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HarborCountry®

Chamber of Commerce
&
Lodging Association

Connection
the monthly newsletter



2nd Food & Wine Classic is prelude to Holidays



Chefs of the 2nd Annual Harbor Country Food & Wine Classic include Matthew Barnes, Tin Buffalo; Diane Botica, Dinner's Ready; Javier Cardenas, Casey's Bar & Grill; Olan Cox, O'Brien's at Whittaker Woods; John Gerbel, Stray Dog; Judy Gosh, Retro Café; Samuel J. Luna, Moxie Restaurant; Ernesto Martinez, El Rancho Grande; Lynn Mounce, Terrace Café at the Harbor Grand; Dave Mullins, Miller's Country House; Rudy Paniaqua, Nick's; Ibrahim Parlak, Café Gulistan; Patty Panozzo, Panozzo's Pantry; Mike Spencer, Steamers; Patty Toussaint, Harbor Grand; Omar Vasquez, El Rancho Grande.

Are you ready for a second helping? The Second Annual Harbor Country Food & Wine Classic has been set for November 20 - 23, 2003. This four-day celebration of food and libation has expanded its vision as it grows to include more of the culinary talent from this five-star resort area.

Living up to its namesake heralding "food and wine," this year's event begins with five wine and dinner pairings hosted by some of the most exclusive restaurants in the Harbor Country area on Thursday and Friday.

Wine & Dinner Pairings

Thursday, Nov. 20

Brewster's, New Buffalo, and Italian wine from Via Imports, Ltd.

Terrace Café at the Harbor Grand, New Buffalo, and the Pinot Noir of Adelsheim Vineyards, Oregon.

Miller's Country House, Union Pier, and the wine of Sokol Blosser Vineyards, Oregon.

Café Gulistan, Harbert and the wine of locally-based vineyard Tabor Hill, Michigan.

Friday, Nov. 21

Moxie Restaurant, Lakeside, and featuring Bordeaux as presented by Knightsbridge Wine Shoppe.

Sides and Beverages

All four days include complimentary wine tasting at Heart of the Vineyards Winery and Tabor Hill Winery in Baroda, and St. Julian Wine Company tasting room in Union Pier.

Saturday, Nov. 22

11:30 am. "Kid's Eat Out Luncheon" at Hannah's Restaurant.

1:30 - 2:45 pm. Seafood appetizer demonstration by Chef Diane Botica of

See FOOD & WINE page 5



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Our future is based on a solid past

By Michael Hojnacki, Chamber President

It was somewhat comforting to see recent economic indicators shine a better light on the nation's potential to recover from the downturn of recent years. That news was tempered during the 22nd Annual Chamber Installation Dinner, when State Senator Ron Jelinek told almost 100 members that the picture isn't all rosy just yet. Michigan's manufacturing economy generally lags behind the nation in recovery. Fortunately, our tourism-based economy seems to be holding its own.

I am quite proud to take the reigns of this Chamber of Commerce. It has a solid 22-year history of consistent growth within its ranks. It has never dropped the banner of Harbor Country in promoting the communities it serves. And our strong past will carry us into an equally strong future.

One of our major sources of strength comes from a unified membership. Past presidents such as AJ Boggio and Don Jackson have set higher standards for our chamber. Past Board of Directors like Gary Ramberg, Kathy Snyder, Marti Arney and the late Ron Miller set and met remarkable goals in membership, internet services, and online retail marketing.

Our new officers Vice President Karen Gear and Treasurer Don Jackson are part of a team that shares a vision of more government interaction and a greater concern for economic development and job creation. Continuing Board Members Chuck Garasic, Margaret Anderson, John Nelson, and Ray Vasquez share a common concern to keep lines of communication open, to preserve the integrity of the chamber and to continue promoting increased

membership, member services, and the function of the chamber within Harbor Country.

It is equally exciting to welcome the freshmen members to the Board of Directors: Diane Botica-Olszowka, Patty Prino and Brenda Stellema. I remember how lost I felt when I first joined the Board. I feel these women are coming on board with a vast amount of determination, a strong positive attitude, and with every intention to promote the good of the Harbor Country area. They not only know what they want; they are ready to set the direction to get us there. The vibrancy that comes with newness is the secret of growth for every organization.

