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Top of the Town celebrates its 25th anniversary

By VICTORIA GUAY

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MATTHEW POLOVICK, left, and Heather Polovick right, stand on either side of their mother, Kathy Polovick, inside the Top of the Town restaurant in Belmont, which the family opened 25 years ago on May 13. Kathy Polovick is holding a photo of herself and her husband, Joe Polovick, also known as Joe Holiday, who died Aug. 22, 2011. The restaurant, at which he also performed as a musician, had been his dream, Kathy Polovick said. Mother's Day marks the establishment's silver anniversary. VICTORIA GUAY/CITIZEN

BELMONT — Contrary to popular myth, Friday the 13th has always brought luck to the family that bought the Top of the Town restaurant 25 years ago.

Born on Friday, Sept. 13, 1946, the late Joseph Polovick, along with his wife, Kathy, bought the restaurant at 88 Ladd Hill Rd. on Friday, May 13, 1987, and the place has been filled with music, laughter, and good food ever since.

"Unfortunately, Joe is not here with us for this special anniversary," Kathy Polovick said on Tuesday.

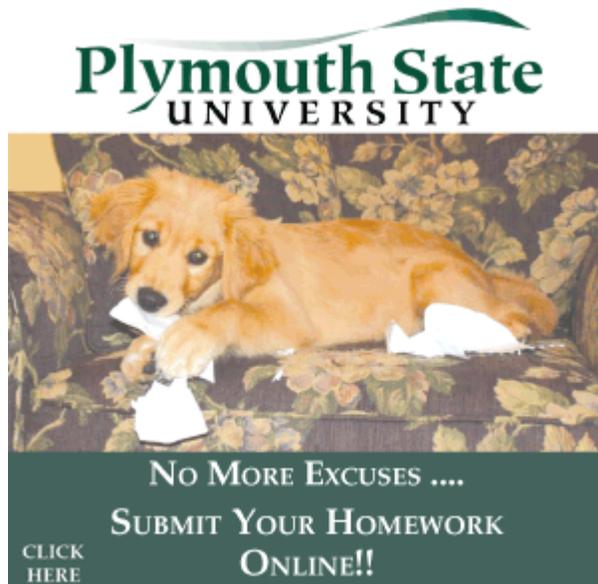
Joe Polovick, also known as "Joe Holiday" to many in the Lakes Region, died Aug. 22, 2011, at the age of 64 from bacterial spinal meningitis.

His wife continues to run the restaurant that was his dream and is filled with as many happy memories as it is satisfied customers.

With May 13 falling on Sunday this year, the restaurant's 25th anniversary coincides with its traditional Mother's Day lunch, which has seatings at noon and 3 p.m.

The Mother's Day menu has several entree choices, including prime rib, roast duck, filet mignon, and stuffed lobster tails, as well as other seafood selections.

Musician Bill Parker will provide the entertainment.



Kathy Polovick said there also will be specials during the upcoming week to celebrate restaurant's silver anniversary.

She said that, when they opened the restaurant, they worked "day and night to provide good food at reasonable prices."

"Joe played music Wednesday through Saturday nights, catering to customers' favorite songs," Polovick said. "We believed in getting to know their names, their special songs, and even the tables they liked to sit at."

Kathy Polovick waited tables, baked homemade desserts, and did the cleaning while Joe Polovick kept the books, cooked lunches, mowed lawns, and was their "all-around fix-anything guy."

Most of all, Kathy Polovick said, her husband was the consummate entertainer.

"Together, we managed to make the Top of the Town a very local, fun-loving place," Polovick said; a place where "people of all ages come to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, rehearsal dinners, and weddings."

While no one could replace the musical stylings of Joe Holiday, customers still are entertained weekly, on Friday and Saturday nights, by Ron Chase and Bill Parker, respectively. Music on both nights starts at 7 p.m.

Kathy Polovick said their employees over the years also contributed to the restaurant's ongoing success.

"Our help also made Top of the Town special," Polovick said. "We were fortunate enough to have waitresses who worked for eight to 10 years for us."

The special crew that ran the kitchen also included many longtime employees, such as Elmer Davis who Polovick said was "a very fine chef who retired after putting out fine food for us for many years."

Polovick said Tom Fish was the bartender at Top of the Town for 16 years before moving on to do something else.

She also noted that some of the people who started out washing dishes at Top of the Town have dropped by over the years "to tell Joe and I how thankful they were for what we did for them.

“That’s what makes a small, family restaurant, off the beaten path, a success. It takes a whole crew working together and owners who put their heart and soul into what they believe in,” Polovick said.

While Joe Polovick is gone, Kathy Polivick said his memory is held dear by herself and their children.

“We have our children, Matthew, 28, and Heather, 25, to stand by his legacy,” she said.

The Polovick children literally grew up in the restaurant, as the family lived in the apartment above it for five years after they first bought the place, when Matthew was 4 and Heather, 1.

Over the years, the children helped their parents and learned various aspects of the restaurant industry, from dishwashing and cleaning to waiting tables and being a host or hostess.

Matthew Polovick currently is the general manager at Fratello’s and Heather Polovick is a bartender at Christmas Island. Both said they plan to continue working in the restaurant industry.

Matthew Polovick said there was a time when he thought about doing something else but being a restaurateur seems to run in the family.

“You miss things you grew up around, especially when you know it so well,” Matthew Polovick said. “You definitely have to like people.”

“After this many years, it’s in our blood; it’s what we know how to best,” Kathy Polovick added.

Looking back, Kathy Polovick said their loyal customers also made the business what it is today.

“We would like to say, ‘Thank you,’ to all of our great customers over the past 25 years who have made Joe’s dream of Top of the Town such as success,” Kathy Polovick said. “His plan of ‘keeping them fed and dancing’ is still going on at the Top.”

The Top of the Town restaurant is located at 88 Ladd Hill Rd., Belmont. For more information, call 603- 528-3244.

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