



At first blush, 106 square feet seemed like a very small space for all of the merchandise we had to present, but Debbie's background in retail and display came in quite handy. With the addition of a chicken-wire roof we were able to take advantage of the "overhead" and our stand became our "Gypsy Wagon", changing appearance weekly. 2006 photo courtesy of Loyd Pakradooni.

Reminiscences: The Cottage at the Market

The Lancaster County Farmers Market has been a part of our lives since we were children. My wife Debbie Pakradooni and I grew up in the area and knew the Market originally from its Wayne days. The Farmers Market is a family tradition for local folks, going back a generation or two in many cases. Such was the case with our families, and for that matter, with many standholders who have maintained their businesses with their children and grandchildren gradually taking charge over time.

When Debbie and I heard that a stand might be available, we decided that it was a great opportunity for us. Debbie had been in retail for 35 years, and my mother had a dress and bridal boutique in Haverford for decades. Hopefully, I would catch on quickly.

After a trip to East Petersburg to meet Sam Neff at Weaver's headquarters, we became the newest members of the Market family. It was October of 2004—just the beginning of the holiday season—and a great time for us to begin. The existing business was called "The Cottage" and we reopened it as "The Cottage at the Market," selling gifts, crafts and accessories on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 6:00 AM 'til 4:00 PM.

We were soon to find out that we were offering more than items to sell. Our customers quickly became friends who would stop by sometimes just to chat. The Farmers Market is a meeting place and a center for the community, and we were now a part of that tradition. With the help of Debbie's sister and her mother, we not only grew a successful business, but we also built relationships with several hundred loyal Market visitors whom Debbie knew by name and the stories that they shared.

It was hard to leave after eight years, but it was time to for us retire. What a great stretch it was though! Leaving our fellow standholders was difficult as well: they had become like family to us. We now live in Florida and staying in touch can be difficult. Every now and then though, we make the trip north and find ourselves gravitating to Strafford and the Market.

The Lancaster County Farmers Market has served the Main Line for almost ninety years, and we expect that it will remain a community tradition for many years to come. — Loyd Pakradooni

Loyd and Debbie Pakradooni were standholders at the Strafford Market for eight years, and now reside in Amelia Island, Florida.