**Business Connections Lunch**

It’s a new year, time to refocus your marketing efforts, and the Chamber is ready to get you started. The Business Connections Lunch is an all-networking event, which has been growing in popularity — with over 60 members at last quarter’s event.

RSVP for the Business Connections Lunch on Thursday, January 17th at 11:30 am (location: Anacortes Lutheran Church, 2100 O Ave). This all-networking event is designed to help you better know your fellow members. Lunch is only $10, the networking is free. Bring your marketing materials, prepare your one-minute commercial and get ready for speed dating business style. Please RSVP — 293.7911 or info@anacortes.org. Also, if you bring a colleague that is not from your business, your lunch is two for the price of one.

**Business After Hours**

The January Business After Hours will be held one week later than normal due to the All-County Chamber Installation Banquet.

This month Insights Gallery will be opening their doors to Chamber members for the BAH on January 24 @ 5:30 p.m. Please RSVP to the Chamber and remember to bring door prizes; it’s a great way to promote your business and adds a lot of fun and excitement to the evening.

**All-County Installation Banquet**

Please mark your calendars: the county-wide installation dinner will be held on Thursday, January 17 from 5:30-8:00 pm at McIntyre Hall.

For those of you who haven’t attended in the past, this annual event brings together Skagit County Chamber members, recognizing new additions to each Chamber Board. It’s a great mixer, combining a wonderful dinner with an engaging speaker. This year’s speaker is Michael Schindler, an internationally recognized presenter. He will be addressing leadership in business. Mr. Schindler’s talk is sure to be both topical and informative, interlaced with a great sense of humor. We had a full contingent last year—please plan on joining us in January. Tickets are $40. Please RSVP to the Chamber.
A Message from the Director

As we begin the new year, I would like to welcome our new Board members: Jim Clarke of John L. Scott Real Estate, Heather Miller of Read Me A Story, Rick Star of Rockfish Grill, and Carrie Tisinger of Whidbey Island Bank. I look forward to taking advantage of their talents and appreciate their willingness to serve. If you see them in the course of your day, please take a moment to thank them.

Based on the goals finalized by the Board at our last meeting, I believe you will see a number of positive developments over the next twelve months. To pick a few:

**Economic Development/Governmental Affairs:** This Division, through the Futures Project Committee, will produce a draft economic plan, which we will circulate to membership for review/comment. The Division will also produce a monthly legislative update, which we will feature in the newsletter, keeping membership current on important developments at local, State and Federal levels.

**Finance/Executive:** This Division will explore and pursue alternate grant funding, augmenting Chamber activities. They will also be the principal coordinating body should we need to respond to threats to the International Ferry run.

**Marketing & Promotions:** This Division will optimize our participation in Trawler Fest in May and analyze branding and its role in tourism, suggesting potential changes to our marketing plan.

**Membership:** This Division has set the lofty goal of 500 members by the end of 2008. To accomplish this, they will seek ways of improving both communication and membership benefits. Look for a comprehensive survey early in the year.

**Trades:** This newly-formed Division will seek to coordinate activities of various constituencies—hotels, restaurants, merchants, and the marine trades—throughout the City. They will also look at “Buy Local” programs and special/extended opening hours, with supportive marketing programs.

I look forward to continued progress in these important areas over the next year. It is a privilege to serve the business community and I deeply appreciate your continued support of the Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the Chamber Board and our staff, I wish you a profitable and prosperous New Year. Any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at the Chamber office at 293-7911.

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By Steve Berentsen

Winter is our slowest season in terms of tourism activity, but hardly dormant when it comes to marketing budget and scheduling challenges. Even though many have yet to pin their new calendar to the wall, the Chamber of Commerce has been pondering 2008 activities for several weeks.

Back again in 2008 will be several of our favorite partners, including the state Department of Tourism, the Skagit Valley Publishing Company, MacGregor Publishing and the Washington’s Treasured Islands co-op including Fidalgo, Whidbey, Camano and the San Juan Islands. New to the marketing scene will be “1340 The Whale,” formerly known as KLKI, right here in Anacortes. We are also exploring a matching program with KOMO TV and its affiliates.

Once again we will “go international” with advertising efforts in British Columbia (Vancouver Sun and Province) and in Europe (Discover America USA Travel Guide). We’re optimistic we will work once again with the state Department of Transportation to promote the international ferry run between Anacortes and Sidney, B.C.

We extend our thanks to members of the Chamber of Commerce Marketing & Promotion Division, established last year. Plans call for review of our tourism brochure, an 8-panel promotional piece. Under consideration is insertion of a seasonal calendar of events, leaving a back panel open so the brochure can function as a self-mailer (savings that can be applied to more marketing).

