

15 Years and Growing - Again!

Diane's Restaurant had it's beginning in 1985



Husband and wife team, Robbie and Angie Davis, share a lot of duties in Cormier Five Island Clam Factory and Diane's Restaurant, Five Islands, which Angie purchased from her mother, Diane, earlier this year. Robbie looks on while Angie writes out the 2010 staff roster. (Rees Photo)

By Maurice Rees

First there was a small take-out which Oswald Cormier, Five Islands, sold to Gordon and Linda Meekins in 1985. Ten years later he re-purchased it from the Meekins. Fifteen years later, daughter, Angie purchases business from her mother.

The foregoing is the round-

about story of how Diane's Restaurant, Five Islands has evolved. In 1985 Oswald Cormier owned Cormier's Clam Factory on Wharf Road and decided he would sell a small take out to Gordon and Linda Meekins. The Meekins operated the take-out for 10 years. When they decided to

sell, they offered it to Oswald Cormier, who repurchased it and moved the facility to the front of the clam factory on Wharf Road.

In 1995 as soon as moving to Wharf Road, he immediately added a dining room, which existed for another four years at that location. In 1998, Oswald envisioned a larger operation and when land became available on the main highway he purchased a tract of land. While still operating Cormier's Clam Factory he found time to allocate time to the highway property. In late summer and fall, he built a basement on the property to give Diane's a more permanent location.

In spring 1999, the restaurant was moved to its present location on the main highway. The basement, not only provided additional storage space, it also allowed for the restaurant to have a longer open season. Starting in 2000, the restaurant with many improvements, started opening from April to October each year.

The Cormier family involve-

ment in business in the Five Islands area dates back almost 40 years, through Cormier's Clam Factory, itself an important contributor to the area economy. In total about 40 families rely upon the clam factory for a significant portion of family income. It takes about 20 inside workers to process clams provided by over 20 local diggers.

The business has continued to grow and by operating from May to October, is has built a strong reputation for quality product. A large customer base exists in New Brunswick and USA. Product is handled by two large fish and seafood distributors.

Approximately 70-75% of the plant's production is shipped to the United States. For years the company operated its own trucks, but with the high cost of fuel and insurance, Cormier's decided to have Midland Transport handle all the shipping.

Having the clam factory, within the family, and nearby has given Diane's Restaurant the opportunity to develop a loyal customer base who expect to have fresh clams from the local area. With a lot of cottagers and tourists in the area, many of them return each year to enjoy quality seafood and clams close to their summer residence.

Angie, who purchased the restaurant from her mother this past winter, has been involved with the restaurant from the beginning. In an area where employment opportunities are at a minimum, not only has Diane's developed a loyal following, it is also an important contributor to the local economy employing a staff of 14 during the summer season.



The covered picnic tables at Diane's are popular when the weather is fine. (Rees Photo)



Karlée Cormier, Leona Allen and Lisa White in the take-out area discussing what to do next. (Rees Photo)



It doesn't take long for customers arrive at Diane's. Diners can enjoy their meal in the dining room, or use the take-out window and sit at the covered picnic tables shown on the right. The restaurant is also popular with motorcyclists. (Rees Photo)



Head cook, Jackie Webb checking an order of clams. Judy says often she can tell when clams are done just right, by the sound of them cooking in the deep fryer. (Rees Photo)

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