In recent years, the chamber has successfully partnered its marketing efforts with its sister group the Harbor Country Lodging Association. Together we have reached millions of people with print ads placed from Chicago to Detroit, from Grand Rapids to Indianapolis. This in turn has drawn attention to our area by such notable publications as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, Midwest Living, and even Architectural Record. We have succeeded in drawing attention to ourselves and that success will only continue.

Also in the past few years, board member Ray Vasquez has almost single handedly kept our web site operating at peak performance. Now, completely revamped, the site is more user friendly and more intuitive so that today's electronic tourists can make informed decisions about our area.

Vasquez, along with past president AJ Boggio, has also spearheaded the

Continues on page 4

Harbor Country® Connection

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Chamber, business groups prepare for holidays

After a successful Harvest Days promotion, area business leaders have been eagerly preparing for the Christmas Holiday Season. The Chamber of Commerce, New Buffalo Business Association and Three Oaks Business Association have organized a number of events throughout the area including the first-ever Harbor Country Cookie Contest.

The three groups have rolled three separate celebrations into one. New Buffalo welcomed the season with their Holiday Happenings. The Chamber lit the way with the Festival of Lights. Three Oaks sponsored a Country Christmas and organized the annual walk. All these activities will come under the

flag of "A Country Christmas in Harbor Country." The event will start on Saturday, November 29 and continue through Sunday, December 7.

Janet Clark, NBBA liaison to the Chamber and owner of Michigan Thyme, asked for Chamber-wide support at the recent Installation Dinner.

"The cookie contest was a great opportunity for all businesses, not just retail, to entice potential customers or clients to their business," said Clark. "Participants receive free advertising, the satisfaction of participating in a chamber-wide event, and being part of a fun event for you and your customers."

She said that visitors to participating businesses will judge the cookies in the following categories: Sweetest, Most Unique, Most Chocolate, Best Dressed, Non-edible (such as a Christmas ornament, Pet Cookie and Best Overall. The winners will receive a ribbon featuring the category in which they won and will be listed in area newspapers. The event organizers supplied ballots and ballot boxes for display at the sales counters.

The events for the Country Christmas are scheduled as follows:

Saturday, November 29

- 11 am to 6 pm Open House and Holiday Refreshments at New Buffalo Shops
- 12:30 pm Santa leaves the Harbor Grand Hotel
- 1 to 3 pm Meet Santa at the New Buffalo Railroad Museum/Chamber office

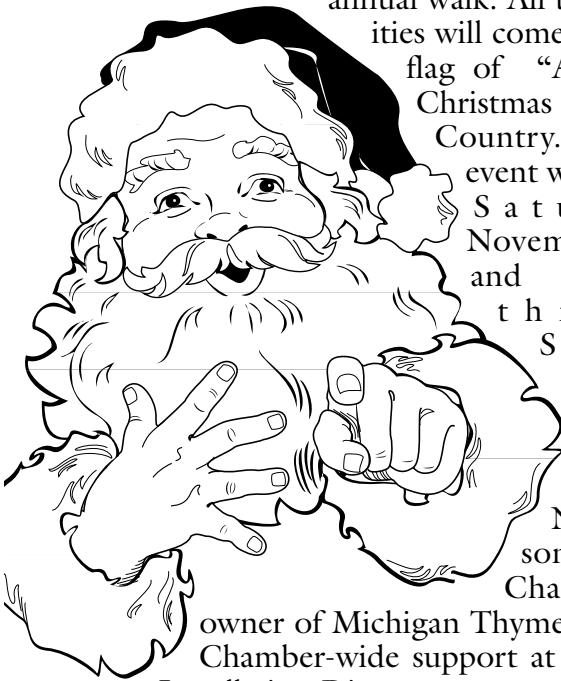
Saturday, December 6

- 9 am to 10:30 Breakfast with Mrs. Claus at the Country Café, Three Oaks
- 9 am to 10:30 Breakfast with Prancer at Kasey's Kitchen, Three Oaks
- 10 am Breakfast with Santa at Hannah's, New Buffalo
- 11 am Santa comes to Three Oaks parade on Elm Street, Three Oaks
- 11 am to 2 pm Sleigh or wagon rides in Three Oaks
- Noon to 2 pm Visit Santa at the Three Oaks Township Library
- Noon to 5 pm Sample chestnuts roasting on an open fire and other treats. Shaker Cottage Complex on US 12, New Buffalo
- 1 pm to 3 pm Carolers in New Buffalo and Union Pier
- 2 pm to 3 pm Ice sculpture demonstration, New Buffalo
- 2 pm Christmas program at Vickers Theatre with Children's Choir and special recitation, Three Oaks

Sunday, December 7

- 1 pm to 5 pm Annual House Walk throughout Harbor Country
- 2 pm to 4 pm Harbor Country Cookie Contest judging at participating businesses.

