



DJ Jeff Oliver's services include dance lessons and event planning.

Antioch DJ offers creative extras

By Anne McCord
Staff writer

ANTIOCH — Hire disc jockey Jeff Oliver to entertain at your event and he'll bring lint remover, toothpicks, a hairdryer and a glue stick.

Oh yeah, some music, too. Don't worry, the lint remover isn't part of his act. Rather, it and more than 130 other everyday oddments are personally prepared and packed into Oliver's event emergency kit.

Designed to supply clients with oft-forgotten necessities, the kit comes in handy when a wedding party overlooks the toasting glasses or when dance hall restrooms need air freshener.

"The kit has gotten so big that I have to take inventory to know where everything is," says Oliver, 33, who has run his Antioch-based Universal Entertainment DJ company full-time for five years.

In a highly competitive industry — where targa-minted party planners don't always understand the difference between experienced DJs and cousin Harry the amateur announcer — Oliver is determined to set himself apart.

The result, colleagues say, is creative, service-minded steps that provide an example for any business looking to win customers amidst tough economic times. The emergency kit is just one tidbit in his extensive bag of tricks.

"That guy, he's always thinking

"I washed dishes, cut vegetables, cleaned carpet, set up tables and greeted the guests."

— Jeff Oliver, DJ

of ideas," says Jeff Ledge, president of Oakley-based Bridgehead Catering. "He's 'Mr. Marketing' of DJs."

Whether it's a high school reunion, wedding or corporate affair, Oliver can play ethnic music from Greek to Peruvian, provide toy instruments for air-band enthusiasts and set up computerized lighting.

Want to show your guests how to cut the rug? Oliver can teach the electric slide, achy breaky, swing, glitterbug, knabe, stroll and 40 other dances.

"He makes the whole reception because he's so involved," says Nancy Pittman, who did the chicken dance at her daughter's June wedding reception at Humphrey's restaurant in Antioch.

He'll also design event fibers, supply low-cost decorations and print a personalized list of event

locations with details on everything from parking spaces to kitchen capacities.

"You have to go the extra mile right now. Money and survival aren't falling into anybody's lap. Jeff sees that," says Sheri Cole, owner of Rhapsody in Romance bridal shop in Danville, who recommends Oliver to her customers.

But Oliver says his attention to detail isn't prompted purely by the recession or steep competition. He'll tell you he has been that way from the time he got his start in the early '80s as banquet supervisor at the Concord Hilton.

"I washed dishes, cut vegetables, cleaned carpet, set up tables and greeted the guests," he says. "I wanted all the details taken care of."

Some of his ideas for the emergency kit came from trouble-shooting during those times. "I was always using tape and thumb-tacks," he recalls.

With all the little things that can go wrong at an event, Oliver has suffered more than his share of headaches — literally.

Few of his clients know that in 1986 he had to give up working because of debilitating sinus disease that caused acute migraine headaches 200 days out of that year.

"It was a gory scene," he says. "My whole family is prone to migraines. I think it's in the chromosomes."

After extensive medical treatment, he gradually gained control

JEFF OLIVER'S EMERGENCY KIT:

To each event, Oliver brings a trunk with 130 items designed to meet his clients' last-minute needs. Among other things, his inventory includes:

- guest book
- toasting glasses
- nylons
- toothpicks
- hairdryer
- hair spray
- shoe polish
- breath mints
- towelettes
- static guard
- air freshener
- safety pins
- bottle opener
- eye drops
- lint remover
- glue stick
- shoe horn
- packing tape
- stain remover
- wine
- iron
- sewing kit

Call Jeff at (925) 773-3764

over his condition and started his new business as a DJ.

Why he picked a job with loud music, flashing lights, scheduling nightmares and nervous clients is anybody's guess. He admits he occasionally still has headaches and sometimes has to wear earplugs during loud events.

But his head has never interfered with his ability to put his heart into his job, he says.

"It is kind of a strange thing, but if you have something, you figure out a way to do it," he says.