



Volume 14 / Issue 4

Calendar

APRIL 2004

APRIL 1-30

6th Annual Quilt Walk downtown Anacortes

APRIL 1-30

1-30 Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, 428-5959

APRIL 1-23

A.C.T. Theatre presents "Hello Dolly" musical comedy:
Tickets: \$15, (360) 293-6829

APRIL 8

President's Luncheon, noon

APRIL 9-10

Quilt Show at Anacortes Middle School

APRIL 15

Business After-Hours, 5:30-7:30 p.m. at
San Juan Airlines

APRIL 20

Chamber Board: Executive meeting 3 p.m.;
Full Board at 3:45 p.m.

APRIL 21

Waterfront Festival meeting 8 a.m.

APRIL 23

Anacortes Museum new exhibit opening 7-9 p.m.

APRIL 27

"Business Connections" Networking Breakfast at
Salvation Army

VIC Meeting, 9 a.m.



April 8 President's Luncheon

Community Health and Hospital Is Focus of April President's Luncheon

Island Hospital is our community's center for health and wellness, but many may be surprised at the not-so-obvious: how the hospital positively impacts our local economy.

Island Hospital Chief Executive Officer Vince Oliver will discuss this and more at the Chamber's President's Luncheon, sponsored by **Cyber One Mortgage**, on Thursday, April 8. Oliver will present an overview of the hospital as well as services available to business owners, economic impact on our community, current challenges and vision for the future.

Oliver took the Island Hospital helm as Chief Executive Officer in May 2000. With more than 20 years of hospital experience, he has led the hospital to financial wellness



and helped it focus on its mission of providing needed services to the community, including a Cancer Care Center that reached capacity within six months of its inception. Last year he oversaw the construction of the Island Hospital Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center, which has reached near capacity as well.

Learn more about Island Hospital at the President's Luncheon beginning at noon at the **Salvation Army**, 3001 R Avenue in Anacortes. The luncheon is only \$15 to attend and you must R.S.V.P. to the Chamber at 293-7911. Please have your credit card and number of people in your party ready when you call. If you need to cancel your reservation, you must do so at least 24 hours in advance to avoid full billing

2004 Festival Season Is Under Way!

The **Skagit Valley Tulip Festival** kicks off festival season here in Skagit County and this year looks to be a good one. With the tulips actually appearing on time this year we can expect a good volume of people to flow into the county and into Anacortes throughout the month. Of course the month-long quilt walk and two-day quilt show associated with the Tulip Festival will bring people specifically to our community, but also just the number of people finding accommodations here will expose Anacortes to many visitors.

The **Anacortes Waterfront Festival** is next on the calendar, scheduled this year for May 22nd & 23rd with the kick-off dinner on the 21st. This annual favorite has grown each year in number of vendors, entertainers, activities, exhibits and attendees, and that trend is expected to continue. If you have not yet secured your vendor space at the festival or a sponsorship, contact the Chamber office to do so.

July is noted for the huge flea market/garage sale known as **Shipwreck Day**.

Continued page 7



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Time To Spruce Up Your Business With A Little Spring Cleaning

Spring is in the air and that means a lot for Anacortes businesses. Signs of increased activity are already evident.

The tulips are blooming perfectly in time for the annual Skagit Valley Tulip festival, whales have already been seen plying the waters of the San Juan Islands and the international ferry run from Anacortes to Sidney, B.C. has returned to service.

These are only a few examples that indicate it is time to be ready for increased business activity.

With that, it is also time to look around our storefronts and select some spring-cleaning projects that will not only beautify our business community but also drive more traffic to your door.

Everyone has a project or two that they know they would like to check off their list but have put it off for one reason or another.



Michael Broome

Whether it is a simple thing like planting some spring flowers in your planter box or touching up the paint on your front door, or a more involved undertaking like painting your entire building or replacing that old awning, now is the perfect time to get it done.

There are many good examples of work that has recently been completed like the restoration of the sign at **Village Pizza**. They also painted their entire building and planted flowers – it looks great!

Dave's Anaco Appliance replaced the awning that stretches the length of their building and it has made a world of difference to the curb appeal there.

Even little things like picking up the trash and cigarette butts on the sidewalk or around the corner help to beautify our fine city and prepare it for our customers. I encourage you to take a walk outside and look at your business. Are there weeds growing? Light

bulbs burnt out? A loose handrail or even dirty windows? With a discerning eye, we can all find something to spruce up. Add a little elbow grease and our businesses will all be ready for the busy times ahead.

