

AROUND THE COUNTY

Video Edge records lasting legacies

Tales of every day life create keepsakes

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Preserving personal stories of life and saving them for future generations is the goal of Video Edge, the home-based business of Mike and Barb Byrne.

Located in rural Pleasant Hill, Video Edge creates a variety of videos ranging from instructional and training tutorials to Web promotions and real estate videos. However, the company's newest focus is on personal histories.

"Every person's life, no matter how ordinary it may seem, has extraordinary facets that can be shared with others," reads the company's Web site. "Creating a personal history is a wonderful way to capture those memories and special aspects of one or more of your family members."

The Byrnes created their first personal history videos three years ago for Barb's parents. Taking their video equipment with them on a visit to her parents' New Jersey home, the couple learned things they had never known about their family, particularly Barb's father, a World War II veteran.

"A lot of these guys didn't talk about (the war) when they came home," Mike said. "We start taping him and all of a sudden we ran out of tape. He starts telling all these stories and the guy was a war hero. Who would know that because he didn't share it with his kids and he didn't share it with his spouse?"

When Barb's father died, the video was played at his funeral visitation along with a photo montage.

"People were glued," Barb recalled. "That's when the bulb went on for us. People are really valuing this now because he's gone. But if he had gone before we did this, they wouldn't have this piece as part of their legacy."

Now the couple is offering the service to others.

"A lot of people are interested in genealogy, but that's on a piece of paper," Barb said. "Yeah, it's nice to know that your great-great-grandfather was a Cherokee Indian, but wouldn't it be wonderful to have (him) talking about some battle that he was in during his warrior days? That's what we can do from now on. We can't go back to those days, but we can certainly do it from now on and have our kids and our grandkids and their kids have that opportunity."

Video Edge's target demographic for personal history videos is the Baby Boomer generation, whose parents are aging.

"We are trying to get them to understand they need to preserve those memories now," Barb said.

She encourages Baby Boomers themselves to consider their own personal history video.

"We consider ourselves part of the Baby Boomer generation, and when we have a family gathering and start telling stories, our grandkids are sitting



Ashley Freburg/Democrat Missourian

Barb and Mike Byrne of Video Edge stand in the green room of their home-based video production company in rural Pleasant Hill.

their going 'What?'" she said. "There are things that they have never heard of. So it occurred to us that we have stories to tell. You don't have to be in your 70s, 80s or 90s for you to preserve the memories of your own legacy for your kids and grandkids."

Barb said the couple has had a lot of interest in learning more about personal history videos. One way they are spreading the word is by hosting workshops throughout the Kansas City area.

"The idea of the workshop is we're going to show you how to do it yourself because we realize not everyone can afford to have one professionally done," Barb said.

Video Edge also offers a free 20-30 minute presentation to organizations on personal histories, what they are and why they are important.

"We are personal historians," Barb said. "Essentially, we are story tellers and we record a person's stories."

A standard video history package includes an hour of recorded interview with approximately 20 photographs mixed throughout.

"Between the client and us we decide what stories we are going to tell and how we are going to present it," Barb said.

The Byrnes encounter a lot of people who feel they don't have stories "special enough" to record, but Barb said once they start asking questions, clients realize they do have something to share.

"People's personalities come out and it's really endearing to hear them tell their stories," she said.

Mike and Barb both started their professional careers as special education teachers. Mike

taught mentally handicapped students while Barb taught students who were deaf or had multiple physical handicaps.

"When we were schoolteachers, we wound up developing a lot of our own materials for our kids because both of us had special needs kids," Mike said. "That kind of led to us being instructional designers."

The two worked as multimedia developers and instructional designers for corporations in St. Louis before starting their own company, Creative Business Consultants.

"When our company first started we were just stand up training kinds of things," Barb said. "As time went on and technology changed, we decided to segue into video."

That's when Video Edge was created.

"In the past, for someone to have a video made it was so

expensive," Mike said. "What we were trying to market was those small businesses who needed training videos, but didn't have the capability or budget."

"We started out doing a lot of instructional programs, how-to programs, how to paint gourds, how to paint on driftwood, all kinds of stuff," Mike said. "Then we did a lot of Web promotions."

Video Edge moved to Cass County three years ago when the Byrnes relocated to be closer to family in the Kansas City area.

While Video Edge's focus has switched primarily to personal history videos, the company still produces other videos as well. For more information about Video Edge and its services, visit www.videoedgemissouri.com or call 816-987-2133.

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