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HarborCountry®

Chamber of Commerce  
&  
Lodging Association

Connection  
the monthly newsletter

## Start Wining! Wine Trail could boost tourism

Our Lake Michigan Shore is the other west coast just a little cooler! It is also designated as an American Viticultural Area. To this end, 10 wineries, cellars, and vineyards have combined forces this year to create the Southwest Michigan Wine Trail. The trail includes Harbor Country wineries Heart of the Vineyard and Tabor Hill, as well as the St. Julian Tasting Room in Union Pier.

Along with presenting a joint marketing effort for the wine producers, the Wine Trail acts as an association for the group and coordinates various events throughout the year to help develop additional traffic. Patterned after the Californian Sonoma-Napa Valley wine tasting routes, the plan promotes a sense of consumer confidence to travelers in essence saying, "...it's worth the drive." Outside of Harbor Country the Wine Trail takes visitors to Baroda, Fennville, Coloma and Paw Paw.

Upcoming events include Holiday Spice: a food & wine weekend on November 9 & 10; and Chocolate & Passion, February 15 & 16, 2003. Not part of the trail, but

equally exciting will be Harbor Country's own Food and Wine Classic, formerly the Sparkling Event, to take place November 22, 23, 24. Watch your mail and the Connection for details.

### Installation dinner set for Oct. 17

The annual Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce Installation Dinner will be held on Thursday, October 17, at Skip's Other Place on Red Arrow Highway in New Buffalo. Cocktails are at 6 p.m. with dinner at 7. The cost this year is \$20.00 per person. Watch the mail for your invitation and get your money and reservation to the Chamber Office.

Being installed are incumbents A.J. Boggio and Mike Hojnacki and newcomers Ray Vasquez and Joan Zonka. The slate of officers for the new fiscal year is Don Jackson, President; Mike Hojnacki, Vice President; and Karen Gear, Treasurer.



Sales associates at St. Julian Tasting Room in Union Pier, Lisa Knoll, Linda Oman, Laurie James and manager Bev Heimbach are ready to welcome travelers following the Southwest Michigan Wine Trail.



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## Great Lakes. Great Memories. Welcome Center Manager Gets Ready To Say Good-bye

Imagine Lennon and McCartney's long and winding road perhaps taking a brief sentimental journey through New Buffalo, MI in 1964. What if Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters had hopped aboard their Day-Glo International Harvester school bus, "Further," and flew their cuckoo's nest over Rt. 12 that same year?

As far fetched as those scenarios may seem, so too might the odds be of anyone predicting that a poor summer intern from Western Michigan University eager for some extra spending money, could discover a "fun job" that would "turn into a lifetime career." Thirty-eight years ago, Betsy Brandt, now a resident of Three Oaks, MI and her husband Ron, were both struggling newlywed college students in need of work. "We were broke, broke, broke, broke," Brandt emphatically recalls.

Little did anyone know that she would rise through the ranks of the Michigan Department of Transportation, now known as Travel Michigan, to become the state's longest serving manager at the nation's first highway travel information center.

Betsy worked her way up from

being a part-time summer helper in June of '64 at the Welcome Center's original Rt. 12 location, which opened in 1935, to assistant manager and then to manager on October 3, 1981.

By then, the center had relocated from its rural Walton-like surroundings, to a more modern, high traffic facility on Interstate 94. Today's bustling 50-acre complex near Exit 1 in New Buffalo has been operating since November of 1990. For nearly forty years, Brandt has effortlessly adapted to the daily twists and turns of her fast paced, never-a-dull-moment, job. Betsy admits, "It's so much fun just being able to help people."

Brandt has greeted many of the same travelers year in and year out. After numerous repeat visits, says Betsy, "They become your friends."

"They look for you when they come and expect to see you." In fact, Brandt still keeps in regular contact with one woman who has been returning to her summer cottage in Coloma, MI since 1964. The steady 'round the clock flow of cars, busses, RV's and semi-trailers entering and exiting one of Michigan's 13 welcome centers has repeatedly earned New Buffalo the distinction of being the state's busiest.

In 2001, Harbor Country's New Buffalo Welcome Center achieved its current number one ranking, attracting 1.9 million visitors. Brandt and her staff also appreciate the immense increase in literature and more sophisticated resources which enable them to assist visitors. Back in '64, Betsy recalls the center only had four little racks with information. Now, tourists may browse through 2,400 publications.

Naturally, computers at the center provide Betsy with the ultimate tool in aiding customers. Access to the Web via the

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Michigan's (and the Nation's) first tourist information center.

### Harbor Country® Connection

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## Spam is not just lunch meat

Known to most of us as junk e-mail, it is known on the Internet by its acronym, Spam. It now infiltrates even major corporations, clogging servers, and costing business millions in lost productivity. Many legitimate e-mails are often lost when office workers inadvertently delete them with the rest of the junk mail flooding their inboxes, thus affecting the reliability of inter-company communications.