Caught in the Act of Doing Business



Bud Lewis of **Home Sweet Home Antiques** can be seen moving items to and from the front of his shop as part of his daily marketing strategy, which has been very effective. Bud and his wife Karen have owned the store for over 13 years.

April's President's Luncheon Sponsor: Cyber One Mortgage

Mark Nilson, Area Manager for Cyber One Mortgage and his Anacortes team can help you choose the right loan to match your needs. As an independent broker, Cyber One Mortgage is connected with many different lenders and even more programs. Take the stress out of the loan process, let Mark and his team do the shopping for you and monitor your loan's progress. Mark

is always available for questions and will keep you up-to-date as the process advances from start to finish.

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DOWNTOWN DOINGS

The Destination Downtown Anacortes (DDA) design committee has found our designer for the community archway to historic downtown.

There is still some work to be completed before we make the announcement as to whom it is and what the design will be however. Please look forward to more information on this in the next newsletter and in our local paper.

A big thank you to Cory Hunter of Kingfisher Lane for helping bring this Arch project together. A true volunteer who really makes a difference.

April is a time to think about spring-cleaning and that's just what we are going to do. Saturday, April 17 is our first celebrated clean up day. Details are still developing, however, as you can guess, volunteers are needed! Ace Hardware has been generous enough to donate garbage bags and latex gloves and the City of Anacortes has pro-



vided us with maps highlighting locations most in need of our help.

Lunch will be provided for volunteers after the cleanup is finished for the day.

May is scheduled to bring about the grand re-opening of the **Majestic Hotel**, which has been anticipated since the day it closed due to a fire. The saying goes 'April showers bring May flowers,' and that is exactly what you'll find on the patio at the Majestic on Saturday, May 22 as the **Star Bar Café** and DDA present the Downtown Garden Fair.

Those of you who have visited the Star Bar in the last month know how strongly Jo and Wally feel about beautifying our downtown area. Jo has found many people to donate indoor and outdoor garden items and plants for the fair with all proceeds from the sale going toward the purchase of large new flowerpots to be placed along Commercial Avenue in downtown. This truly is a community event.

If you would like to donate or volunteer for this day, please call or e-mail me at the Chamber at 293-7911 or njankelson@anacortes.org

— Nancy Jankelson, Director
Destination Downtown Anacortes

Business Connections Breakfast April 27

Got Business? Get more at the Chamber's "Business Connections" networking breakfast on **Tuesday, April 27** at 7:30 a.m. (doors open at 7:15 a.m.) Participants will each give a one-minute infomercial on their business to others at the table, then exchange business cards and complete lead sheets. Participants then move to a new table with new people. The focus is on "connecting" member businesses with each other to create sales leads not only directly, but also indirectly through 'sphere of influence' referrals.

The cost to participate is \$6, which includes a catered continental breakfast. There is also an added opportunity to market your product or service by hosting a "Talking Table." For \$10 you can secure an eight-foot display table to show your products, fliers, photos, etc., and have two minutes to present your business to the entire room.

This is an excellent opportunity to expand your "business connections" and have a great time. This special meeting will be held at the **Salvation Army** meeting room at 3001 R Avenue, Anacortes. Please R.S.V.P. to the Chamber at 293-7911.

Fly High at April 15 Business After Hours at San Juan Airlines

April's *Business After Hours* will be held at **San Juan Airlines** at the **Anacortes Airport** and it's going to be great!

We'll get to take an up-close look at some of the planes in the SJA fleet, enjoy the atmosphere of our own local airport and partake in business networking at its finest.

There will be complimentary food and beverages for Chamber members and their guests as well as door prizes.

Don't miss this fun event and the opportunity to expand your business contacts Thursday, April 15 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at San Juan Airlines, 4000 Airport Road,

Anacortes. Please R.S.V.P. to the Chamber at info@Anacortes.org or 293-7911 to help our hosts get an accurate count for catering. See you there!





Small Business Person Of The Year Nominees Sought

The Skagit Valley College Business Resource Center and the Small Business Administration are seeking nominees for this year's Small Business Person of the Year award.

They are asking Skagit County chambers of commerce to each nominate a maximum of four candidates from their respective communities.

One of those four will be named Small Business Person of the Year for their community and then be considered for the county award. This is where you come in.

