

jan, 2003
vol. 5, no. 12



HarborCountry®

Chamber of Commerce
Lodging Association

Connection
the monthly newsletter



With a view toward the future

One of the problems facing a developing community is that all too often there comes a time when all the prime space is gone. It's no secret that the rooms with the views are what sell first no matter what the circumstances. Such is the case in New Buffalo, a city that is awakening to the fact that the final parcels of very prime space are now on the market. Two parameters dictate the value of this real estate—a view of Lake Michigan and its convenience to the beach.

One parcel in question consists of the 1.36 acres that was once the home of the Lighthouse Restaurant sandwiched between Water Street and Oselka Drive. With the restaurant demolished several years ago, a new and unexpected vista was opened to the residents and visitors to the area. The other parcel is two acres of undeveloped land surrounding the old Surf Gardens Restaurant bordered by Whittaker Street and the railroad tracks. This piece of land offers convenient access to the lakefront, but lacks the view at ground level. The asking price for both parcels is around \$4 million dollars and there aren't very many who would question the value.

The biggest question is this: Who'll be the first to own the view? A small, grassroots organization hopes it will be the city. In an effort to preserve the view of the lake and to create much needed community-use space, this group of residents, government officials, business owners, and downtown land owners are working to identify and apply for grants that would provide the catalyst for further fundraising to secure the parcels for the city. If successful, a children's park, band shell, and public restroom have been discussed as part of the overall green space development on the site of the old Lighthouse Restaurant. The other lot may provide additional public parking. A historical replica of the 1839 lighthouse is even being researched.

"There are very few properties left in Harbor Country that offer the view and access like these two properties," explains Robert Kemper, owner of the Harbor Grand Hotel and President of the Harbor Country Lodging Association. "Finding a grant and subsequent fundraising are a way to preserve that view for all residents and visitors to the communi-

See VIEW page 4



This is the lake front view as of January 2, 2003 from Oselka Drive at Whittaker Street. The choice now becomes one of embellishing this scene with a park-like setting or letting private development take control of the view.



**Harbor Country®
Chamber of Commerce**
Don Jackson, *President*

Board of Directors:
Don Jackson, President
Michael Hojnacki, Vice-President
Karen Gear, Treasurer

Board Members:
Margaret Anderson
Marti Arney
A.J. Boggio
Roger Harvey
John Nelson
Gary Ramberg
Kathy Snyder
Ray Vasquez
Joan Zonka



**Harbor Country®
Lodging Association**
Robert Kemper, *President*

Board of Directors:
Robert Kemper, President
Lisa Werner, Vice-President
Jerry Welsh, Co-Treasurer

Board Members:
Liz Thomas
John Natsis
AJ Boggio

**Harbor Country® Chamber of
Commerce and Lodging Association**
530 South Whittaker Street, Suite F
New Buffalo, Michigan 49117
269-469-5409; fax 269-469-2257
email: harborcountry@triton.net
website: www.harborcountry.org

Be it resolved... Chamber style

Each year, on the last day of the year, we always have an opportunity to allow the power of suggestion to take over our lives and lead us down a better path. For many of us, it affords a chance to make (and statistically most likely break) a promise to stop smoking, lose weight, increase our sales for the year, or pay more attention to our families.

I was kind of hoping that the Chamber could make some resolutions as well, also hoping not to break them as the year progresses. We could use them as a guide to set a few realistic goals for the new year.

My first resolution, to see committees chaired by members who are not on the Board of Directors, has already taken shape in the fact that Jerry Welsh of Garden Grove Bed & Breakfast is the new chair of the Guide Committee, and Louis Price, manager of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in New Buffalo, is taking the helm as chair of the Economic Development Committee.

My second resolution would be to continue the development of our website. In this age of digital communication, the Internet has become the leader in reference documents, especially for travel destinations, and I don't think the Chamber should drop the ball on the fine work diligently initiated and thoughtfully pursued by website volunteer Ray Vasquez. I believe we can make the site a valuable tool for our membership as well as an essential guide for our visitors.

