

# New business offers top service starting at 39 cents

BY LISA EBERT  
CORRESPONDENT

LYNNHAVEN — If enthusiasm spells success for a startup business, Sam Driscoll might as well cash in now.

In April, Sam and his wife, Kathy Driscoll, opened a new concept in bargain stores, "The 39er."

According to the Driscolls, their new store, in Birchwood Shopping Center between Food Lion and Burlington Coat Factory, offers bargain items with personality. But that's not all Sam has in mind.

"I'm gonna bring back the customer service that's so lacking around here," he said.

So far, he appears to have made good on that promise. During grand-opening weekend, Driscoll was carrying bags to cars and leisurely touring customers around The 39er. He drove one customer home when she had too many bags to carry on foot.

Kathy has 24 years of retail



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**Sam and Kathy Driscoll have opened The 39er, a franchise bargain store offering 39-cent greeting cards and other gift and home items.**

experience, and considers herself good with people. But she admits her level of customer service is nothing compared to Sam's.

"He has the patience of Job," she said.

Sam worked 26 years for Data Business Systems as a point-of-sale repair man. He

and Kathy, both Kempsville High graduates, had been talking about making a life change for a year or so.

Sam originally wanted to open a Mexican buffet, but Kathy nixed the food idea. Then they learned of The 39er franchise and made a call to its headquarters in Boothwyn, Pa.,

last fall.

Sam recalled being asked by company representatives: "It's hard work. It's going to take a lot of hours. Are you up for this?"

Not only are they ready, their goal is for corporate to eventually send other owners here to learn from them. The Virginia Beach location is the fourth to open

"We want to be their flagship store," Sam said.

The store's "main draw," Driscoll said, are 39 cent greeting cards. They also carry party supplies, gifts and unique household and outdoor items priced up to \$79.

Price points, or the last two digits, of all items are 39 cents, 59 cents and 89 cents.

Carolyn Dennis heard about the store from a friend, who was thrilled with the price for a garden hose. But the cards also caught her attention.

"They don't look like 39-cent cards," she said.

Margie Stohl recognized

Sam Driscoll's name when she and her husband, Matt Sentman, happened by on opening day.

"We used to work with a Sam Driscoll," she thought as she recalled the man Data Business Systems customers often requested when she worked in repair dispatch more than 10 years ago.

Sure enough, it was the same Sam. An old friend and now repeat customer, Margie brought her mother, Lois Stohl, in the next day.

Lois had told the staff at her retirement community she would be back in an hour, but quickly had to revise that.

"It's gonna take more than an hour," she said.

■ *The 39er is at 3756 Virginia Beach Blvd. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. Call 498-1334.*

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