

GREENWICH

# BUSINESS

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## Father and Son are Life of the Party

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A lot of people will be attending celebrations tonight to ring in the New Year, but John and Matt Dolan of Greenwich will be taking a break from partying. After all, they attended more than 20 holiday parties over the last few weeks.

It's all in a day's work for this father and son, who own Ambassador Entertainment of Greenwich, a full service disc jockey entertainment company servicing wedding receptions, bar and bat mitzvahs, corporate functions, proms, school dances, sweet 16 parties and more.

In addition to a CD library of more than

Dolan said.

### Changing with the Times

John Dolan started in the band business almost 50 years ago. He had offices on Indian Field Road and in Yonkers, N.Y., and produced five bands when it was still popular to have bands at weddings. His son Matt began working as a "roadie" for the company when he was 10 years old. It was Matt's involvement that sealed their fate to enter the DJ side of the business.

"I went to Western Junior High and I was on a committee that was looking for a DJ for a dance," explained Matt Dolan. "I knew my dad had tons of records and

not mixing songs, Matt, a former dancer from Club MTV, also shares moves with the crowd), video games played on large screens and mobile Jeopardy.

From the excitement of the Daily Double to the final question, mobile Jeopardy plays exactly like the real thing. A player or team selects a category and value. The answer is instantly displayed on a large video screen. When players or teams "buzz" in, their scores are instantly entered on the electronic scoreboard. The Ambassador staff will even tailor questions to a particular function.

"Mobile Jeopardy has been big at corporate events and bar mitzvahs," said John Dolan. "The other big thing we are booking right now is large screen video at weddings.

"People are presenting photo montages during dinner time. We also shoot live video as people are dancing and put it up on plasma screens. And we go around to the tables and have guests write down a message they would like to share with the bride and groom and then we project the messages on the plasma screens in real time. That is becoming popular now."

### Fruits of Their Labor

While both admit to butting heads once in awhile, most of their time is spent creating wonderful memories together and for their clients.

"Every job provides great memories," said Matt. "One that sticks out in my mind is when Lou Piniella retired from the Yankees. We actually played his retirement party, not as DJs, but when we were still in the band business. All the classic Yankees were there.

"And last year, we had to drive to



This is another in the "Family Ties" series about multi-generational family-owned businesses in Greenwich. Comments and suggestions for future stories in the series may be submitted to dharrison@bnn.com.

Another rewarding aspect of the job for Matt is seeing how what music they're playing and how they are interacting with the crowd is getting everyone more involved with helping the bride and groom celebrate out on the dance floor.

"It's such an enjoyable business," he said, adding that if his infant daughter wanted to join the business someday he

### Business Snapshot

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would be all for it.

"It keeps you young. That's why my dad still does it," he said with a laugh.

And his dad hopes to be in the business a lot longer.

"It's instant gratification," said John. "When someone turns around and claps and says great job, that's a big thing."

Plus he and his son are both into equipment, so they enjoy buying the latest greatest equipment and seeing the technology change.

"When I started out, a light show to me was going to the hardware store and buying a couple of colored light bulbs and screwing them into a wooden plank," said the senior Dolan. "And now it's all intelligent lighting we run from computers. This business has come a long way."

You can meet and talk with

the Ambassador entertainment staff in the Z100 Party Service Booth at the "Ultimate Bar & Bat Mitzvah Showcase" at the Westchester County Center, White Plains, N.Y., on Sunday, Jan. 30, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m.



Contributed photo

Matt and John Dolan (2nd and 4th from left) and their staff run a booth at a Bar / Bat Mitzvah trade show. They have partnered with Z100 to form the Z100 Party Service.

25,000 songs from the 1930s through today, the duo adds life to a party through light shows, large-screen video, video games and more. What was once a local DJ company now draws clients from around the country and the world thanks to a high-end comprehensive Web site, www.ambassdj.com.

"It's amazing what the Internet has done," says John Dolan. "We were strictly a local DJ company doing smaller parties and weddings. The Internet has done wonders for our business."

He taught himself how to design the Web site and now teaches other DJs at annual industry conventions.

"I tell guys this is the way to go," he said. "If you want to go after the high end business, you have to have a high end Web site. It can't be an amateur looking site."

Most recently the Web site got the attention of personalities from the hip New York radio station Z100, who contacted Ambassador Entertainment requesting a partnership to create Z100-themed parties. Z100 provides banners, T-shirts, stickers, a party patrol truck and a Z100 personality. Ambassador Entertainment provides the DJ, MC, dancer/motivators, sound system, etc.

"It's been booking really well for us,"

speakers so I offered to do it. That's how the DJ end of the business started."

They agree that it was a good thing they got into the DJ business when they did because within the wedding industry the demand was already shifting from bands to DJs.

"Not as many people were into the bands. Everyone began wanting a DJ," recalls the younger Dolan.

And the industry continues to evolve.

"Today's generation is so diverse," he said.

"Whether it's in terms of music or what people are into, you have to be very open-minded and able to do a lot of things."

Some of the exciting things Ambassador is offering these days are dancer motivators to teach guests the latest dances (when he's



Ohio for a party during a really, really bad snowstorm. It took 14 1/2 hours to get out there. It was quite an experience. But it was fun talking about upcoming jobs and jobs we already did."