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HarborCountry®
Chamber of Commerce
&
Lodging Association

Connection

the monthly newsletter

Speaker spotlights women's buying power

Only a handful of lodging and chamber members took advantage of the wisdom offered by marketing consultant and author Yvonne DiVita. Her May 12th visit to Harbor Country should have brought out every retailer, every innkeeper, every real estate person, every service provider in the Harbor Country area. Those that attended had an opportunity to grasp

the concept women have been trying to tell the world for years now-- they hold the purse strings.

DiVita pointed out that women have adopted the internet as part of their neighborhood more so than men. She said most women are online everyday, and when they go online they often bring their pocketbook. She said that any business that does

not have a website is practically doomed to failure for this reason alone.

In her book, *Dickless Marketing: Smart Marketing to Women Online*, a Harris study indicated that women control 75% of household finances and 80% of the purchasing decisions. That gives the Janes of the world a certain advantage over the Dicks. It's a whole new vision for the Dick and Jane story of the early 20th century where Dick held the purse tightly while Jane pampered his needs. The new reality is quite the opposite.

DiVita implored audience to build better websites. Her Dick-O-Meter standards rates sites around the world for friendliness and offering a firm, warm handshake from the beginning. She warned that complicated, often flashy sites get bypassed as quick as a click of a mouse.

Over nine years of internet research have led this marketing guru to understand that most of the time Dick prefers that Jane do his shopping-- online or off. And on the occasions where she isn't making the actual buying decision she is wielding a greater amount of influence. "If you really want Dick to get your message, get it in front of Jane first," she writes.

"You ignore women's buying power at your own risk," she told the group. She referred to the billions of dollars spent online in retail e-commerce.

DiVita's message is vital in an economy shaped by the weather and the price of a gallon of gasoline. That's our Harbor Country economy. One way to extend or level out your season might be to follow the advice she offers in her book. You can order a copy by going online (you women knew that already) at www.dicklessmarketing.com. It's a small investment that will provide numerous insights to greater returns.



Yvonne DiVita, women's marketing Guru and author of "Dickless Marketing: Smart Marketing to Women Online" was the keynote speaker at the annual Harbor Country Lodging Association's annual meeting May 12 at the Harbor Grand. Association president **AJ Boggio** hosted the event.



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With respect for all

By Michael Hojnacki, Chamber President

One of the last places I expected to find a political cauldron was the Chamber of Commerce. Sure, I realized that many of the members had their own particular agenda that they wanted me to address as president. That sort of thing comes with the territory. It wasn't until we started looking into the minutiae that the politics began oozing from every page, paragraph and word.

With respect for all, the Chamber (board and officers) must be cognizant of every detail that comprises its by-laws, policies and contracts. All too often the Chamber considers itself to be bigger than any particular individual effort. All too often, that sort of thinking has come back to bite us in the butt.

We have taken (or not taken) stands on an industry interested in locating in a highly visible location, a proposed casino, city zoning, tourism, community events, and defending our name.

As president, I have read our mission statement over and over again in an effort to maintain an even keel, the proper perspective, the oneness that is deserved by the membership and those who observe our actions as well. That mission is annotated in the third paragraph of our bylaws.

It reads: "The Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce, Inc. shall promote cooperation in all matters of interest to the business and professional men and women of the Harbor Country community; to develop an increased civic interest; to create and maintain higher standards in business dealings; to correct

trade abuses; to compile and distribute information to its members for their benefit; to aid and protect its members and to do all things as are properly within the scope of such an association for the welfare of its members and its community."

The key words here are "all matters" and "all things." In this world of being politically correct, I know I have offended (sometimes spelled "pissed off") members. I know I have been stubborn in my pursuit to satisfy all matters and all things. I'm finding out that a president, much the same as a mayor or other leader, must find the middle ground for all. In the parabolic curve of marketing satisfaction that is going to make about 20% of the people real happy, 20% offended, and 60% somewhat satisfied. It's not a bad feeling knowing you might have 80% support for every decision you make. You know you'll spend a disproportionate amount of time in smoothing ruffled feathers, but you also know that comes with the territory and you take it in stride.

As the Chamber rewrites its bylaws, policies, and a joint operating agreement with lodging, it is important to remember that we are here to cooperate in all matters and to do all things for all of our members within our eight member communities. I, as president, must have the fortitude to guide you in this. You, as the membership, should have the courage to accept the board's final decisions as being in the best interest of all (at least the 80%).

Next Month:

Business Watch Program ready for release

Fire Safety ideas sought by local government

Harbor Country® Connection

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BeachTowns 2004 is a big splash for Harbor Country

At the end of May, Travel Michigan began promoting their annual tourism campaign in the Chicago, Indianapolis, and South Bend markets. The Harbor Country Lodging Association contributed its annual share of \$10,000 with the 9 partners that make up the BeachTowns affiliation with Travel Michigan site: Michigan.org/beachtowns

Our site, harborcountry.org experienced an immediate surge of traffic and inquiries as soon as this campaign began, with nearly 2,000 page views in the first two weeks.

Experts in the travel industry have conceded that the rise in gas prices is hav-

ing a direct impact on travel planning. Vacations are now being sought out in areas closer to home, or within a "one tank trip", to offset this rise in cost. The proximity to the Chicago market makes this a boon for Harbor Country and the BeachTowns partners.

