



THE ANACORTES COMMUNICATOR

The Newsletter of the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce

Volume 20 / Issue 12

calendar

- Wednesday, December 1** 2:00 – 4:00 pm
VIC Volunteer Holiday Appreciation Party
Depot Arts Center
- Tuesday, December 7** 3:00 pm
Marketing & Promotions Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Thursday, December 9** 7:00 am
Sunnyside Up Breakfast
Majestic Inn & Spa
- Thursday, December 9** 3:45 pm
Governmental Affairs Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Tuesday, December 14** 2:45 pm
Membership Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Thursday, December 16** 4:00 pm
Economic Development Division Meeting
Chamber Office
- Thursday, December 16** 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Business After Hours
Bank of the Pacific
- Friday, December 17** 10:30 am
Finance/Executive Meeting
Chamber Office
- Tuesday, 21** 3:45 pm
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber Office

sunnyside up breakfast

Skagit Valley College Foundation

Join us for the December 9th Sunnyside Up Breakfast at **Majestic Inn** at 7:00 am to hear an update on the **Skagit Valley College Foundation** and network with fellow members.

Ms. Tolf will discuss the SVC Foundation's 32 year history, mission, current activities including the exciting news about the Marine Technology Scholarship to support students at the new Anacortes facility. She will also discuss the kickoff event for GlobalFest 2011 with Greg Mortenson, author of Three Cups of Tea and Stones into Schools that will happen on January 27, 2011. The SVC Foundation received an anonymous donation of books for K-8 grade students that have been delivered to the Anacortes School District for distribution to students. The Skagit Valley College Foundation was founded in 1978 for the purpose of supporting educational opportunities for Skagit Valley College. Outstanding community support enables the SVC Foundation to secure resources to assist students, enhance innovative instruction, and support campus development programs. A board of volunteers, who represent communities in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties, governs the SVC Foundation. For more information about the SVC Foundation, visit www.skagit.edu or call (360) 416-7717.

RSVP to the chamber at 293-7911



Kelli Tolf



business after hours

Bank of the Pacific

Join us for the December Business After Hours at the Bank of the Pacific at 801 Commercial Avenue on Thursday, December 16 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. The December after hours is typically a festive evening, with many members donating gifts to the door prizes.

Bank of the Pacific is a full-service community bank committed to providing professional, convenient and personalized financial services to the individuals and businesses in Anacortes. We are here to help you with your home loan, a checking account, a business loan, business cash management, investment services, private banking services or any other banking need. We invite you to tour our historic office conveniently located on the corner of 8th and Commercial. At the Anacortes branch, we believe in providing the best banking has to offer in customer relationship building and service. Come by and see for yourself!

This event is co-sponsored by **Avenue Catering**, who is the premier catering company for Greater Western Washington. Whether an event is for six or for six thousand, Avenue Catering's professional staff will provide the freshest and finest foods for a memorable affair. Please call or visit their website at www.cateringbyavenue.com.



cornerstone members



TESORO Puget Sound Refinery



Geoffrey Castle's Celtic Christmas Concert

The Port of Anacortes is hosting Geoffrey Castle's Celtic Christmas Concert following the Holiday Boat Parade on Saturday, December 18. **(see Concert continued on page 7)**

A community within a community!



Stop by and get acquainted with our independent and assisted living services. 360-293-1300

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a message from the president

Tidings of Joy

This is a special time of the year for many chamber members. Not only is it a festive time with plenty of holiday spirit, but it is also the time when our downtown comes alive with shoppers. This year will be extra special for the holidays. Soon you will see the holiday center spread in the *Anacortes American* and the inside front cover of the *Skagit Valley Herald* with the news of Anacortes' Tidings of Joy. This is extra special, because this year the holiday center spread is from the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce and features our holiday schedule of activities. In years past the center spread was sponsored by La Conner's downtown merchants. This year, and going forward, it is ours!

Watch for downtown Anacortes to come alive. The chamber Retail Division has a holiday extravaganza planned for the downtown. The Christmas holiday carriage rides will be back. Carolers will be in the streets and there are many holiday events scheduled downtown and around town some that are part of our tradition like the tree lighting on December

3rd and the city's Christmas Parade on December 4th. On December 18th there is a new Christmas Concert at the Port's Transit Shed and then in the evening and the Holiday Lighted Boat Parade. The Tidings of Joy ad spread includes a full schedule of all of the holiday activities going on in Anacortes.