Take a look around at your fellow chamber members and call, write or email the Chamber by April 16 with your suggestions as to who merits Small Business Person of the Year and why.

A Chamber-appointed nominating committee will select four nominees from the pool created through your suggestions.

Selection criteria include:

1. **Staying Power—a Substantial History for at Least 3 Years**
2. **Growth in number of employees**
3. **Increase in Sales and or Unit Volume**
4. **Innovativeness of Product or Service Offered**
5. **Current and Financial Data Substantiating the Improved Financial Position of the Business**
6. **Response to Adversity**
7. **Contributions to Aid Community-Oriented Projects**

All nominees will be honored at a special dinner, which is open to all Chamber members, to be held May 27 at Skagit Valley College. There will be local and county media coverage of the nominees and the event.



Anacortes Mayor Dean Maxwell cuts the ribbon at the official ceremony celebrating the move and expansion of **Island Adventure Charters** and the addition of a new business, **Anacortes Kayak Tours**, both owned and operated by Shane and Jennifer Aggergaard.

Networking Blooms at March Business After-Hours



Jean and Shunji of **Donatello Flowers and Gifts** give out door prizes at the March Business After Hours, which they co-hosted with **Emerald Bay Events**.

Waterfront Festival Poster Unveiled at March Meeting



Port of Anacortes Commissioner Bill Shortt joins **Shell Puget Sound Refinery** GM Tom Smith, poster artist Jennifer Bowman and Chamber events director Beth Prins to officially unveil the 2004 Waterfront Festival Poster at well attended event held at **Island Adventures** in March. The refinery is again the official poster sponsor.

We've moved! New location: 602 Commercial

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Red

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FEATURED BUSINESS

Import Autosports

New business owner Jeff Malone believes a mix of experience, contacts and expanded facilities will translate to top-rate service at a competitive cost for clients at Import Autosport, Inc. in Anacortes.

Malone purchased Just Imports, owned and operated by Bryan Christensen for more than 20 years. Christensen will remain on staff with Import Autosport, joining Malone and automotive technician Arnie Jongsma.

Import Autosport, located on South March Point Road, specializes in Japanese, German and Swedish vehicles. The shop has undergone a dramatic facelift. It now features three two-car bays and an office-reception area. In addition, the renovated shop has an added lift, machine shop and parts inventory area.

"Just Import had an extensive diagnostics setup," said Malone, "but physical improvements to the shop will give us the versatility to do several things at once. Our mission is to maintain the quality of service previously provided by Just Import, with improved efficiency so we can address our client's needs with same-day or next-day service."



Malone is a Seattle native who has worked for dealerships and models including Porche, Saab, Lotus, Audi, VW, Toyota and others.

"I've got an extensive background in parts, and contacts all over the country," said Malone. "That's good news for our clients. We can help guarantee that they get the best products at the best price possible."

Import Autosport, Inc., is located at 8180 South March Point Road. The shop's telephone number remains the same: (360) 293-7551. The shop will operate 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.

THANKS TO...

Our March Sponsors:

President's Luncheon

Luncheon Sponsor: **Chapman University**

Door Prizes:

KLKI Radio

River City Screenprinting

Wells Fargo Bank

Business After Hours

Donatello Flowers and Gifts

& Emerald Bay Events – Hosts

Door Prizes:

Donatello Flowers and Gifts

Upstage Boutique & Men's Store

Ace Hardware

KLKI Radio

Penguin Coffee

Anacortes Cinemas

Thanks also to...

Mike Young and Fidalgo Island Rotary for weeding and planting the garden at 35th & Commercial; **Charlie Hopke** for the fresh beautiful flowers from his garden which he delivers to the DOL and VIC every Monday morning; **Loman House** for adding an additional \$50 to their membership renewal for *Community Beautification & Holiday Decorations*; our **Chamber Ambassadors** for their tireless effort in support of events and new members; all of the volunteers who continue to make our Visitor Information Center as wonderful as it is!



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Anacortes Featured in WA State Visitors' Guide

Once again this year, Anacortes and the Skagit Valley are featured prominently in the beautiful Washington State Visitors' Guide, published by the Washington State Hotel and Lodging Association.

The 138-page magazine, published in cooperation with the Washington State Tourism Office, was delivered by the thousands a few days ago to hotels, motels, visitor information centers and chambers of commerce throughout the Northwest and British Columbia. Free copies are available by ordering from www.StayInWashington.com or www.experiencewashington.com.

