

Entertainment biz launches Doug and Nancy show

By Shirloo Rosa Iden
staff writer

When Nancy Kader married Doug Jacobs, they didn't just join forces, they effected a major merger. She brought her stable of 100 piano players, 60 bands, 50 magicians and more. He brought his beloved banjos, an ancient beat-up guitar case, a partner and loads of musician friends.

Kader runs the Entertainment Connection, a Southfield agency that books entertainment and handles parties. Her husband is the leader of the band, the Red Garter Band, that is.

NO WHIRLWIND blew them into marriage. Instead, after more than seven years working together at Eden Glen in Troy, it happened. "I had just opened this business," said Kader, who was a bartender at Eden Glen. "It was July 4 and I took the day off. Doug wasn't booked. He said to me 'Let's fly to Vegas and get married.'"

Within hours they were married by a Las Vegas commissioner. "When he (the commissioner) said 'I pronounce you man and wife,' Doug didn't kiss me, he kissed the commissioner on the top of his bald head."

Next morning the newlyweds were both in their offices as usual. Though they don't take long vacations, they do manage to visit his parents in San Francisco, take little trips, and occasionally vacation in the Bahamas.

Jacobs spent the first 28 years of his life in San Francisco where he started playing his banjo at the Red Garter at age 18.

"I've never made my living any way but in music," he said.

JACOBS HAS PLAYED in many clubs all over the country and opened Red Garter Saloons all over the country. He came to Detroit with no knowledge of the city except that it was the fifth largest city in the nation. "I ran the Red Garter here for six years and it was a most popular spot. It sat 400," he said.

After closing it, he devoted his time to parties and country clubs, working the New Orleans branch at the Eden Glen where he met Nancy. "The band does 300 private parties a year," he said.

Jacobs rated Kader as "the finest" bartender and one who had all kinds of talent.

"We dated and she became my secretary and was amazingly good at it too. I told her to go into the entertainment business."

Kader joined an agency in Detroit and learned the craft so fast that

Jacobs offered to back her in her own business. So was the Entertainment Connection born.

WORKING OUT of a Southfield office, Kader has expanded her business in just two years to employing four people full time.

The couple live on Cass Lake, where they enjoy using their pontoon boat and just having fun.

"I love playing my banjo, and play everywhere," he said. "Patron Jack Dalton writes music for us. In California I played for Reagan when he

was governor, for George Bush, for Jack Kennedy and Ted Kennedy."

Some may say the world of music is a poor choice for young people but Jacobs said, "If they love music, go for it."

Unlike Jacobs who never considered any career but music, Kader calls herself the "I don't quite know what I want type."

"I spent a few years in pre-med, a few years in dance, did stained glass and weaving, and came very close to opening up a knit store. I'm a knitter."

Born and bred in Birmingham, she's moved around quite a bit, but is happy in Michigan. She has two brothers, one a professional skater, the other owner of a resort up north.

IN HER BUSINESS, Kader attempts to specialize in customizing the talent to the event. She represents every imaginable kind of talent — bands, orchestras, comedians, magicians, mimics and clowns.

"I never pictured myself in sales, but I'm having fun," she said. "I'm

actually selling fun to people."

Selling fun to folks involves a lot of erratic working hours, she has found.

"The hours are just crazy," she said.

"Last night I went over to the Westin Hotel from the office. I had seven functions going on there."

"We do lots of weddings, we're really good at that. We have the bands on video. Bridges used to spend half a dozen weekends viewing bands."

Kader's company does a lot of corporate and convention work also and "the Red Garter Band is a good client," she said, smiling.

"This business hasn't lost its charm for me," said the entrepreneur who can get you a ventriloquist or an organ grinder and a monkey.

JACOBS TAKES care of his own bookings from their lake side home, where the two enjoy just being together when they have the time.

"Anyone I play for becomes a perfect client for Nancy," said Jacobs, who started his career on top of an

upright piano, and is now at the top of his field as a Dixieland musician.

Every Sunday, the Red Garter Band plays the Deer Lake Country Club brunch, an elegant event that draws large crowds for both the good food and the animated entertainment.

Jacobs and his band don't travel extensively, but they have a long list of charities to which they faithfully contribute their talent.

Some of the favorites are the Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, Goodfellows, the Special Olympics, the American Cancer Society and Cystic Fibrosis.

Kader and Jacobs' personal entertainment connection has been a huge success. Their life is not routine, and so they value time together and learn to roll with the punches.

"Like last night, I got home at 10 p.m.," said Kader. "So I just gave Doug a slice of watermelon, that's all."

Anyone needing music, magic, or comedic mayhem can reach her at the Entertainment Connection, 353-1515.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Nancy Kader Jacobs and Doug Jacobs clown around a bit in her office where she books entertainment.

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