



Business Advisor

SEPTEMBER 2007

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Fall JOB FAIR*



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BROOKSIDE COUNTRY CLUB

91 YEARS YOUNG

In the western end of Montgomery County, tucked in the Borough of Pottstown adjacent to the Hill School and the neighborhood of Rosedale, lies a one hundred forty-acre oasis of grass, flowers, shrubs and trees known as Brookside Country Club. Built in 1916, the club has been serving its membership for over ninety one years. Today, members enjoy the benefits of a true member-run private country club that caters to the needs of busy professionals and their families. According to Michael Sloane, Club Manager, "Brookside is so much more than the typical golf club. We've got something to offer every member of the family. That's what makes us different."



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The course has been continually updated over the years and today plays 6,748 yards from the back tees. You will find a combination of tight, tree-lined fairways, rolling terrain and strategically placed bunkers to challenge players of all abilities. A wide range of programs and tournaments take place throughout the season. Activities are organized for Men, Women, Couples and Juniors. If you want to work on your game, the club offers a practice

range, practice bunker and putting green. The golf program is supported by a fully-stocked pro shop overseen by PGA Golf Professional, Ryan Breidegam. He and his staff assist members with club selection and fitting, along with clinics and private lessons.

But the real beauty of Brookside Golf is revealed through a conversation with Club President Jeffrey Bevington who states: "You can come out here just about any day of the week and get a game. If the weather is decent, there is always someone looking to play. And, you don't need to worry about tee times. Just show up and play."

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If your game is Tennis, Brookside offers the only Har-Tru courts in the immediate Pottstown area. HarTru is a granular surface with playing characteristics similar to clay. The surface is cooler in hot weather, is easier on the joints and encourages longer points. The three Har-Tru courts are lighted for night play so playing time is widely available. A hard court with a practice backboard completes the court layout. Clinics are run throughout the summer for kids, ladies and men.

A few steps from the tennis facility and you arrive at the swimming pool. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, club members can relax at the pool, which is always a popular gathering spot for families. A full size pool and a smaller wading pool for youngsters are surrounded by tables with umbrellas and lounge chairs. A canopy is provided for those seeking protection from the sun as well as a swing set and play area for children. The added bonus is quickly seen when glancing around the pool activity.

(See "Cover Story" on page 52)



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(ZC1033) N. Keim Street, North End, Pottstown (Paprocki's)- 1850SF retail/office space, plenty of offstreet parking. \$8-10/SF

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(ZC1042) 780 Main Street, Royersford- 600SF, 1st floor office. \$15.00/SF + Utilities. NO CAM.

(ZC1043) 629C Manatoway Road, Oley Township- warehouse, office, powder room. Heated 1st floor, unheated 2nd floor. \$825/Month.

(ZC1044) 1450 Ben Franklin Highway, Douglassville- 1600SF retail/office space. \$1500/Month. **LEASED**

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(ZC1051) Pottstown Airport Campus- 14,000SF building for lease. 5,000SF of warehouse and over 5,000SF of beautiful office suites. Lease all or part of the building. Overhead doors, climate controlled space, plenty of parking. Call for details!

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(ZC1053) 323 S. Hanover Street, Pottstown, N. Coventry Township- 900SF office space, offstreet parking. \$700/Month + utilities.

(ZC1054) 1194 Zara Drive, Limerick Twp.- Brand new warehouse space situated adjacent to the new Limerick Outlet Center. 6300SF or 3150SF. Overhead doors, fenced yard.



(ZC1055) 200 Furnace Street, Birdsboro- 8400SF warehouse and office space; functional, modern and immaculate. Including 2 loading docks, parts room, office suite and more. (Tenant pays electric, heat and gas) A MUST SEE. \$5,200/Month



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FOR SALE- (#ZC2035) 200 BIRD STREET, BIRDSBORO

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FOR SALE- (#ZC2050) 1105 Bethlehem Pike, North Wales- BUILDING IS A SINGLE STUCCO RANCH (DUPLEX) With 3,604SF. One (3) bedroom and one (2) bedroom. Zoned commercial. Property being sold "AS IS". \$279,000.



FOR SALE- (#ZC2063)

BERKS COUNTY LUNCHEONETTE- Located on the outskirts of Boyertown. Recently remodeled inside and out. Great balance sheet and sales results. Please call for details. Real Estate, equipment and business name included. ~~\$424,000~~
Reduced \$399,900.

(#ZC2066) Beautifully Maintained Pottsgrove Strip Shopping Center-

Retail, Medical and Office space mixture. Plenty of parking. Good financials. Many long term tenants with multiple year leases. Call for details! ~~\$799,000~~ **Reduced \$749,900.**

FOR SALE- (#ZC2067)

1131 West Ben Franklin Highway, Douglassville- Commercial building lot on busy Route 422 West. Many possibilities. Zoned highway commercial. \$199,000.

PENDING

(#ZC2068) Boyertown School District- Land and building are included in sale. Corner lot with highway exposure. Features display window and exhaust system. Commercial, Retail, Apartments, Food service. Onsite well, public sewer, gas hot water heat, central air in deli only. Several types of uses. **\$399,000.**



FOR SALE- (#ZC2069) Boyertown Boro Investment Property- 10-13 UNITS. (3) retail, (7) apartments, (3) misc. units. Over 18,000SF situated in the heart of the Boyertown district. Help preserve a part of Boyertown history. Call for financial information. ~~\$549,000~~ **Reduced \$449,900.**



FOR SALE- (#ZC2071) Restaurant in pristine setting / with scenic outdoor cabana deck bar in Pottstown vicinity- A turn-key operation with 225-person seating capacity with several private dining rooms. Call for details. \$995,000.

FOR SALE- (#ZC2072) 20 First Avenue, Pottstown- Lower Pottsgrove township, approved for Sanatoga Village District with planned development plan approved. \$249,900

FOR SALE- (#ZC2073) CHESTER COUNTY, E. VINCENT TOWNSHIP- 5.72 ACRES with C2 Zoning. (3) rental units, house and garage. \$1,195,000

FOR SALE- (#ZC2074) East High Street, Pottstown- Land/Building on busy highway in Sanatoga Village Development area. Over 1/4 acre. Building over 1400SF (well maintained). This location is a Bull's Eye. Call for details. \$350,000.

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Eliminating Question Marks

Your job as presentation designer is to create an interactive document that 1) supports the ideas, concepts, or arguments you need to put forth, and 2) keys the audience to what you're going to talk about just before you fulfill your role in the process, which is to *deliver the presentation*. And that's the rub: the presentation is not what's on the screen. And neither is the presentation what comes out of the presenter's mouth.

The presentation is actually only what takes place in the mind of the listener. And it takes place there because you are firing up their imaginations, memories and emotions. It takes a human to do that, and that is why they have come to your presentation – to be spoon fed and inspired by an expert.

The temptation with PowerPoint is to let the software and the hardware do all the work, allowing you to be just a casual moderator of the whole event. Yet when you think that you can simply put everything you want them to know on the screen and let the audience read it themselves, you insult them with bad, lazy design.

When a slide hits the screen, people have a need to be the first to know – so immediately question marks spring up. Your job is to eliminate as many question marks as possible – which you can with proper design.

We've written at length about the need to limit the *amount* of information that arrives on the screen at any one time, but it's important to also limit the

complexity of that information. To keep them in your fold you must look really hard at every slide with an eye to eliminating the question marks that light up over their heads as each new visual appears:

Where am I?

Where do I Begin?

What's Most Important?

These are the questions that most slides provoke, and the more question marks your slides raise, the more wave lengths you have to deal with, and the less cohesion you have in your audience. In fact, the problem with introducing question marks at all is that they breed rather rapidly.

When an audience member is provoked into asking a question *in his own mind* by a confusing element in your slide, it often sets in motion a cascade of questions that quickly overtake the amount of RAM available for uptake of your actual message. When you send an audience member off on a search for

(See "Successful Presentation Skills" on page 10)



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SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION SKILLS

(Continued from page 9)

understanding, you never know where their mind will take them – except to know that it's probably not to your desired destination.

Self-Evident v. Self-Explanatory

Of course it's not possible or even desirable that *everything* that appears is immediately clear to the entire audience. You do need a few surprises once in a while to shake them up and keep them guessing. And, as the audience is there to learn something new from you, the expert, you wouldn't be giving a very memorable presentation if everybody already knew and understood everything you were there to talk to them about.

What you bring up on the screen needs to *prepare* them for what you're going to explain, and not attempt to be the explanation itself. Once again, it's not about the screen!!! What you really want to strive for in your design is for items to be self-evident. The visual should, in the literal sense, speak for itself. It should not raise questions that start audience members off on their own voyages of self-discovery.

If you can't make your visual self-evi-

dent, try for the next best, *self-explanatory*. A self-explanatory visual at least contains the explanation within the slide, so that if at first question mark flags are flown, they are quickly lowered. A good example of self-explanatory would be a graph with a legend that is large, clear and tied directly into the design of the graph, rather than in a hard-to-read adjacent table. A *self-evident* graph would not need a legend at all. (There's more to come on graphs in their own subsequent chapter.)

To review, your presentation should be as simple as possible, but with respect for the intelligence of your audience, no simpler. Because a well-designed presentation takes place in the minds of the audience, it's not what's up on the screen that determines how good your presentation is, it's how passionately you transfer that information to your listeners. And you can't do that really well unless you keep the focus on you and not the screen. To keep the focus on you, you have to limit the amount of information on the screen, and Keep It Simple, Sweetheart. ☛

J. Douglas Jefferys is a principal at *PublicSpeakingSkills.com*, a national consulting firm specializing in training businesses of all sizes to communicate for maximum efficiency. Contact him through the web or at 888.663.7711.



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BUSINESS & MARKETING STRATEGIES

By John Patania
JLG Business Consulting

IS YOUR BUSINESS WORKING?

I meet many business owners every day that are working a tremendous amount of hours per week. When I ask them "is this what you expected when you started your business?"

... most say they thought in the beginning they would have to work hard but as time went on they had hoped to work a lot less. They had dreams of spending more time in other interests or with their family. But here they are, years late, still working incredibly hard. Why is that? I would contend the reason they are working so hard is because their business isn't working. If their business worked they wouldn't have to. So how do you get your busi-

ness to work so you don't have to?

One area is the development of systems. I'm not talking about computer systems here, although that is something you should look at as well. What I am referring to are systematic processes implemented in your business. The implementation of systems in your business can save you and your employees' time as well as saving you money.

Where do you start? Well, first look at
(See "Business & Marketing Strategies" on page 20)

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MARKETING 101

By Todd Palmer
Virtual Farm Creative,
Inc. www.virtualfarm.com

EXCELLENT SERVICE= EXCELLENT MARKETING

***Make damage control part of
your core competency***

In the advertising industry, if you're a photographer on location, you can expect cloud cover. If you're an account executive, you can expect the client to demand the job a day early. If you're an art director, you can expect designers to inject unwanted style on deadline. If you're a multimedia director, you can expect code conflict just before you compile an application. If you're a production manager, you can expect just about every other thing throughout your workday to go wrong...

But *Murphy's Law* applies to your company's industry too and every business up and down the Route 422 Corridor. So many components, employees and vendors team up to bring projects to successful completion that your entire team would be wise to expect the unexpected at all times.

In fact, great service in the face of disaster often leads to referrals. You can't buy the kind of public relations that proactive damage control generates in positive word of mouth marketing.

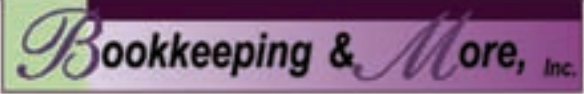
BUILD A STRONG SAFETY NET

Damage can always be averted as soon as it's detected, and proactive organization is the best way of detecting any potential problems.

And, if organization is the insurance policy then communication is the safety net. Not only is it crucial to be completely accessible to your clients during critical jobs, but you should be in constant contact with them as well, preparing them for any eventuality. The fewer surprises you spring on clients the better off you'll both be.

