

CHAMBER CHAT

APRIL 2022

We're Back!!

By Andy Mayer/President & CEO

I am very happy to say we are back in-person for our Membership Luncheons, Multi-Chamber After Hours, and our events! I know you've been patiently waiting for this, and I really appreciate it.

First up is a Membership Orientation on April 12 at 10 a.m., at the Chamber office. Whether you're a new member, or a veteran who wants to know more about the Chamber, please join us. You will meet some other members and find out how you can get what you want from your Chamber membership.

Next is our Multi-Chamber After Hours on April 14 in Sedro-Woolley. We're going bowling at Sedro 10 Entertainment! You don't have to bowl – you may be busy chatting with people you haven't seen in a while. For those of you who are recent members, I realize that I should explain what the Multi-Chamber After Hours is. These events are monthly networking programs that bring together members of all the Skagit County chambers and take place at locations around the county. They are always on the second Thursday of the month, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. They provide an opportunity to see a business that you may never have visited and to expand your circle of friends.

I'm really excited to tell you our April 27 luncheon is taking place at Hillcrest Park. We are fortunate to be able to experience the Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon's world-famous Salmon Barbecue. The program will be a Biz Buzz networking event. And there will be door prizes, of

continued on page 3...



GOLD



SILVER



Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
(360) 428-8547
mountvernonchamber.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

In person!

Membership Orientation

Tuesday, April 12

10 a.m.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce

[Register here](#)

Come learn about how your Chamber membership benefits your business. Our membership orientations are not limited to new members, any active member can attend as well as those businesses who may want to know more about the Mount Vernon Chamber and how we can support their businesses.

Knowledge NOW

How to be Cyber-Wise

Wednesday, April 13

Noon

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Organizations are being asked to take steps to strengthen their data security defenses. Many small business owners believe they won't fall victim to a cyberattack, thinking their size makes them less desirable to hackers. Often that belief leaves them vulnerable in multiple ways. NW Technology will share how to strengthen those weaknesses for the office and the home.

Multi-Chamber After Hours

Thursday, April 14

4:30-6 p.m.

Sedro10 Entertainment

612 Metcalf St., Sedro-Woolley

Join all six of the Skagit County chambers of commerce for an in-person networking event at Sedro10 Entertainment. Have fun and expand your network!

Latino Business Leaders: Marketing en Redes Sociales / Social Media Marketing

Presentado en español

IN-PERSON:

Martes 19 de Abril | Tuesday, April 19

6-7:30 p.m.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce

\$10.00 members / \$15.00 non-members

[Register here](#)

VIRTUAL:

Miercoles 27 de Abril | Wednesday, April 27

6-7:30 p.m.

[Register here](#)

Durante esta sesion Flor Villanueva de Ismaflow Boutique nos enseñara como crear una campaña de marketing utilizando las redes sociales y como alcanzar el crecimiento organico de su empresa en las redes. El evento presencial incluye comida y refrescos.

During this session, Flor Villanueva of Ismaflow Boutique will teach us how to create a social media marketing campaign and how your business can grow organically on social media. In-person event fee includes food and refreshments. Sponsored by:



Chamber Connections Social

Thursday, April 21

4-5:30 p.m.

Il Granaio

[R.S.V.P. Required](#)

This social is for members of the Chamber's Connections referral groups as well as those Chamber members interested in joining Connections. Interested members should speak with Silvia Reed to determine if their business/industry category is available: silvia@mountvernonchamber.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

In person!

**Chamber membership luncheon:
Biz Buzz & Kiwanis Salmon Barbecue**

Wednesday, April 27

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

Hillcrest Park

[Register here](#)

We celebrate the return to in-person membership meetings and tulip time by enjoying the Kiwanis annual tulip festival salmon barbeque at Hillcrest Park in Mount Vernon. Be sure to bring plenty of business cards for our first in-person Biz Buzz in two years!

