



## Business Watch is ready to begin

If you're getting the feeling you're being watched-- that's a good thing. Harbor Country Business Watch is ready to start after months of hard work by John Nelson of Lakeside Antiques. In fact, you should have received a packet in the mail that came in an envelope marked "Alert!"

Business Watch was formed after a rash of robberies in the later part of 2003. At that time, the Chamber began working with local law enforcement and the Berrien County Sheriff's Department to develop a plan that would be a noticeable impediment to would-be robbers, vandals and overall bad guys.

Business Watch is the final product, relying on a network of police, local business observers, and rapid communication among our membership.

Nelson explains the process in the kit he has put together, but it never

hurts to go over some of the details.

It all starts with a call to 911. Don't be afraid to do this. The man rummaging through your dumpster may be hungry or he may be scoping out your business for his next robbery. Let the police decide. That's what they do best.

Once an incident is reported the police will issue a Business Watch Report to the Chamber office. That report will then be faxed or e-mailed to members as a notice to take precaution. Those businesses without fax or e-mail will be part of a phone tree.

Your packet should have included the following:

1) Business Watch Emergency Contact Information Sheet-- to be sent to the Berrien County Sheriff.

2) A "WARNING" sign to post in your window. A great way to demon-

strate combined awareness to potential thugs.

3) Procedures during and after a robbery to review with your employees.

4) Suspect Description Form to fill out while a crime is fresh in your mind.

5) A copy of the Business Watch Report the police will send out so you can recognize it.

"I believe the Business Watch program has the potential to significantly reduce crime in Harbor Country," said John Nelson. "We hope to create a more business friendly environment for all of us."

Nelson cautions that the success of the program depends on individual businesses to report suspicious activity. Robbers rarely take chances and are known to scout a potential business prior to actually committing a crime. If we can play a part in deterring these plans, then Business Watch becomes an instant success.

The Chamber would like to thank Nelson for his persistence in this project. A big round of applause should also go out to Berrien County Sheriff Deputy Karen Klug who hosted two Robbery Prevention Clinics in December, 2003 and met with the steering committee to formulate the plan for Business Watch. Donna Dutton was also instrumental in starting this program.

Let's be a proactive Chamber. Let's watch our business neighbors and pay attention to anything out of the ordinary. Most importantly, let's make the call. All too often this is the weakest link in a plan that requires intense communication-- that first call. It could possibly make the difference in stopping crime by telling the bad guys that they are the only ones not welcome here.



**WAVING OUR OWN FLAG--** President Mike Hojnacki rode in style during the annual Flag Day Parade in Three Oaks. Bob Johnson (left) donated his time and the use of his Excalibur for the event. First Lady Marisue road shotgun and assisted greatly during the candy toss frenzy. This was the first time Harbor Country was represented in the parade. It certainly won't be the last.



Harbor Country®  
Chamber of Commerce

**Board of Directors:**

Michael Hojnacki, President  
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Communications

Karen Gear, Vice-President  
Co-chair of Economic Development  
and Government Relations

Don Jackson, Treasurer  
Co-chair of Economic Development  
and Government Relations

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John Nelson  
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Diane Botica  
Serves on the Marketing Committee

Brenda Stellema  
Serves on the Marketing Committee

## We need a few good people

By Michael Hojnacki, Chamber President

It's time for the annual board member search. We're losing some key people, though I believe two of the four board members whose seats open this year will seek another term.

Don Jackson will be leaving having served the Chamber as president, vice-president, treasurer and board member. His viewpoint of how things have to mesh to maintain a dynamic organization will be greatly missed. These are some big shoes to fill. We'd welcome anyone who has the ability to see the big picture over personal agendas.

Margaret Anderson has also served her term limits. We'll understand the void that will be left behind the moment she's not there. Anderson is a no nonsense person when it comes to board matters. She is consistently active in keeping the Chamber's name at the forefront. She has no qualms about asking for money, and no hesitation in spending it for the right cause. She also has been indispensable in organizing the annual PET Golf Outing.

Chuck Garasic will seek another term. He retired from the board for about a month and then was recruited to fill the vacancy left by Roger Harvey. Garasic is like an overwound top, spinning in every direction as he handles overseeing the Guide production, hanging banners around Harbor Country, handing out money from Community Development to support local events, and hoping one day to bring a beautification plan into fruition. Garasic is the kind of person that should be on every board or at least

as somebody's right hand man.

Karen Gear will also seek another term. Though it seems like she has spent her entire life as a board member, the board recently allowed her one more term if she is nominated for the office of president. This would be a fitting honor for Gear, who has unselfishly served the needs of the board and the Chamber as its treasurer, now as its vice-president. She has been awarded a few plaques that honor her as "Volunteer of the Year," but no piece of wood and metal can equal the dedication to the cause as exuded by Karen Gear. And that dedication goes far past Harbor Country. She balances her life, her family, her job, her community in one of the most mind-dazzling feats of juggling that I have ever witnessed.

Do you feel like a wannabe? Do you have the urge to roll up your shirt sleeves and do something for the good of the Chamber? For the good of the 450 plus members?

We don't expect you to meet the standards set by these seasoned veterans of community activism, but we're willing to train you. We're willing to listen to your point of view. We'll encourage you to take flight and oversee a project or two before the first year is over. We'll sit around and laugh at bad jokes, but in the next minute set the course for a new marketing plan, a new website upgrade, or find another way to invite a new face into the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce.