As always, our exciting slate of community events, including the Anacortes Waterfront Festival, Shipwreck Day and the Anacortes Jazz Festival will give us opportunity to invite tourists for a visit.

Look for updates in this newsletter and the Chamber web site www.anacortes.org for the latest developments.
Member Profile: Mister T’s Awards & Embroidery

The baton in his hand is getting harder to hold. Knowing he must not drop it, he grips it tight and keeps running. As he rounds the curve he sees her getting ready for the hand off. He knows she is ready. He is ready too. She starts taking a few steps, then a few more. Her hand goes back and her head turns forward. Each step brings him closer to her and, at the perfect moment, he reaches the baton ahead of himself. In timed perfection, she grabs hold of it and races forward with the crowd cheering her on.

Without excellent teamwork, perfect timing, and a lot of practice, a team could fail to reach their goal. But this relay race has a happy ending. The baton, in relation to Mister T’s Awards & Embroidery, was successfully passed from Harrold & Cleda Thompson (Mr. and Mrs. T), owners of Mister T’s since 1974, to their daughter and long time employee, Dawn Latimer, on December 1, 2007.

Dawn has been in the awards and recognition business since she can remember. “I love what I do. I get to talk with great people all day long and help them select the perfect award or gift that they will be giving to someone special,” says Dawn. “It’s always such a joy to see someone’s face when they first see their completed item. If it’s a ring we engraved for them, a trophy that ‘the world’s greatest Dad’ is going to get, or an embroidered jacket they are going to wear around town sporting their company name, each customer is so fun to help.”

The team of experts at Mister T’s Awards & Embroidery are able to provide a range of services that are done locally such as custom engraving on jewelry, including inside and outside engraving on rings, laser engraving, rotary engraving, embroidery, vinyl heat transfers and sand etching into glass, marble, and granite. Every day there are new customers that come into the store and exclaim, “I didn’t know you had all of this in here!”

Dawn is looking forward to a bright future for Mister T’s. If you haven’t been by to see them, stop in and introduce yourself. They are located in west side Mount Vernon about 1.3 miles west of the bridge.

Jim Clarke

Jim and his wife, Kathleen Clarke, moved to Anacortes in 2002 with the intent of finding a more relaxed lifestyle where they could enjoy new friends and their passion for boating in Northwest waters.

Before moving to Anacortes, Jim spent nearly thirty-five years in the Seattle business scene. He held various positions in the marketing and advertising arena, including those as Senior Vice President of Evans Kraft Advertising and President of Stimpson-Clarke, Incorporated. His primary focus was working with retail and package goods clients on strategic plans to support branding campaigns and new product launches. Tree Top Juices, Continental Mills, Crescent Foods, Quality Food Centers (QFC) and Starbucks are just a few of the clients he served. But it was his thirst for the coffee business that led him to accept a senior position with Seattle Coffee Holdings—owners of Seattle’s Best Coffee and Torrefazione Italia brands. After five years of rapid growth, Jim was made President of the company where he remained until the company’s transition to new ownership. Before leaving Seattle, Jim also headed SEAS—a non-profit organization that supports the Seattle Aquarium.

Today, Jim and Kathy are co-owners of John L. Scott, Anacortes, where Jim serves as broker. He joined the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce board to help define and support the community’s vision for the future and will chair the Chamber’s Marketing & Promotions Division for 2008.
Member Recruitment Program

In surveys taken of existing Chamber members nationwide, the two reasons most frequently given for membership are (1) networking; and (2) speaking with a unified "voice." The networking piece is pretty straightforward and a major focus of our monthly efforts in Anacortes. Networking events provide business people with the opportunity to meet and greet peers, cross-sell products and services, and remain informed about changes to the business environment.

The other major benefit of Chambers of Commerce is the ability to represent members as a group. The perception of many small businesses is that their opinion doesn’t matter. When combined with many other companies, however, Chambers can represent the business community in a forceful way, one that does garner attention and ultimately action on their issues.

The Anacortes Chamber of Commerce added approximately 75 new members in 2007. It is the goal of our Membership Division to add a like number in 2008, bringing total membership to 500. We can’t accomplish this without your help. We are asking our members to do the following:

• Identify local companies with which you have a personal or business relationship that are not currently Chamber members. If you have a question about whether a business is a member or not, you can go to www.anacortes.org and click on Visit Our Business Directory as a resource or you can call the Chamber directly.

• Contact us for recruitment materials. We will also be happy to give you a quick review on Chamber membership benefits.

• Follow up with your contact and let them know about the Anacortes Chamber and its good works.