Sponsored by:



Ribbon Cutting: Farmers Insurance - Gus Calero

Friday, April 29

1 p.m.

1515 Freeway Dr., Ste. C

Mount Vernon

Join us as we celebrate the ribbon cutting for new Chamber member Gus Calero of Farmers Insurance.



Join us in person

...continued from page 1

course. Please join us for a true celebration of spring and looking forward to seeing all our friends!

Finally, some advance notice for upcoming events. Our Battle of the Bridge golf tournament is June 10. We absolutely need to take back the winner's trophy! The Drive-in Movie series will continue one Friday each month, from June to August. And I'm so happy to say that we'll be back to a full slate of concerts for our Riverwalk Summer Concert Series, every Thursday in July and August, from 6-8 p.m. They're free and fabulous!

So yes, we're back, and I look forward to seeing a lot of you!

Andy



Skagit Chili & Chowder Cook-Off in pictures



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Member Announcements

Tulip Town Locals Night Sponsored by Skagit Acres is April 13

Spring's hottest ticket and honored tradition of opening up Tulip Town to Skagit residents is back this year on April 13.

Locals are invited to come out to Tulip Town from 5-7 p.m.

- Enjoy a sunset stroll through the tulip field and gardens
- Old-school trolley treks through the tulips (weather-dependent)
- Shop local at Tulip Town's retail boutique featuring artisan wares, goods and gifts from Skagit Acres
- Browse the flower stand and nursery for plants, pottery, and more (nearly 5,000 potted tulips)
- Enjoy local ice cream, treats and specialty espresso drinks
- Tulip Town Beer and Wine Garden

Facebook Event Link: <https://fb.me/e/1mzLSg8uK>

Cascadia Eye gets new partner

Cascadia Eye and Cascadia Surgical welcome new business partner Charles Maddux, MD, to the team. Dr. Maddux started as an ophthalmologist and surgeon at the practice in August 2020 and now joins Dan Siapco, MD, and Carlindo DaReitz Pereira, MD, as a full owner of the comprehensive eye care practice and surgical center.

Dr. Maddux is an ophthalmologist and eye surgeon with a special interest in cataract surgery, as well as refractive lens and retinal care. His passion is to help patients become independent from glasses.



Dr. Charles Maddux

Skagit Valley College announces new president

After an extensive nationwide search, the Skagit Valley College Board of Trustees has appointed Dr. Christopher Villa as the college's seventh president. The board voted unanimously in support of Villa.

Villa is an experienced community college leader who most recently served as president at Portland Community College (PCC)-Rock Creek. He has served an accumulated 12 years as vice president of student services for Los Angeles Mission College, Fresno City College and Long Beach City College. He earned his bachelor's degree in social ecology from University of California, Irvine, a master's degree in public administration from University of Southern California, and a doctorate in educational leadership and policy from University of Utah.



Dr. Christopher Villa

Become a Triple E Presenter: Effective, Engaging and Entertaining

Rebecca P. Murray teaches How to Become a Triple E Presenter: Effective, Engaging and Entertaining, a new online course at Western Washington University. This five-week, fast-track course starting Wednesday, April 13, is designed to give you skills to connect with any audience and deliver your message with value and impact. Attendees will discover tips, tools and techniques to leverage their influence in-person, on-screen and on stage. Learn more and register at <https://pce.wvu.edu/programs/triple-e-presenter-workshop>.

Get to Know Ristretto Coffee Lounge & Wine Bar

The mission of Ristretto Coffee Lounge & Wine Bar is to build relationships by pouring happiness, says Ristretto's owner Sean O'Leary. It's something they've been doing every day since O'Leary and his wife Colleen bought the café in 2018 from the original owner.

"I feel obligated to preserve this place for the people of Mount Vernon and Skagit County."

O'Leary said their aim with the shop is to keep the focus on local and regional producers, such as baked goods from 5b's and The Scone Lady, beer from Farmstrong and Kulshan breweries, and wines from around Washington state.

