

Osbornes celebrate 25 years

By TOM LLOYD
Ocean City Sentinel

OCEAN CITY - For many people who grew up in the tri-state area, childhood memories of the Jersey shore usually include a "special place" the family called home for a week, a month or a summer.

In Ocean City, there is a very special place that hundreds of vacationers call their home away from home, including the Ocean City family that owns the home and is celebrating 25 years of summer memories.

Osborne's Fairview Inn, a guest house on the corner of 15th St. and Wesley Ave., was opened in 1974 by Frank and Peggy Ann Osborne. Through 25 years of running a family business with their five children, many guests of the Osbornes have become lifelong friends after many re-

turn stays. The couple has shown their appreciation to their guests by producing about 200 plaques as a gift for their clientele.

The plaques have a picture of the Inn on the front with a short history of the 75-year-old house on the back. "The year 1998 marks our 25th anniversary of service in "America's Greatest Family Resort," the plaque reads. "How very blessed we are to have made so many wonderful friends through the years! We are truly grateful to all of you."

The Osborne family is from Montgomery County, Pa., but Frank and Peggy Ann have been coming to Ocean City since 1958. Peggy Ann's parents owned a home on the 1400 block of West Ave. and she walked past her future summer home for many years before calling it her own. In memory of her parents, a boardwalk bench in front of

Johnson's Popcorn bears the inscription, "In loving memory of John and Peg Fischer who enjoyed watching all the people go by on their favorite boardwalk."

The Osbornes have made this 25th anniversary a celebration of the many memories that their summer business has given them, including the experiences of their five children who have spent every summer in Ocean City. When the Osbornes bought the guest house in 1974, they had four children, four years of age and under. Their youngest child, Megan, was born in 1977.

Their children, Kelley, 29, Kevin, 27, Colleen, 25, Frank, 24, and Megan, 21, are grown up now but still visit their childhood home on many summer weekends. All the children are college graduates. Megan is still a summer resident and works at Angelo's Restaurant in Ocean



The Osborne family in 1994. This year, the family celebrates the 25th anniversary of owning and operating Osborne's Fairview Inn in Ocean City. From left, Peggy Ann, Megan, Frank X., Colleen, Frank, Kelley and Kevin.

running guest house in O.C.

City.

Kelley was married at St. Augustine's Church in Ocean City last year and Colleen will be married there next month. The decision to get married at the shore is an example of how close the Osbornes feel to Ocean City.

While the guest rooms were filled throughout the years, the five Osborne children shared a small bedroom just off the living room in the house. The three sisters and two brothers became even closer due to the tiny quarters as it added to their loved memories of summers at the shore. When applying to colleges, Colleen wrote about her summer experiences in an essay to Villanova.

"It is because we have adjusted to smaller living space in the summer that we are fortunate enough to have a shore home," she writes. "We may not

retain our privacy, but the camaraderie and fun we have shared is unique, and one that many envy."

The Inn has six guest rooms and three apartments including a cottage which sleeps six. It has been named in the vacation guide, "Best Bargain Family Vacations in the USA," a publication which lists more than 200 high quality, low cost destinations in the country.

The guest house was originally built as a single family home in 1923. Since the Osbornes have owned the home, they have added many modern conveniences while maintaining the original style of the structure.

The front porch of the guest house has remained the same for years. It has always been a special place for guests to gather and relax while looking out onto 15th Street, just a block from the

Boardwalk. It is still the part of the home where guests know they can always find another guest or family member to sit and reminisce.

The Osbornes wanted all their guests to reminisce about staying at their summer home. They asked their friends to write about personal memories connected with vacationing at the home and received over 60 letters in response.

Sue and Rich Barnes wrote about their son Brian's first visit to the 15th Street beach. The introduction to the water and sand they said was a treat to witness.

"To see the excitement in all our faces was all we needed to know and understand how important it is to take time to spend together in such a wonderful place," they wrote.

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Susan Miller states what many of the Osbornes' guest feel, that Ocean City and the house on 15th and Wesley is like a second home.

"The Osbornes are a huge, easy-going clan and the Inn reverberates with the laughter and ebullience of kids, adults, guests, dogs, and whomever or whatever else wanders in. The ambiance is warm, carefree and fun," Miller writes. "As the years go by, we all seem to grow up and older together, but the charm, the boardwalk, the venerable houses, the sea, and the welcome always remain the same."

On the Osborne's porch this week, Donna Bilson, a summer guest since 1989, explained why she keeps coming back year after year.

"It's just such a family atmosphere with such loving and caring people," she said.

The Osbornes, while running a summer business, have disguised themselves not a busi-



The Osborne's Fairview Inn on the corner of 15th St. and Wesley Avenue has been a welcome home to guests for 25 years. The Osborne family celebrated the anniversary by giving away specially made plaques to their guests.

ness, but a family of friends that you vacation with. At the same time, they have established themselves as an important landmark in Ocean City, one that adds to the ideals and values this town was born from.

Terri Flaherty, another long time guest of the Inn, wrote the Osbornes a letter, including her many memories of the past 25 years in Ocean City. Perhaps,

however, she revealed how far the Osborne's hospitality has extended when she told a story involving her daughter in Baltimore.

Working at Loyola College, Flaherty's daughter was approached by a student. "I've seen you somewhere before," the student said, then remembering. "I know! Osborne's front porch, Ocean City, New Jersey!"

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