Most clients appreciate knowing the continual status of a job and they feel safer every time they are informed of ongoing progress. A client can track the status of any job in our shop by click on milestones in our web-based proofing and review center. These are the types of features a small company can easily and

(See "Marketing 101" on page 14)



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MARKETING 101

(Continued from page 13)

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After calling several vendors we ultimately called in a favor that made a printer get creative with their scheduling. Getting the job produced was no small feat, getting it to San Francisco from Philadelphia on a Sunday was even harder. The solution turned out to be our Creative Director substituting his luggage for the boxes of brochures on a 6am flight to Frisco where he personally delivered the materials to the marketing

director in the lobby of her hotel.

The CEO of the company was heard to say, "We need more vendors like them." But impressing the client wasn't the goal... Controlling the damage was. We met their deadline and kept our reputation for developing service solutions that are as dynamic and inspiring as our creative.

Of course you don't want to have to jet to Cali every time a client flinches, and you shouldn't have to by staying organized and accessible. You're probably thinking that solution was much too costly for a small agency to undertake. It was actually less expensive than same day delivery across the country, and it underscored the type of personal service we're willing to deliver to all of our clients. It was an investment.

Before he caught the red-eye back home, our CD managed to make several promising new business contacts on the left coast. When they heard why he was there, the prospects were more than intrigued, proving that excellent service really is excellent marketing. 📦

Todd Palmer is Creative Director at Virtual Farm Creative, Inc., a full service advertising, marketing and multimedia firm specializing in excellent traditional and Internet branding. Visit them at www.virtualfarm.com.

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"BUZZ AROUND THE BLOCK"

By Jim Jannotti

What Lies Beneath, Behind and Around THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Certainly you've noticed the large number of commercial and residential development projects dotting the 422 corridor. Each of these many projects brings together skills and talents across multiple disciplines. While the sight of a project going up and moving toward completion may be inspiring to the area residents who eagerly await new places to do business, there's also a lot going on around and beneath all that development. Absolutely essential to each of these projects are the architects, engineers, and other professionals of various types who design the plans and prepare the site before construction even begins, and are involved long after the builders have gone home.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

One such firm is Ludgate Engineering, based in Reading. Kirsten Deysher, Ludgate's Marketing Coordinator, clarifies how they work along with architects in advance of construction. "The most common scenario is when the architect is hired to provide a conceptual building design, prior to site selection and the civil engineer. The civil engineer prepares the site plan, including permitting, grading, storm water management, erosion and sedimentation control and presents the plan to the municipality. The architect

handles how the building relates to the site, accessibility, view sheds, pricing for the building, feasibility for the building and more." She adds, "The timing of each party being brought on board is a key to the success of the working relationship."

One of Ludgate's current projects is the Gateway Building in Phoenixville, which will soon house executive offices for New Century Bank. It illustrates Ms. Deysher's point about the relationship between architects and engineers. "Ludgate Engineering provided the original civil engineering and site design for this corporate building in downtown Phoenixville. Ludgate was recently hired by Van Potteiger, AIA, architect for New Century Bank, to prepare parking lot modifications for a new entrance," she says.

Another of Ludgate's current projects is the Linfield Corporate Center, a 100k square foot manufacturing facility and 6,000 square foot office building at Lewis and Linfield roads in Limerick Township. The firm's involvement in this project was initiated by the developer, Gambone Development Company. They also hired the project architects, Architectural Concepts of Exton, PA.

(See "Buzz Around The Block" on page 16)

"Ludgate Engineering is the most creative firm I have worked with. I appreciate their professionalism, responsiveness and their common sense approach to solving site problems. Ludgate Engineers think about the financial aspect of the project, not just the engineering. They make sure it is bank-able and build-able. Other engineers do not view projects from a dollars and sense perspective."

-John MacPhee, Project Manager, Delta Organization
(a builder/developer company)



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Buzz Around The Block

(Continued from page 15)

Jim Cherry, a partner at Architectural

Concepts explains how developers will often go from one project to another with architects whose work they appreciate. "We get projects in all different ways. Usually, either we're coming at it as a representative of the developer, or an individual businesses will contact us and they'll have either expansion or downsizing needs. We'll do a space and needs analysis on their existing business. Clients that have come to us have stayed with us for a long time. Whether they're developers or they're corporate clients, they continue to go from project to project with us." Mr. Cherry says Gambone Development is a frequent client of theirs.

Such was the case at the Court at Upper Providence, the 400k square foot shopping center at Ridge Pike and Township Line Road in Upper Providence Township. That project began with a partnership between Gambone and Highland Development Company, and eventually Gambone brought in Architectural Concepts. Currently Target and Giant are located there with Staples and other retailers on the way.

MEASURING PIPE IN MILES

Some of these projects on the 422 corridor may not actually be visible from the

highway, but there is no mistaking the Philadelphia Premium Outlets, which announces itself dramatically to any 422 traveler. Seeing the large size of this project as construction proceeded made me wonder about things like road access (and if you've ever driven on Possum Hollow road, where one of the entrances is located, you probably wondered too), as well as less visible but highly important things, like plumbing and sewer issues.

Things like that are just a passing thought for someone like me, but for John Sartor, P.E., Vice President of Gilmore and Associates, an engineering and consulting services company with local offices in Trappe, such thoughts are his job. "Recent representative projects for which Gilmore & Associates, Inc. has provided engineering design and construction administration services include the 1.7 million gallon per day (mgd) King Road Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion and upgrade and the new 0.7 mgd Possum Hollow Wastewater Treatment Plant and conveyance system. These include two pump stations and over five miles of interceptor lines, both located in Limerick Township," he says. That's a lot of gallons, and a lot of miles of pipe.

Mr. Sartor adds, "The King Road Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion, with a total construction cost of \$9.4 million, used similar technology as at the Possum Hollow Wastewater Treatment

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Plant, allowing for better ease of use by the Limerick Township Municipal Authority operators. Improvements to the wastewater collection, conveyance, and treatment systems in Limerick Township have allowed the township to accommodate the recent development growth as well as plan for future growth, including the Philadelphia Outlet Shops currently under construction along the Route 422 corridor and office complexes planned along Linfield-Trappe Road."

ONGOING WORK

Perhaps you recall that I mentioned Gilmore & Associates in last month's Buzz, about Boyertown. They're at work there too, helping Building a Better Boyertown with surveying and design work toward the improvement of the town's streetscape. "Gilmore & Associates is working closely with the Borough and Building a Better Boyertown (BBB) to develop the borough's vision for streetscape enhancements along the main business district within Boyertown. We are uniquely qualified to assist the Borough and BBB with this effort as a result of our success in designing numerous streetscape improvement projects that have been constructed in and securing over \$6 million in grant monies for nine municipal-

ities in the Philadelphia region," stated Mr. Sartor. Some of these other projects include downtown revitalization efforts in Doylestown as well as engineering consulting for the renovations to Trappe's Borough Hall.

The work of outside contractors and consultants continues long after the site is developed. Companies like Schultz Technology Solutions, for example, provide security, cabling, and communications for future and current site tenants. Others such as Applied Technology and Science aid firms in designing production facilities as well as enhancing their efficiency once they are brought on line. "My practice focuses on providing Manufacturing Engineering services to manufacturing companies in the 422 Corridor and elsewhere when there is a need for additional engineering resources, a need for outside expertise or a need for an outside perspective on a problem. Specifically, I provide assistance in process and operations improvement, equipment procurement & commissioning and preparation and maintenance of production documentation," says company president Don Havas.

In an area that is growing as fast as the 422 corridor, the future looks like a busy one across all of these various industries. 🏠



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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

By Daniel E. McCabe, Esq.
Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.

CAN AN Employee Be Fired After A Work Injury?

The short and simple answer to this question is "yes." However, there are a number of nuances that must be considered by either an employer or an employee in such a situation.

Since I have been practicing nearly exclusively in the area of Workers' Compensation law for the last 7 years, this question has been presented to me from both employees and employers. The answer, depending on each party's perspective, can be vastly different. If

you are an employer, is it wise to fire an employee after he or she has been injured? If you are an injured employee, what is your recourse if you are fired?

For both the employee and the employer, of course, the best result after any work injury is a full recovery that allows the injured person to return to work at his or her regular job with the same wages. However, in the real world, this is often not the result, and when an injured employee is out of work for lengthy periods of time, it can be devastating to the small business owner, and take a serious financial and emotional

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toll on the employee.

The unfortunate reality of the situation for many injured employees is that they cannot return to their pre-injury job because it is simply too physically demanding. A common example is the laborer who injures his back and can not return to performing the heavy lifting required by his line of work. Theoretically, he can collect Workers' Compensation benefits for the rest of his life or until his disability ends, either by a Judge's order, or upon his return to some type of job. However, in many situations, an injured employee can be reluctant to return to heavy work, even assuming that his injury improves to near pre-injury status. I frequently hear injured workers express the fear: "if I go back, I will just end up hurting myself again."

Conversely, employers in this situation do not often offer suitable jobs to their recovering employees. It is not uncommon for an employer to view an employee who has had a work injury in a different light, and be concerned that taking that person back to work would create a "liability." As a result, such employers are disinclined to re-employ their injured workers, even if they had previously done good work, and even if the employer could otherwise offer light duty work. Additionally, if the person was hired to do a specific job, the vacancy caused by the injury will likely have to be filled by someone who can physically perform the tasks required. So, once the injury takes place, both the employer and employee have reasons to not continue the injured worker's employment.

One factor that both parties must consider is that Pennsylvania is an "employment at will" State, meaning that an employee is not legally "entitled" to her job. Her job can be terminated at any time, absent a contract to the contrary. So, the employer might legally be able to terminate the injured worker who can no longer perform her job, but it must be aware of the additional prob-

lems that termination may create, especially if it occurs soon after the injury.

First, the employer must realize that an injured employee may recover more quickly than initially expected. If the employer eliminates the job of the injured worker, the return to work may take that much longer. Consider that the average unemployed person may take up to four to six months to find suitable employment. How much longer will it take for an injured employee to find a new job, even though he may have recovered fully, when his job is no longer available to him through the employer? Even if the worker has fully recovered, when he applies for other jobs, not every employer will hire someone who left his prior job due to a work injury.

In most cases the employer will remain liable to pay the injured employee's Workers' Compensation benefits so long as he or she remains unemployed due to the work injury. Absent a job to return to, injured workers will usually be less inclined to return to work unless they find jobs with similar pay to their pre-injury jobs. If the pay is less, the time-of-injury employer will usually be liable to pay partial disability benefits (2/3 of the difference between the worker's new wage and her pre-injury wages). Thus, employers are usually well-advised not to fire an injured worker without giving that person ample time to attempt to recover and return to work. Firing someone too soon can have repercussions in the Unemployment Compensation realm as well.

For the employee, there is really no job protection under the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act. If the employer simply can not function by holding the job open, there is almost no way for the employee to force the issue. Indeed, in some cases the employer can terminate health insurance benefits even *without* firing the employee (although they must offer appropriate COBRA benefits, if applicable).

(See "Legal Perspectives" on page 21)



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BUSINESS & MARKETING STRATEGIES

(Continued from page 11)

anything that is done on a routine basis. Something that is done every day, week or month no matter what. You should particularly take a look at those things that you, as the business owner, are doing that could be done by someone who is (or should be) paid a lot less. Look at those things that generally don't take a tremendous amount of skill to perform. Next, flow chart the process in the order it is performed. You can use a white board for this or simply use post-it notes on a desk or table to identify each step. While doing this take a look for process improvement. There may be areas of duplication or if the steps can be rearranged the process can be done in less time.

Next, document the process. Get your employees to write down every step in performing the task. One way to ensure the documentation is sufficient is to ask someone to perform the task that normally is unfamiliar with it. If someone needs to step in and verbally explain what needs to be done the documentation isn't thorough enough. Change it so someone can follow it step by step.

Once the documentation is complete you need to measure the success of the system by using Key Performance Indicators. These could be deadlines, checklists, sales volume, expense levels or a number of other areas. Pick what's important to the business.

