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HarborCountry<sup>SM</sup>

Chamber of Commerce  
Lodging Association

## Connection

the monthly newsletter

# 2002: a time to renew and heal

It will take a long time to shake off the heebie-jeebies set into motion by the cowardly act of terrorism on Sept. 11, 2001. Personally, I'm going along with the school of thought that will not remember 2001 as a year of terrorism, but rather as a year of heroism. I will remember the bravery, the resolve of our Nation, the sense of community, the efforts to share of ourselves-- and the innocent souls. Doing that will take me a long way from the shadows of tragedy.

Life, in its indefatigable way, goes on. How we get through each day is really a measure of the confidence we instill upon ourselves, our neighbors, our own little world and that bigger picture beyond. Each morning we have to say that this day will be better than the one before. Each morning we have to ignore the negative headlines and sound bytes and concentrate on the good news. Everyday we have to tear through the gray covering of clouds and reach for the rainbow inside.

This isn't a lot of girly-man, new age talk. It is the message extolled by the simplest tenet of life-- that we love our neighbor as we would want to be loved ourselves. On Christmas Eve, the Catholic Cardinal of Chicago told his congregation that one of the hardest concepts for us to perceive in these times is that of "...loving our enemies." He emphasized that this included total forgiveness of our transgressors (a.k.a the terrorists). You can see how hard that can be for many of us. You can sense that it would take a lot of courage, faith and compassion to do that. You can now realize the full extent of the conviction it will take to heal the wounds created in 2001. Yet, we will.

We step into each new year refreshed. New Year's Day is the milepost we use to identify potential change. "Be it resolved that I..." are the words we use to affect a change in our life. We make resolutions to quit smoking, lose weight, exercise more often, be a more loving spouse, return our neighbor's tools, take the action needed to let our business prosper, find a true love, or make a commitment to a cause. Each new year the resolution is either successful right from the start or the resolve dwindles into forgetfulness in a matter of weeks. The key to keeping resolutions is to look deeper into your own spirit for the justification to change and not be dependent upon the New Year holiday as the inspiration for making the commitment. Only you can change yourself.

Is there anything to renew and heal in Harbor Country? Is there a need to make Chamber-specific resolutions? Are we loving our neighbor as we would ourselves? The answer is: Always.

We can always get better. That's actually the basis for the existence of Harbor Country, the Chamber of Commerce and the Lodging Association. It is the driving force of every organization in the world-- to get better.

Harbor Country must look at itself as being comprised of many individuals with many different ideas. Sometimes these ideas are expressed to the consternation of others in the organization. Members come and go at the drop of an ill-placed word. Members take their ball home when they feel their leadership doesn't represent them 100%. For these reasons, healing is required. Both sides must admit shortcomings in their expectations of one another. The most obvious of these is that no one person or group can be all things to all people.

This past year we have sent a message to our neighbors that expressed concern for their use of our hard-earned image called "Harbor Country<sup>SM</sup>". Many of us have been part of this business group from day one and take offense when others latch onto our success like carpetbaggers. We hope that they will see the reason for our concern and that our lives would be better if we could cooperate with each other under our own unique identities. Healing is required here.

There are many new and exciting things planned for the year 2002 and beyond, many of which will renew our spirit. The Harbor Country Guide committee is getting ready to create their annual tourist magnet. The Connection will be encouraging more news from its sister sponsor, the Lodging Association, which is also a major source of the promotional activity for this area. The Ninth Annual Art Attack will set the creative prelude for a season of our traditional festivals and celebrations: Flag Day, St. Mary's Summer Festival, Ship & Shore Festival, Blues Fest (maybe), Apple Cider Century, Christmas Walk and more. We also eagerly anticipate the flood of tourists and second homeowners that add to our success. Have a great year!!

*This is solely the opinion of  
Connection editor, Michael J. Hojnacki.*



A. J. Boggio, *President*

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## How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying (To Understand The Internet)

"I'm a social worker. What did I know about running a business?" Back in the summer of 1995 Donna Dutton held the position of Director of Foster Care Services for the YMCA in Chicago, IL. That same year, due to management restructuring, Donna returned from one of her frequent time-honored warm weather getaways to Harbor Country only to find out her job was being eliminated.

