President’s Luncheon February 8

Mayor Dean Maxwell will give his annual “State of the City” address at the February 8 Chamber of Commerce President’s Luncheon. The $15 luncheon, sponsored by Whidbey Island Bank, will draw a crowd, so make reservations early. When asked about the focus of his talk, Mayor Maxwell commented, “This past year has been a busy one for the City of Anacortes with a new comprehensive plan adopted by the City Council this fall after a lot of community input. With the plan adoption comes some pretty significant changes for Anacortes, which are targeted toward creating an even more vibrant and robust economy, adding retail and mixed use. We continue to build and add to our significant infrastructure, which in turn paves the way for an even more prosperous future for Anacortes. We also face several challenges that are some cause for concern and I plan on touching on the most significant of these.”

Il Posto Ristorante will be hosting a five-course dinner with wine pairings on Thursday, March 8 in honor of International Women’s Day. Proceeds from the dinner and silent auction will go toward women’s health education administered through the Island Hospital Health Foundation. We invite you to support this worthy event and enjoy a great meal in the process. Tickets are $100 and may be purchased through the restaurant at 293.7600.

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Business After Hours at Bayshore Office Products

Our upcoming Business After Hours will be held at Bayshore Office Products on Thursday, February 15th from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Bayshore is still growing! They’ve remodeled half the store to accommodate their popular Full-Service Copy Shop and expanded their Copier Sales Showroom. Bayshore makes everything from high-speed color and black and white copies, to laminated posters and banners. Call the Chamber to make reservations (this helps us provide more accurate information to the hosts for catering purposes AND ensures a nametag will be waiting for you.)

The next Taste Anacortes is February 21. Tickets are available at participating restaurants and at the Chamber. For more information visit Anacortes.org.
A Message from the Director

A consistent refrain that I hear from a variety of sources within our community is the need for a Conference Center within City limits. Such a facility would ideally accommodate 350-400 people, yet have the flexibility to segment into smaller meeting rooms, probably via an accordion wall system which could be retracted to produce a larger area. Among the benefits of a Conference center: (1) meeting space for service clubs, whose growth is currently constrained by a lack of capacity; (2) accommodation of events programming, such as the annual Hospital Foundation Gala; and (3) the ability to market conferences during the winter and shoulder periods, filling hotel rooms, restaurant seats, and bringing business to merchants.

To that end, the Chamber is facilitating discussions around planning for and constructing a Conference Center. We have asked the Port Commission to include a facility in their master planning process, a request supported by a variety of local organizations. Once completed, we will identify funding sources, both public and private, as well as potential usage fee revenues. It is my hope that we can make a Conference Center a reality within a reasonable timeframe.

In other news, Stephanie and I recently returned from the Institute of Organizational Management, conducted annually by the US Chamber of Commerce and focused on best practices. This is a wonderful forum for exchanging ideas with other Chamber professionals. There are a number of relevant topics which are being reviewed by the Board, with a view toward possible implementation.

I will be conducting a member orientation on February 14 from 10:00-11:30. Whether you are a new member or not, if you would like to find out more about your Chamber, the benefits of membership, and our strategic focus, please RSVP to Mary by February 9. Note: we will be conducting regular orientation sessions during the year. If you are unable to make this meeting, there will be another one shortly.

Finally there are a variety of projects underway which I will report on more fully in future newsletters. These include implementation of new Chamber software, a redesign of our website and tourist brochure, and a new business development marketing campaign, incorporating web-based video and supporting collateral.

I look forward to any comments you might have. Please contact me at the Chamber office (293-7911) or via cell phone (333-4754).

Thank you for your continued support of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mitch Everton

Tourism Marketing

By Steve Berentson

Within the next few weeks, Anacortes will make a splash in Europe with an advertising “pitch” featuring an aerial photograph of Mt. Baker and text inviting Internet surfers to the “Treasured Islands” including Fidalgo, Camano, Whidbey and the San Juans.

This advertisement, placed in cooperation with two neighboring tourism organizations, will appear in a new glossy magazine titled “USA Travel Guide.” First-year circulation of the magazine will exceed one million units. Some will be printed in English (Hello, London!). Others will be published in German, Spanish and French (Ooh-la-la!).

This regional ad appealing to a European audience is part of a full page advertisement sponsored by the state tourism website: ExperienceWashington.com. We’re in exciting company, as other advertisers include Seattle, the Olympic Peninsula, Future of Flight Aviation Center and Seattle Southside.