Finally, allow the system to change and evolve. As other things in the business change, your systems may have to adapt.

Here is a list of areas that you may want to consider in developing systems for;

Daily office operations
Manufacturing and inventory
Order processing
Product/Service delivery
Invoicing
Accounts receivable
Accounts payable
Customer service
Sales and Marketing
Human resources and training
General accounting

Remember when documenting and reviewing these systems you should always be looking for redundancy and duplication. Aim to streamline processes to save time and money. The faster the business cycle, in other words, the faster you can produce a sale, or the faster you can produce a product, or the faster you can deliver the service, or the faster you can send out invoices, or the faster you get your customer to pay you — **the more profit you will generate.**

As the business owner you need to lead your people, your people will use the systems to support your customers, your customers will support your business and of course your business supports you. Get your business to work for you instead of you for it. 🗑

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LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

(Continued from page 19)

In the short term, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides some protection for injured workers who are eligible for such protection. While the Workers' Compensation Act affords no such protection, the FMLA may require an employer to keep the injured worker's position open, without pay, for up to 12 weeks. However, at the end of those 12 weeks, the employer's responsibility ends and employment can be terminated.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can also provide tangential protection for injured workers. Without going into a lengthy explanation here, suffice it to say that many employers do not want to risk the exposure of a potential countersuit from an injured worker if the worker is terminated because of a disability under the ADA.

The only other way for an employee to ensure that his employer keeps his job open is through a collective bargaining agreement or a voluntary employer policy. Some employers maintain a policy of retaining injured employees for a set period of time after their disability starts. Once that period expires, the employer will most likely terminate the relationship, and consequently, also can-

cel any benefits that came with the relationship. Collective bargaining agreements and employer handbook policies may operate to amend the typical at-will employment relationship.

Under very limited circumstances, a terminated employee may bring a claim for wrongful termination, but considering the difficulty of litigating such cases, employers will often take that chance, rather than continue to hold a job open for an injured worker.

In short, any employer who is considering firing an injured worker should be aware that the termination may create yet another lawsuit, or, at best, make the Workers' Compensation case stay open that much longer. Injured employees should be aware that their jobs can be terminated, and that there is only limited job protection under the law. Either party when presented with these questions would be well-advised to consult experienced legal counsel. ☐

Daniel E. McCabe, Esq., is an associate in the law firm of Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.. His practice, located in the firm's West Chester office, concentrates on the representation of injured workers and medical providers. He can be reached by phone at 610.436.8300, or by e-mail at dmc-cabe@wolfbaldwin.com.

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INVESTMENT IDEAS

By Jim McGuire, Branch Manager, A.G. Edwards

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While stocks are favored by day traders and others looking to make quick profits on short-term price movements, long-term investors should also realize that investing in stocks offers many advantages.

For starters, stocks have historically outperformed other long-term financial assets. In addition, stocks have typically outpaced inflation, which helps investors counteract its detrimental effects on their portfolios. To illustrate these points, the results of a recent study provide empirical data to support what investors have long suspected.*

A recent analysis compared the

results of investing one dollar in each of several different asset classes — common stocks, long-term corporate bonds, long-term government bonds, and Treasury bills — on the last day of 1919 and holding the investment (with associated returns) until the end of 2006. All proceeds were reinvested, which means dividends received were used to purchase additional shares of stock and interest payments from bonds were used to buy more bonds.

Investors likely won't be surprised to find that over the course of the 87 years studied, stocks significantly outperformed several fixed-income investments. But what may be eye-opening is

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the extent to which they exceed the return on bonds. While an initial investment of one dollar in Treasury bills would have grown to approximately \$29, the same investment in long-term government bonds would have grown to approximately \$87 and a similar investment in long-term corporate bonds would have grown to more than \$162. That initial one dollar invested in common stocks, on the other hand, gives the investor a portfolio valued at more than \$4,889 at the end of 2006.

The numbers alone show stocks winning this contest by a large margin. But what's interesting is just how such dramatic growth is achieved. Capital appreciation alone causes the one-dollar investment in stocks to grow to \$137 by the end of the period. The other \$4,752 comes from collecting the dividends paid over the years, using them to purchase more shares of stock, and enjoying the benefits of compounding growth as well. As these numbers show, patient investors who buy stocks that pay dividends — especially growing dividends — and reinvest those dividends in more shares of stock have the opportunity to significantly outperform fixed-income investors.

Beyond just the growth of the different investments, the effects inflation has on each of the assets mentioned need to be taken into consideration as well. Using
(See "Investment Ideas" on page 24)



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INVESTMENT IDEAS

(Continued from page 23)

an average annual inflation rate of 2.5 percent over this time frame, the average inflation-adjusted returns were: 1.38 percent for Treasury bills, 2.66 percent for long-term government bonds, 3.40 percent for long-term corporate bonds, and 7.52 percent for common stocks. While past performance does not guarantee future results, as you can see, the stock investor was the only one who was able to generate meaningful returns to combat the eroding effects of inflation.

In addition to the returns stock investment can provide, investors should also

consider the tax benefits of buying stocks. When a stock is sold, the owner is subject to capital gains taxes on any earnings from the sale. Because of recent legislative decisions in the past several years, tax-advantaged investments have become even more important. In 2006, the law reduced the top tax rate for long-term capital gains from 20 percent to 15 percent, until the year 2011. Under the same legislation, taxpayers in the 10 percent and 15 percent brackets will be taxed at only five percent on long-term capital gains realized before January 1, 2008, and for those same taxpayers will owe no capital gains taxes.

These are just a few of the many reasons to consider investing in stocks. Take a look at your holdings and decide whether stocks might be welcome in your portfolio. 📈

*Source: Jack W. Wilson and Charles P. Jones, North Carolina State University

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MCCC IS ONE OF 10 INSTITUTIONS IN NATION TO RECEIVE THE 2007 HP TECHNOLOGY HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AWARD

Montgomery County Community College is one of only 10 institutions in the nation to be awarded a 2007 HP Technology for Teaching Leadership Award, which is designed to transform and improve learning in the classroom through innovative uses of technology. The award package includes of HP Tablet personal computers (PCs), cash and professional development with a total value of more than \$120,000.

Leadership awards are additional, higher value grants awarded to HP Technology for Teaching grant recipients whose projects demonstrate success in their first year of implementation. Montgomery County Community College was selected for reinvestment because of its success in using HP technology to enhance instruction, demonstrating a measurable, positive impact on student achievement, and proposing innovative plans to expand their programs to have broader impact on student success.

The Leadership Award is the second grant in as many years that the College has received from HP. In 2006, the College was among 40 institutions in the nation to receive the HP Higher Education Technology for Teaching Grant Initiative, through the work of Computer Science faculty Pat Rahmlow, Linda Moulton and Marie Hartlein. The

grant enabled the College to redesign required computer science courses in a way that integrates new technology and positively impacts student learning. For 2007, Computer Science Instructor Jason Wertz, Communications Instructor Allan Shearer and Communications Program Coordinator Neil Goldstein were added to the project team.

"The HP Technology for Teaching Leadership Award will enable us to equip two additional classrooms in the College's new Advanced Technology Center with 20 tablet PCs, a teacher station table PC and wireless access points," said Patricia S. Rahmlow, Assistant Professor of Computer Science at the College. "The award will allow students enrolled in communications and computer information systems courses to experience the latest technology available, which furthers the College's position as a technology leader in higher education and beyond."

The Advanced Technology Center (ATC) will open for classes on Sept. 5 and will be the new home for communications and computer science courses, as well as programs in animation, digital audio and video design, biotechnology, computer game design, astronomy and geographic information systems. ■

Since 2004, HP has contributed approximately \$44 million in HP Technology for Teaching grants to more than 850 schools worldwide. During the past 20 years, HP has contributed more than \$1 billion in cash and equipment to schools, universities, community organizations and other non-profit organizations around the world.



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IMPROVEMENTS MAKE POTTSTOWN'S RIVERFRONT PARK A POPULAR DESTINATION

*Trail counts indicate over 100 people
a day use the Schuylkill River Trail along
Pottstown's Riverfront Park.*

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area recently completed a series of improvements to Riverfront Park, making the site more family friendly and better suited to community events.

Projects to enhance the park, located off College Drive, were undertaken over a period of about 18 months and cost over \$100,000 to complete. Funding came from the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Pottstown Rotary Club.

In June, a natural amphitheater and stage was rebuilt, replacing one that was destroyed by last year's flood. Fencing was also added to more clearly delineate the park area, and picnic tables were installed. Signs identifying the site as a trailhead for the Schuylkill River Trail will be added later this summer.

Last summer, a Trailhead Pavilion was built with support from the Pottstown Rotary Club and Al Kutz Construction, with funding from the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation. A walkway from the pavilion to the Schuylkill River Trail was paved, making it handicapped accessible and more available to families with strollers or young children on bikes. Electricity was recently added to the pavilion.

Also completed last year was a canoe launch constructed by Pottstown Eagle Scout Adam Hampton and his fellow Troop 129 Boy Scouts.

Recent trail counts confirm that the park is becoming a popular destination, with over 100 people a day, on average, using the Schuylkill River Trail along the park.

"We'd like to have other river communities look at this as a model for what can be done to improve access, open space and recreational opportunities along the river," said SRHA Executive Director Kurt Zwikl.

The Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area is a non-profit organization that uses conservation, education, recreation, tourism, and cultural and historic preservation as tools for community revitalization and economic development. For more information about the SRHA visit www.schuylkillriver.org

The non-profit Schuylkill River Heritage Area organized the projects and secured funding to complete them, enabling the Borough of Pottstown, which owns the park, to achieve its long-time vision for the riverfront.

"This gives us the venue and the vista to get the community more involved along the river," observed John Reber, director of the Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department. "The river is a great asset to the community, and this gives Pottstown a destination and a connection to the river."

According to Reber, the amphitheater will be used for performances during special events and, eventually, for an outdoor concert series.

Ten years ago, the area that now houses Riverfront Park was a wasteland, with overgrown brush that intruded onto the trail and hid the river from view. Former Pottstown Borough Councilman Ronald C. Downie, who is also past president of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area board of directors, helped spearhead an effort to create the park. He and three other area residents, spent several years clearing the undergrowth and removing weed trees, and then arranged to have the original amphitheater graded and seeded.

"We thought this was a golden opportunity to get the public in Pottstown interested in the river," said Downie. "The river was here long before us and will be here long after us, so we have to get a sense of community strength from it."

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area expects that, through public and private initiatives, the area will continue to be improved, possibly with the addition of a proposed labyrinth.

"We hope areas of this type will be added up and down the Schuylkill River," Downie said. ■

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CREATING A MORE HEALTHFUL WORKSTATION

Sit up straight. Stand tall. Don't slouch. Mom always had a way of telling us how to "defy gravity." As is with most things Mom taught us, it's not until we're older that we better understand those subtle commands, let alone appreciate them. If you work in an office setting, I'll bet if you turn around right now you will find a few dozen offenders of mom's regulations. Perhaps you won't even have to go that far and just take a look at yourself.

If your job requires several hours sitting at a desk, chances are gravity is already having its way with you. The slouched sitting position; the craned neck; the rounded shoulders; the wrist pain; even the expanding waistline. Who ever thought sitting could be so hard? The fact is, sitting is very bad for us. It shortens the muscles involved in trunk extension, including those of the neck and back of the legs, or hamstrings. It weakens the muscles involved in trunk flexion and spinal support, namely the abdominals and longitudinal muscles of the spine. What's more, sitting is as big a calorie sparing activity as lying down, although you do burn plenty of calories while sleeping. Aside from getting up from your desk every twenty minutes, which may or may not be feasible, what is one to do to make things better?

The good news is that you can indeed create what is known as a more

ergonomical work station, or a more properly positioned one. It does not involve any super special upgrades and may cost you absolutely nothing, but the rewards will be invaluable. We say in the health and fitness industry that it's the little things that make a difference, and none could be truer than following some of these tips for a more healthful workstation.

