



## Best practices make perfect

A best practice exemplifies initiative and innovation and represents a significant improvement over traditional practices. That's how we are introduced to this guiding force in a book called, *Guide to Best Practices in Tourism and Destination Management* by Dr. Rich Harrill. This is not to be construed as the hottest book for summer beach reading. It is a scholarly work that for the serious business person should be part of their library right next to *Think And Grow Rich*. Certainly, he has given a lot of thought to the tourism business.

You can hear what he has to say at the annual Harbor Country Lodging Association dinner to be held at the Harbor Grand Hotel at 7 p.m., June 4. As a brief introduction, Dr. Harrill is a senior associate for the Georgia Institute of Technology's Economic Development Institute (EDI) and Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers (TRACS). He brings to Harbor Country a broad range of research experience, including his expertise in tourism planning, tourism motivation, heritage tourism, ecotourism, scenic byway development and sustainable community development. And you thought tourism was just selling gallons of sun block and thousands of post cards.

Harrill will present the findings of his research as delineated in his book, but more importantly he'll discuss how that research of "best practices" can be applied to the Harbor Country model. He says that best practices can be the result of many catalysts such as a collective response to external events to a leader's vision for the community. The book presents case studies about successful strategies and approaches that can easily be adopted by all types and sizes of tourism organizations. Dr. Harrill

is supported in his research by a substantial list of tourism experts.

The best practices presented within the book fell into six categories:

Research- Highlights organizations providing public, private and non-profit research at all levels from local to national.

Funding- A look at funding options such as public-private partnerships that include membership dues for cooperative tourism advertising and marketing.

Professional Development- Looks at organizations involved in education and training members of the tourism industry.

Information Dissemination- This aspect showcases organizations who provide "how-to" workbooks and fact sheets.

Advocacy- Looks at those who lobby or testify on behalf of the tourism industry.

Web Marketing- Highlights organizations using the Internet for destination promotion.

The case studies provided illustrate the remarkable diversity of techniques and approaches used for tourism marketing and development. This isn't a book that only focuses on Southern hospitality. In fact, two chapters reveal the best practices of Michigan-based efforts: Michigan State University Michigan Travel, Tourism and Research Center and the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau. From Florida to California, from New York State's Finger Lakes Wine Country to the wide open spaces of Montana, Harrill has tapped into of broad range of tourism resolves identified through best practices.

Bringing this concept to a more understandable level, Harrill is saying that we have to stop doing things the way we've been doing them because that's the way we do it. As funding for any tourism project faces tighter and tighter budgets, the best way, the best practice, is the only



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## It's all in the name®

by Don Jackson, Chamber President

After much debate at the board level about the use of the trademarked name "Harbor Country®" we have finally received important guidelines from Attorney Christopher Putt of May, Oberfell and Lorber who has been our legal counsel on this matter.

Here's the deal: If you have a business that uses the words Harbor Country in the name, the Chamber is not going to come after you for trademark infringement as long as you're a business operating in the geographical area associated with this trademark.

Our trademark is primarily geographic in origin. Anyone who is located in this place has a limited right to tell prospective buyers of his location. Businesses and organizations have the right to use the mark in its purely descriptive and non-trademark sense.

Consistent with this thinking, it is important for us to be vigilant against the use of the mark by persons or businesses outside of our geographic area. That area is spelled out specifically as the municipalities of Three Oaks, New Buffalo, Grand Beach, Michiana, Union Pier, Lakeside, Harbert, and Sawyer.

We have been cautioned to always police the use of the Harbor Country trademark whether inside or outside of the area. The attorney has provided us with a boiler plate letter that we can use to send to businesses outside of the area that we feel are infringing on our trademark. Meanwhile, Board member Ray Vasquez keeps an eagle eye on the World Wide Web for people who feel they can lift our hard-fought moniker.

So, to our friends in Harbor Country, enjoy our name, use it as deemed fit, and wear it proudly. This is Harbor Country-- it's all in the name.

