

# CHAMBER CHAT

MARCH 2022

## Chili with ATTITUDE!

**By Andy Mayer/President & CEO**

Whoops, I messed that up. This month we have “That Gratitude Guy” speaking on *Maximizing Your Gratitude Attitude* at our membership meeting, and early next month we have our Skagit Chili & Chowder Cook-Off. I guess I conflated the two in my excitement! I am grateful for the opportunity to have some fun and to see you.

“Gratitude Guy” David George Brooke spoke to us a few years ago and he was quite good. I was looking on his website to get a quote and I found one – from me: “David’s presentation was interesting and from the heart. He drew on personal experience to illustrate how doing simple things can produce powerful changes in one’s life.” He illustrates how living a life of gratitude can enhance and improve your life both personally and professionally. Join us for the program on March 23 at 11:30 a.m., on Zoom.

Okay here’s the chili part – and attitude/flavor will be a big part of it! After a two-year break, we are very happy to be holding our Skagit Chili & Chowder Cook-Off on April 2, at Farmstrong Brewing, from 1-4 p.m. Join us to sample some fantastic chili and chowder, and to have some fun because it is sure to be a party! We are looking for additional cooks/teams to compete to be awarded the best pro or amateur chili or chowder chefs. Attitude helps – the “Flaming Trousers” come to mind! Contact Jeremy for details on entering as a cook or to attend the event.

I look forward to seeing you soon. I truly think that the rest of 2022 will be memorable – for good things this time!



**GOLD**



**SILVER**



Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
(360) 428-8547  
[mountvernonchamber.com](http://mountvernonchamber.com)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Marketing Mastermind:

### Getting Familiar with YouTube & Video Editing Tips

Thursday, March 3

10 a.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Once you have your video, where will you post it? We discuss the various platforms for your videos, with a focus on YouTube and best practices for posting to the platform. Then, we'll shift gears and do a quick tutorial on easy editing tips for your videos. As always, bring your own knowledge on these topics to share with the group.

## Knowledge NOW

### If Conflict Is Inevitable, How Do You Manage It?

Wednesday, March 9

Noon

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

We don't mean for conflict to happen, but sometimes it does. Join professional mediator Max Collette to learn why conflicts arise and what to do when conflict rears its ugly head, so you can tell it "not today."

## Latino Business Leaders Monthly Training

### (En Español)

Martes 15 de Marzo/Tuesday, March 15

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

*Entrenamiento mensual para empresarios y aspirantes a empresarios dentro de la comunidad Latina.*

Monthly educational training for current and aspiring Latino business owners.

Sponsored by:



## Save the date

### Ribbon Cutting – Wendy's

Monday, March 21

Join us as the brand-new Wendy's celebrates its new downtown Mount Vernon location.

## Chamber membership luncheon:

### Maximizing Your Gratitude Attitude

Wednesday, March 23

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

David George Brooke – “That Gratitude Guy” – brings his attitude of gratitude to our March meeting. You will:

- Learn how gratitude can overcome any life-changing event.
- Explore exercises to keep you moving toward a more positive mindset.
- Discover benefits of using a daily gratitude journal
- Tap into increased happiness, a better attitude and higher self-esteem.

Be prepared to look at your life differently!

Sponsored by:



## Call for Merchants SHOP LOCAL & WIN *Spring edition*

The Shop Local & Win promotion is back for the spring, running April 1 - May 31. To become a participating merchant, see the sign up form on page 14 of this newsletter or contact Jeremy Kindlund at (360) 428-8547.

## Welcome back, Skagit Chili & Chowder Cook-Off

The Skagit Chili & Chowder Cook-Off is back after a two-year break. The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce and Farmstrong Brewing Co. are excited to invite amateurs and professionals to compete on Saturday, April 2, at Farmstrong for the title of Skagit's favorite chili and chowder.

Cook-off attendees pick the winners by voting with their bowls. The top prize in each division is \$150, a commemorative plaque and bragging rights for the best chili or chowder in the county! Ready to throw your hat in the ring? It's just \$25 for amateur or professional entries. See page 15 for the entry form.

Interested in sponsoring the event? We have sponsorship levels available for every budget, which include opportunities through print and digital advertising as well as day-of-event visibility. In 2019 we had nearly 300 attendees and more than 36,000 impressions. See page 16 for a detailed list of sponsorship opportunities.