• **CHAIR.** The very first step should be to improve on where you're going to be spending most of your time, despite the negative drawbacks. Seat height should be adjustable so that your feet rest flat on the floor, with your spine and head upright. Lumbar pillows or supports are a good idea, especially for those with very concave low backs or who experience low back pain. Another suggestion would be to investigate the use of a kneeling posture ergonomic chair or an exercise ball chair. Both certainly may

(See "Health And Fitness" on page 30)



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HEALTH AND FITNESS

(Continued from page 29)

take some time getting used to and may raise a brow or two among your colleagues, but your postural muscles will get stronger and defy gravity and you may experience more energy, even while sitting.

- **COMPUTER MONITOR.** Situate the monitor at eye level with keyboard directly in front of you, rather than to the side. You shouldn't have to turn your head to view the computer screen. Also, a monitor magnifier may not be a bad idea to make things larger than they appear. It doesn't say your blind, but you won't have to crane your neck to read your e-mail either.

- **KEYBOARD.** The ideal or recommended position is at elbow level when seated, which will prevent strain on the shoulders, forearms, and wrists. Most office supply stores also sell gel pads for not only mouse pads but keyboards as well to prevent excess strain and pressure to the carpal tunnel of the wrist.

- **COMPUTER MOUSE.** Keep it close to the keyboard and avoid extended arm reaches to minimize arm or wrist strain.

- **LIGHTING.** Most people don't give lighting much thought, but millions of

dollars are spent each year on lighting research and it's affect on our moods, energy level, and desire to spend. (Casinos in Las Vegas have it down to a science.) Prevent eyestrain by supplementing your office light with a desk lamp or get a Bright Light from Sharper Image which provides radiant light just as in summer on those dark, dreary, or wintry days.

- **SNACKS.** Keep a piece of fruit or two on your desk. When you get a sweet tooth or craving, instead of reaching for your cubicle mate's candy jar, eat a piece of nature's candy. Yes, it too is sugar, but it has less calories, more vitamins and minerals, and will satisfy you quicker and longer. Furthermore, if done consistently, it will go a long way to preventing you from eating too much at your next big meal.

There's still no substitute for getting up from your workstation several times throughout the workday. The more you can move around and about, stand up, get the circulation moving, and get oxygen to places it needs to go, namely the brain, you will feel not only more energized but healthier. Now, if we could only believe what mom said about eating your vegetables. 🥦

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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Hello Chamber Members,
I hope you had an enjoyable summer. We've been busy at the office re-organizing, planning, and housekeeping.

Lots of great programs have been planned for this fiscal year under the leadership of Joe Gambone, Chairman of the Board and president of Gambone Construction Co. Meet Joe at our first program of the new year. We will be having an interesting discussion regarding workforce development in the region at our Membership Breakfast on September 13 at the Elks, 61 High Street in Pottstown. The 10th class of Leadership Tri-County starts that morning and our new business guide will be distributed to those present. You can expect a copy in your mail sometime in September. It is a wonderful resource and marketing piece. Amy Noble and Eileen Dautrich have worked very hard with our member, Atlantic Communications, to insure a quality 4 color publication that will also appear on our website. Speaking of tricountychamber.com, check out the Chamber calendar and community calendar to assist you in your planning and scheduling of events.

I am looking forward to seeing you in September!

Dale P. Mahle,
President

INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE AT CHAMBER

If you or somebody you know is looking for an internship, consider the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce. The hours are flexible and we do not require a specific number of hours (unless required by an educational institution for credits). We make an effort to see that interns are published by writing an article for the *Route 422 Business Advisor* (distributed to 11,000 businesses) and we will invite our interns as a guest on the Chamber's radio show on WPAZ. Internships are unpaid but we will work with your school with evaluations if you are receiving course credit. Resumes can be forwarded to Eileen Dautrich at eileen@tricountyareachamber.com or via fax at 610.970.9705. 📠

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HANDLING IT EQUIPMENT END-OF-LIFE: FEWER OPTIONS, BIGGER RISKS

The options for disposing equipment have shrunk as the decreasing cost of IT equipment has effectively eliminated the used PC market.

**By Alex Zelesko,
Director of Information Technology,
PA Chamber of Business & Industry**

For years, companies that purchase their own IT equipment have looked for ways to properly dispose of the equipment when it reaches the end of its life cycle. The options for disposing equipment have shrunk as the decreasing cost of IT equipment has effectively eliminated the used PC market, and environmental and waste management equipment disposal guidelines have become stricter.

Equipment life cycles have also changed how business looks at asset management, and have affected the decision of whether or not to lease equipment instead of purchasing equipment. And because of all of this change, an entire industry of IT life cycle management companies has cropped up.

IT equipment disposal

The first and most prominent issue to consider in IT equipment disposal is that of data security. In a world in which IT operational guidelines are often mandated by government regulation, particularly in the health-care and financial industries, there are now much higher standards than existed 10 years ago.

For companies not bound by regulation, failing to perform a reasonable amount of data cleansing could be disastrous. At a bare minimum, a program such as DBAN (freely available at <http://dban.sourceforge.net/>) should be used to perform a complete wipe of a computer's hard drive prior to disposal. (Keep in mind that this process can be lengthy.)

An Alternative would be to replace the hard drives in PCs to be disposed of with inexpensive replacement drives. This decision is ultimately dictated by the manner in which equipment will be disposed. The least mitigating option available is to use an outside hardware vendor to handle the removal and wiping of the systems. Selecting a vendor can be time consuming as well, but this is the most important step in disposing of any IT equipment.

Compliance considerations

The second piece of the puzzle is to ensure compliance with all environmental and waste management requirements that pertain to the proper disposal of equipment. Some organizations work around this by donating the equipment to charitable organizations. This often is a win-win proposition as the charity gets equipment to redistribute and often there is no cost to the donating organization. Third-party disposal services can ensure proper disposal under all guidelines.

After all, why should you pay someone to dispose of the equipment when someone else will do it for free? It is important, however, to ensure that the charitable organization itself will follow the proper disposal steps. This is necessary because most companies today "asset tag" their equipment

with the company name. If the organization receiving the donated equipment improperly disposes of that equipment, it could lead to a cause for action against your organization for improper disposal because your company name will still be on the equipment. Remember also that equipment can often be traced via serial number to the original owner.

Finally, it is advisable to develop company policy and procedure about how equipment disposal will be handled. Will disposal occur in-house or be handled by a third party? If a third party is used, what steps will be taken to ensure that the third

party is being honest with its handling of the equipment? These are the types of questions that business owners need to ask themselves.

Having a policy in place will help keep your company's data secure and your image clean. ■

Business Equipment Recycling Day

**Tuesday, October 9, 2007
8 – 11 AM**

No Charge, Members Only

Refer to the Chamber Calendar of Events on Page 36 for More Information.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Support SEPAC to Assist Pro-Business Candidates

Alex Rahn, Wanner Associates

The TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce is a member of SEPAC, the political action committee for a number of chambers of commerce located in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

TCACC's Governmental Affairs Committee and staff do an excellent job of developing a legislative agenda and delivering that message to the legislative delegation and other key decision makers in Harrisburg. However, campaign contributions can make significant difference in the state legislative elections, and gives the financial help that pro-business candidates need to survive during tough political campaigns.

Thus, your contribution to SEPAC will work to make sure that pro-jobs, pro-growth legislators are there to hear TCACC's message by targeting contribu-

tions to those state legislators who best meet the business communities' legislative goals. With anti-business forces spending millions of dollars each election supporting their candidates and their agenda, the future of business in this region, and its ability to grow and maintain the local economy is at stake. Your support of SEPAC is critical to creating a business-friendly environment within the tri-county area.

Please contact me at 717.236.2050; arahn@wannerassoc.com, or Dale Mahle at 610.326.2900; dale@tricountyareachamber.com if you would like to contribute to SEPAC. ■

Alex Rahn of Wanner Associates (www.wannerassoc.com) serves as the Government Affairs Consultant and Lobbyist for the Delaware County, Main Line, TriCounty Area and the Greater West Chester chambers of commerce.

JUNE 2007

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DAVID GRUNFELD NAMED PRESIDENT OF FAMILY SERVICES' BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David I. Grunfeld, Esq. was named president of Family Services of Montgomery County's Board of Directors recently. "It is only with the partnership of a strong Board of Directors and a skilled management team that Family Services has been able to respond to the changing needs of the communities we serve," said Mark Lieberman, executive director of Family Services. "In assuming the role of president of the Board of Directors, I am confident David Grunfeld will provide the strong, positive leadership necessary for Family Services to meet the challenges we will face in the next three years."

Grunfeld is an attorney with Astor, Weiss, Kaplan & Mandel, LLP, in Philadelphia. He concentrates his practice in family law, commercial litigation, collections and professional responsibility. He is a member of the Philadelphia Bar Association and a past chair of its Family Law Section. Grunfeld is an editor emeritus of *The Philadelphia Lawyer*, the quarterly magazine of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

Grunfeld received his J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree from Lehigh University.

Grunfeld and his wife, Sandra, reside in Montgomery County (Pa.) and have two adult sons, Eric and Ken.

Since 1900, Family Services has been caring for children, seniors and families in Montgomery County (Pa.) and the surrounding communities who face everyday emotional difficulties or physical hardships. The agency's many innovative social service programs make a positive difference in the lives of over 16,000 County residents each year. For more information on Family Services, please call 610.630.2111 or visit www.fsmontco.org. ■

STRUCTURES (BRIDGE) ENGINEER, DIANE MCGROARTY, P.E., JOINS TPD'S SOUTH JERSEY OFFICE

Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. (TPD) is pleased to announce the addition of Diane McGroarty, P.E. as a Structures Project Manager at the firm's South Jersey Office. Diane joins TPD with over 14 years of structures (bridge) engineering and inspection experience with a wide range of clients, including NJDOT, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, Delaware River Port Authority, SEPTA, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, and PennDOT.

Extensive experience and comprehensive knowledge of design requirements in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania make Diane another invaluable asset for TPD's 11-member Structures Design Team which includes 5 licensed Professional Engineers. Diane's experience makes her a highly-qualified resource person for all 125 members of the firm, and in her role as a Structures Project Manager, Diane will be a key contributor toward enhancing the constructability, efficiency, safety, and cost effectiveness of TPD structures designs to ensure successful projects for our clients and the traveling public.

From an office in Camden, NJ and PA offices in Pottstown, Harrisburg, and the Lehigh Valley, TPD specializes in providing transportation planning, highway/bridge and traffic signal design, and environmental and construction services to municipal, state (DOT), and private clients. TPD is currently ranked as one of the Top 25 Civil Engineering Firms to Work For in the United States by *Civil Engineering Newsmagazine*. ■

LITERACY TUTORS TO BE TRAINED

The YWCA Tri-County Area Adult Literacy Center will conduct a 7-hour Volunteer Tutor Training Workshop on Saturday, September 8, 2007, from 9 AM – 4 PM at the YWCA Adult Literacy Center, 1830 East High Street, Pottstown (National Penn Bank, lower level). The YWCA Adult Literacy Center serves the Tri-County Region and accepts tutors and students throughout the area. After tutors are trained, they are paired with students to meet twice weekly at a day, time and location convenient to both individuals. No previous teaching experience is necessary; just a commitment to assist other adults to become more knowledgeable in the English language and/or mathematics. Registration is required. A \$12 fee will cover the costs of training and provide lunch to participants. This is the only expense involved in tutoring. Call the YWCA Adult Literacy Center at 610.326.READ or stop by 1830 East High Street to register. ■



Business professionals age 40 & under are invited to participate in the Tri-County Area Young Professionals Network. Just send an e-mail to amy@tricityareachamber.com with the names and e-mail addresses of those in your office who fit into that category.