Our state is broken into 10 tourism regions, with Anacortes and "The Islands" leading the way. A full page aerial photograph of the islands lies opposite a page dedicated to Anacortes and Fidalgo Island. This page features a regional map, a narrative about our community and photographs of orcas, Deception Pass Bridge and Cap Sante Marina.



In addition, Anacortes is among communities featured in a section on the Cascade Loop: "The communities along the route are as varied as the Loop's geography. There's the Bavarian village of Leavenworth, the frontier town of Winthrop, lakeside Chelan, historic Snohomish, waterfront Anacortes, bustling Everett, the Apple Capital of Wenatchee and the pastoral

hamlets of Whidbey Island. Hiking, biking, gawking, walking or exploring opportunities beckon every mile of the way."

Finally, there is a two-page spread on Skagit County. Eye-grabbing photographs in this section include orcas in front of Mt. Baker, tulips from the Skagit Valley, an island sunset and a marina and antique shop from downtown Anacortes. If you want only specific sections of this stunning magazine, visit www.StayInWashington.com and select the pages you want to print from your computer.

New elements of our tourism promotion campaign this year include membership in the Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau as well as a "hot link" to our Web site from Tourism Victoria's popular Web site: www.tourismvictoria.com. Between this region's natural attractions, Butchart Gardens' 100th anniversary and the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympics, Victoria and British Columbia are excellent tourism partners for us.

Our membership in the Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau qualifies us for a place in their downtown Seattle brochure display area as well as a "hot link" to www.anacortes.org from their Web site: www.seeSeattle.org. Anacortes will be listed in beautiful promotional publications including the Seattle Visitors Guide and the Professional Travel Planners Guide.

In the next issue of *The Communicator* we will explain our second annual television campaign, launched in partnership with Belo Corporation's King 5 TV and NorthWest Cable News.

Licensing Department Supports Efforts in Community

You may or may not know that the Chamber of Commerce, operating as a sub-agency for Skagit County, manages the vehicle and vessel licensing department in Anacortes. Located in the Chamber building, the sub-agency has three employees, April, Betsy and Janette who many of you have come to know and like over the years.

Each time a transaction is processed a small fee is charged by the sub-agency, which ultimately goes to the Chamber's operating budget. This additional revenue helps our

Chamber be as financially stable as it is, allowing us to fund projects like community beautification and others.

One source of business for the Anacortes licensing department is car, boat and RV dealers. When you buy a new or used vehicle or vessel in Anacortes, the dealer will have the title transfer work done either at the County or at a sub-agency. Unfortunately, not all dealers in Anacortes recognize the benefit of keeping the work and dollars in Anacortes and opt to send their work elsewhere.

The next time you purchase a car, boat or RV from an Anacortes dealer ask if the title transfer work will be done in Anacortes. If the answer is yes, let them know you appreciate their decision. If the answer is no, and you feel strongly about keeping the dollars here in town, you might share your sentiment with the dealer. Most astute business people will listen to their customers and in this case, it could help keep some extra dollars right here in Anacortes where they belong.



Festival Season *continued from page one*

What a fun event this is! Bargain hunters, junk collectors, antique aficionados and plain old looky-loos will converge on the streets of downtown Anacortes on Saturday, July 17 in search of treasures. This event is also growing. More spaces than ever have been added this year to accommodate the interest. Spaces are on sale now and are expected to sell out soon so, again, call the Chamber if you would like a spot.

August brings us the ever-popular **Anacortes Arts Festival** – three days of food, fun, music, entertainment and fabulous art, among other things. This festival takes place August 6, 7 & 8 this year and is expected to be better than ever!

A new festival produced by the Anacortes Chamber will make its home in September on the 17th, 18th & 19th. The **Anacortes Jazz Festival** will begin Friday afternoon with an educational component for students of Anacortes High School and continue later that evening with the official Jazz Festival kick-off dinner. Local pubs and clubs will pick up where the dinner leaves off, providing even more live jazz into the wee hours of the morning. Saturday is the big day when Curtis Wharf will be transformed into a beautiful waterfront concert venue with some of the best jazz entertainment from around the Pacific Northwest and Vancouver, Canada. Plans are in the works for a Sunday morning gospel brunch to close out the festival.

Oyster Run returns to Anacortes on Sunday, September 26, and if last year was any indicator, the crowds (and the opportunities), will be huge!

