



WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Glenside woman enjoys a life filled with art, community and serendipity

By Gerry Dungan

Trend Editorial Staff

It's hard not to see Elayne Aion smiling.

For the last year and a half, a store filled with wonderful smells, world music, delicate mobiles, painted tiles, comically-shaped animal clocks, Judaica, African statues and Zen-inspired ceramics has surrounded her daily living.

"Everything in this store either ticks, tocks or flows," said Aion, owner of Dovetail Artisans. "There's real movement ... and I like that."

Dovetail Artisans, with its joyful and gallery-like atmosphere, may be something one might expect to find on the trendy streets of Bucks County's New Hope.

Instead, Aion wanted to open a business near her home in Abington, close to where she grew up in Elkins Park, Montgomery County.

"The fact is, this is a place that you would expect to find somewhere else," she said. "My goal is to let people know that Glenside is somewhere else."

She said that her move to open Dovetail Artisans was made possible by her family, friends and fellow community business-owners.

Although Aion may be in the retail business, she emphasizes that Dovetail Artisans is no ordinary gift shop. She explained that the focus behind the store is to showcase and support local artists and those from across North America, which is why the store has its art gallery layout.

However, Dovetail Artisan's specialty may not be any one piece of artwork, but rather Aion herself.

"When they stop into the store, they are not just looking for a gift, they might be looking for a conversation," said Aion.

Aion partly contributes her bold, wel-



Elayne Aion

coming personality to her past days as a world-traveler, when she visited Europe after achieving a degree in social work from the Pennsylvania State University, where she was one of the first female bartenders in State College history.

She is also currently a singer with Anna Crusic Women's Choir, the country's oldest feminist choir, based in Philadelphia.

Upon her return in 1976, she was eager to travel abroad and joined the Peace Corps to help the Philippine Navy start a program that would bring iodized nutrients to those suffering from Goiter — a program that is still in effect today.

Afterward, Aion held a slew of jobs, most recently working as the volunteer coordina-

tor for a visiting nurse agency.

As in her current job, she invited people to experience something they had never done before.

She said that she trained volunteers to aid hospice patients with end-of-life issues, citing that most people don't know what to do in those situations.

"There's a saying in hospice care: 'Don't just do something, stand there,'" she said, emphasizing the importance of simply being present for someone when they most need it.

After 10 years of faithful years of service, she was forced to leave her position at the visiting nurse agency, without first securing another job.

Two days later, Aion's sister stopped into a store that was for sale, then called Dovetail Forest in Glenside, where the sisters used to shop for folk art gifts.

"My career has been a career in serendipity," said Aion, who also celebrated her 55th birthday at the beginning of this month.

For details, call 215-887-2220 or visit www.thedovetailartisans.com.