



## Membership drive to emphasize benefits

It has always been the best guess of the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce that most of our members joined for reasons other than the fame and fortune that go hand in hand with this sort of association.

Prestige aside, the Chamber is first

and foremost an ideal environment to network with your neighboring businesses. It provides a sense of "oneness."

Ranking high on the top ten reasons for joining the Chamber we always find that membership allows advertising in the annual Guide, a chance to participate in

group promotions, an opportunity to buy into the Blue Cross/Blue Shield program, and getting a free listing on the Chamber's web site.

The Member Services Committee, under the direction of Patty Prino (Patty's Picks) has just produced a membership promotion brochure that will soon be distributed through key contacts throughout Harbor Country. The idea is to build upon our membership base that stands at just over 400 members. There is a twofold reason for a more active push: 1) Membership is a good thing, and in terms of a Chamber of Commerce, the more members we have the better we understand the wants and needs of "all" the businesses in this eight community area; 2) We need the members because their dues are the primary source of revenue for this organization.

Since we're preaching to the choir here about the need to be part of the Chamber, let's review some of the benefits you might have forgotten about since you first made the commitment.

Advertising and promotional opportunities are the strong point. Beside the guide and website, members can offer free "Hot Deals" on the web, participate in campaigns in Chicago Magazine and the **See MEMBERSHIP page 3**



**GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING--** Karen Cummings, President of the Three Oaks Business Association and Karen Gear, Vice President of the HCC and Secretary/Treasurer of TOBA, flank Doris Krossovich of the Harbor Country Food Pantry while presenting a check for \$225. The sum represented 20% of the ticket sales of the Harbor Country Christmas House Walk. On Feb. 10, TOBA hosted a "Meet the Candidates" forum at Vickers Theatre so that the public could meet those running for village office. They also presented an overview of the new website designed by Jennifer and Jon Vickers and sponsored by TOBA and the Village combined. (South County Gazette photo by Mira Poncin)

### Mixer set for Feb. 26

A "Mixer With a Twist of Business," sponsored by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and Diane Ashcraft of The Spectacle Shop, will be held at her shop at 13 N. Elm, Three Oaks, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 26. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and lively conversation will be served. RSVP the Chamber at 269-469-5409.



**Harbor Country®  
Chamber of Commerce**  
Michael Hojnacki, *President*

Board of Directors:  
Michael Hojnacki, President  
Karen Gear, Vice-President  
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**Harbor Country®  
Lodging Association**  
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Board of Directors:  
AJ Boggio, President  
Lisa Werner, Vice-President  
Jerry Welsh, Co-Treasurer  
Board Members:  
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John Natsis  
Lynn O'Hara  
Robert Kemper

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Commerce and Lodging Association**  
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## Marketing means exposure (is less better?)

By Michael Hojnacki, Chamber President

It was half time of the Super Bowl and contrary to the religious belief, "Thou Shalt Not Change Channels While A Super Bowl Is In Progress," I did. I know, shame on me. So after several minutes of being tempted by the other stuff, I decided to head back to CBS to stay abreast of the situation. Like a flash in the pan there it was-- Janet Jackson's right breast being exposed by her duet partner Justin Timberlake. Talk about timing, talk about sensationalism, talk about exposure.

Those few seconds of exposed flesh on regular television have garnered more publicity and attention than any of those \$2 million commercial spots. Remember how the next day conversation was always about which commercial you liked more. We heard very little of that this year. It was all about the "boob." (Does this give even more credence to television being the "boob" tube?)

No matter how anyone felt about the mammary maneuver, good or bad, it certainly did what it was expected to do. Right or wrong it worked. How many times do you think the name "Janet Jackson" was uttered in the days following the wardrobe malfunction? How many people viewed the then-censored version of the performance in those same days? How many found a website that had a picture of the real deal? Millions upon millions around the world would be a fairly accurate estimate.

The point is this-- exposure is an important ingredient in marketing your business. Likewise, it's equally important for the Chamber. Now, you don't have to worry about me dropping my trousers at the next mixer, but you can be certain to see my face somewhere in the next month, whether it's the two pictures in

the most recent Lake Magazine, on the website in the member area welcoming all to come and stay in Harbor Country, or in the local press at the next ribbon cutting. More importantly, the Chamber is really about the exposure from all of the membership. Things you do can have a very positive (hopefully not negative) effect on the perceptions our local citizens, tourists and second homeowners have on the Chamber.

Keeping your business appearance neat and tidy, your office or shop in order, your advertising truthful, your demeanor pleasant, and instructing your employees in the art of being helpful has a lasting impact in how people remember this area. If you are pleasant and respectful to potential customers, you can be sure you've gained them forever. The upside is you probably won a customer for all of Harbor Country as well.

So as we prepare for the high season, let's keep in mind how important exposure is to our marketing plan. Let's keep our signs colorful, our "open" banners flying high in the wind, our words courteous and helpful, but keep those private parts unexposed. Less, often is better.

### Buy a banner

Area chamber members, especially in New Buffalo Township, who might feel bannerless, can now purchase a complete package for \$200 (banner, mounting kit, installation). Patty Prino has been on a mission to bring the flags to the township where they previously were denied permission to be installed. Businesses along Red Arrow/US 12, south of New Buffalo city and in Union Pier, have already agreed to purchase about 12 banners. Call Sue Harsch at 269-469-5409 to find our more.

### Harbor Country® Connection

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### Artistic Energy Group, Inc.