Key points to be made:

(1) our networking events and the business opportunities that they foster;

(2) the benefits of joining a local business organization with over 400 members and the “seat at the table,” which that provides;

(3) the Chamber’s commitment to the City, its cultural identity, and its beautification—well over $10,000 is spent annually on flower baskets, white lights, and the various Holiday celebrations out of Chamber funds;

(4) our stewardship of $150,000+ in annual 2% hotel/motel marketing funds, promoting local tourism; and

(5) our sponsorship of various important festivals throughout the year, which bring thousands of tourists to town.

An additional point: The deadline for the Membership Directory is January 18…any potential members who commit prior to that date will receive a listing in the annual publication.

Thank you for your assistance with this project and your continued support of the Chamber. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Chamber office.

Group Health Insurance

After considerable research and review through our Membership Division, we have identified a group health provider that we feel confident will meet the needs of many of our members. The Washington Business Association & Chamber of Commerce Trust (WBACC) offers group health benefits to many Chambers and Associations state-wide. They are underwritten by Regence BlueShield.

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Chamber Staff Stephanie Hamilton and Mary Talosi give Vince Oliver a goodbye hug as he performs his final official act as President of the Chamber Board of Directors.
Skagit Valley College Business and Community Development

Whether you are looking to sharpen your skills for work, start or grow your business, or learn something new in your spare time, our program located in the Business Resource Center downtown Mount Vernon has a wide array of workshops and services to help meet your needs. Workshops are local, affordable, and offered at convenient times.

Resource for Small and Start-up Business: Take one of our classes to learn how to: get started in business, do E-Marketing, write an effective ad, or learn new computer skills. The BRC also offers a number of FREE resources: Pick up a “Getting Started” packet, check out our “How To” books for start-ups, use the computer lab with internet access, or schedule a FREE one-on-one business counseling with a SCORE counselor.

Business Workshops and Customize Training: For larger businesses we offer workshops to advance your skills or the skills of your employees. Our instructors are local and have years of business experience. Attend one of the scheduled classes or call us to arrange customize training specific to your company’s needs. We offer classes in language, computer, customer service, supervisory, lean, quality, as well as a whole series of offerings designed to help non-profits. And you can earn CEUs or contact hours through our Continuing Professional Education program.

Personal Enrichment – Are you interested in learning a new language, a new hobby, how to cook in a new way, or have some other interest? We offer a wide variety of workshops for your personal enrichment. Classes include wine tasting, fly fishing, travel, art, bird watching, health and fitness, classes on spirituality and much more. Check out the green and white mailer to learn more or call 360-416-7873.

Legislative Column

Beginning in February, please look to this space for pertinent and timely information on legislative developments—local, state-wide, and national.

Our Governmental Affairs Division will be culling relevant input from various sources, including a monthly Association of Washington Business conference call. Our intent is to provide membership with the information you need to stay fully informed—pending bills, enacted legislation, and contact data.

We would appreciate any feedback that you can provide. What would you like to see? Are there any specific issues that are of particular interest?

Please contact Mitch Everton at the Chamber office with questions or comments.

$hop Anacortes

The Gift Certificates to Anacortes will be an ongoing shop local-campaign.

Now that the holidays are over, think about the gifts you need to give all year long: birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine’s and Mother’s days? There is always an opportunity to give $hop Anacortes Dollars.

$hop Anacortes dollars are available at the Chamber and are available in increments of $5 and can be purchased in bundles of $20 or $100. To see a complete list of participating merchants go to http://www.anacortes.org/shopanacortes.cfm.

Give the gift of variety and convenience — $hop Anacortes Dollars.

Sponsored by the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce and the Anacortes American.
Born and raised in Anacortes, I graduated AHS in 1987, joined the Army and was deployed to Operation Just Cause (Panama) and Operation Desert Shield/Storm.

I returned to Anacortes and married my wife Candice in 1993. We have three children, Cortney, Meghan and Scott and enjoy raising generation number six in Anacortes.

In 1997, I became a volunteer FF/EMT with the Anacortes Fire Department and in 2000, I became a police officer with the Swinomish Police Department. Last June I decided I was not spending enough time with my family and hung up my belt.

In 2006, I was elected to an at-large position as a city council member for the City of Anacortes and enjoy it very much.

I currently host the morning show for 1340 KWLE and also work as a loan organizer for Strategy Financial.

Some of my hobbies include volunteering in the community, golf and coaching youth sports.

I am very excited about being an ambassador for the chamber and hope to be able to help in any way I can. Being involved at any level with the chamber provides members with the opportunity to network and generate new ideas as well as help promote the business community.

I would like to see the day where Anacortes has its own economic development committee committed to public input and direction.