For a third resolution, I would like to see this area receive the positive promotion it deserves. Talking to Mike Hojnacki, chairman of the Chamber Communication Committee, we have decided to target at least three image-building stories over the course of the year in our area dailies: South Bend Tribune, Herald-Palladium and News Dispatch. Ongoing coverage in the Tribune

Business Weekly, as well as continuing support from our area's weekly publications: Harbor Country News, Southcounty Gazette, New Buffalo Times, and The Beacher.

A fourth resolution is directed at the Community Development Committee to begin a project utilizing the funds raised at the 2001 Auction. Those funds were ear-marked for a beautification project and so far all we've done is decorate the inside of a bank vault. I realize there are opportunities to seek additional funding through grants, but it just seems like a long-winded approach to the simple task of planting of few strategic areas throughout Harbor Country utilizing the landscaping talents and services which abound in our membership.

I would also like to resolve to bring our membership more benefits, especially through self-help presentations on investing, business planning, marketing and other useful topics. I know the Membership Committee, now under the direction of Margaret Anderson of Topp Press, is working hard to set this idea in motion for 2003.

Lastly, I would like to ask our members to make a Chamber-related resolution of their own. Quite simply, the best resolution would be to take a pro-active role in the Chamber of Commerce (or the Lodging Association). We always have a core group willing to work hard for the membership, but we could cut through the game-playing and posturing if our members just told us what they wanted on a regular basis. Being involved doesn't have to mean attending meetings, it could be a note slipped under the chamber office door or better yet, an e-mail to me, your president, saying you're dissatisfied with this or that for a particular reason, or that you love what we're doing and keep up the good work. I just want to hear from some of our 400 members. I want to be certain that I and the Board of Directors are doing what YOU want.

The year is progressing. Let's make and keep these resolutions. Let's build the best possible Chamber we can!

Harbor Country® Connection

Harbor Country Connection is published once a month by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and the Harbor Country Lodging Association, 530 South Whittaker Street, Suite F, New Buffalo, Michigan 49117 and is distributed to its membership through the U.S. Postal Service. Additional copies are available at the office. DEADLINE for all editorial matter is the 20th of each month for publication in the following month's issue. COPY may be sent via fax, e-mail, or regular mail to:

Artistic Energy Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 6, Three Oaks, MI 49128
Fax: 269-756-9071 • Voice: 269-756-9070
email ~ mhojnacki@triton.net
Michael & Marisue Hojnacki, Editors

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.

Online Tool Keeps Track of Meetings

Activities within the Chamber are numerous and important to the growth and promotion of Harbor Country®. Every month there are a variety of meetings and functions attended by Chamber members who contribute to the success of our area's appeal and economy.

With so many activities spawned by the Chamber, it's become necessary to provide a central forum where everyone can keep track of these regularly scheduled events. As a service to our membership, we are now offering an online calendar which can be accessed from any computer through the Internet. The calendar lists all Chamber and Lodging Association board and committee meetings, community development functions, and is updated by the Chamber office on a regular basis. If you have forgotten a meeting date, or if you are interested in participating in any of these committees, you can check the online calendar for the scheduled dates and times.

The current calendar is a beta version we will be testing, and we'll welcome your feedback. You can find it on the Chamber's site at the easy to remember address:

www.harborcountry.org/calendar

Not to be mistaken for the Events Calendar, which lists things like Art Attack, Blues Fest and Ship & Shore Festival, the "Chamber Calendar" is intended to track only Chamber and Lodging Association meetings and related functions. To insure the continued success of this tool, we encourage all committees to report their scheduled meetings to the Chamber office so that they can be posted to the Calendar. Contact Sue Harsch at 269-469-5409 or email: sue@harborcountry.org

new
members
december
2002

CHIKAMING OPEN LANDS
14340 Lakeside Road
Lakeside, MI 49116
CEO: Peter Van Nice
269-469-0023

CONSIDER IT DONE IN HARBOR COUNTRY
P.O. Box 22
New Buffalo, MI 49117
Owner: Liz Grim
269-469-0478

GREGORY T. FANNING ANTIQUE & FURNITURE RESTORATION
16750 Lakeshore Road
New Buffalo, MI 49117
Owner: Gregory T. Fanning
773-255-4546

MRP
105 North Elm Street
Three Oaks, MI 49128
Owner: Garry LaBaugh
269-756-9133



ANNUAL HOUSE WALK RAISED \$200 for the Harbor Country Food Pantry's benefit. Karen Gear, treasurer of the Chamber and Karen Cummings, president of the Three Oaks Business Association, flank Anne Wucki and Bonnie Pickens of the food pantry to present a representation of the toiletry products purchased for the needy. Jim Nichols at Harding's Market in Three Oaks helped with the purchase of the much-needed supplies.

