



Check your mail (it's a good thing)

Now that all the scares of tainted mail seem to be over, it's time to take a serious look at that pile of communication that you know are not bills in a holding pattern. Why don't you take a few moments and rummage through that tall pile of bigger envelopes, trade magazines and miscellaneous envelopes that seemed to contain something interesting enough for you to put aside rather than in the round file.

We're looking for two pieces in particular: one from the Chamber Guide Committee, the other from the Art Attack Committee. Unfortunately, both are packaged in relatively non-descript envelopes.

Office manager, Sue Harsch, said that the Guide information packets were sent in 9 by 12 inch white catalogue envelopes that are not printed with our lovely logo. Instead, look for a computer-generated return address label, a red hand-stamped "Guide Advertising Deadline" and another label with your address as the telltale signs that this is one piece of mail you do not want to miss-- this is your Harbor Country Guide 2002 Information Packet. It includes order forms, price lists and above all else important deadlines that have to be met.

Guide committee chairman, Roger Harvey, has announced that we will print 75,000 copies of the guide in 2002, just as we did last year. In case you don't have this precious piece of mail, here are the important things to remember:

- Deadline to RESERVE your ad space is Feb. 15.
- Deadline to PAY for ad and listings is Feb. 25.
- Premium ads are on a first-come basis.
- Guide distribution begins April 19 in conjunction with Art Attack.

And that leads us to our second bit of mail-- Art Attack. "Not everyone will receive a letter and application from the Art Attack Committee," said chair-

person Rita Cochran. "This year we looked at a more selective list of prospects to host or sponsor an Art Attack event. Only 175 inquiries were sent out."

Utilizing a Minimalist theme this year, the Art Attack Committee sent their correspondence in plain white, No. 10 envelopes with no return address at all. Chamber members will find a computer-generated address label lovingly affixed to the front. Out of area participants will receive an artistically hand-addressed envelope.

Here's a the skinny on the Ninth Annual Art Attack:

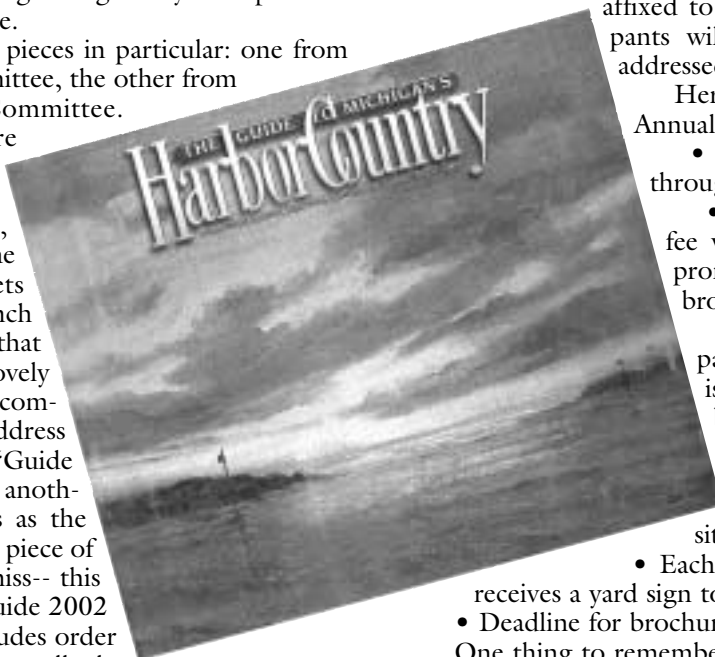
- It will be held Friday, April 26, through Sunday, April 28.
- There is a \$100 participation fee which helps defray the cost of promotion and the printing of a brochure.
- The brochure is mailed to past attendees of Art Attack and is also distributed through local businesses and area and regional tourism offices.
- Promotion also includes print and radio ads and a web-site presence.
- Each participating artist or business receives a yard sign to identify them as such.
- Deadline for brochure copy is March 1.

One thing to remember, except for the actual production work of putting together the Guide, both of these projects come about only through a significant amount of volunteer effort. These people are your Chamber and Lodging Association peers. They look for your support as only you can give, at any level you wish to participate, and in return they will try not to overlook a single detail.

Join the fun! The 2002 season is about to begin!!

With questions about the Harbor Country Guide call Roger Harvey at 616-469-6257.

With questions about Art Attack 2002 contact Local Color Gallery at 616-469-5332.





