

Al Colborne Taxi takes party-goers safely home

By Eileen Argyris

One Colborne woman has an added reason for her timely message: "Don't drink and drive."

She's Linda Hewton, owner of a new local business, A1 Colborne Taxi.

Ms. Hewton has as her goal the operation of "a fast, safe, clean, efficient cab service, day or night."

A1 Colborne Taxi is open 24 hours a day. Ms. Hewton operates the business herself, with the help of two part-time drivers.

She offers a number of services that not every cab company does.

PACKAGE PICK-UP

She does errands for a small "walk-in" charge.

The walk-in charge applies whenever she has to leave her cab to go into a store, post office, or other facility.

For that money, plus the regular fare and the charge for anything the customer wants bought, she will pick up your groceries, mail, library books, prescriptions, cleaning, whatever.

Even liquor can be ordered this way, but minors, beware; Ms. Hewton checks I.D.

Of course, it's cheaper for the customer to order the cab and do their own errands, but the walk-in service is great for the ill or disabled, or when the weather is bad.

As well, if you get celebrating with your friends over the holiday season, or any time, she will gladly pick you up and bring you home.

BRING YOU — AND YOUR CAR — HOME

She even offers a second-driver service to bring your car home, as well.

A1 Colborne Taxi offers school runs, and special seniors' discounts, such as 10 per cent off for seniors every Tuesday, and one free local ride (or a discount off a long-distance run) after 10 rides.

"That way, I'm giving something back to my customers," Ms. Hewton observes.

A1 Colborne Taxi will even come and boost your vehicle's battery.

While most of her runs are made in an area between Belleville and Port Hope, Ms. Hewton does take you where you want to go — even to Toronto.

"But, for long trips like that, I like to book in advance" (because she only has one cab in service, so far) and she asks for the fare in advance, as well.

In order to open her business, Ms. Hewton, and her cab, had to be approved.

The car underwent a mechanical inspection, and another inspection by Colborne bylaws officer, Mike Godin.



Why take a chance? — Enjoy yourself at seasonal gatherings, then call A1 Colborne Taxi to make sure you get home safely, advises A1 owner, Linda Hewton.

Photo by Eileen Argyris

She had to get a business licence, and as a taxi licence, and is paying business tax to the village, even though she operates from her home; an apart-

ment at 38B Toronto St.

DRIVERS ARE SCRUTINIZED

And her drivers faced scrutiny, as well.

"You can't have just any driver," she points out. "Each one has to be cleared by my insurance company. They have to have a clear driving record."

She says, a taxi licence can be cancelled at any time, if she, or any of her drivers, fails to meet current standards of safety and good driving conduct.

In addition to driving skills, a good taxi driver must have people skills.

"I like people; I like all kinds of people. I like to have fun with them," Ms. Hewton says.

But sometimes her passengers are not human — literally.

She recalls with a smile the day she was called to pick up a stray dog and deliver it back home.

She drive just the dog, not the owner.

She didn't say what kind of tip he left.

At this time, her cab is dispatched by cell phone. Eventually she says she'd like to be able to install a radio system, but the set-up is expensive, however the operation would be cheaper in the long run.

SOMETHING THE VILLAGE NEEDS

As well, there could be a second cab, and more

staff members, in A1 Colborne Taxi's future, but for now, Ms. Hewton says she'd settle for a few more fares.

"We're giving Colborne something it needed," she believes. "All I need now, are more customers."

Ms. Hewton says she is "pretty acquainted by now" with all the roads in and around Colborne. She has lived in the area since 1991, and was born in Trenton.

She is the mother of two grown daughters, and grandmother to two (almost three) grandchildren.

So she thinks about children, especially at this time of year, when she tells everyone — especially parents — not to take any chances with drinking and driving.

If you test over the legal limit for alcohol, she reminds everyone, the police now automatically lift your driver's licence for 90 days.

An impaired-driving conviction will net you a year's suspension (minimum) for a first offence, and a hefty fine.

Then, there's the greatest cost of all.

"How would it be for kids to wake up Christmas Day or New Year's Day and have no parents, because (the parents) partied the night before?"

You can reach A1 Colborne Taxi by calling 355-2923.