## bits & pieces

### Mixer with a twist

You are cordially invited to join your fellow chamber partners at a Mixer with a Twist of Business hosted by the Ed Homolka of the Financial Resource Group, 139 N. Whittaker St., New Buffalo on May 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. RSVP to the Chamber office at 269-469-5409.

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logical alternative. We have to analyze what we do with a more critical eye to results, whether that's exceeding our expectations in business growth or seeing an influx of people from Fort Wayne, IN because that's where we concentrated our promotional effort. No matter what we do or how innovative we get, we must be accountable.

This presentation promises to take the Harbor Country way of thinking to the next level. This is a Lodging Association event and, as such, lodging members are gratis. An invitation, however, has been extended to Chamber members. The cost of the evening, which includes a buffet-style dinner, is \$15. Please reserve your spot by May 21 by calling Sue Harsch at the Chamber office (269-469-5409). Seating is limited.

### Harbor Country® Connection

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## Harbor Country® Awards Contract to LightSky

In June 2002, the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and Lodging Association (HCLA) boards of directors agreed it was time to renew the official Harbor Country® web site, www.harborcountry.org - a decision based on several key points:

- 1.) The home page has become cluttered and needs to convey a simple appealing message.
- 2.) Navigation must be simplified, content easy to find.
- 3.) An "intelligent search" capability is needed for visitors to find information through keyword queries.
- 4.) Visibility of the Harbor Country® trademark destination needs to reflect the appeal of our eight unique communities, local talent and attractions, with focus on those who want to live and work in our region.

After months of discussion and search for outsource web developers, the Chamber's Internet Committee came up with about 12 candidates. Selection criteria was based on business competency, reliability, creative skill, in-house "back-end" technical capability, cost effectiveness, and responsiveness. On March 25th, at the committee's recommendation, the Chamber board by unanimous vote awarded the contract to LightSky, www.lightsky.com, a nationally marketed web development company with offices in Goshen, IN and Philadelphia, PA.

Chamber President, Don Jackson commented, "I was particularly impressed with their dynamic enthusiasm and technical skill... they're in a league of their own and stood out among competing bidders". Internet Committee Chairman Gary Ramberg added, "These people are sharp, attentive, receptive and open".

Confidence in the selection was explained by former HCLA President, Robert Kemper, "This team is very capable of delivering our message about Harbor Country: who we are, and what we offer as a place to visit, live, and work."

Additionally, AJ, Boggio, current HCLA President stated, "Among all the suppliers considered, LightSky provides unique designs for each of its clients. They don't use an assembly line approach".

LightSky has also joined as one of our new Chamber members and we look forward to a successful relationship, as we move forward to renew the Chamber's web site, a project scheduled for completion in early June, 2003. We wish to thank all the Chamber & HCLA members who contributed their time and provided their ideas and input in this process.

# ART ATTACK 2003



It looks like after 10 years Art Attack has finally clicked. Blue skies, moderate temperatures, and plenty of things to see and do brought people out by the droves. Co-chair Jennifer Coch-



ran said they were busy at Local Color Galley as soon as they opened their doors. Let's hope the strong support for this event heralds a fantastic season for all Chamber & Lodging members.



(Left to right) Mary Baske displayed cigar purses at Patty's Picks. Fritz Olsen with his sculpture "Harvey." His studio held a "name that sculpture" competition. And Roger Harvey displayed his paintings at the Harbor Grand Hotel.



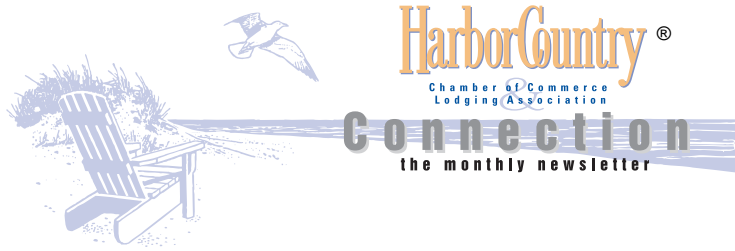
Gary Wick at Courtyard Gallery.



