

COMOX VALLEY ECHO

Two local businesses win BBB Torch Awards

By Marcel Tetrault

Two Comox Valley businesses have won the Vancouver Island Better Business Bureau's award for ethical practices.

Two Eagles Bed and Breakfast in Union Bay took the 2010 Torch Award in the hospitality category, while Comox's The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy won the Torch Award in the health and wellness category.

Medicine Shoppe owner Tim Cowan has been in business for 10 years. He said he gives his employees the latitude required to do what is needed to keep customers happy.

"We get to know our patients one-on-one," said Cowan. "I've given (our staff) the autonomy to do whatever it takes, as long as it's legally, morally and ethically right.

"The award is for the staff. It's for the store, but the store is the staff. It's for them going the extra mile and doing the right thing all the time."

Carolyn Touhey owns and runs the Two Eagles Bed and Breakfast along with her husband Steve.

The couple hails from the east coast of the United States but moved to the Valley in 2006, just a couple of years after they first discovered Vancouver Island, fell in love with the region

and purchased 12 acres in Union Bay.

"There was something about this island that was calling to us," said Touhey. "We just thought it was beautiful."

In the year 2000, at the age of 35, Touhey had already lost her first husband. A couple of years earlier she lost her mother and, in 2005, her father also passed away. Those experiences, she said, taught her not to wait for retirement before following her dreams.

"Every time I go to a funeral it reinforces why I did what I did," said Touhey. "It's that mortality -- why put off until tomorrow what you can do today, without being foolhardy."

The couple has now been in business for three years. The B&B has a fine view of Baynes Sound and Denman Island and the fairly unique feature of five horses roaming the fields.

Their slogan is "where new friends and great memories are made in paradise."

"Typically, people come with a handshake and leave with a hug," said Touhey. "I think one of the nicest times is just sitting on the deck at night roasting marshmallows with people. We sit there and share stories



and watch the cruise ships go by up the strait in the distance.

"You feel like in a very short period of time you've made good friends. We have friends all over the world now."

As to the receipt of the Torch Award, Touhey said that she and her husband are "ecstatic."

"There's nothing that speaks higher to a business person's integrity," she said. "We're in a real personal business and there's a fine line between being intrusive in your guest's lives and being available.

"I tell people, literally, if my kitchen door is open I'm up and I'm kicking, even if you don't see me just come in and yell."

A VIBBB spokesperson said the organization could not comment on the 2010 Torch Award winners until results of the award ceremony are published in the Sunday issue of the Victoria Times Colonist.