For questions regarding the cook-off or sponsorships, contact Jeremy Kindlund at [Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com](mailto:Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com).



⇒ SKAGIT ⇐  
CHILI &  
CHOWDER  
⇒ COOK-OFF ⇐



Craft   
Stove

presents the  
**2022 Chili & Chowder Cook-Off**

Saturday, April 2

1-4 p.m.

Farmstrong Brewing Co.

\$15

Get your tickets today on

Eventbrite

<https://bit.ly/3oXu4Pc>

## Career panels kick off for 2022

2022's Experience Work Project (EWP) panel discussions kicked off last month with a presentation from two supervisors with Pioneer Human Services.

Students from Skagit Valley College have the opportunity to attend these panel discussions to learn more about career fields they may be interested in. Students from allied health, nursing and human services programs were in attendance.

Mary Preftes-Arnez, clinical mental health supervisor, and Seth Peebles, clinical supervisor, shared their paths to working for Pioneer Human Services and provided insights into the

the industry today as it copes with the aftermath of COVID-19.

The students are eager to do job shadows, meet their practicum requirement and get on-the-job experience with paid employment.

The Chamber Foundation's workforce development and Career Connect programs are funded by the Opportunity Grant Program/ Northwest Workforce Council, Skagit Valley College, Shell Puget Sound Refinery and Puget Sound Energy. For more information, please contact Business Development and Foundation Director Silvia Reed (360) 395-2944 or [Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com](mailto:Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com).

## April's Tulip Festival is around the corner

**By Cindy Verge**

**Skagit Valley Tulip Festival  
Executive Director**

Our very own Skagit Valley Tulip Festival is ready to go with hundreds of acres of blooming tulips, three beautiful gardens (Garden Rosalyn, RoozenGaarde and Tulip Town), and the return of our signature Tulip Festival Street Fair in downtown Mount Vernon, the Kiwanis Salmon Barbecue and, of course, our very own Chili & Chowder Cook-Off at Farmstrong Brewing Co.

All three gardens will have ticketing available in advance online, allowing people to plan their trips to the Skagit Valley, choosing the time and date they want to visit. Details are available on the Tulip Festival website, [www.tulipfestival.org](http://www.tulipfestival.org).

Locals will want to be part of the annual gala on March 31. The virtual celebration (brought to you by Peoples Bank and Judd & Black Appliance) includes performances by talented



Skagitonians Marcia Kester, David Benson and Dean Snider; a Tulip Bingo game; and a delicious dinner from Calico Cupboard, complete with a party pack to enhance your evening. Warren Jewelers will also announce the winner of the annual jewelry giveaway during the program. Tickets are \$55 each and available on the Tulip Festival website under the “merchandise” tab.

Author, filmmaker and artist Jack Gunter from Camano Island, created a joyful,

bright and bold image for the 2022 poster. His image is available on a variety of items including posters, mugs and puzzles, both online and at the Tulip Festival office/headquarters at 311 W. Kincaid St. in downtown Mount Vernon. You can meet Jack on April 13 and 27 at the festival office and, of course, get your favorite tulip item signed.

The Tulip Festival is always looking for volunteers to help staff its office and events. If you are not already a sponsor, opportunities are always available at a variety of levels. For more information, contact Executive Director Cindy Verge at (360) 428-5959 or [cindy@tulipfestival.org](mailto:cindy@tulipfestival.org).



## Tammy Reim-Ledbetter named February Upbeat Award winner

The 2021 Ambassador of the Year, Phil Thornley of Primerica, chose this month's Upbeat Award winner, Tammy Reim-Ledbetter of Alaska USA credit union. Here's what Phil has to say about Tammy:

This California native has worked for Alaska USA for nearly 18 years, moving from one branch to another over the years as she has grown her career. She eventually found her way to Mount Vernon and became a Chamber ambassador in 2015. In 2021, she stepped up her involvement with the Chamber and became a board member.

Her community involvement doesn't stop at the Chamber of Commerce. She is also involved with PFLAG Skagit and the League of Women Voters.

Tammy has a proven philosophy of keeping the well-being of others top of mind and always is asking "How can I help?"

