

January 15, 2007

Designing perfection:

A Hampden couple's journey into business together

BY DANIELLE PAINE
REMINDER ASSISTANT EDITOR

HAMPDEN, MA -- Peter and Kathy Lehdorff have been complementing each other for decades, in business and in life.

When the couple began their graphic design and marketing business in 1997, Lehdorff Design, they were taking a shot at making it on their own together. And as their 30th wedding anniversary nears, so does the 10th anniversary of beginning their company in their Hampden home.

"I'm more of the computer guy and Kathy likes deciding on the colors," Peter said about their partnership. "We like working with the clients together, a lot of them are very creative."

It was years ago, when the two began accepting side work, that they started to think about working together from home. Peter soon left his graphic design position for the venture with Kathy following right behind, also leaving her full-time job.

Because of their combined range of skills and creativity, the pair take on projects ranging from compact disc covers and posters to advertisements, brochures and books.

"I can't stop," Peter said about picking up ideas for great designs everyday in the world around him. "Even Christmas cards, you pick one up say 'look at the way they did this.'"

Kathy said that she and Peter have found so many brochures full of good ideas that their stockpile is sure to last quite a while.

When asked how they like working from home, they agreed with smiles that the commute is great. But on the flip side, Peter said, they have to limit themselves on when to stop working.

"It can be hard because design is all around us," Peter said, pointing to some of Kathy's artwork, handmade by her and hung throughout their home. "But we try to keep our work separate and in a separate room."

The Lehdorff's are still adding to their long list of clients through referrals, the same way they began. Some clients however, they stumble upon in their daily lives including Signature Sounds of Whately, whom Peter met through his singing and acoustic guitar performances.

Today, many of the record label's artists turn to Lehdorff Design for their CD covers. For an intricate pattern they needed for a recent cover, the couple scanned the spine of an antique book from their extensive collection.

Other clients have included area hospitals, Spalding Sports, Western Massachusetts Electric Company, the Milton Bradley Company and Top-Flite Golf. Right now, Peter said, they are networking to expand their customer base and to grow their business.

"I guess the best part of this is to feel like we've solved a problem or helped someone communicate something," Peter said. "That's a good feeling."