A few months later, with no experience and no expectations, she fell for Harbor Country in a big way and bought the G&K Party Store on Townline Rd. in Union Pier, MI. As G&K's sole proprietor for almost six years running, the specter of looming unemployment has been the least of Ms. Dutton's worries.

She says, "I spend about 80 hours a week working here during the summer." Her unique, no-niche store in "Downtown Union Pier" is conveniently located near one of Harbor Country's busiest intersections having drawn throngs of first time shoppers as well as long lines of loyal patrons who, like migrating hummingbirds and hot tropical breezes blow into town every spring and summer.

According to Donna, some of her repeat customers have been returning to Harbor Country for 20 or 30 years. She proudly admits, "They're like family coming back."

G&K sells everything from "shoelaces to Dom Perignon," she adds, affectionately dubbing her one-of-a-kind business the "information station" of the neighborhood.

Donna Dutton became a full time

member of the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce about three years ago and believes all business owners share a vested interest in their community's well being. Dutton feels everyone has a responsibility to devote whatever time they can to form strong partnerships between business and civic leaders and doing whatever it takes to promote a positive image of our area.

Unbeknownst to Donna and scores of other Chamber members, their colorful yarns portray individual success stories about courage, personal sacrifice and the day to day blood, sweat and tears of running a business. Each tale has discreetly woven itself into the invisible fabric of our daily lives.

More importantly, every inspiring narrative serves as another priceless facet surrounding Harbor Country's bejeweled legacy. Starting this year, your Chamber of Commerce is unveiling a high-tech approach towards helping preserve that heritage. This convenient, affordable and rewarding method will enable each member's "Kodak moment" to be shared digitally throughout the vast territory of the World Wide Web.

The Chamber's highly acclaimed and immensely popular website, [VisitHarborCountry.com](http://VisitHarborCountry.com), will feature our monthly "Business Profile" linked to a statistically proven audience in excess of four million visitors a year who can experience first hand each participating business owner's detailed account. The full story remains highlighted throughout the month and remains archived on the website for an entire year facilitating unlimited viewing. No faded or torn

**See How to Succeed page 3**

**FINE PRINT:** Though every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of stories and information in this publication, the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce, Harbor Country Lodging Association, their respective Boards of Directors, and the editors of the Harbor Country Connection are not responsible for errors or misinformation in copy submitted by any organization or group.

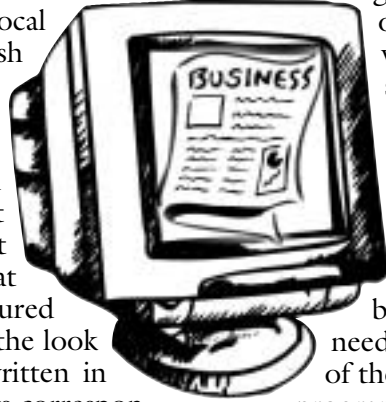
## Feature your business on the web with an internet profile

It's impressive when you open up the local newspaper and there on a full page spread is a detailed write up with photos of one of our local businesses. But, like news articles go, they're written at the whim of the newspaper editors, and as a local business owner, you tell yourself, "I wish that were me!"

Well, now you have the opportunity to appear on the Internet as a featured e-magazine article, and you don't even need to own a web site! Over the last few months the Chamber's Internet Committee has developed a program that is now ready for release. It's called "Featured Business Profiles". It's advertising with the look and feel of a news/magazine article written in the second person by a professional news correspondent.

Here's how it works: Just fill out a simple questionnaire (provided by the Chamber) describing your business and the unique products or services you provide in Harbor Country. The questionnaire is submitted to the Chamber with a \$125 fee, and up to 3 images of your business, logo or your pretty face. The questionnaire is then assigned to one of the approved news writers who will develop a 500 word story with your approval of the content on the final draft. (A portion of the \$125 fee covers the journalist's services).

If you have your own web site, a link to your site will be included, along with email, phone, business



address and fax number!

The finished article will then appear prominently on the Chamber's site as a "Featured Business Profile" graphic link on the home page. The duration of the article will last 30 days, after which it will remain archived and accessible on the site for one year.