The chamber started its new year right after our successful Chamber Cheers event. Based on the ideas and plans discussed in the board's strategy retreat in October, preparations for 2011 are already underway in the economic development, government affairs and marketing & promotion divisions. The board is committed to driving Anacortes forward into the future and is looking to promote our member's businesses better on the web and in other media. We are looking to revitalize and support our local businesses together with the city and the port. We see opportunities to bring new jobs and new business to the city and support our local businesses through a program we call "Connect the Dots," where we will work on all levels to pull

together the many things that make this community a great place to work, visit, shop, and play.

One of the chamber's most important initiatives is the Anacortes Futures Project. During October and November the community met in two town hall meetings, the later to discuss two of the most popular requests from the first general meeting; our connection to the water and the best housing options for the community in the future. For the November town hall meeting, everyone broke into groups of 8-10 where a passionate crowd grappled with the challenges of managing our growth and shaping the community we hope to enjoy in 15 years and to pass on to our children. The most popular comment was that most felt we needed more time than the two hours allotted to discuss the issues with their table group. The next AFP town hall meeting will be on December 9th, from 5-7pm at City Hall. At the same time as the meetings, over 400 people registered their opinions on the future through an online survey. If you have not gotten involved in the AFP process, join this last meeting on December 9th and let the AFP team know your thoughts.

The chamber is approaching 2011 with ambitious plans in front of a dedicated group of business leaders who believe in Anacortes and are willing to donate their time to be involved. You too can make a difference by joining one of the many divisions, committees and task forces focused on making Anacortes an even better place to live and work.

Best wishes to you and your family for this holiday season.



Mark Bunzel
2011 Chamber President





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member profile

Gae's Drapery

In 1969 Gae Dunton was an accomplished seamstress teaching classes in sewing. That was fine, but she could see there was a need for custom window treatments in the small town of Anacortes, which had started to grow and was becoming popular as a retirement community. Still, business investment can be an expensive proposition, but she had a large basement at home where she could put the business, made the decision to purchase a few sewing machines, and see what happened.

There was also the matter of a name for the business. She wanted something that would catch people's attention and noticed a Gai's Bakery truck one day in Anacortes. They were a popular Washington bread products supplier of the time. Gae thought it might be fun to make a play on words for her business and so she did: Gae's Drapery. With

that, the business was launched and is still going strong over 40 years later.

In the late 1970's, her daughter Jen joined the business, and the two of them have run the show ever since. Gae and Jen are involved in all stages of the window treatment process: design consultation, choice of fabrics, hardware, ordering, fabricating, and installation.

To do all of this properly, they attended seminars and expositions, and met with company representatives and interior designers to ensure that they were up to date on current trends, fabrics, and the like. They presently maintain a large sample collection of drapery and upholstery fabrics, trim, and hardware for prospective customers to view.

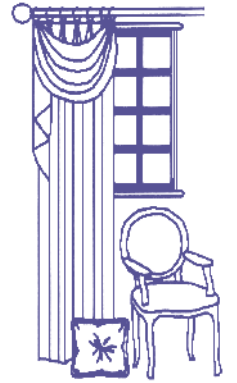
Anacortes has been good to Gae's Drapery. People here appreciate quality window treatments and have kept the two women

busy through the ups and downs of business cycles. Their clients appreciate the personalized treatment they receive from Gae and Jen, who can be reached easily without going through a

phone tree. Gae and Jen also keep other local businesses and individuals, such as upholsterers and installers, employed as needed.

While many business come and go, change names, sell to others, etc., Gae and Jen still run Gae's Drapery out of Gae's basement at her home near Lake Erie. Now, how many businesses can say that?

www.gaesdrapery.com
360-293-9732



Gae's Drapery

meet your board

Curt Oppel

Curt was born in San Francisco, California and called the Bay Area home for most of his life. After graduating from college he went to work as an elementary school teacher. One summer he started working in construction, he went on to become a building contractor in Sebastopol, California. For 18 years he ran his own construction business working on projects, from remodeling to new homes and developing land.