We just need a few good people.

**See related story on page 3.**

### Next Month:

**A push for new members; updating old members  
Committees to extend reach of Chamber Board**

#### Harbor Country® Connection

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## Keywords yield trends

Over the last few months we have, with funding from the Harbor Country Lodging Association, invested in Internet keyword advertising that has yielded powerful traffic results to the Chamber's site, [www.harborcountry.org](http://www.harborcountry.org). In the process, we've also benefited from traffic trends based on certain keywords (search terms used by visitors to find specific sites).

Rather than the traditional approach of coaxing web users with generic travel and vacation related terms, we have found that there is an increasing audience in women who are now making a larger proportion of travel, purchasing, and planning decisions. Another hot spot of activ-

ity is related to stress relief, and remedies for burn-outs looking for a change of pace and scenery. The gas crunch has churned out many visitors looking for travel destinations close to home. People want deals! Activity junkies are looking for something to do (festivals/events) in Michigan, and Harbor Country towns are increasingly being sought out by name, the top among them: New Buffalo, Union Pier, and Three Oaks - in that order.

Other amusing results tell us that we have areas we need to work on. For example, many visitors are still looking for Harbor County (not Country), an annoying misconception to many of us. And a

number of visitors found us when searching for "perfume palace iraq". Don't ask, we don't know how that happened.

What all this means is that we just don't throw money at the wind, hoping to attract visitors to Harbor Country. We want to find the right audiences that will regard us as an appropriate answer to their search. The next phase of our site's upgrade will capture the search terms visitors type in our own site, and will tell us exactly what they're looking for in Harbor Country. The Chamber member list is top priority on the site, and they could very well be looking for your business by name.

## You can save with Early, Early Guide deadline

The early bird catches the worm, but it's the early, early advertiser who saves the green. An ultra-early advance deadline for the 2005 Harbor Country Guide is offering savings of 10% off last year's prices.

"It was such a great book last year that we decided to offer a reward for an early commitment to next year's guide," said Guide coordinator Chuck Garasic.

Garasic explained that this is only a space reservation deadline. Artwork for

your ad isn't due until February, 2005. You will, however, be asked if you want to run your 2004 ad over again. Just think if you run the same ad, pay for your space by Friday, September 3, you have nothing to worry about all winter and you pocket the savings as well. Those savings can run from \$50 to over \$500.

Watch the mail for a member packet that will include the new rates. Think Spring!

## Board member petitions due before Aug. 1

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 must be returned by 5 p.m. on the last business day before August 1. Petitions are available at the Chamber office. 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 and 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. The greatest number of votes will determine the board members. New Board members are seated at the October meeting.

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.

new  
members  
JUNE  
2004

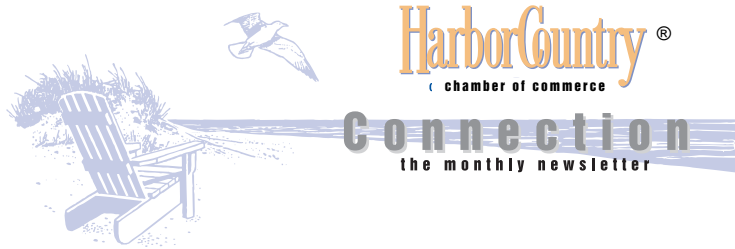
*Cherry Beach Cottage*  
*Harry Dillard*  
13901 Cherry Beach Road  
Harbert, MI  
Cottage  
General Membership

*JustMark Corporation*  
*Audy Kryceris*  
813 W. Water Street  
New Buffalo, MI  
Cottage  
General Membership

*Union Pier Home*  
*Kathleen Mac Arthur*  
15963 Lakeshore Road  
Union Pier, MI  
Cottage  
General Membership

*Block Fine Arts*  
*Ellen M. Block*  
308 S. Elm Street  
Three Oaks, MI  
Art  
General Membership

*Susan Fredman & Associates*  
*At Home with Nature*  
*Susan Fredman*  
15998 Red Arrow Highway  
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Interior Design  
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**WE'RE  
WATCHING**

**GOOD  
PEOPLE**

**TRENDY  
WORDS**

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BLUES FEST- Nora Jean Brusco was one of the headliners at the 6th Annual Blues Fest, sponsored in part by the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce. The July 3 festival in Three Oaks also featured the Elwood Splinter Blues Band and Carl Weathersby. Hundreds attended the music fest and fireworks display in Three Oaks even though the event was delayed by periodic rain showers.

## July/Aug

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- JULY 24-25-** RV Gas Engine show is a step back in time.
- JULY 24-25-** Four A's Car Show, Three Oaks
- JULY 24-** Chikamingling at Public Safety Bldg., Harbert. Meet Chikaming leaders, tour facility.
- AUG 1- Petitions for new board members due** (SEE PAGE 3)
- AUG 1-** Lakeside Ice Cream Social, 6-9 p.m. Lakeside Park
- AUG 6-7-** Ship & Shore Festival at New Buffalo's lakefront, fireworks.
- AUG 13-14-** Sound of Silents Film Festival, Vickers Theatre, Three Oaks. Simply remarkable.
- AUG 28-** Springdale Block Party, Three Oaks featuring Jump Little Children.

UPDATES AT [www.harborcountry.org/calendar](http://www.harborcountry.org/calendar)