Featured Business Profiles will be scheduled on a first come, first serve basis. The Chamber's site is now more popular than ever, attracting in excess of four million hits a year. As a "Featured Business Profile" you can tap into this ever increasing visibility to give your business that focus you need, and the unique recognition of being part of the Harbor Country family of businesses. This program is available only to in-area Chamber members in good standing. Contact the Chamber office at 616-469-5409 or by email at harborcountry@triton.net to sign up or get details.

**new  
members  
november  
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*Three Oaks Library*  
3 North Elm  
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*David Helmer, Owner*

*Fields of Illusion,*  
*Real Estate*  
142 North Whittaker  
New Buffalo, MI 49117  
773/721-7373  
*Paul Fields, Owner*

## How to succeed From Page 2

pages. No lost copies or accidental spills ruining a flattering photo of you beaming behind the cash register during July or August. Skillfully crafted by professional writers and our own Chamber webmaster, no business owner is required to have his or her own website, web page or web knowledge in order to electronically enhance your company's exposure. No one knows your business better than you do and only you can answer the who, what, where, when and why's of your commercial stake in Harbor Country. This valuable economic tool will not only serve to humanize your business, it can also create a lasting cyber-snapshot inside Harbor Country's virtual family photo album.

The Internet may have changed how people depend on business but nothing can change how business depends on people.

\*For further information about "Business Profiles," please see this month's Internet Forum above.

## An affordable sales rep



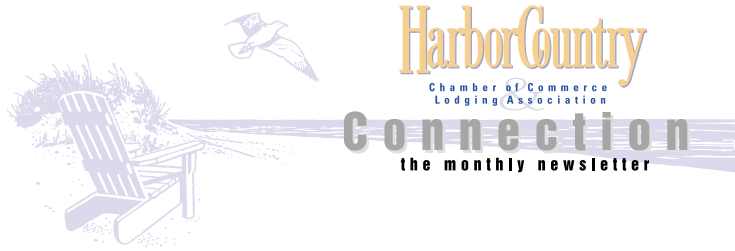
Did you ever wonder about the value of a brochure? If you had one right now it could be working for you at numerous tourist-popular locations, you could be sending it out to potential customers, or you could be encouraging your hard-earned customers to come back.

All this at far less than the cost of a sales rep. We do brochures from photos and writing to the printed piece. Just call or e-mail

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## Lifting a cup of good cheer



Julia Mead and Diane Botica lift a glass of good cheer just minutes before the December Chamber Mixer with a Twist of Business started on Dec. 18.

Mead is the owner/operator of Tall Oaks Inn in Grand Beach. She provided a beautiful and spacious setting for the Holiday mixer. Her staff led tours of the inn which features 12 rooms some with fireplaces and jacuzzi tubs. Tall Oaks Inn is a perfect spot for those large family gatherings, yet offering those cozy and romantic amenities for an intimate rendezvous. The large common rooms on the first floor provide ample space for private business meetings and catered luncheons.

Botica is the driving force of her new company, "Dinner's Ready." She provided the delicious holiday fare which satisfied the diverse palate of our chamber membership-- from sweets to meats. She can also prepare a week's worth of meals for busy chamber members who just want to go home after a long day and pop something delicious in the microwave-- no fuss and no worry and as healthful as you want to make it.

You can contact Tall Oaks Inn at 616-469-0097; and Dinner's Ready at 616-469-1702.

## do it

**JANUARY 1, 2002- Happy New Year.**

And then there seems to be this big void where there is nothing to do, or at least nothing organized. So it's fend for yourself. Curl up by the fireplace with a notepad or laptop computer and plan your strategy for the new season of tourism. Dust off those shelves, sift through that inventory, make the adjustments you need to create a world of success in 2002. When that's all taken care of we bring you...

**APRIL 26-28- Ninth Annual Art Attack.**

An eclectic celebration of "All That Is Art" in Harbor Country. Area galleries, inns, antique and specialty shops join to present art workshops, lectures, demonstrations, artist receptions and unique entertainment. (Obviously, these people weren't sitting around with nothing to do since January 1st.)