To date, our “Treasured Islands” cooperative has booked ads in Travel+Leisure magazine, Conde Nast Traveler Magazine, Budget Travel magazine, Sunset magazine and AAA Journey magazine. Whew!

Also hitting magazine racks and mailboxes soon is the 2007 Washington State tourism magazine, an impressive publication that also boasts an online version. Once again, Anacortes leads off the Islands section of the magazine with a descriptive piece and several photographs including a city panorama from the popular Cap Sante vantage point.

On yet another front, preparations continue for the 2007 Anacortes Salmon Derby, a March 10-11 event with a $5,000 cash prize for biggest fish; $2,000 for “hidden weight” fish — and many more opportunities including a guaranteed cash prize in the Youth Division. Tickets will be $50 per pole, with all proceeds going to a scholarship established by the Fidalgo Island Chapter of the Puget Sound Anglers Association. Derby organizer Jay Field and his team of volunteers are busy lining up sponsors. Partners include not only the Chamber of Commerce, but the Port of Anacortes.

Obviously, Derby planners are eager to see as many local folks as possible involved in this event. See AnacortesSalmonDerby.com for details and watch the Communicator for news developments in the wonderful world of Anacortes tourism.
Founded in 1989, Watermark Book Co. continues the bookselling passion of Norman Sturdevant and Patti Pattee that started ten years earlier on Whidbey Island. The addition of superstores in Oak Harbor caused us to search for a new location and instead of going to Calistoga, Ca., we ended up in Anacortes. Since our opening day, Watermark has been a welcomed addition to downtown Anacortes. The first week, Scott Gorman walked in and said, "Wow. Now we have our own little Elliott Bay...(Book Co.)."

In our store you will always find something that is new to you. Perhaps it's the book you just heard about on NPR or an unusual edition of a classic such as To Kill A Mockingbird (in paperback and in hardback). Our shelves hold up to a weekly perusal. If we don't have it and it is in print, we will obtain it for you, usually quite quickly, or one of our knowledgeable staff members will suggest a good read.

In addition to a large and diverse book inventory, we offer unique note cards (don't forget Valentine's Day), magazines, journals and calendars. You can buy or rent a book on CD and we offer a frequent buyer discount program.

We gift wrap and ship—truly one stop shopping in downtown Anacortes available seven days a week.

As part of our ongoing event series, distinguished writer William Dietrich will read from his new novel, Napoleon's Pyramids, on Saturday, February 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the Anacortes Public Library and author Dr. Allen Wyler will sign his new medical mystery, Dead Head, on Saturday, February 17 from 12:00 - 2:00 at the store. Keep checking the store for ongoing events.

We are active members of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association and the American Booksellers Association. In early February three staff members will attend two day workshops on professional development. Future plans include adding a meeting space in the back of the shop.

Like the spotted owl, Watermark Book Co. and all independent bookstores are endangered species. So far, we have weathered many storms, including Norman's death, the rockslide, the recent winds and THE BIG RIVER. Thank you for continuing to support your independent bookstore!

This seaside community with a rich maritime history will host the 2007 Anacortes Scholarship Salmon Derby on Saturday and Sunday, March 10 and 11. Members of the Fidalgo Island Chapter of Puget Sound Anglers (PSA) will partner with the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce and Port of Anacortes to present a derby featuring cash and merchandise prizes.

Tentative plans call for a grand prize winner (fish weight) as well as a “hidden weight” winner. There will be a number of merchandise prizes. Boundaries of the derby will be Marine Area 7. Details regarding ticket prices are pending. For information call Jay Field, (360) 941-4500. Visit AnacortesSalmonDerby.com
Member Renewals

- City Tree Service
- Fidalgo Walk-in Clinic
- How It Works
- Il Posto Ristorante
- Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
- Samantha Masaoka
- Piston Service Parts
- Thrive Community Fitness
- Trust Accounting Center
- Viking Moving Services, Inc.

Member Orientation

The Chamber will be hosting the first of a series of member orientations on February 14 at 10:00 a.m. These meetings are designed to acquaint new and existing Chamber members with Chamber resources, benefits of membership, organizational structure and programs. The format is interactive and informal. Space for each orientation is limited to fifteen attendees. Please RSVP to Mary Talosi at the Chamber office (293.7911).