When I became a Chamber ambassador, Tammy was on my first swag bag delivery and new member welcome call. I appreciated her



(L-R) Phil Thornley, Tammy Reim-Ledbetter and Chamber CEO Andy Mayer.

knowledge! As an ambassador, she is committed to connecting regularly with membership.

In her free time, Tammy enjoys RV camping. You've likely seen her big bright orange rig, perfect for pulling a fifth-wheel, around town.

The next time you are shopping at the Mount Vernon Safeway, give her a wave at the Alaska USA branch.

## Welcome New Members

### American Cancer Society

Mariam Sowe

(425) 609-9442

Seattle

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

We attack cancer from every angle. We promote healthy lifestyles to help you prevent cancer. We research cancer and its causes to find more answers and better treatments.

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# Get to Know Baker Septic

People don't usually give too much thought to septic systems, even if they have one, but Lisa Hanley from Baker Septic Tank Pumping finds that the company does get recognized: "You're the guys with the skunk!" is what she often hears from folks who recognize the cartoon skunk from their trucks.

Baker Septic has been pumping septic tanks since 1985 when Don Wells founded the company in Ferndale. Today, Wells' grandson, Justin, is the company's president, and Baker Septic serves Whatcom, Skagit, Island and north Snohomish counties.

Baker Septic's service offerings have grown, too. It now offers inspections on new and existing systems, installation of new systems, and portable toilet services in Skagit and Whatcom.

Hanley says many people would like to ignore their septic system as much as possible, but when something goes wrong, like wastewater backing up into the bathtub, it's an ugly situation that often brings customers to tears.

"Inspections are a way to keep an eye on what could be a burgeoning problem," Hanley says. Since 2007, the state has required all drain field/gravity septic systems to be inspected every three years and pressurized systems inspected annually. No one particularly likes to take on the expense of an inspection, Hanley says, but pollutants from failing septic systems can turn up where they're not expected – like the neighbor's yard or even a community's drinking water.

"When you own a septic system, you essentially take on a small environmental stewardship role," she said.

As more people are moving out to the county to get greater bang for their real estate buck,



many more homeowners are first-time septic system owners, Hanley says. Education is key for these folks, as well as anyone who doesn't know much about the do's and don'ts of their septic system.

"If somebody wants to know about their septic system, they should feel free to ask us," she says.

They've even had interested homeowners observing every step of an installation or repair process.

One of Baker Septic's advantages over some of the other septic pumping companies is its size. Some companies are only one or two employees with a single truck. While they may be able to operate on slimmer margins and pass that savings onto customers, they have less ability to respond quickly in an emergency, Hanley said.

"We have enough guys, enough trucks and enough know-how," she said.

And the company is looking to expand its reach by opening a satellite office in southern Skagit County in the coming months.

To learn more about Baker Septic Tank Pumping, visit [bakerseptic.com](http://bakerseptic.com).

# Member reveals return on investment

My involvement with the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is invaluable to myself, our members and the Associated General Contractors organization. As AGC of Washington represents commercial, industrial and civil contractors in Mount Vernon and Skagit County, the Mount Vernon Chamber is a great source to gather relevant information about local and state governmental issues and how they may impact not only our members but also the community as a whole. I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to engage in the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee as the group addresses the issues important to the business community and its employees, on both a local and state level. Another key component, which I view as especially critical to our industry, is the Chamber's ongoing efforts to develop and enhance our workforce. This work brings the business community and educators together to help students develop the skills to be successful in our communities' businesses. In my opinion, the Chamber brings a tremendous value to Mount Vernon's business community.

**Lance Calloway**

**Associated General Contractors of Washington - AGC**



**Lance Calloway**  
**ACG of Washington**

## **Partner Members**

Barron Smith Daugert, PLLC, Best Western PLUS, Skagit Valley Inn, Birch Equipment Co., Budget Towing & Repair, Coastal Farm & Ranch, Costco Wholesale, D&P Electronic Home Monitoring, Foothills Toyota, Fortiphi, Haggen Food & Pharmacy, Hampton Inn & Suites, Infinity Painting & Renovations, Kern Funeral Home, Landed Gentry Homes & Communities, Loving Farms, Max Dale's Steak and Chop House, Mount Vernon School District, North Coast Credit Union, Northwest Escrow, LLC, Pacific Premier Bank, PogoZone, Port of Skagit, Puget Sound Energy, SERVPRO, Skagit Public Utility District 1, Skagit Valley Casino Resort, Skagit Valley College, Skagit Regional Health, Tacos Tecalitlan, Testing and Commissioning Services, LLC, Walmart, Williams & Nulle, PLLC, CPAs