It seems, as it was last year, visitors are delaying in making their travel plans, which explains why many of us have experienced a slow start to the season. With the BeachTowns campaign kicking in and going until August, we should see more acceleration in visitor inquiries once we push into the middle of June.

This year, the BeachTowns partners

have obtained their own domain, Beachtowns.org. This site will be up and running around mid-June and, unlike the Michigan.org site which only promotes BeachTowns in the summer, the Beachtowns.org site will continue to promote the partners year-round. As a result we should begin to see a sustained interest further into the Fall season, and pick up visitors earlier in the Spring before Travel Michigan restarts the campaign in May. These partnerships and alliances are part of the continuing efforts of the Chamber and Lodging Association to promote YOU our members and our Harbor Country destination.

Board members sought for Chamber

The Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce is seeking petitions for four seats to the Chamber Board of Directors. Seats expiring include those of Don Jackson, Karen Gear, Chuck Garasic and Margaret Anderson. The Board of Directors approved a term extension for Karen Gear should she be nominated for president. Terms for directors are three years.

All candidates interested in being on the Board must have petitions signed, including those slated by the nominating committee, second term seekers, and new members wishing to run. Petitions must be signed by 20 members in good standing (dues are paid up to date). Signatures will be validated.

Petitions may be picked up at the Chamber office by July 15 and must be returned by 5 p.m. on the last business day before August 1. When petitions are picked up the candidate must read and

sign a Letter of Intent that contains the Board member's job description.

Each candidate must be a member in good standing and agree to accept the responsibilities of a directorship. They must also have been a member of the Chamber for at least one year.

As a Board member they are required to attend ten of the twelve Board meetings unless excused; attend all Chamber functions including 50% of all mixers; be on at least one committee.

If more than four petitions are filed within the designated period, the names of all candidates shall be arranged on a ballot in alphabetical order and that ballot shall be made available to the general membership 15 days prior to the September meeting. Members will have two weeks to return their ballot. Greatest number of votes will determine the board members. New Board members are seated at the October meeting.

Blues Fest, Fireworks set for July 3

Harbor Country's very own fireworks show will take place at Watkins Park in Three Oaks (behind Hardings) on Saturday, July 3 at around 11 p.m. It will also be the finale of Blues Fest held at the same location.

Blues Fest is sponsored in part by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce and Lodging Association, Three Oaks Business Association, Corvette Central, Forest Lawn Landfill

and others.

Gates open at 4 p.m. This year's performers include regional favorite the Elwood Splinter Blues Band, internationally recognized Nora Jean Bruso, and the legendary Carl Weathersby. Admission is \$15 a person; \$25 a couple (non-gender specific). The event will also feature a beer tent and food concessions. Coolers are not allowed.

**new
members
May
2004**

MCK Partners

Mitch Krebs, Craig Mauri, Kristin Luff
9185 Gottlieb Grove
Lakeside, MI 49117
General Membership
Cottage

Joe Prino Realtor

16225 Lakeside Road
Union Pier, MI 49129
Associate Membership
Real Estate

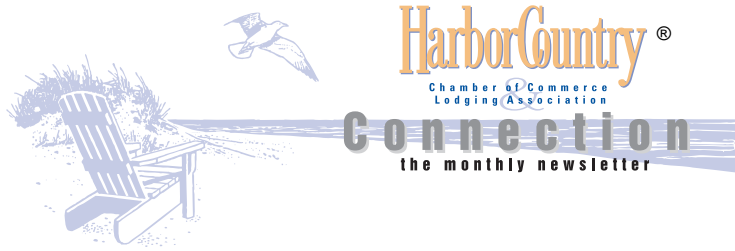
Kirk Harsch Realtor

Prudential Red Arrow
303 E. Michigan Street
Three Oaks, MI 49128
Associate Membership
Real Estate

Ellie Routtenberg

901 Hinman Avenue
Evanston, IL 60202
Associate Member
Individual

**Do you know a business
that should be a member?
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available at most banks, realtors,
and the Chamber Office.
Call Sue Harsch at 469-5409 and she can
mail an application at your suggestion.**



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**COMMON
GROUND**

**BEACHTOWN
SPLASH**

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REALTY CHECK- Keller Williams Realty, the relatively new kids on the block in downtown New Buffalo, hosted a Chamber mixer and open house. Keller Williams Realty, 19 N. Whittaker, is an extension of their St. Joseph operation. Chamber members enjoyed a sidewalk buffet from Featherbone Restaurant. Tom Jennings from Casey's stopped by thankful that a new restaurant wasn't opening on Whittaker. It was a pleasant way to welcome the summer season.

June/July

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

JUNE 18-20, 25-27- The Rocky Horror Show at Dunes Summer Theater.

JUNE 19- Fonn Mor, Celtic music and beyond at Dewey Cannon Park, 7 p.m. Free

JUNE 22- Noon, Harbor Country Chamber Board Meeting, (tentatively set for Stray Dog)

JUNE 25- Roxy Bellows at Acorn Theater, Three Oaks.

JUNE 25- Summer Wine Tasting at Whittaker Woods hosted by the Wine Seller.

JUNE 26- Woodworkers with the Blues at Center of the World Woodshop.

JULY 3- Blues Fest & Fireworks, Watkins Park, Three Oaks. 4-11 pm.

UPDATES AT www.harborcountry.org/calendar