SCORE SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP

A workshop series on "How to Start and Operate a Small Business" will be presented from 7 – 9 PM on Monday evenings, September 10, 17, 24 and October 1, 2007 at the Pottstown SCORE office in the New York Plaza at 244 High Street, Suite 402, Pottstown. This series is presented by SCORE (Counselors to America's Small Business), is for those who are considering a business startup, as well as those who are currently operating a small business. The workshops are as follows:

1. *Business Structure, Accounting/Finances* September 10
2. *Finances and Business Plan* September 17
3. *Marketing* September 24
4. *It's All about Profit* October 1

Registration for each session begins at 6:45 PM. Each course is \$20 plus \$20 for the course manual. A special price of \$90 is offered for all four courses including the manual. This has been an extremely popular workshop. Early paid reservations guarantee a seat. For more information call 610.327.2673. ■

MOM'S HOUSE OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA IS LOOKING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Mom's House®, Inc. is a state licensed, free, non-profit daycare for single parents who are continuing their education full-time (High school, GED, College or Technical school). The children receive breakfast, lunch, diapers, wipes, clothing and a lot of love from our wonderful staff and volunteers. Our goal is to keep the single parent out of the welfare system, have them finish their education, and enable them to get a good job where they can adequately support themselves and their child. Mom's House® helps two generations. We rely solely on grants, donations and Board sponsored fundraisers for our operation. We will be celebrating our "20th Anniversary" this October. During that time, we have helped hundreds of single parents.

In exchange for the free daycare, the moms or dads must attend monthly meetings on such topics as pediatric care, health and nutrition, counseling services, job hunting and resume writing, etc. They must also do three hours service for each week of daycare. In exchange for this service, they receive "fake dollars" which they can use to purchase items of clothing, toys, or diapers for their children. We also provide tutoring services and a study room for our moms.

If you believe in our mission and would like additional information, please call 610.935.7711 or visit our website at www.momshouse-phoenixville.org. If you are interested in receiving a Board Member application, please call or e-mail us at phx_momshouse@verizon.net. The Board holds monthly meetings. Thank you.

SAVE THE DATE: Mom's House "20th Anniversary Celebration & Wine Tasting"

Thursday, October 25, 2007 from 4:30 – 6:30 PM at the Columbia Bar & Grill, 148 Bridge Street, Phoenixville

Tickets are \$80 per person

Call 610.935.7711 if you are interested in attending or would like to sponsor the event. ■

*Planning an event?
Promoting employees?
Proud of your recent
awards? Celebrating a
significant anniversary?*

***The Chamber strives to recognize
Members for their success.***

Send press releases regarding awards received, promotions, events, etc. to Amy at:
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JOIN THE CHAMBER TODAY!

Contact Susan Burnett
Director of Membership Development and Services at
610.326.2900, or email:
susan@tricountyareachamber.com



TCACC MEMBER NOTES

Please note updated contact information for the following Chamber Members:
NTG Telecommunications has changed to Atris, Inc., 484.398.4500, www.atris.biz

The Chamber Saves You Money!!!

In the 2006-2007 fiscal year, Chamber Members saved \$8,137.38 by purchasing discounted tickets to area attractions!!! That's just one example of how the Chamber brings you a return on your investment!

GUIDES AND DIRECTORIES AVAILABLE NOW AT THE CHAMBER

Business/Education Resource Guide
(a guide of businesses who are willing to collaborate with educators) – No Charge for Chamber Members / \$25 non-member rate

Civic Directory - \$10 Member rate / \$20 non-member rate

Industrial Directory - \$25 Member rate / \$40 non-member rate

FEATURED MEMBER BENEFIT OF THE MONTH

One of the many benefits created to save our Members money – **Business Equipment Recycling Day!** Don't spend hundreds of dollars getting rid of your used electronic equipment. Bring it to the Business Equipment Recycling Day on Tuesday, October 9, 2007 at Pottstown Industrial Complex, Keim Street, Pottstown. It will be held from 8 – 11 AM and there is NO CHARGE to drop off your used electronic equipment. Items accepted include: audio visual equipment, circuit boards, fax machines, monitors, computers, and more! If you would like to participate, please call the Chamber at 610.326.2900 and request a registration form. Forms must be completed and submitted to the Chamber with the amount of equipment you will be bringing to recycle. This is just one more way your membership brings you a return on your investment!

RESUMES

Resumes are available for viewing by Chamber Member companies who are looking to fill positions.

Administrative Assistant – 1

Human Services Counselor – 1

Mailroom Worker – 1

Sales Manager -1

CHECK YOUR E-MAIL!

To receive the Chamber's weekly e-mail regarding upcoming events, updates, etc. please e-mail amy@tricountyareachamber.com. You can rest assured that the Chamber will never sell or share its email list.

BE FEATURED ON TV!

Reach 75,000+ homes in western Montgomery, northern Chester, and southeastern Berks County by sponsoring the Chamber's television show on PCTV Channel 27. Taping of your 3-5 minute commercial and airing of the commercial 4 times is included in the sponsorship fee. Call Amy for details at 610.326.2900.

CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

(ACCORDING TO TCACC RECORDS)

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10 Years

Walnut Woods of Boyertown

15 Years

Almond Pest Control
Lower Pottsgrove Township

20 Years:

Roland & Schlegel, P.C.

Thank you to the following Members who have renewed their commitment and support to your Chamber.

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The Burkhardt Group

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CMP – Contoured Metal Products Co., Inc.

The Eastwood Company

Express Data Systems, Inc.

Family Caregivers Network, Inc.

Fraser Advanced Information Systems

Gracie's 21st Century Café & Catering

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Ice House Steaks & Pizza

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TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Celebrating 25, 50, 75 Years?

If your Chamber Member company is celebrating a significant anniversary then the Chamber needs to know! The Chamber strives to recognize their Members for their success. Contact Amy at 610.326.2900 or amy@tricountyareachamber.com.

For more information on becoming a TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce Member, please contact Susan at the Chamber, 610.326.2900.

ALWAYS BUY CHAMBER

STUDY: CONSUMERS FAVOR CHAMBER MEMBERS

A new national study reveals that membership in a local chamber of commerce can significantly boost a business's image among consumers, as well as among other businesses. In a scientific survey of 2000 U.S. adults, The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based strategic consulting firm, found positive perceptions of chamber members in a number of areas, including overall favorability, consumer awareness and reputation, and likelihood of future patronage.

The study, commissioned by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), IBM, Administaff, Small Business Network, Inc., and Market Street Services, showed that when respondents were told that a particular small business was a member of its local chamber, they were 44 percent more likely to rate it favorably than study respondents who were not told of the chamber affiliation. Respondents were also 63 percent more likely to want to purchase goods or services from a small business that is a chamber member.

"We discovered that informing someone about a company's chamber membership opens the door to substantial increases in positive perceptions of that business," said Alex Trouteaud, Ph.D., senior strategist for The Schapiro Group. "There clearly is a feeling by our respondents that chamber membership is synonymous with quality and desirability."

To tap into this reservoir of goodwill, a small business should not only join the local chamber of commerce and participate, but also make sure consumers and other businesses are aware of that chamber affiliation.

The positive impact of perceived chamber membership is felt by big businesses, too. For example, when consumers believed that a restaurant chain was a member of the local chamber of commerce, they were 40 percent more likely to eat at the franchise in the future. And if a consumer believed that one of the major automobile manufacturers was a member of its local chamber, that consumer was 9 percent more likely to consider purchasing his or her next car from the automaker.

"This study reinforces research done in 2005 about the perceived capacity of chambers to lead businesses and lead

Welcome New Members!

Look who's joined us... The following businesses have invested in YOUR Chamber.

When purchasing goods or services please keep these businesses as well as other TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce Members in mind. Call and welcome these new Members to the Chamber!

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communities," said Mick Fleming, president of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). "These new national findings point to even more direct benefits for companies willing to be stakeholders in their local chamber."

The study results had good news for chambers themselves, where 82 percent of respondents indicated that a local chamber of commerce "creates jobs and promotes economic development."

"The message from this national study is as simple as it is ground-breaking," said Jim Blasingame, small business expert and president of Small Business Network, Inc. "Join your local chamber,

be an active participant in your chamber's programs and be sure to let your customers and prospects know you're a proud chamber supporter when they come in your business and when they see your marketing material."

J. Mac Holladay, CEO of Market Street Services, an economic development consulting firm based in Atlanta that helped create the study, said, "It is refreshing to learn what we have suspected for years that chamber membership and community involvement are good investments."

**The full study results are available on the ACCE Website,
www.acce.org/chamberstudy.aspx**

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Established in 1914, ACCE is the only national association uniquely serving the professional development needs of individuals managing chambers of commerce throughout the United States and Canada. Representing more than 7,300 chamber professionals, ACCE enhances the knowledge, leadership skills, and management effectiveness of chamber executives and their staffs through education, trend analysis, benchmarking, and best practices. ACCE promotes the highest standards of professional excellence and integrity within the chamber profession. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



FIVE-STAR ACCREDITED CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tues., Sept. 11 **HR for the Small Business – Workers' Compensation: Learn the System...Take Control**

8 – 10 AM *Chamber Conference Center*, Pottstown*

This seminar will be presented by Greg DeMedio, CIC, CWCA, Collegeville Financial Group, LLC & Keystone CompControl, LLC. At this seminar you can realize how work related injuries affect your bottom line and how you can take control of your Workers' Compensation costs.

\$35 per Chamber Member or SHRM/HR Association Member (\$30 for additional attendees from the same company); \$75 per non-member

Thurs., Sept. 13 **Membership Breakfast**

7 – 7:30 AM *The Elks Lodge, 61 High Street, Pottstown*

7:30 – 9 AM **Networking Program**

The topic "Workforce Development in the Tri-County Area" will be discussed. This event will also serve as the Chamber's Annual Meeting and each attendee will receive a copy of the brand new 2007-2009 Tri-County Area Guide & Membership Directory. The Greater Pottstown HR Association, Pottstown Symphony Orchestra, and United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania are sponsoring this event..

\$17 per Member prepaid; \$21 per Member at the door; \$24 per Member invoiced / non-member

Tues., Sept. 18 **Small Business Program – 5 Power Tips to Grow Your Business**

8 – 10 AM *Chamber Conference Center*, Pottstown*

This seminar will be presented by Tim Schauer, V.P. of Agency Services at Westlawn Group. This interactive power packed session will inspire you to look at your business in a different way. By using creativity and proven business principles, it is possible to move your company forward.

\$35 per Member (\$30 for additional attendees from the same company); \$75 per non-member

Tues., Sept. 18 **Welcome Coffee for Boyertown Salvation Army Captains**

9 – 10 AM *Boyertown Salvation Army, 409 South Reading Avenue, Boyertown*

Join the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce, Building a Better Boyertown, Berks-Mont Business Association and Pottstown Salvation Army in welcoming Tommy and Gillian Rogers to the Tri-County area! Captains Tommy and Gillian Rogers arrived in early July from Buffalo, New York, to take over for Captains Doug and Patty Richwine who were reassigned to Wilkes-Barre.

No Charge, Members of participating organizations only

Thurs., Sept. 20 **Tri-County Area Fall JOB FAIR**

10 AM – 3 PM *Norco Fire Hall, 144 West Schuylkill Road (Rt. 724), Pottstown*

Exhibit at the job fair to meet potential employees, accept resumes, conduct on-site interviews or hand out applications! The event is free for job seekers. The Job Fair is sponsored by 107.5 FRANK fm.

\$200 per table for Chamber Members; \$300 per table for non-members

Tues., Sept. 25 **Women of the Workforce Luncheon**

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM *Brookside Country Club, Prospect & Adams Streets, Pottstown*

The keynote speaker is Tara Paster of Paster Training, Inc., a local food and alcohol safety training firm which trains servers about safe practices throughout the country. She traveled to the Olympic Village in Torino, Italy to present an alcohol education program to the Olympic hospitality team.

\$28 per Member prepaid or at the door; \$36 per Member invoiced

Tues., Sept. 25 **Membership Mixer at Nimlok Philadelphia**

4:30 – 6:30 PM *Nimlok Philadelphia, 16 Iron Bridge Drive, Collegeville*

Nimlok Philadelphia invites you to join them for appetizers and drinks, to take a tour of their exhibit showroom, and enter a drawing for the chance to win a 10 ft. PopUp Display Rental with header graphic (valued at \$800).