## Board of Directors

### Chair - Bill Henkel

Community Action of Skagit County

### Vice Chair - Brian Ivie

Skagit Regional Health

### Past Chair - David Lukov

Kern Funeral Home

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### Robert Knoll

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### Jesse Lopez

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### Flora Lucatero

Children of the Valley

### Andrew Miller

Tulip Town

### Todd Owsley

Farmstrong Brewing Company

### Tammy Reim-Ledbetter

Alaska USA

### Dr. Amanda Rentschler

Roosevelt Dental Center

### Jon Ronngren

Mount Vernon School District

### Tony White

Skagit Valley Food Co-op

## STAFF

**Andy Mayer** President/CEO

**Silvia Reed** Business Development and  
Foundation Director

**Jeremy Kindlund** Operations Director

**Hilary Parker** Marketing Specialist

**Marinus Rouw & Emeleah Magaña**

Visitor Information Services

## Member Announcements



### Children of the Valley celebrates new Sedro-Woolley center with ribbon cutting

Mount Vernon-based after school program Children of the Valley has expanded to serve Sedro-Woolley, and celebrated its new location with a ribbon cutting on Wednesday, Feb. 1

The program, in partnership with the Sedro-Woolley School District, is located in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Children of the Valley serves children of low-income families, offering a variety of cultural enrichment activities, social emotional learning and academic support. Students attend Children of the Valley on a referral basis through their elementary school counselor.

Donors, community members and representatives from the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce attended the ribbon cutting. Services in Sedro-Woolley began in January, and an average of 30 children attend on any given day from Central, Mary Purcell and Evergreen elementary schools.

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# Thank You Renewing Members

## 30+ Years

Baird Private Wealth Management  
Community Action of Skagit County  
Pape Machinery AG and Turf  
Skagit County Fairgrounds  
Skagit Publishing  
The Bony Pony

## 20+ Years

Cascade Facial Surgery and Aesthetics  
Heritage Bank  
Swinomish Casino & Lodge

## 15+ Years

Chuckanut Valley Veterinary Clinic  
Red Apple Market  
WorkSource Skagit/  
Employment Security Department

## 10+ Years

B&B Financial Resources  
Opportunities Corporation

## 10+ Years cont'd

Big Scoop Sundae Palace & Restaurant  
I Love Skagit  
McDonald's - College Way  
Puget Sound Veterinary Group PC  
Skagit Valley Family YMCA  
Tulip Valley Winery  
Urban Fitness & Health

## 5+ Years

Il Granaio Inc.  
PFLAG Skagit  
Thrivent Financial - Shawn Steffens

## Less than 5 Years

Cascade Prosthetics & Orthotics  
SERVPRO  
Skagit Valley Living  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church / La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurreccion  
SunRidge Media, Inc.

# Ambassadors

## Chair - Liz Theaker

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**Rani Bal**

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**Mitch Britt**

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**Susan Cooper**

Susan Cooper

**Ector DeLeon**

Tulip Valley Winery

**Sarah Eckenrode**

CPI Plumbing & Heating

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**Carol Harris**

PrimeLending

**Crystal King**

NW Technology

**Joel Pasek**

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## Welcome new VIC staff member



Emeleah Magaña is our new weekend Visitor Information Center staff member. Stop by and say hello the next time you're downtown on the weekend.

## Record-breaking Shop Local season



Congratulations to Belen, the grand prize winner for the holiday Shop Local promotion! This holiday season shoppers spent their dollars locally to the tune of \$120,800 through the Shop Local program. That's our most successful promotion to date!

## BRONZE LEGACY



### ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE

For more information, visit:  
[skagitregionalhealth.org/orthopedics](http://skagitregionalhealth.org/orthopedics)



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A healthy body is a body in motion.





# ART AUCTION AND DINNER CHILDREN OF THE VALLEY

LIMITED  
SPACE!



FRIDAY, MAY 6

5:30 PM-9 PM

MAPLEHURST FARM, MOUNT VERNON

Help COV Kids Dream Big!