Last but not least, the **Anacortes**



Christmas Festival will span from the day after Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve with a myriad of events ranging from the Lions Christmas Parade to the Community Tree-lighting Ceremony to the Christmas Boat Parade and much more.

With each of these festivals comes the opportunity to capitalize on the large crowds of people. Begin your plans now on how to reach out to festivalgoers and increase your sales. Get creative and be bold! The returns will well exceed the investment.

Membership Renewals

- Anacortes Highliner Charter
- Alldata Shredding Inc.
- Anaco Inn
- Anacortes Automotive
- An-O-Chords Chapter SPEBSQSA
- Birch Equipment
- Cap Sante Heated Mini-Storage
- First American Title Co.
- Humane Society of Skagit County
- Island Adventure Charters, Inc.
- Island Rentals, Inc.
- Micro Aero Dynamics
- Pacific Rim Marine Surveyors
- Peoples Bank
- San Juan Motel
- San Juan Rehabilitation and Care Center of Anacortes
- SeaBear
- Similk Beach Golf Course
- Sound Body Shop
- Susie's Moped Rentals, Inc.
- U.S. Bank
- Vicky Grady
- Viking Moving Services, Inc
- Waste Management of Skagit County

CHAMBER MEMBER NEWS NOTES

- **Whidbey Island Bank** will be holding a silent auction in their lobby April 1-15, with proceeds to benefit the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. All auction items have been donated by local businesses. Stop by and check out the auction or just have a cup of coffee at 2202 Commercial, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Volunteers, participants and supporters of the **American Cancer Society Relay For Life** of Anacortes gathered to kick-off the 2004 Relay season in March. Many new teams gathered, to join the hundreds of participants from last year, in the goal of raising \$165,000 for the fight against cancer.

If you would like to take part in this fun and meaningful event as a volunteer, team participant, or cancer survivor contact Christi Beckley at 1-800-729-5588 (option 3) or Meredith Link at 360-293-6831. Team Captain meetings will be held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at Gere-A-Deli in downtown Anacortes.

The Relay For Life is June 12 –13 from 3 p.m.–9 a.m. at the Anacortes High School.

- The **Anacortes Museum** will host an opening night reception for the new exhibit "Roots and Pathways: A Celebration of Island Cultures" on April 23, 7-9 p.m. 1305 -8th St. Free refreshments will be served.

Welcome New Members

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VIC Statistics

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

FEBRUARY 2004

Visitors	796	(2003 - 905)
Phone Calls	322	(2003 - 319)
Information Requests.....	74	(2003 - 116)
Relocation Packets.....	43	(2003 - 37)
Web Sessions	15,587	(2003 - 7,771)

Executive Board

Executive Board

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Randy Burgess / Ace Hardware

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Pam Allen / Anaco Inn / Anaco Bay Inn

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Vince Oliver* / Island Hospital

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WA State Rules Change For Gift Certificates

Starting this July, a gift certificate issued in Washington State by any merchant, with some exceptions, will be good forever. Under a law recently signed by Gov. Gary Locke, it is now illegal to put an expiration date on a gift card or certificate. And, such cards or certificates will be redeemable for cash when their value slips to less than \$5, returning to consumers the money that now stays with merchants. The law, effective July 1, has a few exceptions, including cards and certificates that are part of promotions or those donated to a charity for fund-raising purposes.

The current law requires merchants to give the unused portion of gift certificates to the state after three years. The unclaimed-property office at the Department of Revenue has tried to reunite the money and the gift cards' owners, but has often been unsuccessful because it had little information to go on. On average, the state general fund was benefiting to the tune of \$2.7 million a year in unused gift-card money.

Rep. Ross Hunter, D-Medina, chief sponsor of the legislation (House Bill 3036), said it will end those awkward moments when a consumer walks into a restaurant and presents a card that's rejected because it's too old.

Some retailers, including restaurateurs, backed the new legislation, and no one testified against it, according to the legislative record. The bill was modeled after a California law, but a provision was added to prevent merchants from whittling down the value of gift cards by imposing various usage fees, said Julie Sexton, legislative liaison with the Revenue Department.

In recent years the use of gift cards has become widespread. Consumers Union, which publishes Consumer Reports, reported that about \$45 billion in gift certificates were purchased nationwide in 2003. It is estimated that Washington state's share was about \$90 million.

Hunter said the new law represents good consumer protection. "Anytime you see a change in the way people pay for things, there's opportunities for it to get out of hand," he said.



Anacortes
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