

Scrapbooking business opens in Watsonville

Dragonfly Papers offers craft materials for local scrapbookers' needs

By DONALD ALSTON
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Dragonfly Papers opened its doors to the public in Watsonville Saturday. The business specializes in providing materials and resources for putting together scrapbooks, a hobby that is becoming increasingly popular.

The scrapbook industry has grown exponentially in the past few years. In 1997, the "Wall Street Journal" reported that sales for the scrapbook industry in 1996 totaled \$200 million. In January of 2002, "Creative Keepsakes," a popular scrapbooking magazine, reported that the industry had grown to \$1.4 billion in annual sales.

Scrapbooking is about the artistic preservation of memories deriving from a variety of family and social settings. With the opening of Dragonfly Papers at 1954 Main St. (a few doors from Nob Hill), Watsonville residents now have a place where they too can go to preserve precious memories.

Dadre Laine owns the business with her husband Michael. "I always wanted to have my own business," Laine commented.

Laine picked up the hobby from her sister-in-law and has been scrapbooking for nine years. She chose the name "Dragonfly Papers" because dragonflies are supposed to bring good luck.

But with a seemingly wise business choice, she may not need luck. The business pundits say that one of the best ways for a business to succeed is to find a new or unique business category because consumers will think of that business first when needing a product or service. While scrapbooking may not be an entirely new industry, it's relatively new in Santa Cruz County, where there are currently only a few sources for scrapbook materials.

"Creative Keepsakes" estimates that approximately one of five households in the U.S. engages in some form of scrapbooking. In January of 2002, the population of Watsonville was estimated at 47,950. If the figure for U.S. households applies to Watsonville, that's close to 10,000 potential consumers for scrapbooking supplies!

People use scrapbooks to record a variety of memorable events. Popular themes include family histories, weddings, chronologies of children growing-up and birthdays; and people are constantly finding new reasons to create scrapbooks.

"People do scrapbooks for everything," Laine said.

With designer paper, embellishing materials and explanatory text — also known as "journaling" — the pictures are nicer to look at and make more sense in the future.

Previously, this hobby had attracted mostly women, particularly mothers. Local scrapbooker Tami Rudd said, "I use it to do the pictures of my daughter. Before, they were thrown in a box, and I could never find them. Now they are a lot nicer to look at."

Makers of scrapbook materials recognize other opportunities for growth in the industry. Companies are producing more products with designs — various sports, dirt bik-



ABOVE: Dadre Laine, who co-owns Dragonfly Papers with her husband Michael, shows off some examples of scrapbooking inside her store Thursday. The new business is located 1954 Main St. in Watsonville Square.

RIGHT: A display of scrapbooking materials sits inside Dragonfly Papers.

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ing, tools and hunting — intended to attract males.

"I was amazingly surprised at the amount of men that have gotten into it," said Laine, adding that some teenagers are learning the hobby in schools.

Dragonfly Papers has a complete inventory for "creating and keeping memories," said Laine, including scrapbooks, patterned papers, stickers, embellishments, rubber stamps, how-to books and

magazines.

In addition, the store has a workspace where scrapbookers can spend some quality time on their hobby and work with others. "Scrapbooking," Laine said, "is very much a social activity."

Starting in February, Dragonfly Papers will offer classes on various scrapbooking subjects. One of the classes will focus on scrapbooking as a family activity. There will also be a frequent-buyer pro-

gram that will help offset costs for prolific customers. And to keep the men engaged, the store will have a shopping night designated just for them.

To learn more about people's scrapbook needs in the Watsonville area, Laine is asking customers to complete questionnaires that will be available at the store starting Friday.

Although the store is already in business, a grand opening is scheduled from Feb. 7 through 9. At that time, merchandise will be on sale and there will be prizes. Dragonfly Papers is currently open Wednesdays through Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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