No Charge, Members only

**"TUNE IN" WEDNESDAY EVENING FOR
CHAMBER UPDATE ON PCTV!**
Featuring various topics and Chamber updates.
Wednesday evenings at 8 PM PCTV Channel 27

Thurs., Oct. 4 **20th Annual Education and Career Fair**

8:30 – 11:30 AM *Gilbertsville Fire Co., 1454 E. Philadelphia Ave., Gilbertsville*

Over 250 colleges, universities, and schools of higher education have been invited to exhibit at this event supplying valuable information to aid high school students in making career choices for their futures. The fair is FREE for students and the general public. Chamber Member businesses who would like to exhibit at the event to provide students with information on the skills and training they will need to work in your industry, may do so at the discounted rate of \$125 per table. Booths are for informational purposes only. Resumes may not be accepted and applications may not be distributed. Sponsorships are available.

Tues., Oct. 9 **Business Equipment Recycling Day**

8 – 11 AM *Pottstown Industrial Complex, Keim St., Pottstown*

At this event, Chamber Member businesses are invited to bring their used electronic business equipment to be recycled at NO CHARGE. Items accepted include: audio visual equipment, circuit boards, fax machines, monitors, computers, and more! If you would like to participate, please call the Chamber at 610.326.2900 and request a registration form. Forms must be completed and submitted to the Chamber with the amount of equipment you will be bringing to recycle.

No Charge, Members only

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Registering for Chamber events is fast & easy:
Call the RSVP line,
610.326.5158
or visit us online!

For additional upcoming events visit the Chamber Calendar on our website!

*PARKING

There is NO visitor parking available at the Security Trust Building, 152 High St.

Parking is available on High St. for up to 3 hours at no charge or in the Freight Station Municipal lot, across the railroad tracks for \$.10 per hour (enter off of Hanover St.). You must have a permit to park in the 152 lot or you will be ticketed.

On the Radio:

Audio Impact; highlighting a Chamber Member business or event each week,
Monday afternoons at 5:05 PM on WPAZ 1370 AM

Noble Notes

Amy Noble



Finally...it is here! The 2007-2008 Tri-County Area Guide and Membership Directory is finished and will be sent to each and every Chamber Member business! We will also be distributing the Guides at the Membership Breakfast on Thursday, September 13 at The Elks Lodge. I would like to thank all of the Chamber Members who purchased advertising in the guidebook. Your investment will be well worth it, as this book will be distributed to many businesses, legislators, new residents, visitors and others in the region over the next two years.

I want to encourage everyone to visit our website, tricountyareachamber.com. It's the "go-to" site for the region and it contains lots of information for Chamber Members, non-members and the community. Chamber Members can log onto the "Members Only" section to find information exclusively for Members. The site will be undergoing some changes to make it easier to navigate and many pages will be updated. I'm also very excited to announce that we will soon be selling sponsorships for the site. If you are interested in promoting your business to the thousands of visitors on the site, let me know. I can be reached at amy@tricountyareachamber.com or 610.326.2900.

Thank you to the entire membership for your support, and I look forward to seeing you all at the exciting events we have planned for the 2007-2008 program year!

AMY NOBLE OF THE TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COMPLETES THIRD YEAR AT INSTITUTE

Amy Noble, Marketing & Communications Director, of the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce, recently completed Institute for Organization Management (Institute), an intensive week-long nonprofit leadership training program held July 29-August 2, 2007, at Villanova University in Villanova, Pa.

The industry leader in nonprofit education, Institute is a four-year program held at five sites each year—four in the summer and one in the winter. Most participants attend the one-week sessions at the same site each year, building valuable relationships with others in the industry and creating a network of idea sharing. Through a combination of required courses and electives, students not only enhance their own organizational management skills but add new

fuel to their organizations, making them run more efficiently and effectively.

Graduates of Institute receive the IOM recognition, signifying completion of 96 hours of course instruction in association, chamber, and nonprofit management. In addition, participants can earn points toward the Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) or Certified Association Executive (CAE) designations.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.

For more information, contact Institute for Organization Management at U.S. Chamber headquarters at 202.463.5570; 1615 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20062-2000; www.uschamber.com/institute. 🗑️

Red CARPET EVENT



FLOWERS EVERMORE CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING WITH CHAMBER AMBASSADORS

Flowers Evermore, a new flower and gift shop, opened in downtown Pottstown at 417 King Street, with a Chamber Ambassador Grand Opening Celebration. Pictured in the center of the picture holding the large scissors are Flowers Evermore owners, Hope and Brian Egolf. The Egolfs are surrounded by family, friends and Chamber Ambassadors to commemorate their opening.

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Tri-County Area Fall JOB FAIR

Thursday, September 20, 2007
10 AM – 3 PM

Norco Fire Company, Rt. 724, Pottstown

Exhibit at the job fair to meet potential employees, accept resumes, conduct on-site interviews or hand out applications! The cost is \$200 for Chamber Members and \$300 for non-members. The event is free for job seekers. To register your company for a table, call Kitty at 610.326.2900 or visit the Chamber Calendar on tricountyareachamber.com. The Job Fair is sponsored by 107.5 FRANK fm.



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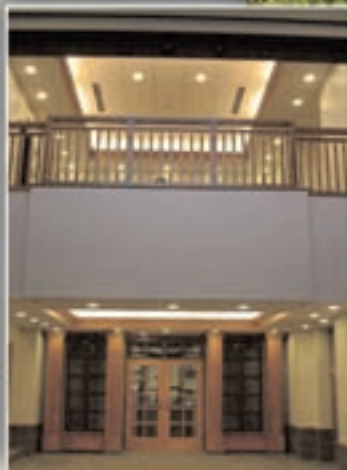


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URSINUS' BERMAN MUSEUM TO SHOW G. NOBLE WAGNER SCULPTURE, PRINTS

An exhibition of the art of local artist G. Noble Wagner will open Sept. 18 at the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College.

Purity of Surface: Sculpture & Prints by G. Noble Wagner (1907-1987) will run through Dec. 21 in the Main Gallery.

A gallery talk is scheduled Sept. 20 at 6:30 PM. The Berman Museum Director, Lisa Tremper Hanover, will give the talk. An opening reception will be held Sept. 23 from 2 to 4 PM.

Wagner was a co-founder of the Cheltenham (Pa.) Art Center, and is noted for her use of a concise, direct and powerful artistic vocabulary largely in aluminum and stainless steel, constructed around basic geometric shapes and forms. Her two-dimensional surfaces are silk-screened with vibrant, often dissonant, colors that play against the aluminum or stainless surface.

Affiliated with the Minimalism movement, Wagner was a force in the Philadelphia and New York art scene

challenging the field with her use of materials, scale, and installation techniques. Her sculpture, *The Oval*, graces the Ursinus College campus and was donated by her five children including Ursinus alumna Susan Wagner Lubking 1960. A large collection of Wagner's artistic *oeuvre* will join the permanent collection as a significant resource for the study and interpretation of her work.

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at www.ursinus.edu. The College

is located on Main Street in

Collegeville.

The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus, known for its diverse collection and innovative educational programming, is open 10 AM to 4 PM, Tuesday through Friday; noon to 4:30 PM, Saturday and Sunday, and closed Mondays and college holidays. The muse-

um is accessible to the physically disabled and admission is free. The museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums. Exhibitions and programs are funded in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. For group tour information, call 610.409.3500. 📞



Purity of Surface: Sculpture & Prints by G. Noble Wagner (1907-1987) will run through Dec. 21 in the Main Gallery.

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U.S. CHAMBER PRAISES PASSAGE OF AMERICA COMPETES ACT Bill Makes Greater Commitment to Math and Science Education

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce applauded House and Senate's recent passage of H.R. 2272, the America COMPETES Act, calling the bipartisan vote a signal of their renewed federal commitment to keeping American students globally competitive.

"While other nations are raising their standards and numbers of science and math graduates, the United States is not keeping pace," said Chamber President and CEO Tom Donohue. "This bill will enhance the economic competitiveness of our nation by stopping the long-running decline in the number of U.S.-trained engineers and mathematicians."

The bill authorizes over \$40 billion between fiscal years 2008 and 2010 for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics research and education. It also authorizes two new competitive grant programs that enable public-private partnerships with colleges and universities to strengthen education in math, science, engineering,

technology, and critical foreign languages. In addition, the bill will help prepare thousands of new teachers and provide current teachers with content and skills in their area of expertise through the National Science Foundation's Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and Math and Science Partnerships Program. Finally, the bill provides competitive grants to increase the number of teachers serving high-need schools.

"If America is to remain competitive in the global, knowledge-based economy, it needs to better prepare its workforce and maintain excellence in education and science," added Donohue. "The America COMPETES Act will help our nation keep its critical edge in innovation and technological leadership."

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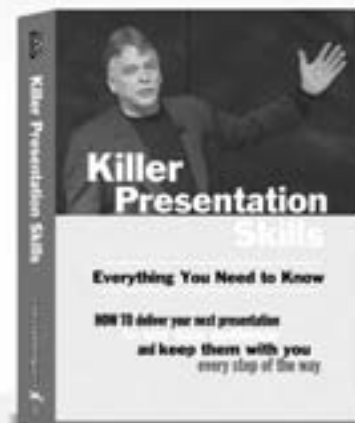
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U.S. CHAMBER PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REBUILD AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

"Let's Rebuild America" Initiative Will Build Support for Private and Public Investment

In a major address, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Thomas J. Donohue recently condemned the current condition of the nation's transportation, energy, and water systems and announced a new initiative to spur hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure investments.

"We're rapidly running out of capacity, and it's already costing us jobs, productivity, competitiveness, mobility, and most tragically, innocent American lives," said Donohue, who delivered a keynote address at the Transportation 2007 Summit. "We must begin now to build a modern and safe infrastructure system. The business community must lead the way to make this happen."

Donohue announced that the Chamber would organize, fund, and lead a new, multimillion-dollar initiative called "Let's Rebuild America." The four key goals of the Chamber's plan include: (1) documenting the problem with solid research, including state-by-state infrastructure report cards; (2) educating citizens and policymakers about the benefits of infra-

structure and the cost of failure; (3) unlocking pent-up private investment by removing legal and regulatory impediments; and (4) boosting public investment through congressional reauthorizations and public-private partnerships and stopping the diversion of infrastructure funds to other programs. An increase in the federal gasoline user fee—which has not been raised in 14 years even as construction costs have soared—should be examined along with other financing options.

"We can create American jobs, reduce congestion, clean the air, succeed in a global economy, and save thousands of innocent lives by expanding both private and public investment in our infrastructure," said Donohue. "The benefits are great. The price of failure is high. We are going to make sure that the American people hear that message over and over again and hold their elected officials accountable." ■

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Upcoming Events At Village Productions

Need an idea for an enchanted evening? For a GRAND way to spend some weekend time? How about music and dance to liven things up! Look no further than Village Production’s performance of *A Grand Night for Singing* at Pottstown Middle School for TWO WEEKENDS ONLY from October 19th through the 28th. This show has the great Rogers and Hammerstein music you’d expect, but it’s more than a simple revue. The show takes the songs you love and presents them with a twist, bringing new life to the songs, whether it is the classic “Some Enchanted Evening” or “I’m Gonna Wash that Man Right out of My Hair.” After all, how many ways are there to solve a problem like Maria? Come and find out! When it appeared on Broadway this show was nominated for two Tony awards, including Best Musical. You don’t have to go all the way to New York; you can see great theater right here in Pottstown. To purchase tickets, visit www.village-productions.org or call Village Productions at 610.469.1254.

Speaking of great theater, Village Productions is holding open auditions for the upcoming season September 8th through 16th at Montgomery County Community College in Pottstown, PA. You are welcome to audition for one or all of our productions. We will cast as much of our season as possible from this audition process. Audition appointments are strongly encouraged but are not required. Additional auditions may be available later in our season to fill open roles, as needed. Ethnic diversity is encouraged! Contact rebec-

ca.shoemaker@villageproductions.org or call 610.633.8083 for an audition appointment and additional information.