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Dining Out In Harbor Country Comes With No Phone-y Baloney

Valentine's Day tends to bring out the romantic in all of us. Mushy cards, fragrant bouquets of flowers delivered with heart shaped chocolate candies. Couples holding hands sharing cozy intimate dinners while gazing lovingly into each others eyes. Each passionate stare is bathed in flickering candlelight surrounded by the soft and gentle strains of distant violins. The script reads on, like a steamy passage from a cheesy Harlequin novel— "The moon hit their eyes like big pizza pies.—That's amore!"

Suddenly, this night to remember becomes transformed into a bloodcurdling Valentine's Day massacre as the whispers of sweet nothings are shattered to tiny bits by the shrill sounds of . . . a cell phone!

AAAAGGGGHHH! Each eardrum puncturing ring bombards the airwaves sending decibel levels skyrocketing to "Psycho-shower-scene" proportions. That sneak attack to your senses is inevitably followed by the annoyingly loud, obnoxious and waaaaay too public conversation of a rude cell phone user.

In today's "call-anytime-anywhere-speed-dial world," restaurant owners and their customers have witnessed old-fashioned affairs-of-the-heart become victimized by high-tech heartburn. Hungry diners in the mood for love, cooks eager to feed them and wait staff ready to serve them, have all lost their appetites for a night out on the town while some inconsiderate shmuck with unlimited minutes and no roaming charges serves up a heaping helping of hot air.

Beginning late last year, Dan Verhil, 22-year owner of The Cottage Bar and

One Trick Pony restaurants in downtown Grand Rapids, MI, has designated his businesses "no cell phone zones." He has placed signs outside each restaurant asking customers not to use their phones while dining. Verhil also has designed small cards depicting cell phones with slashed red circles around them. Verhil says he requests patrons to either turn their phones off or put them on a vibration alert, instead of allowing them to ring.

"The ringing is the big distraction, but it seems like when people answer the phone, their decibel level goes up automatically. They're speaking louder and you can hear them throughout the restaurant," Verhil said. "It first started out as a tongue-in-cheek thing. We didn't want to offend anyone. But my staff complained when they would go to tables during the lunch rush trying to take an order and have to wait for people to get off the phone. This restaurant is a dining room and not a phone booth." Verhil says so far, most customers are complying with the ban and he has received lots of compliments.

Harbor Country restaurants are not immune to large crowds and noisy customers amid confirmed reports of a few cell phone users who can't resist reaching out to touch someone. Fortunately, the majority of Harbor Country restaurateurs that were contacted have not been affected by an overwhelming amount of cell phone abuse and don't foresee any need to issue a similar ban. In fact, most owners and managers cited the area's lack of cell phone towers and poor reception, if any, as a main deterrent to frequent cell phone use in their

See NO-PHONEY page 3

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Internet Advertising, where to go?

This subject has been covered in one way or another in previous articles, but for the benefit of many of our newer Chamber members over the last few months, it would be worthwhile reviewing some of the topics we've covered.

There is no question that without Internet exposure, your business in Harbor Country is missing out on all the action. The following statistics are just a snapshot of the Chamber's success in offering Internet exposure to its membership:

- The Chamber's site, harborcountry.org is now attracting in excess of 4 million hits a year.
- Many Chamber members are tapping into this great exposure by purchasing very reasonably priced advertising spots on the Chamber's site.

- Currently, a "banner" ad runs \$120 for 6 months or \$240 for 12 months.
- A link to your site from one of the Chamber's directories (Lodging, Dining, Restaurants, Shops, etc) is only \$25 a year.
- Our newest program, "Featured Business Profiles" is only \$125 for 30 days of front page exposure plus a 1 year listing in the archives.

Our statistics show that an advertiser on the Chamber's site gets in excess of 200,000 impressions from their ad in 6 months. In other words, the ad is displayed to internet viewers that many times. If you are interested in Internet advertising, just go to the Chamber's web page: www.harborcountry.org/hcads.htm or call the Chamber office at 616-469-5409.

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establishments.

"Many people have to go outside" and "You can't get a signal from here" were the most commonly used phrases. That only goes to show why this Valentine's Day, the best lovebird calling plan available is Harbor Country's own toned down version of wireless hospitality, where the most hair-raising signals being transmitted from nearby restaurants might be—"Is that a cell phone in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?"

Festival of Trees raises \$500

The 2nd Annual Festival of Trees raised close to \$500 for local charities and non-profit organizations in Harbor Country this past December. The festival features decorated trees at participating business locations at which 'votes' are collected in the form of cash donations. The largest donation at any one location could qualify that tree for an additional first, second or third prize from the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and the Lodging Association.