Join the fun! Participate if you can. Let's make the season happen in a big way!!



campaign to securely lock-in Harbor Country's unique identity and name in the form of trademark status from the US government. Now we scrutinize all who take our name lightly or try to ride on the coattails of all the hard work we have gone through to put our communities on the map.

As a chamber we will continue to support the marketing strategies that put our name before millions of people each year. We will continue to maintain a guide that is a centerpiece and shining star of all the guides produced in southwest Michigan. We will continue our internet presence and look for additional ways to market this area to a computer friendly generation.

My mission for this coming year is to bring the Chamber back home.

As one of my first goals, I will seek solutions to an apparent communication black hole. Though our membership is served by the Harbor Country Connection, that is apparently not enough. So, in the next couple of weeks I will sit down with the local media and discuss how we can all benefit by expanded coverage of chamber business and events, and the role the media plays in building stronger communities.

My second goal will be to personally market the chamber directly to our local interests— first to our membership, then to non-member businesses, and last but certainly not least, our year-round citizens of which we are all a part. We need to bring our message home. We need to hear the concerns of our business partners. We need to understand the vision of our local governments, schools and residents. We have already taken steps in this direction with our government forums. Look for the addition of roundtable discussion groups to be established in the very near future. I hope these small informal meetings around a cup of coffee will provide the insight we need to steer the chamber in a continual forward direction.

A third goal for the coming year, will be to support the efforts of Three Oaks and Galien, along with the Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance, in developing a strong light industrial base on property already set aside for this purpose. In order to pursue this unique bond, I invite the Board of Directors to find a way to include the Village of Galien and Galien Township as part of our Harbor Country communities. Together it could be a long-term commitment to economic success based on good-paying local jobs, year round home ownership, and local spending.

And finally, I would like to see the chamber take a proactive role as nerve center of local events. By taking control of our diverse calendar of events, the chamber could act as a clearinghouse of activity. We could help avoid conflicts in scheduling, maintain a heads-up attitude for community and visitor participation, and in the bigger picture truly bring the chamber back to the hometown level.

People come to this area because we reflect our true "harbor country" personality in events like Art Attack, Harvest Fest, Ship and Shore Festival, Downtown Sawyer Fest, the Food and Wine Classic, Holiday Happenings, Three Oaks Flag Day celebration, the Apple Cider Century, and Bluesfest. The chamber has their hand in some of these events, but most are organized by groups like Harbor Arts, the Dunes Art Foundation, New Buffalo Fine Arts, the New Buffalo Service League, area Lions Clubs, the Three Oaks Business Association, the New Buffalo Business Association and dozens of others. We need to be certain that we support these groups at any level we can. We need to form this bigger alliance so that one day we can all say in unison, "Welcome home. Welcome home to Harbor Country!"

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Are you missing out on FREE advertising?

We're perplexed. Or perhaps we have not communicated widely enough about FREE Internet advertising available to our Chamber Members. Here are some facts to help put some light on the subject.

Our Hot Deals web page, www.harborcountry.org/hotdeals is one of our top pages receiving Internet traffic, at a peak of nearly 3,000 pageviews in August and most recently 1,471 page views in the slower month of September 2003.

Our highly successful Beachtowns partnership with Travel Michigan (Michigan.org) is partly responsible for these high traffic numbers, which report

that of all our links on their site to Harbor Country, our "Deals" link at Michigan.org brings in the highest volume.

Yet we are finding only a handful of members participating in this free program to promote their businesses on the worldwide web.

If you are hearing about this for the first time, let us bring you up to speed. You can promote your business on the Chamber's web site (whether or not you have a web site) for free, provided that you offer our visitors some sort of discount or exchange value of at least \$10, a very minimal requirement. For details, visit the following web pages:

harborcountry.org/hotdeals
harborcountry.org/hotdealspolicy
harborcountry.org/hotdealsposting
harborcountry.org/calendar

If you do not have access to the Internet, contact the Chamber office at 269-469-5409 to have details faxed or mailed to you. We want our members to benefit from this free opportunity to be seen, heard and patronized by our many visitors. Visitors wanting to know more about Harbor Country, particularly Hot Deals, and we want to send them your way!

new
members
october
2003

FOOD & WINE from page 1

Dinner's Ready, Inn at Union Pier.