Watch for more information on the upcoming season, with more main stage events, cabarets, and educational offerings currently in the planning process, all culminating in the opening of the Tri-County Performing Arts Center next spring. Interested in being a part of the excitement? Give us a call and ask how you can volunteer – many kinds of talent are needed! 🍷

See you in October at
our GRAND NIGHT!



Village Productions is a dynamic, performing arts organization founded in 2001 by a dedicated team of professional and amateur performing artists, arts educators, and area residents who dreamed of creating new and highly accessible performing arts opportunities for the community. Village Productions seeks to strengthen community, inspire creative exploration, educate, and entertain, through the presentation of quality performing arts events and educational opportunities geared toward a diverse audience. You may contact Village Productions through their website at www.villageproductions.org or by telephone at 610.469.1254

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State Manufacturing Program Is Generating Results

87 Percent of Projects Increased Sales, Gross Margins

A special, commonwealth-backed network designed to help Pennsylvania's small- and medium-sized manufacturers respond to changing markets, new technology and increased competition are reporting a stronger potential for growth and a confidence in building their workforce.

The network is made up of seven, private, non-profit organizations called industrial resource centers.

"Recognizing the value of the network to Pennsylvania's manufacturers, Governor Edward G. Rendell increased funding the last two years by 50 percent," said Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Yablonsky. "This investment has allowed the centers to extend their creative consulting and direct service programs to more small- and medium-sized manufacturers, helping them to compete and grow in the global marketplace."

Since 2003, the commonwealth has invested \$55.8 million to support the mission of the centers.

The centers have assembled a team of business growth consultants who help manufacturers implement strategies in the areas of new markets and customers, product and service development, sales development, and new business models and strategy. The team has completed 727 projects for 591 companies since 2004. Recently, they conducted a survey of their clients and learned:

- 87 percent expect to increase sales and gross margins
- More than 65 percent now have at least one new product in development
- 90 percent feel they now have a better-trained sales staff
- More than 45 percent plan to enter

at least two new markets in the next two years

Because of the centers, Susquehanna County-based Masters Concrete is thriving in the pre-cast decorative landscaping concrete business. Masters had operated a ready-mixed concrete business for more than 50 years, primarily, by word-of-mouth. It realized it would need additional sales and marketing to enter – and be competitive – in the pre-cast market.

"The Northeastern Industrial Resource Center guided us through the development of a sales and marketing strategy, which gave us a solid plan of action to follow as we looked for new customers," said Masters Concrete President Rick Masters. "With hands on sales training and solid marketing material, we were able to confidently pursue new clients and, ultimately, win their business."

Masters estimates the coaching and strategies provided by the center has resulted in securing 50 new distributors, five new products under development and a 20 percent increase in sales.

"Instead of merely saving money, companies must focus on new ways to generate revenue and be innovative," Yablonsky said. "By practicing this broader perspective, Pennsylvania manufacturers will increase sales and become more profitable. This flexibility, in turn, lowers the risk for companies competing in the global economy." ■

For more information on Governor Rendell's manufacturing programs and other DCED programs, visit www.newpa.com or call 1.866.466.3972.

For more information about the IRC Network, visit www.pairc.net.



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In late summer of 2002, I found myself idled after 20 years of successful employment in the interior design and office furnishing industry.

At loose end about the immediate future and, I admit, with the need to commiserate a little, I invited my good friend and business soul mate Tracy McKay over. Tracy, also a graduate designer with her own successful business in commercial interior design and furnishing, has a great knack for making lemonade out of lemons. After a particular situation arose that needed both of us to join heads, it instantly became quite clear to us that we had, right in our hands, the opportunity to do what we had dreamed to do with our knowledge, experience and innate creativity: to start our own business using an out-of-the-box eclectic approach that would make us different

from anyone else in the field and would reflect our dynamic approach in developing an end user's identity and usefulness of environment. After weeks of planning, research and juggling numbers, we officially decided to become partners in our own business adventure: to create one of a kind harmonious and productive office environments using design skills and great quality "previously enjoyed" furniture.

Our first order of business was to create a totally unique and so out-of-the ordinary name that it could not be mistaken with another competitor; a name that would be difficult to forget and that would make people curious about us. A name that would also reflect the approach we planned to use in our design: a concoction of previously enjoyed and new office

(See "Company Profile" on page 46)

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COMPANY PROFILE

(Continued from page 45)

furniture combined with great design, carpet patterns, found objects, diverse artwork from local artists. All things that contribute to a creative and fun-seeking environment when considering a new office.

Already having an established client base that had been working with both of us for years and gave our venture support and encouragement provided our new tree solid roots to grow on. We became Furniture Soup, Inc. This was the summer of 2003.

With no funds for a "formal" address, the business started out of Tracy's husband's new garage (much to his dismay), my living room and a garage where we stored as much "previously enjoyed" furniture as we could get from a liquidator in New York. Being both environmentally conscious, Tracy and I became "dumpster queens," collecting and storing unwanted items to be creatively adapted for re-use.

One of our many specialties is the use of gears, sprockets, bearings and other mysterious mechanical parts from assorted places such as the old Mrs. Smith's Frozen Pies factory in Pottstown to make one-of-a-kind candlesticks, beloved by our mechanically inclined

clientele. Another opportunity we use to show off our out-of-the-box approach to design is by occasionally making hand painted desks out of old antique doors, complete with found objects, tasseled fence posts used as legs and various gears to support the glass top. These "table/desks", each of a unique design, once set up on a canvas made up of gold, black, orange, and red carpet tiles for example create a pleasing sense of individuality and artistry not found anywhere else. Our main focus and the thing that makes us different from other commercial office furniture dealers and interiors designers is our love and ability to take furniture, in whole or parts, and adapt it for re-use in a way that is unique and extremely functional for our clients and at a great affordable price!

In September 2003, Furniture Soup, lovingly referred to as The Soup, finally got a home, a 15,000 square foot warehouse with a big showroom. This was a turning point for us. We were now a concrete entity that could be marketed! With a non-existent marketing budget, we had to use ingenuity and style to be recognized. We already had an established client base that had been working with us for years and that continued to support and encourage us in our new venture. Our tree had some good roots already.

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CREATIVE MARKETING

Our primary approach was name recognition. We soon had a unique, multi-dimensional metal sign, with our name in company colors, erected on the showroom façade fronting Route 61. At the same time, hundreds of business cards with their unusual design and colors were handed out at conventions, chambers' sponsored breakfasts, luncheons, dinners and other business functions. When possible, we have shown our expertise in creating a proactive office environment on a shoestring, as we recently did for Paving-the-Ways' 2006 Make Over.

Concurrently, now that we were on the map, we set-up our showroom to ensure that all visitors would have not only an informative experience, but also a memorable and fun one! This is why, as you enter our showroom, you will experience an exuberance of colors and sensations punctuated by a Bart Simpson's mask on a nearby wall, a bold floral arrangement atop a "previously enjoyed" traditional wood desk, maybe a designer guest chair perched on a credenza, and a multi-colored screen made up of antique doors to hide the men's room entrance thus enhancing the area's "feng-shui". Further on, you may find our "Soup Menu" of photos depicting

client's offices "before" and "after" Furniture Soup's personal touch.

To reach potential customers that we do not have the opportunity to meet, we have a quarterly bulk mailing of postcards designed by Tracy. They may announce a special sale or event. Also, in order to attract people not necessarily in need of our services but who will spread our name through word-of-mouth, we have an annual Open House featuring special entertainments such as, Art Auctions or Sanctioned Flower Shows. Together with light refreshments, live music, and various interesting artisans ranging from silversmiths to tarot card readers, these popular and memorable evenings have allowed us to market ourselves to a large cross-section of potential customers from Reading and surrounding areas.

Any questions? Jenna and Monique will be there to help you with ideas, dimensions or prices!

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

As mentioned above, to benefit local senior artists, we have had art auctions in which all our employees participate by making the artists' evening memorable. We also use our showroom as a gallery to promote their work. Similarly,

(See "Company Profile" on page 49)



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COMPANY PROFILE

(Continued from page 47)

we have hosted a Small Standard Flower Show sponsored by the Garden Club of Reading with all our staff participating.

Personally, I (Brenda) have participated in 60 hrs of training classes with Berks Women in Crisis (BWIC). I now volunteer with mailings and marketing events. Furniture Soup donates time and furniture to help as well.

Furniture Soup also supports many yearly charity events with silent auctions and raffles by donating floral arrangements created by Tracy. We loan furniture to the Genesius theatre for their stage productions. We have taught classes on design to the Association of Builders and Contractors (ABC) and helped various non-profit organizations with time and free or discounted furniture, such as, River Place, The Berks Arts Council, the Lehigh Valley Arts Council, and the West Reading Business Association of which Tracy is a member donating her time as a consultant. Tracy is also a team member of the Montgomery County Children's Advocacy Group established through ABC. All of us at The Soup have painted fantastic "Soup Bowls" for Opportunity House and can't wait to do it again!

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

All of us at Furniture Soup are always receptive to opportunities to help organizations in the community dedicated to make Reading and Berks County a better place to live and work. Our passion, as a business and as designers is to create work places that are more organized, more efficient and more stimulating to come to, thus contributing to a higher quality of life for those who spend 8 hours a day or more behind their desk.

Furniture Soup, which now has 11 employees, 8 full-time and 3 part-time, and which, on regular occasions, hire temporary personnel, contributes favorably to the local workforce and to the tax base of the County. We also buy and sell local furniture inventories thus keeping the business in Berks County. Depending on the project, we pull from local installation companies, contractors, service providers, wood workers and material suppliers to collaborate on our design projects.

RESPONSE TO ADVERSITY

Adversity wears many hats and we confront each issue with our own creative ability, whether they are from customers or internal ones.

(See "Company Profile" on page 50)

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COMPANY PROFILE

(Continued from page 49)

As with most businesses, we were faced with cash flow challenges. First having to work from our own homes loaded with furniture and then moving to a long time unoccupied building demanding lots of TLC! We had no money to hire contractors, but our spirits were high. With the help of our first employees, Jenna and Monique, we painted our entire showroom, with Jenna (who nears 6 feet) painting the top of the walls and Monique (who barely reaches 5 feet), painting the lower end of the walls. What a beautiful job they did and with a smile!

In the beginning, our cash flow was so tight that we could not meet payroll and had to use plastic! I had to put up my house as collateral. Tracy and I went several months without a real paycheck! But, we had people who believed in us, first our landlord and our insurer, also our New York liquidator who gave us equipment and furniture on consignment. Our first business loan came from Susquehanna Patriot Bank in the form of an SBA loan. Anyone who knows anything about the SBA can testify to its intensity! After innumerable hours of work, our 6" thick binder was completed and we were able to get our loan.

Recently, Fulton Bank helped us re-structure our finances and gave us a line of credit, which helped us grow from \$1 million to \$2.5 millions in 3 years! Without these people and our hard working staff, we would still be struggling.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES OR EMPLOYEE GROWTH OVER PAST 3 YEARS

When we opened our doors on September 1, 2003, Furniture Soup had 4 employees, Tracy, Jenna, and I being full time and Monique part-time. In October 2003 Shari was added to the staff on a part-time basis to help with design. The five of us did everything: design, accounting, warehousing and maintenance including painting the walls, moving furniture around and loading desks in customers' trucks. In 2004, we contracted for bookkeeping support. In January of 2005, Andrew joined us to help with liquidations, projects and sales. By May 2005, it became evident that we needed more help to keep us financially organized. This is when Dorothy came to our aid as a one-woman accounting department. In September 2005, we hired a warehouse person full time to handle the increasing demand for someone to handle furniture in house and to make deliveries. Up



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to that time we had only hired temporary personnel on a as needed basis. One year later, in July and August respectively, we added Tiffany and Joanne for additional design support and outside sales. We also expanded our focus to include the hospitality and healthcare markets. By the end of 2006, with all the business growth going on we hired a second warehouse person full time that took the total number of employees to 11 where we are at now. Fernando and Tim have rounded the Furniture Soup team and work hard to deliver, install and keep our ever-changing warehouse in order.