Curt, Monica and their son Cory moved to Anacortes in the early 90s to be closer to Monica's parents, Ed & Mary Pranger. Being new in the area and not having a lot of contacts, Curt decided to put his knowledge of homes to work in another way. He became an agent at John L Scott Real Estate, where he been a successful Realtor for over 16 years.

In the late 90s Curt's community interest led him to support the chamber's efforts to enhance downtown business. The city was in the process of revitalizing the downtown streets. He worked with a handful of merchants to put on the "Celebrate the Sidewalks" events, and this led to the formation of "Destination Downtown Anacortes." Curt was instrumental in introducing civic leaders to the ideas of the national Main Street Organization. In spring 2003, he attended the regional conference in Lake Chelan with Mayor Dean Maxwell. These efforts lead to closer work between the port, city and the chamber. Out of these efforts came the Gallery Walks, beautification efforts and the Anacortes Community Arch.

Curt's other community service has

included, "Our Town, Our Park" leader, completing a community built playground at Storvik Park. More recently a mentor for the AHS Robotics Team; he is excited about the prospects for the upcoming competition.

Curt is looking forward to continuing his work with the chamber in its efforts. He supports the growing success of downtown business, and is looking forward to the progress of the Anacortes Futures Project. He also plans to work on efforts already started to attract viable new businesses and to fill the vacancies in our wonderful town.





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Come celebrate Tidings of Joy

*Free Horse-Drawn
Trolley Rides
on Saturdays!*

December 2

- Picture your pet with Santa—6–8 pm, 1004 12th Street

December 3

- Picture your pet with Santa—12–4 pm, 1004 12th Street
- Celebration of Trees—Winter on the Waterfront Free Community Day at the Port Warehouse—12 pm–10 pm
- Christmas Tree Lighting. Holiday music. Free pictures with Santa 6:00 pm at the Chamber of Commerce, 9th and Commercial
- Holiday Open House Retail Shops
- Chamber Holiday Art Walk 6–9 pm
- Anchor Art Space Winter Art Sale—6pm–9pm

December 4

- Breakfast with Santa, Anacortes Senior Center—8–11 am
- Chamber Holiday Art Walk—10 am–5 pm
- Picture your pet with Santa at Walgreens—10 am–6 pm
- Annual Lion's Club Parade—Downtown—11 am
- Fidalgo DanceWorks presents "Winter Celebration," 3:00 pm at AHS Brodniak Hall—(360) 299-8447

December 11

- Fidalgo DanceWorks presents "The Nutcracker," 7:00 pm at AHS Brodniak Hall—(360) 299-8447
- Helping our neighbors fill the

Anacortes Food Bank. Bring a non perishable can food item and receive a discount on one item at participating merchants (look for signs)

- Pictures with Santa at Read Me A Story—1–4 pm

December 12

- Calico Cupboard—Breakfast with Santa—9:00 am–12:00 pm
- Fidalgo DanceWorks presents "The Nutcracker," 3:00 pm at AHS Brodniak Hall—(360) 299-8447
- Food drive continues

December 16

- Guys Night Out until 8:00 pm at participating merchants (look for signs)

December 18

- Christmas caroling throughout downtown
- Lighted Boat Parade on Guemes Channel, view from the Port Warehouse event center—5:30 pm
- A Celtic Christmas Celebration with Geoffrey Castle (free with donation to Boys and Girls Club, Toys for Tots or Anacortes Food Bank) at the Port Warehouse event center—6:30 pm
- Storytime with Santa at Read Me A Story—2–3pm

December 19

- Calico Cupboard—Breakfast with Santa—9:00–12:00 pm

Coast in. Hang out.™

HOLIDAY ARTWALK



Friday • December 3 • 6 to 9 pm

following the Chamber's Tree Lighting Ceremony in conjunction with the First Friday Gallery Walk

Saturday • December 4 • 10 am to 5 pm

Paintings - Sculptures - Jewelry - Photography

More than 20 merchants in Old Town Anacortes will exhibit the work of local artists.
Sponsored by Anacortes Chamber of Commerce

Winter Celebration

Fidalgo DanceWorks presents "Winter Celebration," a joyous holiday dance concert for all ages! Saturday, December 4, 3:00 pm, at AHS Brodniak Hall. Tickets are just \$8 each and may be purchased at the door or at Fidalgo DanceWorks, 901 Third Street.

