Business Connections Lunch

Summer ended, vacations are over and now is the time to get back to business (and maybe win a new camera). 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 infomercial and get ready for speed dating business style on October 11th, 11:30 - 1:00pm at the Salvation Army. Please RSVP — 293.7911 or info@anacortes.org.

Also, if you bring a colleague that is not from your business, the second lunch is free. You may also enter to win a digital camera purchased at RadioShack — a $200 value.

Business After Hours: Three In One!

The October Business After Hours gives you three hosts at one time. Come to the ACT Theatre on Wednesday, October 24 at 5:30 pm as co-hosts Airporter Shuttle/Bellair Charter and Deception Pass Grill help take you on a trip down the yellow brick road.

Bellair Charter is going to focus on their charter business, Deception Pass Grill will showcase their catering abilities for your holiday parties and the theatre will present cuttings from the Wizard of Oz, which is sponsored by Whidbey Island Bank. Please RSVP to the chamber (293.7911 or info@anacortes.org).
Heartfelt thanks to all of our volunteers and members for your support of the Jazz Festival. It was great to see the crowds and the enthusiasm for this unique event. More importantly, we were able to put heads in beds, fill restaurants, and provide shoppers for local merchants. We made a large number of significant changes this year and I believe, on the whole, they were received positively. Readers of this newsletter were a key element to our success—thanks again.

I am excited to announce our new Chamber Board members, all of whom are slated to take office on January 1:

• Jim Clarke – John L. Scott Real Estate
• Heather Miller – Read Me A Story
• Steve Oakley – Anacortes Museum
• Rick Star – Rockfish Grill/Anacortes Brewery
• Carrie Tisinger – Whidbey Island Bank

I look forward to the new energy and direction this group will bring to the Chamber.

As I write this, we are preparing for our annual Board Retreat on September 25. The focus of the Retreat will be to set strategic direction and goals for 2008. We will be communicating these goals in the November newsletter and at our annual meeting on November 8th. More on this topic next month.

We are also well underway with planning a new educational series, which is outlined in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter. I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity—an affordable, well-conceived set of classes that will improve your technical skills. Business education is a clear mandate of your Chamber Board—I look forward to member feedback from this program.

Thank you for your continued support of the Chamber of Commerce. Comments/questions, please contact me at 299-1300 or voliver@islandhospital.org.

### Annual Meeting

**The Chamber annual meeting will be held in tandem with the President’s Luncheon on November 8 at 11:30 at the Salvation Army.**

Chamber President Vince Oliver will provide a short “State of the Chamber” overview and we will formally vote in the incoming candidate slate.

We are also in the process of hiring a professional speaker to highlight a topic of general interest—more on this as details firm up.

### Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives Conference: Oct. 24-26th

**The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is hosting the Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives on October 24-26 at the CottonTree in Mount Vernon.**

The annual conference expects close to 100 chamber professionals from throughout Washington State. Kristen Whitener, President and CEO of the Mount Vernon Chamber and the incoming President of WCCE is the convention’s organizer. Whitener put together a team from the WCCE Board and recruited Anacortes Chamber’s Program and Events Director, Stephanie Hamilton, to help plan and execute this year’s conference.

Conference attendees will get practical training on chamber trends from nationwide and local instructors. Our own chamber member, Duane Knapp of BrandStrategy will instruct on Building Community Brands.

Each attendee is receiving a welcome bag with items from Skagit County. We are looking for special quality items that really “say” Anacortes to add to the collection (Sea-Bear is donating smoked salmon)—call Stephanie at the chamber if you would like to be included.
Member Profile: Mystic Sea Charters

Mystic Sea Charters began operations in 1992 when Monte Hughes returned from fishing in Alaska and purchased the 100 foot M/V Mystic Sea. The company is owned and operated by Monte and Cindy along with their daughters, Christy and Rebecca, and a diligent staff.