We are also proud that we were able, in 2006, to get our first "Furniture Soup" truck, leased from Penske and to purchase our first trailer that we use for storing or transporting cubicles and other furniture inventory.

Over the past two years, we have also gone from receiving our previously enjoyed furniture on consignment to totally owning our entire inventory. This has been a great accomplishment. Tracy and I are very proud of the business that we have been able to create and grow and all of our furniture Soup team that have worked hard to help make it possible. 🍷

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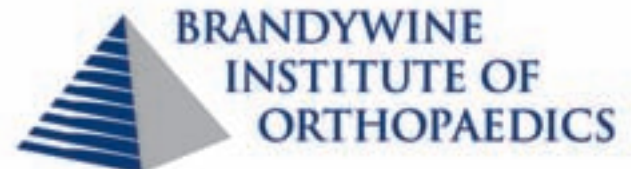
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COVER STORY

(Continued from page 7)

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extravaganza to holiday buffets, to the formal President's Ball.

In addition to restaurant style dining, the staff routinely handles special events for business and social functions. Brookside plays host to many of the regions annual golf outings. The setting combined with exquisite food provides a memorable experience for all participants. The facility is also conducive to a broad range of functions ranging from small private business meetings to weddings and banquets for up to 225 guests. The professional banquet staff is equipped to



handle all of the details for these special events.

Taking in everything that Brookside has to offer leaves few stones unturned. With the benefit of member input, the club has adapted to today's busy lifestyle by providing first class recreation in a family-friendly environment. Highly personalized service and meticulous attention to detail are hallmarks of a member-run organization that are evident throughout the Brookside staff and facility. If you've ever thought about joining a club, Brookside should be at the top of the list. 🏌️

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Thomas J. Kent, Jr., Franchise & Corporate Attorney, Joins Fox Rothschild's Chester County Office

Fox Rothschild announced that Thomas J. Kent, Jr. has joined the firm's Franchising & Distribution practice as a partner, resident in the Chester County office.

"We have known Tom for years and are thrilled that he has decided to join us," said Michael S. Harrington, managing partner at the Chester County office. "Tom has a superb reputation in the franchise and distribution area. His reputation and experience are an excellent addition to Fox Rothschild and to our Chester County office."

Kent focuses his practice on franchising and distribution, as well as mergers and acquisitions, licensing, and corporate / partnership organization / reorganization.

"Fox offers me an excellent opportunity to grow my practice, and offers my clients the depth and breadth of an entre-

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Thomas J. Kent, Jr

preneurial law firm with a growing national platform," said Kent. "It's my pleasure to join Fox, and I'm looking forward to the many opportunities the firm can provide to both me and to my clients."

Before joining Fox, Kent was the managing partner of a mid-size Chester County law firm. He began his legal career as in-house counsel with an international franchise corporation and ultimately became the Director of Center Development for the Franchise.

Kent is a graduate of Villanova University (B.A. 1992) and Widener University School of Law (J.D. 1995). He is active in the legal community as a member of the Pennsylvania and Chester County Bar Associations, and is admitted to practice in Pennsylvania. 🏠

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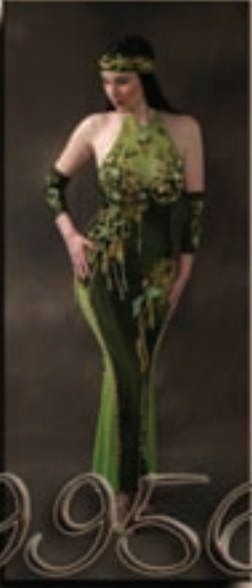
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Pottstown Memorial Medical Center announces initiative to go Smoke-Free

Effective November 15, 2007

In an effort to promote and encourage healthier lifestyles for the community it serves, Pottstown Memorial Medical Center (PMMC) and its outpatient campuses will implement a smoke-free policy effective November 15, 2007. The target date coincides with the Great American SmokeOut, providing an opportunity for patients, visitors, and employees to quit smoking.

PMMC currently prohibits smoking inside the building; however, the new policy will take the next step by banning the use of all tobacco products on its entire campus, interior and exterior. The smoke free environment includes the elimination of the currently designated smoking areas and extends to all satellite locations of PMMC including:

- Pottstown Scanning and Treatment Center
- Boyertown Rehabilitation and Diagnostic Services
- CarePlex Outpatient Center
- Berks Family Care
- Coventry Family Care
- Coventry Pediatrics
- Limerick Family Care

According to Steve MacLauchlan, CEO, "smoking and tobacco use has been identified as a contributing factor of many diseases, and is the leading cause of preventable deaths. It is only natural for hospitals to lead the way with a smoke-free initiative by setting a smoke-free example. We are looking forward to providing a healthy environment for our employees and patients by going smoke-free."

The new policy will eliminate the health risks of second hand smoke for all patrons of the hospital, providing a safer and healthier atmosphere. In addition, the initiative encourages and enables people to quit by eliminating triggers that make smoking cessation difficult.

PMMC offers Freedom from Smoking, a smoking cessation program that can be utilized in preparation for the smoke-free policy. All health care providers are able and willing to assist employees, patients, and visitors with cessation treatments and referrals. PMMC also offers counseling and services in smoking cessation and makes a strong commitment to improve the health of the community.

The decision to go smoke-free follows a national trend of hospitals, propelled by the direct connection between smoking and increased health risks. Smoke-free policies have also shown to reduce the number of employees who start smoking and reduce the number of cigarettes smoked by employees. 🚭

For information about the smoking cessation programs at PMMC, call Denise Connolly in Professional Development at 610.327.7594.
PA free Smoking Quitline: 1.877.724.1090, website: www.quitnet.com.



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THE RELUCTANT REVIEWER

By Marie LaBrune

Wonderful taste
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In our lives we reach milestones — sometimes big, sometimes small — that represent key events and achievements in our existence.

We take time to mark an occasion so that we will recall long after the moment passes that we progressed, that we achieved, that we accomplished something noteworthy. Hence, we celebrate.

These moments of celebration are precious in our lives. And, I find, are often too few. It's not that we don't have moments to celebrate. It's just that in our frantic, overscheduled lives we sometimes forget to take the time to mark an occasion. And think about how much there is to celebrate. Sure, there are the well-recognized milestones and events — anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, major life changes. But what about those smaller milestones? A new project, a new friend, a new day?

It was rather early in the morning to be having such philosophical thoughts. Still, I made myself another cup of tea and decided to turn my mental ranting and raving into action. James had just started a new consulting assignment, which deserved a celebration. For me, there was definitely a lot to celebrate — like it was Saturday, and I had survived another week as a working stiff — and I knew the perfect place to mark the occasion that evening.

James and I made our way along Manatawny Road through Pottstown to Pine Forge, turning at the small, simple 'restaurant' sign that pointed the way to Gracie's 21st Century Café. I admired Gracie's garden, bursting with color and texture as we crossed the terrace toward the restaurant entrance. As we stepped inside, we felt immediately refreshed. Yes, it was certainly cooler inside than out. However it was more than that. The beautifully fluid décor of the front dining room with its lovely white walls, soft lighting, and most interesting artwork

which showed the many faces and places of Jamaica and Cuba beloved by Proprietor-Chef Gracie herself. This eclectic décor continues throughout the restaurant, I noted, as our hostess led us through an inviting bar area into another lovely dining room. This dimly lit area exuded calm and comfort. I noted the Native American art pieces that hung simply on the walls, fitting in perfectly with the earthy color scheme. Looking at the large candles which shone from the fireplace — respecting the season — I felt myself completely relax.

The menu is as refreshing and inviting as the décor. For nearly 20 years, Gracie's has combined her artistry as a chef with her philosophical and spiritual self. Progressing from its early days as a vegetarian haven, the current menu bursts with fresh, seasonal ingredients, and uses local suppliers where appropriate. Gracie's builds her tempting dishes on a foundation of natural meats, consciously monitored wild fish catches, and organic fruits and vegetables.

After placing our orders, we were delighted to see a plate of pork empanadas placed before us. A light, flaky pastry enveloped a wonderfully spiced pork mixture, and was served with a mole sauce, with flavors of Jamaican jerk. It was a very generous size for an amuse-bouche, though we had no problem finishing every last morsel. We also savored the fresh bread and roasted head of garlic that arrived with it. How I love mashing roasted garlic cloves with sweet cream butter to top off homemade bread. A wonderful way to start our meal.

Our appetizers soon arrived, beautifully presented. James enjoyed one of the evening's special offerings of Lemon Shrimp. Two colossal shrimp were adorned with a delicate lemon confit and lay on a petit bed of angel hair pasta. Wonderful flavor combinations in a perfect starter portion. My own starter was a goat cheese quesadilla, filled with tender meat and covered in a luscious fresh salsa of bell and jalapeno peppers, onion, and cilantro, excitedly charged with fresh mango. A simple looking dish that went beyond common flavors, including the cheese which was imported from Jamaica. Fresh avocado slices finished off the plate. Truly delicious.

We next enjoyed a traditional Caesar salad. A common offering, perhaps, but done properly a wonderful taste sensation. (See "The Reluctant Reviewer" on page 58)

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THE RELUCTANT REVIEWER

(Continued from page 57)

Crisp, garden fresh romaine, home-made Ceasar dressing topped with fresh Asiago cheese, imported anchovies, and house made croutons. Tasty and satisfying.

As we waited for our main course, I sipped a perfectly chilled glass of chardonnay, organic in fact from the estate of Valle Casablanca in Chile. Another example of the thoughtful offerings at Gracie's. By this time, the dining room was beginning to fill up with a diverse crowd. I could see a family of 6 happily raising their glasses for a toast. I spied another couple in a romantic moment, as they held hands across the table. Another group of friends enjoyed cocktails at the bar, joyfully engaged in a most entertaining story. And James and I, celebrating our own small but noteworthy events of the week. I made a mental note to mention Gracie's to my office manager who is always looking for a great place to celebrate or for that

special caterer. Now that would be worth going to work for! Noting the seasonal demand for this special location, I made my own mental note to book in early for my holiday plans.

I came out of my reverie to find our entrees had arrived. I had ordered striped bass that had been braised to create a moist, tender and flavorful filet. Served over fennel and asparagus with a light flavorful broth, each bite was a taste sensation. Out of this world. James feasted on Chicken Ascona, a boneless, skinless breast of chicken pan seared with tiny diced plum tomatoes and fresh basil. A very healthy preparation, as the dish was steamed to a tender finish with no low fat chicken stock and a splash of fresh lemon. Melted cheddar topped the chicken that rested on a bed of fresh spinach and was accompanied by angel hair pasta.

The generous portions. The explosion of flavors and textures. All extremely satisfying. But alas, always room for dessert. A slice of Montserrat Coconut Tart sat before us on a fantastically colored lime green plate. This island delight explodes with key lime flavor as its rich filling is mixed with flaky coconut, sitting atop a tender pastry crust. And like all things Gracie, this has a story. An elusive recipe sought on the island of Monserrat, uncovered and perfected by Gracie herself. An intoxicating way to finish off the meal.

Fully satiated, we smiled at each other and at this wonderful place as we gathered our things to go. As we made our way through the restaurant, I gazed at the relaxed, smiling faces of the diners lingering over their own meals. It seems we all recognized that Gracie's is a most wonderful spot to mark any occasion. For me, I knew I couldn't wait for the upcoming holiday season to come back. There would surely be another celebratory moment in the near future. As we stepped into the night air, it was clear me that coming to Gracie's celebrates any moment. 🍷

Marie LaBrune is the Reluctant Reviewer, a road-weary frequent traveler who nevertheless still enjoys the delights of occasionally dining out at one of the dozens of unique establishments along the 422 corridor. Her careful if somewhat jaded palette is always on the lookout for places where business people might seek solace for dinner or weekday lunch.

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