Call (360) 299-8447 or email dance@fidalgodanceworks.org for more information.

The Nutcracker

Fidalgo DanceWorks presents Anacortes's only production of the classic holiday ballet, "The Nutcracker," with special guests, dazzling ballerinas, an incredible growing tree, and a cast of nearly 80 dancers! One weekend only, Saturday, December 11, 7:00 pm and Sunday, December 12, 3:00 pm, at AHS Brodniak Hall. Tickets are \$15 reserved or \$10 festival seating and may be purchased at the door or at Fidalgo DanceWorks, 901 Third Street. Call (360) 299-8447 or email dance@fidalgodanceworks.org for more information.



Island Hospital Foundation's Celebration of Trees

FREE COMMUNITY DAY

Friday, December 3rd
12:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

RECEPTION & AUCTION Saturday, December 4, 2010

Doors open at 5:00 pm
Ticket price \$35 per person
Tree and wreath auction
and cocktail reception.

To purchase tickets or for more info call Island Hospital Foundation at 299.4201



Outgoing board president, Mike Trafton (Bank of the Pacific) presented Rick Star (Rockfish Grill) with the President's Award. Rick has served this business community by organizing the Taste of Anacortes each year, chairing the Jazz Festival, developing the Oktoberfest, and truly making Anacortes a dining (and night life) destination.



The Community Service Excellence award was given to Eric Johnson (Anacortes Family Center) for his tireless mission of seeing a temporary shelter home in our community come to life.



Pat Barrett (Barrett Financial Services, LTD) was the evenings' emcee and dressed the part of It's a Wonderful Life in Anacortes. The room was decorated with many of Bill Mitchell's murals showing the local characters that have made Anacortes what we enjoy today.



The chamber board and staff thank the outgoing board members for their service: Heather Miller (Read Me A Story), Zee Hogan (Maison Jardin), Rick Star (Rockfish Grill), Suzanne Knutson (Bunnies By The Bay). Not pictured: Jim Clarke (John L. Scott Real Estate) and Andie McMakin (Summit Park Covered Storage).



Roger Jewett, Judy Rekevics and Don and Denise Childs (McGregor Benefits)



Artwork by Michael Staum (Bandanas Skin Art)



Carla Cummins (All About Honeymoons), Mary Staley (Chandler's Square – a Retirement Community), Mark Lione and Heidi Zilke (Cap Sante Inn), and Barbara Atterberry (Avenue Catering)



Tex Strizic and Holly Jenkins (Brown Lantern Ale House)



Mike and Karin Baldwin (Quantum Construction)

PICTURES PROVIDED BY KEVIN MCMANUS. TO VIEW ALL OF THE EVENING'S PHOTOS, GO TO WWW.MCMANUSPHOTO.COM.



ambassador profile

Mary Staley



Mary Staley moved to Anacortes 20+ years ago. She visited our beautiful town while on vacation and fell in love with the quaint, pristine town she calls home. Mary tells the story of how she visited Anacortes on a day trip and as she was pulling onto Commercial Ave. from Highway 20 she suddenly felt like she had come home for the first time in her life. She was unable to shake this feeling for the remainder of her vacation so made the decision to relocate. She had friends who lived in the area, who generously offered their home as a place to stay until she was able to find her own humble abode.

As Mary tells you the story her face lights up like a Christmas tree. She never once looked back on her decision with regret. She loved Anacortes then and she will emphatically tell you that her love for our town has only grown with each passing day. As Mary will tell you "Anacortes is a slice of heaven right here on earth." She qualifies her statement with the description that not only is Anacortes itself beautiful with its charming downtown area, but includes the direction to look around at the outlying areas too and the unspoiled beauty, hiking trails, lakes, parks, marinas, and beautiful waterfront. She continues her spirited tangent, as she goes into detail about the people and the sense of community that pervades every nook and cranny of her home. Now do we wonder why she is leading the Chamber Ambassador's group? Nope!

new members

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Christine Cleland
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thanks...