### Member Renewals

- American Cancer Society
- Anacortes Family Medicine
- Broderick, Richard T. AIA
- Calico Cupboard Old Town Bakery
- Cascade Job Corps
- Fidalgo Bay RV Resort
- Insights Gallery
- Jennings Chiropractic, Inc., P.S.
- Kenmore Air Express
- Lakeside Industries
- Madden, Phillip W. D.D.S.
- Magic Earth Landscaping
- March Point Cogeneration Co.
- Marine Documentation Service, Inc.
- OASYS, Inc.
- Peratrovich, Nottingham & Drage Inc
- Petrish, Nick
- Quantum Construction
- Rasmussen, Daniel W. DMD P.S.
- San Juan Islands Visitors Info
- Sevieri’s Northwest Cedar Homes, LLC
- Ship Harbor Yacht Charters
- Transpac Marinas
- Village Pizza
**World-Class Sales**

*By Lynn Giuliani*

Companies that think like the customer and view the company through the customer’s eyes are those that lead the way. Successful sales demand that one continually see and understand what the customer sees. What’s important to the customer should be what’s important to your business. How do you determine this? You ask!

Using customer service, mailings and individual exchanges with the customer to determine their experience with your company and its products & services will move you from mediocrity to excellence.

Here are seven tips toward world-class sales:

1. **Create a customer-driven culture.** If delivered effectively, sales and service are interchangeable. A proactive customer-driven focus should drive sales.

2. **Recruit the right sales talent.** It is paramount to have the right people on the bus. One of your core strategies for company growth should be finding and keeping talent.

3. **Training.** Develop the skill sets to properly serve your customers. Training needs to be ongoing…it never stops.

4. **Knowing whom to call on and why.** Market segmentation gives you the right research, energy, and dollars for the greatest return.

5. **Defining your own process.** Meld the appropriate sales process to your company’s needs.

6. **Support technology.** All business functions should work effectively with sales. Stay up with the times, spend the dollars, and provide resources to your team to stay competitive.

7. **Clear direction from senior management.** Top management must be completely committed to creating a culture that focuses entirely on the customer. This means effective communication, involvement, and setting clear expectations.

*From Northwest Business Monthly, November 2007, p. 58-59*

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**Winter Quarter Educational Curriculum**

We will once again be offering a full slate of educational seminars—please see the insert in this month’s edition.

All classes are 90 minutes in length, from 6:30-8:00 on the scheduled date. They will be held at CompuMatter (616 Commercial Avenue) unless otherwise noted. Cost is $25/session ($35 for non-Chamber members).

Classes are taught by qualified professionals in their area of expertise. We invite you to take advantage of this affordable opportunity and welcome your feedback. To enroll, please contact the Chamber of Commerce at 293-7911. (See enclosed insert.)

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**Thank You!**

Thanks to the following members who donated raffle items to the November President’s Lunch:

- Boudoir
- Express Personnel Services
- Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
- Read Me A Story

Thanks to the following members who donated door prizes at the November Business After Hours:

- Bayside Sweets & Treats
- Boudoir
- Chandler’s Square Retirement Community
- Donatello Flowers & Gifts
- Earth Bound Used Books
- Island Medical Spa
- Lighthouse RV & Mini Storage
- Maison et Jardin
- Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
- Read Me A Story
- Seaside Autobody
- Upstage Boutique & Men’s Store

**Ambassadors celebrate another great year!**
VIC Statistics

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!
Visitor Information Center

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Chamber Officers

Executive Board
President
Robin Pestarino/ALLDATA SHREDDING
President-Elect
Zee Hogan/Maison Et Jardin & Boudoir
Secretary
Mark Lione/Cap Sante Inn
Treasurer
Patti Anderson/Williams & Nule
Past President
Vince Oliver/Island Hospital

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Jim Clarke / John L. Scott Real Estate
Bob Hyde* / Port of Anacortes
Pat Meyer / Viking Moving Services
Heather Miller / Read Me A Story
Curtis Payne / Farmer’s Insurance Agency
John Pope / Tesoro Refinery & Marketing Co.
Joe Schlundt / Shell Puget Sound Refinery
Rick Star / Rockfish Grill
Carrie Tisinger / Whidbey Island Bank
Mike Trafton / Bank of the Pacific
*ex-officio

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Executive Director
Mitch Everton
Program & Events Director
Stephanie Hamilton
Visitor Information & Operations Director
Mary Talosi
Licensing Sub-Agents
Kristi Daniels/Kathleen Mitchell
Newsletter Editor
Sheila Powell/Graphic Concepts

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Only three months left to Taste Anacortes this season and the next Taste is January 16, 5:00 – 9:00 pm.

Each $20 ticket provides you the opportunity to “Taste” five restaurants. Go to www.anacortes.org for route details.

Celebration of Trees was a huge success for the Island Hospital Foundation.