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Charley's open under new owner

By Trenton Albers
Times/Sun Editor

"We're open."

That's an important message for any business looking to attract customers, but for one local business it's been a difficult message to get across.

Gary and Sharon Smith reopened Charley's Philly Grill on the corner of 72nd Street and Giles Road in June, but the couple found that a challenge of reopening the sandwich shop was getting area customers to realize that after being closed for more than a month, the restaurant was open again.

"Business has been pretty slow thus far," Gary said. "The problem is a lot of people still think we're closed."

So, he and his wife put up more striking open signs and new management signs in and around the store front. Gary said he and his wife hadn't intended to buy the restaurant when they originally visited the La Vista location. The couple owns another shop in Mall of the Bluffs in Council Bluffs, and with the La Vista shop closing, they bought all of its inventory.

"Ironically, I was here the day it closed and I bought all of the inventory not thinking I was going to come back to it," he said.

Gary said Charley Shin, the Charley's namesake and founder, persuaded him and



Photo by Trenton Albers

Sharon and Gary Smith recently took over and reopened Charley's Philly Grill at the corner of 72nd Street and Giles Road.

his wife to take over and continue the restaurant in the location, which serves a variety of cheesesteak and grilled subs and rice bowls.

Gary and Sharon, who moved to Bellevue in 1995, have worked together nearly all of their 34-year marriage, beyond owning Charley's restaurants together. Even through the latest challenge of reviving the 72nd Street location, the couple says for them business and marriage go together hand-in-hand.

"I tell people this a lot — we get along better at work than we do at home," Gary said. "It's pretty business-like at work."

"It's a lot quieter at home," Sharon said with a laugh. "It's definitely strengthened our marriage."

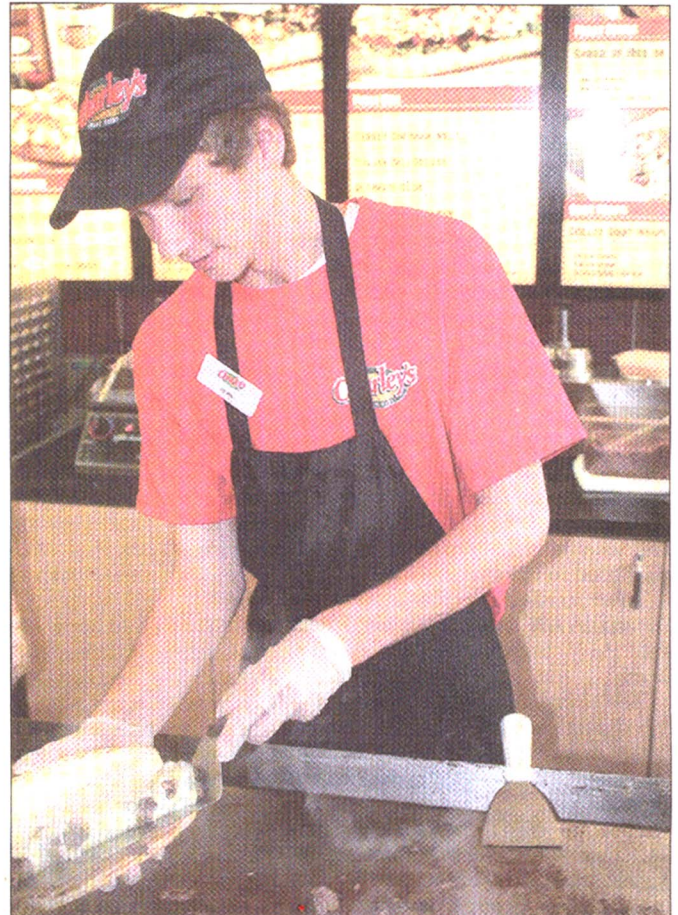


Photo by Trenton Albers

Jon Grinstead grills up a sandwich at Charley's Philly Grill at the corner of 72nd Street and Giles Road. The restaurant recently opened under new ownership after it closed in March.