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## On the "net" you are what you "say"; choose carefully

A misplaced word in a corporate boardroom could divide a business relationship. A carelessly phrased statement to the press could send ripples throughout the community, or a casually worded remark to a customer or supplier might be misconstrued and met with an unexpected response. (Enter the idiosyncrasies of the Internet.) Words and the way they are arranged can work for or against you.

We can carefully phrase words and

inflections in tone, yet no matter how well you research the American lexicon for the right or politically correct things to say, it matters little to most search engines if what you place in your site is not relevant to the search being performed.

Top search engines like Google, Yahoo, MSN, and Overture are changing their strategies and computer algorithms to produce the best relevance and give visitors exactly what they want. Less important are the once hailed meta tags and keywords embedded in web sites. Squeezed out are all the hype, spam, and nonsense that many of us have had to endure. Relevant sites have fresh content, and topics that relate specifically to that business' products, services, and the market they serve.

Choose words carefully for your web pages. Keep content fresh, up to date. Inject information that will directly relate and appeal to your target audience. Place yourself in your visitor's shoes. What words or phrases would a visitor use to find your product or service? Think outside the box.

Visitors may use phrases you wouldn't think of. For example-- as a business owner you're thinking 'Marina.' However, they're thinking 'Boat Slips'. Do the research and examine successful sites and their content structure. Over time the winners with the most relevant sites get picked for the top spots in search results, and can translate to increased visibility and business.



New Member brochure and application.

### MEMBERSHIP from page 1

others, insert your brochure in Chamber Guide requests for a minimal fee, and advertise member to member in the Connection.

There is the Blue Cross/Blue Shield program, but the the Chamber also provides the means to network through special programs (such as our new Business Watch), special events, educational programs and seminars.

The Chamber also provides legislative advocacy at local, state and national levels. It also offers the business person the opportunity to shape the direction of our economy and future through active Chamber participation.

Sounds like a pretty good deal! Do you know a business neighbor who needs to join. Call Sue Harsch at 469-5409 and she'll send a brochure and application.

**new  
members  
Dec/Jan  
2004**

### DECEMBER 16-31

**GRAND BEACH INN**  
Tim O'Neil & Greg Dingens  
19400 Ravine Drive  
New Buffalo  
Accommodations

**Tom Hemingway**  
**REMAX HARBOR COUNTRY**  
10234 Community Hall Rd  
Union Pier  
Real Estate

**McCOLLUM ARCHITECTS**  
William McCollum  
Red Arrow Hwy.  
Union Pier  
Architect

**AVANZATA, INC.**  
David Blum  
15060 Marquette Rd.  
New Buffalo  
Associate- Computer Services

**SERVICE 1 MARINE**  
Robert Stratton  
135 E. Buffalo  
Boat Sales & Maintenance

**George Lucas**  
**REMAX HARBOR COUNTRY**  
10234 Community Hall Rd  
Union Pier  
Associate- Real Estate

### JANUARY

**O'BRIEN'S RESTAURANT**  
New Buffalo  
Add'l Member- Dining

**McALLOON PROPERTIES, INC**  
P.O. Box 521  
Union Pier  
Building Contractor

**HARBOR COUNTRY WIRELESS**  
P.O. Box 275  
New Buffalo  
Wireless, High Speed Internet

**DALE LUTHER CONSTRUCTION**  
3860 W. Elm Valley Road  
Three Oaks  
Builder

**TOWN CENTRE LAUNDRY**  
P.O. Box 521  
Union Pier  
Add'l Member- Laundromat

**RICK HESS**  
3258 N. Sheffield  
Chicago  
Associate

**FOXGLOVE FARMS**  
4508 Sawyer Rd  
Sawyer  
Accommodations

**PARALLAX**  
222 S. Whittaker  
New Buffalo  
Personal Development

**SMOKE FAMILY VISION**  
18301 West U.S. 12  
New Buffalo  
Optical Physician

**MICKEY GALLAS PROPERTIES**  
23 S. Griffith St.  
New Buffalo  
Realtor

**SUMMERWIND RESORT**  
15608 Victor St.  
Union Pier  
Accommodations

**ABIGAIL HECHE. LTD**  
14866 Red Arrow  
Lakeside  
Gallery

**HARBOR COUNTRY TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**  
P.O. Box 126  
New Buffalo  
Associate- Taxi Services

**The Plum Tree**  
16337 Red Arrow Hwy  
Union Pier  
Antiques

### FEBRUARY 1-4

**TLC TOWN, LAKE & COUNTRY VACATION RENTALS**  
42 Whittaker St.  
New Buffalo  
Vacation Rental Agency

**KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY**  
North Whittaker  
New Buffalo  
Real Estate

**UNION HOUSE**  
16036 Red Arrow Hwy  
Union Pier  
Restaurant



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

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

**MEMBER  
 DRIVE**

**EXPOSING  
 OURSELVES**

**WORDS  
 TO THE WISE**

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>MARCH</b>		<b>1</b> Community Development, 5:30 @ Hannah's	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Post Hot Deals!	<b>6</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Member Services, 6:00 @ Hannah's	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Lodging Meeting, Noon @ Hannah's	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> St. Patrick's Day	<b>18</b> Connection Deadline	<b>19</b> Post Hot Deals!	<b>20</b>
	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Chamber Board, Noon, TBA Marketing, after Board Meeting	<b>31</b>			

**UPDATES AVAILABLE AT [www.harborcountry.org/calendar](http://www.harborcountry.org/calendar) or 469-5409**