Mystic Sea Charters offers year-round cruises, beginning each spring in Coupeville for the Penn Cove Mussel Festival and Gray Whale watching. They return to their homeport of Anacortes in May for the Waterfront Festival, and begin Orca Whale Watching Cruises.

The season ends each year participating in the Christmas Ship Parades on Lakes Washington and Union for the entire month of December for private groups. The last cruise of the season rings in the New Year watching fireworks explode over the Space Needle aboard the M/V Mystic Sea.

Monte and Cindy want to thank their customers, business associates and friends for their continued support and patronage. “It is our relationships and the tight knit community of Anacortes that makes it a joyous place to do business,” say the Hughes.

Visit Mystic Sea at their new location at 819 Commercial Ave, Suite E (the same building that houses the Chamber of Commerce) for the 2008 season. Find Mystic Sea Charters on the web at www.mysticseacharters.com or 1.800.308.9387.

Patricia (Patti) Anderson has been a member of the Chamber for almost twenty years. Her parents arrived in the early 80s and purchased the Cap Sante Marina while Patti was in college. While working at Sea Galley, she took a break from college and entered their Management Program.

While in the Management Program, she met her husband Darwin and when their son, Dan, was nine months old, they had seen enough of Anacortes to make the decision to move here and buy the Captain’s Place restaurant. They became Chamber members about a year later in 1988.

When their son entered school, Patti went back to college to get her accounting degree and CPA certification. She spent eight years as a member of the Soroptimists, in her desire to want to give back to the community, but was unable to keep up with meeting requirements. As a member of the Board, Patti has once again found a place where she can offer assistance to the community through her experience of living twenty years in Anacortes as a business owner and resident.

Patti is a member of the Economic Development Division of the Chamber, a committee which is striving to answer questions like, “Where is Anacortes now?” and “What direction does Anacortes want to go in the future?” The team is verifying information, taking surveys, reviewing studies and census information to find out “what Anacortes wants and what is feasible.”
Buy Local — A Practical Consideration

An important element in any “Buy Local” campaign is the realization that buying from within your community supports your town and its economic well-being. The businesses involved are likely your neighbors, parents of your children’s classmates, or members of your church or service group.

An equally important and perhaps more compelling reason to buy local is that Anacortes companies provide superior service at very competitive prices. The days when a small business could charge premium prices and still compete are long gone. The cost of making an error, especially in a large project, is prohibitive. Involving a qualified and focused local professional early in the process saves money and assures that the job will be done right.

A case in point: when Visit Information Center volunteers Marilyn and Derry Bowles decided to completely replace their kitchen this summer, they made a pact that, to the extent possible, all products and services would be purchased locally. As such, they bought flooring products, carpeting, and tile through Anacortes Interiors, five new kitchen appliances through Anaco Appliance, cabinetry and countertops through Kitchen Trends, ancillary hardware through Ace Hardware, and technical expertise through CompuMatter.

As Derry related: “The service we received from these local companies was excellent, the pricing was competitive, and we are very happy with the result. The belief that buying exclusively through large retailers will save money is a myth. Anyone considering a construction project should contact the Chamber of Commerce and get a list of product and service providers who will take a personal interest in you and your needs.”

Your Chamber is a resource. Please consider local business when making purchase decisions—it makes sense for your community and your pocketbook.

Technical Training Classes

Through our technical membership, the Chamber is sponsoring a series of training classes that will be offered to the community (and directly to membership at a reduced rate). All classes will be held at CompuMatter’s training facility (616 Commercial), weekdays from 6:30-8:00, beginning in October. A tentative list of course offerings:

- Elements of effective web site design
- Implementing an effective e-mail marketing campaign
- E-bay as a business
- Excel—A practical guide to financial spreadsheets, analysis, and budgeting
- Word—A practical guide to word processing
- PowerPoint—Designing effective presentations
- QuickBooks—A comprehensive course covering use of accounting software
- Publisher (or equivalent)—Designing effective marketing material/newsletters
- Computer Defense—Data retention, warehousing, recovery, and virus concerns
- Computer Hardware—Enhancement and repair of your PC and peripherals

Each course will be taught by a qualified professional. A partial list of instructors includes Jay Lepore (CompuMatter), Sandy Swartos (Steam Interactive), Art Shotwell (Art Shotwell Web Design), and Lauri Sowa and Rick Matson (Wise Owl Opportunities).

