

Angela Welsh taking care of business

By Carol Johnson
Special Features Writer

When Angela Welsh lost her elementary school job, she didn't have far to look to figure out which path to take.

"I've travelled all my life," she says, "enough to know a lot of the good things and a lot of the bad things with travel and I still wanted to do it"

In August 1997, she opened Welsh's Travel Services out of her home on the Old Sambro Road with her friend Audrey Nelson who handles European routes, her husband, Mark, who deals with the administration side and their two children, Adam, 17, and Ashley, 14, who help her copy, file, and answer phones.

"It's a family orientated business, there's no doubt about that," Mrs. Welsh says.

While many things she offers are similar to bigger agencies all-inclusive leisure tours, corporate clients, brochures and cruises, she also has some of the big problems. Canada 3000 going under and the

tragedy on September 11 stranded some of her clients, and caused one group to cancel because they were afraid to travel.

Sometimes being home-based involves odd hours, like when a client who was travelling on Maui in Hawaii called at 3 o'clock on a Sunday night.

"He and his wife had had such a fabulous time that they forgot their flight," she says. "They were so concerned."

She fixed them up and got them out on the next flight home at no charge to them.

Mrs. Welsh is extending her personal service to becoming a tour guide. Through feedback and word-of-mouth from her women clients and others she's met through the Business Network International, she's discovered an untapped market.

"The average woman is about 52," she says who've either travelled before or never travelled who "just want to get away from the stress, or their children, or maybe they just want to be pampered."

She chose Cuba "because I've

been to almost every resort in Cuba and the people are just wonderful, like Atlantic Canadians" in the quality of their friendliness and hospitality. "We're going to spoil them rotten," she says of the 60 women going on the trip.

She began with a registration night where the group ate and drank Caribbean cake and coffee and danced the night away learning new steps to Cuban music. They'll stay in a resort about a half an hour's drive outside of Havana.

When she's talked to people about this project, Mrs. Welsh says "It's just been like a chain reaction, and it's to a point now where they're talking about 'Okay, after we do this women's one, can we do a couple one?', or then 'Can we do one with kids?'"

Mrs. Welsh is happy with the size of business she has. She says, "I can't be cut-throat, and I can't compete against the major, major chains and I don't want to. I just want my clients and I want to take good care of them and be happy and sleep well at night."