

Campbell's, Occasions: Strength in unity

Feb. 17/04 By JOHN CARTER
Mercury Reporter

It is a 'marriage' made in Horton. Campbell's Catering Service and Occasions Catering and Event Planning have joined forces to the benefit of both firms and their clients.

Despite the rumours, Judy Campbell hasn't sold her catering business. In fact, her company is busier than ever thanks to the alliance with Occasions, owned by Natalie and John Atkins. The linking in October of the two Horton catering companies sparked talk that Campbell was getting out of catering after 12 years in the business.

While Campbell is easing up, Campbell's Catering is still offering meals for a variety of events from weddings to award dinners.

The involvement with Occasions, with its specialty offerings, has widened the type of event the two companies can accommodate.

When Campbell's husband, David, passed away a couple of years ago, their catering business helped "fill the void," said Judy. But lately it has become so successful that it was threatening to run her off her feet.

"It was getting to the point it was too, too much," explained Campbell.

Turning to the Atkins', who had started their catering company last

January, was a natural move. David Campbell had frequently consulted with John Atkins, then a chef at Flamingo's Restaurant, for advice and recipes when they served together on the Horton fire department.

Natalie Atkins noted that with John's input into Campbell's Catering they felt an affinity for the company. Furthermore, John helped Campbell provide meals at the Renfrew Fair for the past two years.

"We've fit quite well together," said Campbell. She noted that Campbell's is known for its down-home cooking for gatherings of up to 600 people. Occasions can handle large gatherings, but also caters to smaller functions and provides fancy fare if need be.

"I'm more meat and potatoes ... real good Ottawa Valley fare," said Campbell. "We're a lot fancier ... tablecloths, napkins, the works," said Natalie Atkins.

One benefit of the merger is that Campbell and staff no longer have to spend all day cooking meals in the kitchens of the halls in which they are serving.

The Atkins' have renovated the basement of their Horton home and put in a full industrial kitchen, so the cooking can be done there. As a result, the two firms can cater two or three

functions a day instead of being restricted to one.

Campbell and the Atkins' are looking forward to the opening of the new Horton Community Centre. The opportunity to cater more bookings right in their home community is a bonus for the allied companies.

The Atkins' are looking to eventually buy Campbell's. But for now they remain two separate companies, working closely together and referring jobs to each other.

"We're learning from each other ... it's making it very interesting," said Campbell.

Horton-born Natalie (nee Corbin) looks after marketing and accounting for Occasions, while John, who was born in England and took chef training at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary, provides the cooking expertise.

Since Occasions was formed a year ago, the orders have been coming in almost non-stop, said Natalie. She thanks her parents, Karen and Randy Corbin for providing a great deal of support for the fledgling company.

The linking with Campbell's has enhanced their business even more.

"It's filled our blanks and taken stress away from her (Campbell)," said Natalie Atkins.

"It's working very well."

Musical talent in Renfrew

Mar. 23/04

It has been a busy and successful year for students of Sister Margaret Joan Pecore.

Since last June, many students have taken music exams in piano, recorder, theory and singing. Marks are 70-79 for honours, 80-89 for first-class honours, and 90+ for honours with distinction. For introductory exams, examiners provided only comments, with no marks. The marks or comments for her students included:

* Piano: Caroline Holley, introductory, great comment; Delaney Holley, Grade 1, honours; Hannah Holley, Grade 2, honours.

* Recorder: Angela Walker, Grade 1, first-class honours.

* Theory: Delaney Holley, preliminary, first-class honours; Lauren Scott, Grade 1, first-class honours; Lindsay Vaive, preliminary, first-class honours.

* Singing: Adrienne Guty, introductory, great comments; Tyler

Daley, introductory, great comments; Jessica Vaive, Grade 1, first-class honours; Jennalee Black, Grade 3, first-class honours; Rebecca Millar, first-class honours; Mary Kathryn Lepine, honours. Jennalee Black, Grade 5, first-class honours; Lindsay Vaive, first-class honours; Allison Enright, Grade 5, honours; Hannah Holley, Grade 6, honours; Lauren Scott, Grade 6, first-class honours.

NATS competition

In early February, Jennalee Black, Delaney Holley, Hannah Holley, Rebecca Millar and Lindsay Vaive participated in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) music competition in Ottawa. The girls prepared three songs in varied styles and languages.

Delaney, Hannah and Lindsay reached the final round, but cold and flu stalled progress in their respective age categories.

The Pembroke Music Festival followed, with Lindsay singing to five firsts, with marks of 85 or 86 percent.

Other performing soloists at the festival were: Mary Kathryn Lepine, Marlee Vandewouw, Hanna Bilson, Kim Bilson, Caroline Holley, Jessica Vaive, Lauren Scott, Amanda Gavin, Lily Freemark, Janet Zohr, Kerry Keyes, Tyler Daley, Bailey Rogers and Hilary Stafford.

Most of these students are also members of Our Lady of Fatima School's junior choir, which produced a first-place mark of 86. In the children/youth class, the Renfrew and Area choir was first with a mark of 85.

Next comes the Renfrew Rotary Music Festival in April.