## Tickets Available Online April 1.

Each spring we feature art by beloved local artists such as Ben Mann, Jennifer Bowman, and Maria Wickwire. Join us in person for the 2022 Art Auction & Dinner or simply bid on art online! Visit [covmv.org/art-auction](http://covmv.org/art-auction) for details.



## Thank You to Our Leadership Circle!



## About Children of the Valley

Founded in 2006, COV is a referral-based after-school program that provides three cornerstones of care: academic assistance, enrichment activities, and social-emotional learning. We partner with Skagit Valley school districts to identify and serve our community's most under-resourced children.

ENJOY DINNER BY COA  
MEXICAN EATERY

BID ON ART, GIFT  
BASKETS, & GETAWAYS!

HEAR FROM COV  
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childrenofthevalleymv.org



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## Spring Shop Local Campaign

Dear Chamber member,

The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to supporting local businesses. We are partnering with the Mount Vernon Downtown Association and are proud to announce the 2022 Spring Shop Local Campaign. The campaign will launch **April 1 and continue through May 31 with the grand prize drawing on June 1.**

We are looking for partners to promote shopping local. Involvement includes fantastic marketing opportunities for your business such as an ad in the Skagit Valley Herald, online and social media promotion, a consumer incentive punch card program, and more. Please return this flyer with your business information, \$25 and a raffle prize valued at \$25 or more to Jeremy Kindlund at the address listed below.

Not a member of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce? You are still able to participate in this great program and promote your business.

**For more information, please contact Jeremy Kindlund, Operations Director**

Via email: [Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com](mailto:Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com)

Phone: (360) 428-8547

301 W Kincaid St.

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

### Participation requirements -

- \$25 payment
- Raffle Prize (Value of \$25 or more)

### Participation benefits -

- Consumer incentive punch card program: customers receive a punch for every \$5 spent at participating businesses. When the punch card is full (10 Punches at \$5 each, \$50) they can be used as an entry into weekly & grand prize drawings for fantastic raffle prizes. Each partnering business will be listed on back of the punch cards, poster, and ads.
- Shop Local Poster
- PDF copy of flier with partnering businesses listed can be distributed to your customers via email or print off to put in bags, etc.

**Please provide the information below, \$25 and the raffle prize to Jeremy Kindlund at the Chamber office no later than March 18.**

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Raffle Prize: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Raffle Prize Value: \_\_\_\_\_



Presented by:



Saturday, April 2, from 1pm to 4pm at Farmstrong Brewing Company

1st Place Professional Division - \$150 and an award plaque

2nd Place Professional Division - Entry Fee Refunded

1st Place Amateur Division - \$150 and an award plaque

2nd Place Amateur Division - Entry Fee Refunded

Craft Stove Best of Show Award - Award plaque

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Captain: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Yes, I will need electricity to prepare my chili/chowder

\_\_\_ No, I have a camp stove or propane to prepare and keep my product warm

I am entering Chili \_\_\_ and/or Chowder \_\_\_ to the competition

I will be competing as a Professional \_\_\_ or Amateur \_\_\_

**Space is limited! Please fill out and return by Friday, March 25**

Please send your completed form and \$25 entry fee to:

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce

301 W Kincaid St.

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

For more information please contact Jeremy Kindlund at  
(360) 428-8547 or [Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com](mailto:Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com)



**Sponsorship Opportunities**  
**Saturday, April 2 2022**  
**at Farmstrong Brewing Company**

**Royal Sponsor:** **\$1,000**  
Company logo on promotional poster  
Company name on printed and digital marketing materials  
Logo with a link to your website on MountVernonChamber.com  
Social media promotion on all Chamber channels  
Mentions in both the weekly and monthly Chamber newsletters  
Display table at the cook-off  
Special recognition during the event

**Major Sponsor:** **\$550**  
Company logo on poster  
Company name on printed and digital marketing materials  
Logo with a link to your website on MountVernonChamber.com  
Social media promotion on all Chamber channels  
Mentions in both the weekly and monthly Chamber newsletters  
Special recognition during the event

**Supporting Sponsor:** **\$325**  
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Mentions in both the weekly and monthly Chamber newsletters  
Special recognition during the event

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce  
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