, or Pam, visit [ipswichrivercraft.com](http://ipswichrivercraft.com).

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