Art from local artists fill the walls of the café, and O'Leary said he is proud to support local artists by offering a space to sell their works without taking a commission.

Ristretto pours Victrola Coffee, which hails from the Capitol Hill neighborhood in Seattle, where O'Leary grew up.

He finds the flavor of Victrola's coffee to be like none other: "I can taste the chocolate, hazelnut and berry flavors."

Ristretto, he notes, is a specific espresso extraction method. Meaning "restricted," the output from the beans and the water is less than what is put in, providing a richer, bolder flavor.

Like many businesses, Ristretto endured some lean times during the pandemic. O'Leary said the shop only closed for three days at the very start of the pandemic in March 2020, when they deep cleaned the space and upgraded the HVAC filtration system.

"I felt obligated to my staff to stay open," O'Leary said, and he worked to accommodate employees' comfort level working during the



pandemic. For some employees, that meant they stayed in back of the house roles where they didn't come into direct contact with the customers.

O'Leary also got creative during those months. On Saturdays he would dress up in a Sasquatch costume, waving to potential customers in an effort to drum up business and keep things light during a collectively difficult time.

Now, coming out of the pandemic, he is looking forward to bringing back some of the community-focused events the café used to host, such as Watercolor Wednesdays and open mic Saturdays, which features everything from poetry to music to comedy.

Starting next month, Ristretto will be at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market – a first for the café.

Another first, one of the O'Leary's sons will begin working part-time for the café. "It's nice to start making it more of a family business," he said.

Welcome New Members

Mayra Nava Agency

Mayra Nava
(360) 233-4023
Mount Vernon



<https://agents.allstate.com/mayra-nava-burlington-wa.html>

As an Allstate Agent in Burlington, I know many local families. My knowledge and understanding of the people in this community help me provide customers with an outstanding level of service. I look forward to helping families like yours protect the things that are important – your family, home, car, boat and more.

DSHS – Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Tina Mitchell
(360) 429-3097
900 E. College Way #120
Mount Vernon
www.dshs.wa.gov

We provide technical assistance and training to businesses regarding the recruiting and hiring of people with disabilities.

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Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon

Diane Fox
(360) 708-5550
www.kiwanisbbq.com

Each spring during the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival the Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon hosts a 23-day long salmon BBQ at the Hillcrest Lodge in Mount Vernon.

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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

March Upbeat Award winner is Stevie Allen



February's Upbeat Award winner, Tammy Rein-Ledbetter from Alaska USA, pays it forward by naming the March Upbeat recipient, Stevie Allen.

"It is my honor to nominate Stevie Allen, executive director at Logan Creek Retirement Community as March's Upbeat Award recipient.

"Stevie has displayed amazing leadership with her current employer and has been involved with the Mount Vernon Chamber Connections group, recently taking on the Chamber Connections Chair role. Stevie has also been involved in the Mount Vernon community and has participated in many of the networking events we have had in the past years. She has a positive, infectious, upbeat personality and always welcomes you with a big smile and a warm greeting. She is the mother of two and loves spending time in the outdoors."

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The Chamber hits the road



Ambassador Joley Garner welcomes new member Miriam Sowe of the American Cancer Society at Ristretto Coffee Lounge.



Our resident "tulip guru" Marinus Rowe with Ector Mendoza, owner of Garden Rosalyn. Garden Rosalyn is part of the Tulip Festival.



Av Mellen from Getaway Skagit Valley was welcomed to the Chamber by Ambassador Liz Theaker.



(L-R) Ambassadors Liz Theaker and Tammy Reim-Ledbetter, Skagit Landing Chef Josie Urbick and the Chamber's Silvia Reed.

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Welcoming Wendy's to the neighborhood

With the cutting of the ribbon, the new Wendy's in Mount Vernon officially opened March 21. The restaurant is located at 810 S. 5th St., in the new Station Square development near Interstate 5. Did you know Wendy's even serves breakfast?



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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 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

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