Proliferation of Spam has become so serious that many consumer groups are pleading for congressional legislation to stop these vast quantities of fraudulent, inappropriate and offensive e-mails. Such laws would be difficult to enforce, just as those laws that were intended to stop telemarketers. While we wait with skepticism for such legislation, and you are fed up with the unrelenting stream of unwanted junk e-mail, there are some things you can do:

1. Do not "Reply" to Spam e-mails to be "Removed" from their list. Your reply sends up flags to Spammers that your e-mail address is active, and you'll get even more junk e-mail.

2. Changing your e-mail address is very effective. Shutting down your existing e-mail address will force all junk e-mails to bounce back to their senders. Spammers don't like bouncing addresses and remove them from their databases. It may take a year, but you may be able to reactivate your old e-

## CENTER from page 2

Internet assist in making guest reservations online, as well as help Michigan businesses. With installation of Broadband technology already underway, Brandt feels the Welcome Center will further expand its role in helping Michigan tourism. Studies have shown Welcome Centers can add up to two more days to a visitor's stay, which translates into more profits for Michigan businesses and increased revenue for the state's economy.

Betsy's award-winning tenure at Travel Michigan will end October 31, and given her love for people, Brandt knows retirement won't come easy.

"People always ask me how many times can you tell someone how to get to Detroit? But I wouldn't trade this for anything."

On behalf of myself and all of the Chamber members, we salute you, Betsy Brandt, for your nearly four decades of dedicated and distinguished service to Michigan's tourism industry and the citizens and businesses of Harbor Country.

*E-mail your comments to:* [president@harborcountry.org](mailto:president@harborcountry.org)



(Above) The second tourist center was built at Exit 1, I-94 and later (right) expanded into the present-day facility. It is Michigan's busiest tourist information center attracting over a million visitors a year.



mail address junk mail free. To do this, ask your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to give you a new e-mail address, and "suspend" your current address, so you can reactivate it at a later time.

3. Though not 100% effective, you can buy anti-Spam software that will automatically flush out most incoming Spam before it hits your inbox. Use only trusted services, as many are bogus rip-offs. McAfee Software ([www.mcafee.com](http://www.mcafee.com)) is a good source. Their product is called "Spam Killer", and has been awarded "Best Buy" by PCWorld magazine.

We may not be able to stop Spammers from peddling their wares, but we don't have to sit idly by and accept delivery either.

## P.E.T. golf outing big success

The Partnership in Education for Tomorrow (P.E.T.) Committee was happy to report that the golf outing at Lost Dunes Country Club in Bridgman on September 18 was a huge success. The event raised \$5,392.50 for the scholarship fund, including a \$1,000 anonymous donation. Each year, this committee awards at least one scholarship to a River Valley and a New Buffalo High School senior pursuing a career in technical education.

Fifty golfers participated in the event. Winners included low gross Jeff Lawless and Joe Effa with a total of 70; low net Paul Oselka and Gene Hwang with 63; woman closest to the pin Nora Duffy; and man closest to the pin Keith McLean. They received a gift certificate for \$50 donated by Lost Dunes (to be used at Lost Dunes).

At the last Chamber Board meeting on September 24 Board Members Margaret Anderson and Karen Gear said that they owe a special thanks to Nora Duffy and Jeff Shearer and the entire staff of Lost Dunes for letting them hold the golf outing there. It was also announced that Lost Dunes has said they will host the outing again next year.

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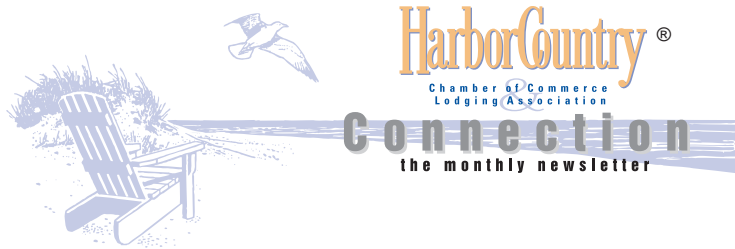
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John Anderson of Topp Press with two helpers, Alex and Kyra Heit, as they help the New Buffalo Lions Club serve food at a SAG stop for the annual Apple Cider Century Bicycle Ride. Ride attracts 7,500 to area each year.

**d o i t**

**October Weekends** "Hallowscream Fright Fest" at Vickers Theatre, Three Oaks.

**October 13-** Third Annual Hot Rod Happening. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. WOW Art Gallery, New Buffalo. Over 75 classic hot rods on display.

**October 19-** The 20th Annual Arts and Craft Show at New Buffalo High School Gym, Clay Street. Over 70 arts and craft booths and a bake sale.

**Save on guide ads**

Information about next year's Harbor Country Guide advertising is in the mail. Once again the committee will be offering 2002 prices if you place a reservation and pay by November 1, 2002 for the 2003 guide.

**Mixer in November**

A Mixer With A Twist Of Business, sponsored by Sensational Spas and the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce, will be held November 14, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 5595 Red Arrow Highway, Stevensville, Michigan. Your hosts for the evening will be Brian & Jackie Van Horn. Please R.S.V.P. to the Chamber office by November 4, 2002 by calling 269-469-5409.