

BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Area DJ still has passion for craft after 30 years

by Pat Pomales

Times change, and music often changes with them. But in the midst of all the change, the one constant in local entertainment these past 30 years has been the passion of D-J Jay for his craft.

"I started DJing in 1977, so it's 30 years," said Rosendale resident John Thorpe, a/k/a D-J Jay. "I am a long-time area DJ that still has a lot of passion for my craft."

And that passion gave birth to his business, Hudson Valley DJ Services.

"During the first 3-5 years I had an awful lot of growth," D-J Jay said. "It started out basically as a hobby, as I was a collector of DJ equipment."

D-J Jay said he started to DJ at company picnics and corporate parties. "I worked at Shop Rite, and they let me do their parties," said D-J Jay. "I was also spinning tunes in between live band performances."

High schools and hospitals were the next opportunities for D-J Jay, followed by bars and clubs in New Paltz. And then weddings in the early 80's.

"It was all a stepping stone," said D-J Jay. "But I've leveled off, as I'm content with the wedding industry and being a mobile wedding DJ."

D-J Jay not only enjoys doing bridal shows and setting up bridal shops, he also enjoys making wedding referrals. Three years ago, he started a wedding referral group called All Occasions Referral Network.

"It's one-stop shopping for the bride and groom," said D-J Jay.

Another constant in D-J Jay's 30-year stint is his adaptability.

"I have always been able to adapt to where the industry's going," said D-J Jay. "I started with a turntable and LPs." He added, "If I was still playing records, I would not be a DJ now."

Adaptability was not easy for D-J Jay in the early 90's when records and tapes went out, and CDs came in. He said, "That was my toughest transition - retiring my turntables."

Another tough transition was his professional name change, as D-J Jay was initially known as J.T. the DJ, a name that his father, Burt Thorpe, suggested for his son.

"My father thought the name J.T. the DJ was original," said D-J Jay. "He and my mother, Lennaie, were strong supporters of my DJ service."

D-J Jay said he switched names due to copycat practices, as at least one other DJ came up with similar initials for a DJ name, causing some confusion with customers. After the name switch, D-J Jay printed up business cards with his present name, followed by the words formerly known as J.T. the DJ.

"I risked my reputation by changing my name," said D-J Jay. "But it all worked out." He added, "I'm on my second generation of customers, as I now DJ for the sons and daughters of parents I performed for 25 years ago."

So if you want to hear about Hudson Valley DJ Services and its "reasonable rates," odds are you could talk to your neighbors for "word-of-mouth" advertising...first and second generation.

"I am like a pioneer in the industry, as there was only one other DJ listed in the telephone book when I started," said D-J Jay. "I am having a lot of fun."

D-J Jay not only has fun helping customers with their events, but also with assisting other DJs in their craft.

He said, "I have always been receptive to helping other DJs." This is due, in part, to his being helped by other DJs when he first started in the business.



DJ Jay (aka John Thorpe) has played tunes at area events for 30 years, evolving with the times. Above, DJ Jay (right) spins records at a Tillson Fire Department event in the early 1980s. Above left, he uses his modern equipment at a recent wedding.

"I have to acknowledge DJ Rod Graham and DJ Tony Raiola, two men that got me started in the business," said D-J Jay. "They were my inspiration."

And that inspiration has touched the lives of others, as Hudson Valley DJ Services has been involved in various cancer drives and fundraisers for diabetes and heart patients, as well as events such as grand openings and bridal expos.

Hudson Valley DJ Services is open 7 days a week from 8a.m. to 8p.m. For more information, call 658-9381 or visit hudsonvalleydjservices.com.

For more information about All Occasions Referral Network, visit allocalcasionreferralnetwork.com.