Please find a schedule of classes in the insert in this newsletter.

Pricing for each 90 minute session is $25.00. RSVP to the Chamber office @ 293-7911.

Downtown Trick or Treat

In tandem with the folks at Village Pizza, the Chamber of Commerce will be sponsoring downtown trick or treating on Saturday, October 27 from 1:00-4:00, open to all children 12 and under, who must be accompanied by an adult.

The event will culminate at Village Pizza at 4:00, with pizza bites and prizes to the most imaginative costumes. We will be distributing window placards to all participating merchants the week before the event (who should stock up on candy, as volumes have increased over the past several years).

We are also looking for prizes, which we will acknowledge at the contest—please contact the Chamber office if interested.
Judging by the significantly increased crowds, the 4th Annual Anacortes Jazz Festival was a success. The Chamber Board voted to move the festival up two weeks to hopefully capture warmer days while still focusing on filling our hotels during the typically slower shoulder season. The result: better weather and many “No Vacancy” signs at our hotels. The Labor Day weekend gave us the opportunity to offer audiences three distinctive types of jazz — straight jazz on Saturday, a more bluesy jazz on Sunday and smooth Jazz on Monday. This musical variety brought different crowds for each of the days. Last year the total ticket sales for the weekend was 588; this year we topped 1000, an increase of approximately 60%.

An event of this significance could not have been successful without our dedicated Jazz Festival committee, devoted volunteers and the business community’s full support. Headed by Bill Berry, our Jazz Committee included: Steve Berentson, Berentson Public Relations; John Hachey, Port of Anacortes; Ken Markel, San Juan Lanes; Robin Pestarino, ALLDATA Shredding; Rick Star, Anacortes Rockfish Grill; and Lynn Singer, Pacific Coast Mats. Sixty-one volunteers manned the event — working hard to ensure that audiences enjoyed themselves. This year, the Anacortes business community really stepped up with record sponsorships. We especially want to thank Tesoro Refining and Marketing Company, Dakota Creek Industries, Island Hospital and the Port of Anacortes.

Other businesses and individuals were instrumental in partnering with the Jazz Festival. Our Jammin’ Salmon poster, painted by local artist Jennifer Bowman really brought a whimsical brightness to our merchandise. We continue to use the jazz logo designed by Bearce Design — it has become our distinctive brand. As usual, the professionals at How it Works ensured our marketing material was top notch. The Anacortes American produced a fabulous and informative program and disseminated it across Northwest Washington. The Anacortes American and Skagit Valley Herald provided timely and valuable coverage in their editorial sections. On-the-grounds help from members was provided by the Port of Anacortes, Dakota Creek, Flounder Bay Restaurant, Anacortes Brewery/ Rockfish Grill, Pacific Party Canopies, Barbara and Bob Atterberry, Johnny Picasso and Aloha Paradise Grill.

The Jammin’ Salmon scavenger hunt gave the community the opportunity to earn free festival tickets, as did our promotional buttons — thanks to those who participated. This year we gave some wonderful gift bags to our out-of-town artists, containing many items donated by members SeaBear, EDASC and Bayside Sweets and Treats — it was great to have so much member support for this chamber produced event.

Thank you to everyone involved.
Kristi Gabrielse

Kristi Gabrielse is the brand-new owner of Ana-Cross Stitch, Anacortes' yarn and needlepoint store.

Kristi grew up in the Chicago area, moving to the Northwest in 1992. With a degree in Restaurant Management, and a minor in Tourism and Marketing from the University of Wisconsin, Kristi worked for the Hyatt Regency in Chicago. Later she sold everything, hopped on a train, and moved to Seattle.