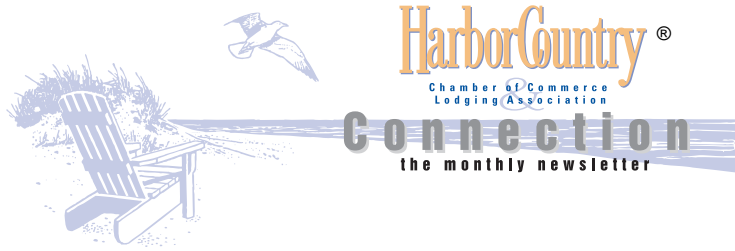
bits & pieces

CIRCLE TOUR AND LIGHTHOUSE GUIDE

WMTA's Lake Michigan Circle Tour & Lighthouse Guide has begun sales for the 16th edition and the Harbor Country page is starting to fill up with businesses just like yours! The Harbor Country Lodging Association is sponsoring a banner in the 2003 guide and you can participate on their page too! Please go to the link to see how you too can be listed. <http://www.wmta.org/specialrequest/02hcChamberad.jpg> This is actual copy from last year's edition.

The cost to participate is \$150 per business. This includes your color logo and a brief description about your

See next page



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
UNION PIER, MI
49129
PERMIT NO. 7

530 south whittaker street, suite f, new buffalo, mi 49117

**LAKE
VIEWS**

**BE IT
RESOLVED**

**ONLINE
DATING**

page 4 harbor country connection.....january, 2003

VIEW from page 1

ty, while also creating a place for gathering and relaxing. We believe the park will serve as an “anchor” to the downtown district. Clearly, the value of these parcels from a development standpoint is large, but we believe that the park would generate equal, if not greater, value to the community.”

The Chamber of Commerce has also tendered its support for the project, known as the Lighthouse Park Project, in a letter to the mayor of New Buffalo recently approved by president Don Jackson and the Board of Directors. The letter states in part: “...we would like to pledge our full support to this effort so that this lakefront area can be transformed into a usable community asset while still promoting downtown

commerce and tourism.”

Yet, it always comes down to the matter of money. Kemper says that grants and private donations are the only options at this time. “We should have some information regarding the success of our efforts by June or July,” says Kemper. “Without a major grant or donation the committee cannot continue its efforts.”

Any parties interested in making a major donation to this effort please contact Robert Kemper (469-7700) or Milan Kluko (469-6135).



CIRCLE TOUR from page 3

business. WMTA prints 75,000 of this specialty guide and with over 5,500 individual requests from visitors on Lake Michigan, Lighthouses, Maritime History and Swimming/Beaches (figures from WMTA's leads program) - it's no wonder the guide runs out fast. The people are certainly coming and they are interested!

It is a four state guide including Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. All 13 Michigan Welcome Centers will receive copies along with, AAA offices nationwide, chambers & CVB's in all four

states, motorcoach & tour operators, travel agencies, other WMTA members and businesses from Mackinac Island, Jackson, Grand Rapids, Lansing and all along the shoreline, motor clubs and tour clubs, 1500+ media and targeted travel, lifestyle and outdoor writers, available on our website at www.wmta.org. It will also be distributed at 15 Travel Shows/ Expos throughout the year, plus be distributed at more than 60 service clubs & organizations throughout the region and beyond in a travelogue-style slide show presenta-

tion which takes visitors along the route. Audience totals were over 1,000 for those who attended the 2002 edition and there are 40 more venues coming in 2003!

If you have questions simply contact, Karen Rukas, at swsales@wmta.org or 1-800-442-2084 x104. The deadline for participation is February 8, 2003, for inclusion in this year's guide which will debut in April. Don't miss out on this outstanding opportunity to help promote your community in such a fast growing publication!