Taking those honors for the 2001 Festival of Trees were:

1st Place, \$100.00 Toys for Tots
hosted by **Gold's Gym, New Buffalo**

2nd Place, \$75.00 Lithuanian Sea Scouts
hosted by **Milda's Corner Market, Union Pier**

3rd Place, \$50.00 Domestic Violence
hosted by **The General Store, Three Oaks**

"On behalf of our committee, The Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and The Lodging Association, I would like to thank all the participating businesses," said committee chairperson, Margaret Anderson. "We look forward to your support in the future."

Mixer at Best Western, Feb. 21

The Chamber and the Best Western Plaza Hotel- New Buffalo will host a Mixer with a Twist of Business on Thursday, February 21, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Here's your chance to tour the latest addition to our lodging facilities. The Best Western Plaza Hotel is located at 18800 LaPorte Road. New Buffalo.

Please RSVP the Chamber Office by Feb. 15 by calling 616-469-5409.

**new
members
december
2001**

**Curves for Women
of Harbor Country**
18739 West US 12
New Buffalo, MI
616-469-9223

Jetta Masters, Owner

Herbert's Guest House
9895 Nolan
Union Pier, MI 49129
312-787-7110

Herbert & Therese Ruschke

**Michigan City
Zoological Society**
Washington Park Zoo
Michigan City, IN
219-873-1510

**Contacts: Lane Theriac or
Mary Ellen Postlewaite**
(Associate Membership)

An affordable sales rep



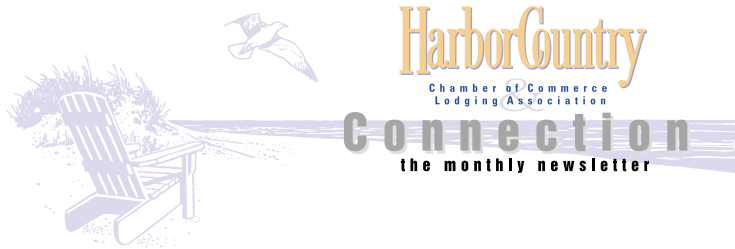
Did you ever wonder about the value of a brochure? If you had one right now it could be working for you at numerous tourist-popular locations, you could be sending it out to potential customers, or you could be encouraging your hard-earned customers to come back.

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

ARTISTIC ENERGY GROUP, INC.

505 W. LOCUST STREET, THREE OAKS, MI

616-756-9070 fax 756-9071 email mhojnacki@triton.net



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49129
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you got mail

phone-y baloney

web refresher

New at the Chamber/Lodging office



River Valley sophomore, Brianne Glenn, is the newest addition to our weekend staff at the Chamber/Lodging Office located at 530 S. Whittaker, New Buffalo.

The daughter of Pat Glenn of Three Oaks, Brianne brings a wealth of business proficiency to the team. As a member of the Business Professionals of America at River Valley High School, she placed 6th in Keyboarding and 8th in Verbal Prepared I at the state level last year. This year Brianne took First Place in Fundamental Word Processing at the BPA Regionals held in Grand Rapids. She was also part of the 2nd Place Spelling team and took a 4th Place in Prepared Verbal Speech II. She will go on to the state competition in Detroit this March.

"I love a job where I can use my skills," said Brianne. "Plus I love to talk and meet new people." That's the winning combination we look for at the Chamber office.

Brianne hopes to eventually pursue a career in pediatric medicine.

- d o i t**
- FEBRUARY 12- Lincoln's Birthday**
 - FEBRUARY 14- Valentine's Day**
 - FEBRUARY 18- President's Day**
 - FEBRUARY 21- Mixer at Best Western**
5:30 to 7:30 p.m., New Buffalo
 - FEBRUARY 22- Washington's Birthday**
 - FEBRUARY 15- 2002 Harbor Country Guide ad space reservation deadline**
 - FEBRUARY 25- Ad copy and payment deadline for Guide**
 - MARCH 1- Brochure copy deadline for Art Attack**
 - MARCH 18- Cooperative Tourism Conference, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Lake Michigan College Mendel Center, \$20 Call SWMichigan Tourist Council, 616-925-6301**
 - MARCH 20- Spring begins!!**
 - MARCH 28- Passover begins**
 - MARCH 29- Good Friday**
 - MARCH 31- Easter Sunday**
 - APRIL 7- Daylight Savings Time starts**
 - APRIL 19- Guide distribution begins**
 - APRIL 26-28- Ninth Annual Art Attack.**
An eclectic celebration of "all that is art" throughout Harbor Country.