Wanting a change, Kristi went into the communication industry. Later, she worked as a human resources professional in the building materials industry. She was recruited to Tesoro Refining and Marketing Company in 2005. Kristi became a Chamber Ambassador while working for Tesoro.

Kristi's always had been active in visual and fiber arts. Her signature wool purses started selling right off her shoulder, and she decided to enter the Anacortes Arts Festival with a conglomerate of local artists. While preparing for the festival, Kristi saw an opportunity for living out her creative dream.

As of September 1st Kristi became the proud proprietress of Ana-Cross Stitch. “Lois (Slotemaker, the former owner) built a marvelous shop with a great reputation, and I am thrilled to continue her legacy,” Kristi invites you to stop by and visit her at Ana-Cross Stitch anytime.

Thank You!

Thank you to the following business for contributing to the August Business After Hours at Pelican Bay Books:

CompuMatter
Mark Nilson Mortgage Consultant
Read Me a Story
Watermark Book Company
TOURISM MARKETING

by Steve Berentson

Our website (www.anacortes.org) represents a highway for potential visitors. We are doing everything possible to promote it. A positive spinoff of marketing investment for events such as the recent Anacortes Jazz Festival is the fact that ALL advertisements promote a visit to our Web site.

We are proud of the “virtual visit” opportunity our Web site provides, and analysis shows a spike in online traffic as we marketed the Jazz Festival.

Among the highest number of page views for the year was Friday, August 31, the first day of the Jazz Festival. On that day, there were a whopping 5,037 page views with an average time on site of five minutes.

In the four weeks between August 11 and September 10, statistics regarding referrals to our Web site from others indicates a mix of interest between “general tourism” and our festival marketing campaign.

Jazz Festival radio partners, for example, directed hundreds of their visitors to our site: KWJZ, 491 referrals; KPLU, 186 referrals. Earshot.org, the organization with whom we partner on each festival’s talent lineup, was responsible for another 144 referrals.

We promote our Web site on a year-round basis on sites including Experience Washington, the official state tourism site. Year-round exposure is also provided on Web sites created for Skagit Tourism and Treasured Islands Washington, cooperative marketing ventures with neighboring Chambers of Commerce and Visitors Bureaus.

Long story short — the Internet is our friend, and we will continue to explore new opportunities as we “tell the story” of Anacortes, Washington.

Access Anacortes

Barrier Busters, a local committee in existence since 2004, approached the Chamber of Commerce Board earlier this year to gain support for a program called Access Anacortes. The Board agreed to support this program as long as it was (1) completely voluntary to member businesses; and (2) administered entirely through the Barrier Busters organization. Access Anacortes has two objectives. The first is to educate local businesses about the needs of people with disabilities. The second is to inform residents and visitors with disabilities about Anacortes businesses that are able to accommodate their needs.

To be eligible for the program, businesses must complete and submit a brief Access Anacortes Checklist, indicating that they meet the basic accessibility requirements. These forms are reviewed by the Barrier Buster Committee and upon approval, an Access Anacortes window cling is issued to the business for public display. Businesses initially unable to satisfy the basic accessibility requirements are encouraged to work with Barrier Busters to determine if an alternative solution is practical. Businesses displaying the window cling are also highlighted on the Barrier Busters’ website.

To learn more about Access Anacortes and resources available to local business to improve accessibility, visit www.barrierbusters.net.
THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!
Visitor Information Center

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Mark Lione / Cap Sante Inn
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John Pope / Tesoro Refinery & Marketing Co.
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Betsy Rogers
Newsletter Editor
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SeaBear’s 50th Anniversary Celebration

SeaBear celebrated 50 years in business with the world’s largest dinner party.
SeaBear staff opened their doors to community members — providing a wonderful meal and giving informative tours.

Mike Mondello, President & CEO

Notice the crispness in the air, the leaves changing color — to ensure that autumn is a treat for all the senses, Taste Anacortes returns by popular demand. The Third Wednesdays of the month from now until March (excluding December), you can experience five restaurants for only $20.

Tickets go quickly, so don’t miss these sensational events.