2 pm. Heart of the Vineyard Winery and the fine art of grappa distillation.

2 - 3 pm. Pastry Chef Patty Toussaint and "Tantalizing Truffles and Luscious Crème Caramel" at the Harbor Grand.

2 - 3 pm. Cookbook author, Patty Panozzo, and the "Well Dressed" Turkey, Panozzo's Pantry, New Buffalo.

3 pm. Rick Cooper and Richard Ward present "Classic British Ales" at Casey's Bar and Grill, New Buffalo.

3 - 5 pm. High Tea at Retro Café, New Buffalo. Chef Judy Gosh introduces Todd & Holland Tea Merchants.

3 - 4:30 pm. Chef Mike Spencer at Steamers, Three Oaks, demonstrates the art of Roll Ups

4 pm. Champagnes, Sparkling Wines— what's the difference? Mark Kalachnik and The Wine Sellers, Inc. answer that question at Moxie Restaurant, Lakeside.

Sunday, Nov. 23

1:30 pm., Chef Matt Barnes of Tin Buffalo, New Buffalo, and the secrets of Calzone preparation.

Main courses

Friday, Nov. 21

7 pm. Blues and Brews. Acorn Theater in Three Oaks. Dance to the Lil' Frank Band while tasting microbrews and sampling great food from Harbor Country's Bars, Grills, and small eateries. Proceeds support Harbor Arts.

\$40 per person.

Saturday, Nov. 22

6 pm. Sparkling Event, Harbor Grand Hotel, New Buffalo. This early-evening gala spotlights fine appetizers from Harbor Country's chefs paired with regional, domestic and imported wines. Music by the Bombay Jazz Trio. Proceeds support the Dunes Summer Theatre and the Dunes Art Foundation.

\$60 per person.

Sunday, Nov. 23

11 am. - 1 pm. Second Annual Golden Muffin Award featuring the best efforts from almost a dozen of the area's finest scratch bakers. The public tastes and judges. Intelligentsia Coffee will provide the morning wake-up brew. Hosted by Vickers Theatre, Three Oaks.

Free.

Reservations/advance ticket purchases for the Main Courses can be made with credit cards by calling the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce at 269-469-5409 or toll free 800-362-7251. All other reservations must be made through the respective restaurant or presenter.

Organizers of this second annual event included Robert Kemper, Jacqui Schiewe, Mike Hojnacki, Patty Panozzo, Elizabeth Grim, Diane Botica and Roger Harvey.

The Food & Wine Classic is also sponsored in part by Lake Magazine, The Other Side of the Lake, Acorn Theater, Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce, Vickers Theatre, The Harbor Grand, Fusion Design Group and Intelligentsia Coffee.

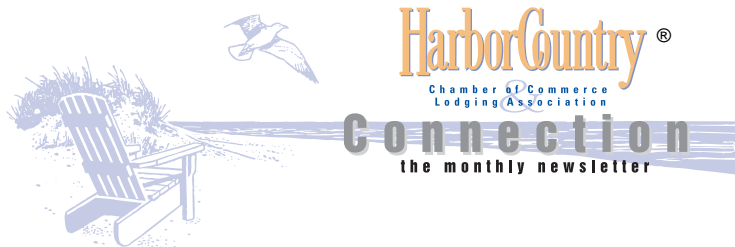
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**Are you hungry
for seconds?
2nd Annual
Harbor Country
Food & Wine
Classic
November 20, 21, 22, 23**

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Photo highlights from the Chamber Installation

On Oct. 23 the new officers and board of directors were installed at a dinner held at Hannah's Restaurant in New Buffalo. **(Below)** New directors Diane Botica of Dinner's Ready, Brenda Stellema of Alliance Banking Company, Patty Prino of Patty's Picks, join 2nd term director John Nelson of Lakeside Antiques. **(At right)** Karen Gear (5/3 Bank) is installed as Vice President. **(Below right)** New president Mike Hojnacki (Artistic Energy Group) thanks Immediate Past President for his year of leadership. Jackson holds a M&M telephone, a gift from Hojnacki. Jackson (The Jackson Group) will now serve as the Treasurer.