Thanks to the following members for donating to the raffle at the October candidate's forum:

- Best Western Harbor Plaza
- Candlewood Suites
- Read Me A Story
- Swinomish Casino

Thanks to the following members for donating to the raffle at the October business after hours:

- Anacortes Clean!
- Bayshore Office Products
- Donatello Flowers & Gifts
- Earth Bound Used Books
- Fidalgo Pool & Fitness Center
- Upstage Boutique & Men's Store

member renewals

- Action Pages
- Anaco Bay Inn
- Anacortes Automotive
- Anacortes Health & Nutrition
- Anacortes Kayak Tours
- Anacortes Yacht Sales/AAA Yacht Finders Intl.
- Best Western Harbor Plaza
- Brown Lantern Ale House
- Candlewood Suites
- Challenge Developments
- Easy Companions
- Encompass Financial & Accounting Services
- Fidalgo Machine
- La Conner Country Inn & Channel Lodge
- Patricia Newman—Avon Representative
- Pacific Woodtech Corporation
- RiverCity Screenprinting, Inc.
- Steve Sonnenberg
- The Troll House
- Whidbey Coffee
- Steven Wilhoit



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Concert

Continued from page 1

The Holiday Boat Parade will begin at 5:30 and a viewing area will be set up in the Port Warehouse on Pier One overlooking Guemes Channel.

The concert begins immediately after the parade. Geoffrey Castle has assembled a truly extraordinary group to entertain that evening: Beth Quist vocalist from Cirque du Soleil, the nationally renowned Celtic dance and song trio the Gothard Sisters, Mac MacDonald as Santa Claus, Tracy Alan Moore cameo as Elvis, and of course the amazing talents of Mr. Castle and his band mates.



Cost to the Public: FREE... Suggested donation to the Boys & Girls Club, Toys for Tots, Local Food Bank.

chambermaster chat

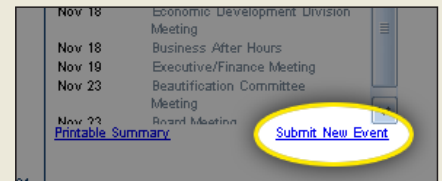
Update your events

Getting ready for 2011? Remember to update our website calendar with your events for 2011. It's a simple process and available for all chamber and community members.

- Log onto www.anacortes.org
- Go to the *news and events* section and choose *View All News & Events*



- Click on *Submit a New Event*



- Fill out the template and submit your event

Request To Add A New Event
Anacortes Chamber of Commerce and Information Center

Event Name:

Start Date/Time: All Events

End Date/Time: Printable List

Show Options:

Location:

Date/Time:

Event Submission:

Contact Information:

Contact Email:

Website URL:

Event Category: Arts & Culture Chamber of Commerce Fundraising Government Meetings & Conferences Non-Profit Recreation & Sports Other

Your event will be reviewed and approved within 48 hours.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mary at the chamber.

KP Studios Halloween Photos



KP Studios once again took pictures of 700 kids during trick or treating in October. The downtown business community really stepped up this year to provide candy and fun for all the kids of Anacortes.

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Curt Oppel *John L. Scott Real Estate*

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Chamber Staff

Stephanie Hamilton *Marketing Director*

Mary Talosi *Visitor Information & Operations Director*

Cecilie Miller *Event & Communications Coordinator*

Kristi Daniels & Crystal Johnson *Licensing Sub-Agents*

Photography by Steve Berentson

Newsletter designed by Linda J. McGuire

vic (visitor information center) statistics

	Oct. 2010	Oct. 2009		Oct. 2010	Oct. 2009
Visitors	996	741	Relocation Requests	13	6
Phone Calls	198	182	Web Visits	9,923	7,402
Information Requests	112	3	Web Page Views	29,613	29,410

Thank you, volunteers!

Visit us on the web at www.anacortes.org



Christmas Tree Lighting

School Choirs & Bands
An-O-Chords
Pictures with Santa Claus

Sponsored by:
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Friday, Dec. 3
6:00 pm



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