Ambassadors Corner

Rita Ball

Branch Manager of Mortgage Master of Anacortes since May, 1999, Rita Ball is definitely a “master” at finding the best pricing possible for her clients. When she’s not busy saving thousands of dollars for customers, you’ll often find her hiking in the Anacortes Forestlands with her dog, Shuriff, and dancing with the trees. Also, much of her time (and most of her money) in the last 3 years has been spent completing the new second story of her home and office on the northeast corner of Highway 20 and Commercial. The view, of course, is fabulous there, especially from the “tower.”

Rita absolutely loves everything about Anacortes. She believes you can find blue sky here every day of the year, even if it might be just a tiny bit for a moment. Mostly, though, Rita knows there’s a lot more blue sky here than you’ll find anywhere else in Western Washington—it’s why she moved here from May Valley. She decides where to walk each day by looking for the “blue hole” in the sky. Rita claims there are little angels and flower-fairies in the woods. “You never know what you’ll find if you keep an open mind,” quips Rita.

Stop by to say “Hi” and check out the view from Mortgage Master. Perhaps you can get Rita to show you one of the flower ferries she rescued (or is that captured) from the forest!

Caught in the Act of Doing Business

Gentle Dental dentist Dr. David Kuzma with patient Shelli McGee; Cathy Longstreet (left) and Kris Kuzma.
New Members

Anchor Signs & Awnings
Signs, awnings, graphics, billboards, vehicle wraps, banners, magnetic strips, boat lettering, lighted canopies.
Steven Felts
8146 S. March Point Lane
Anacortes, WA 98221
299-0430
feltsenator@gmail.com

Washington State Employment Security Department/ Worksource Skagit
Not for profit state agency, employment services.
Maria Pitts
2005 E. College Way
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273
416-3575
mpitts@esd.wa.gov
worksource.com

Bob Baker, Realtor ABR
Windermere Real Estate
Residential & commercial real estate.
Bob Baker, Realtor ABR
3018 Commercial Avenue
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BobBaker.mywindermere.com

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Financial services, bookkeeping, payroll, tax planning & preparation, business consulting for the small business community.
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Cathy Herbold
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derbold@islandhospital.org
islandhospital.org

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McCaryCreative.com

Wise Owl Opportunities
Computer and accounting.
Instruction/assistance in computerization and accounting for individuals and businesses.
Mouse calls are our specialty.
Lauri & Rick Matson
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wiseowl@wiseowlops.com
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Thank You!
Thanks to the following businesses for donating prizes the December Business After Hours at the Cannery Building:
- ALLDATA Shredding
- Anacortes Window and Door
- Gentle Dental
- Island Hospital—Gifts & More
- J&J Espresso
- KLKI
- Lake Campbell Lodging
- Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
- Pat and Betty Mooney
- Piston Services
- Read Me a Story
- Shainin LLC
- Strangvery Construction
- Whidbey Island Bank

Brian Nyeste, Nels Strandberg, Pete Shainin, Vince Oliver and Mayor Dean Maxwell celebrate the opening of the Cannery Building at the December Business After Hours.
Attorney General Visits Chamber

Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna paid a visit to the Chamber January 12. Members had an opportunity to learn what the office is doing to protect citizens rights throughout the state. Pictured speaking with Mr. McKenna is Tesoro executive Ed Hsu, Chamber Member Steve Wilhoit and Chamber Director Mitch Everton.

VIC Statistics

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<th>Visitor Information Center</th>
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Chamber Officers

Executive Board
President
Vince Oliver / Island Hospital
President-Elect
Robin Pestarino / AllData Shredding
Secretary
Zee Hogan / Maison et Jardin
Treasurer
Carol Van Iterson / Horizon Bank
Past President
Bill Berry / KLKI Radio

Board of Directors
Patti Anderson / Captain's Place
Chris Borgen* / ASD
Bob Hyde* / Port of Anacortes
Mike King* / City of Anacortes
Mark Lione / Cape Sante Inn
Pat Meyer / Viking Moving Services
Curtis Payne / Farmer’s Insurance Agency
John Pope / Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co.
Nate Scott / Windermere Real Estate
Peter Steffen / ABC Yacht Charters
Dave Storkson / San Juan Lanes & Stork's
Mike Trafton / Bank of the Pacific
Thomas Wood* / Shell Puget Sound Refinery
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Stephanie Hamilton
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Newsletter Editor

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