Guide artist Wendy Wilcox Kermen.



Susan Henshaw at Gaia Gallery



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**BEST  
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**ALL IN  
A NAME**

**LIGHTSKY'S  
THE LIMIT**

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## Guide unveiled, cover artist Bruce Wood honored

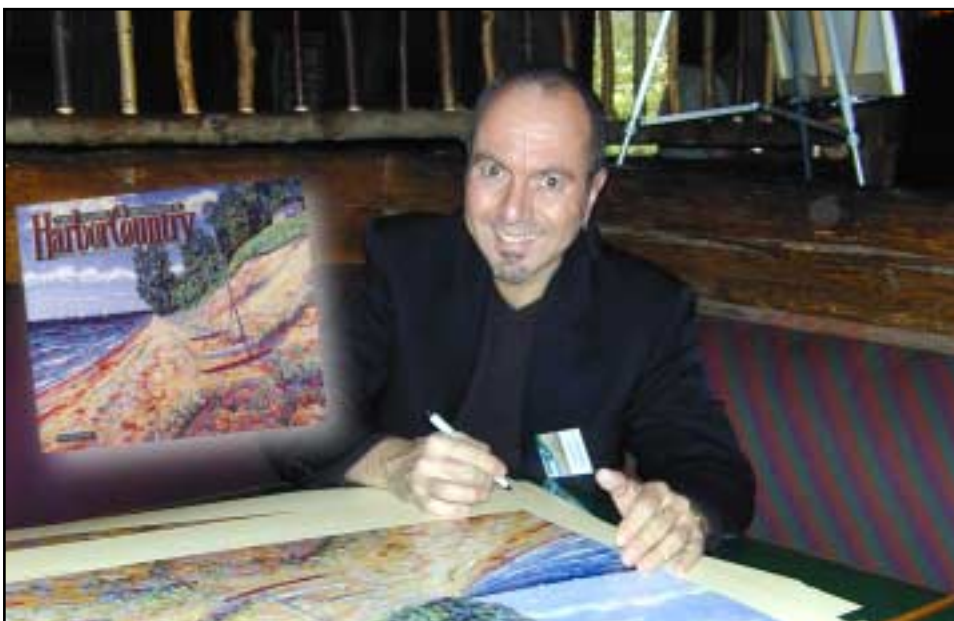
Bruce Wood signed 100 posters, (below) a reproduction of the image “Summer Friends” that was used for the 2003 cover of the Harbor Country Chamber and Lodging Association Guide. The internationally-recognized contemporary impressionist artist was busy signing 100 of the

prints (above) during the recent unveiling of the guide at Miller’s Country House April 17. Wood, who opened Fenway Gallery in Lakeside in 1990, was previously honored with the 1991 cover selection. His paintings and serigraphs grace walls throughout the United States, Japan, and Europe. Bruce

Wood received his Bachelor of Fine Art degree from the Massachusetts College of Art and his Master of Fine Art degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Still maintaining a residence and studio in Lakeside and operating Fenway Gallery there and two additional stores and another domicile in Chicago, the artist still finds time to paint.

“I’ve always wanted my work to become synonymous with the Harbor Country area and I think I’ve accomplished that,” said Wood. The guides are available locally, though the full printing has not been finished quite yet. Posters are available at the Chamber office in New Buffalo.

The guide itself is a work of art produced by Tim Rogers of Fusion Design Group and assembled and conceived by a volunteer staff including Jerry Welsh, Roger Harvey, Janet Hayes, John Anderson, Marti Arney, A.J. Boggio, Diane Botica, Hillary Bubb, Sue Harsch, Dani Lane, Trisha Miller, Jacqui Schiewe, Keith Sindelar, Liz Thomas and Patti Toussaint. The 75,000 guides promote tourism throughout the area on an annual basis. This year’s guide was dedicated to the late Ron Miller, who was instrumental in the guide’s production from day one.



**HCC**