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**Support
your
community
by shopping
locally**

details on page 8

Also Inside:

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Published Quarterly by the
COLUMBIA COUNTY
Chamber
of commerce

Main Street, Chatham

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A Message from the President

Welcome to Columbia County Chamber's new newsletter format. We are proud to partner with Hudson-Catskill Newspapers to deliver you our newsletter highlighting our local business community. Our Chamber is over 850 members strong.

In today's economy, it has never been more important to Buy Local and our lead article spotlights the advantages. This inaugural issue examines a local public art project that helps to build community. You'll also read an article that investigates the social media phenomenon and discusses how its use can benefit a business.

We invite you to read this publication and share with us your thoughts and ideas for future feature articles. We hope our publication prompts you to think about the relationships you have built with local businesses and reflect on how that positively impacts our community. Every day consumers randomly select where to make purchases. Buying local is the easiest thing you can personally do to stimulate our economy. If you haven't already, we ask you to first consider buying from the local businesses that employ your friends and give back to the community you live in. It is the one thing you can do today that is guaranteed to help local commerce.

David B. Colby

President & CEO

Columbia County Chamber of Commerce

Welcome New Members!

Benjamin Veronis Design
Health & Fitness

Bob's Barber Shop
Hair Styling/Personal Care

Camp Unleashed
Pet Supplies/Services

Canaan Transport
Transportation

Columbia County Bount
Community Organization

**Columbia County
Electrical Contractors
Association**

Electrical
Contractors/Supplies

Columbia Landscape Corp.
Landscape/
Lawn Maintenance

**Commodity Futures
Services**
Financial Planning

DejaSue - Alterations
Clothing

Diddo, Inc.
Arts Organizations

**Don Webber, MSCC -
Christian Counseling
Service**
Counseling/Psychotherapy

Dragonfly
Computer Services

Dzek Machines
Manufacturing/Design

e3communications
Advertising/Marketing/
Public Relations

Eat For A Cause
Community Organizations

**Gulinello's
Towne & Country**
Food Markets/Food Products

H.C. Harde, MD, FAAP
Physicians

HotFashionsToGo.com
Clothing

**In Front
Training Center LLC**
Horse Equipment/Services

**J. Ritter
Marketing & Media**
Advertising/Marketing/
Public Relations

Jed Mattes Inc.
Educational Services

Margaret J. Boeringer
Attorneys/Legal Services

Mark A. Corbett
Home Furnishings /
Decorating

**Martinelli Slocum
Publishing**
Publishers

**Palatine Manor Housing
Development Corp.**
Senior Care

Ribbon Hill Music
Music

**State Farm Insurance &
Financial Services**
Insurance

TechBridge Group LLC
Computer Services

The Columbia Insider
Newspapers/Magazines

The Historic Blue Stores
Restaurants/Banquet Facilities

The Second Show, Inc.
Community Organizations

Vivian Cook
Consultants-Business

*To learn more about these
and other members
visit the Web site
at www.columbiachamber-ny.com
or call the Chamber office
at (518) 828-4417.*

Introduction to Social Media

Business owners nowadays who don't know what it means to be LinkedIn or how to Twitter, or how to have a presence on Facebook, YouTube and MySpace, are missing out on low-cost marketing tools that are rapidly growing in importance across a broad spectrum of audiences.

This new "social media" is a way for people to make connections—much like they might at cocktail parties or business luncheons—but via a different communication mode, the Internet. The social media sites are free to join, but it takes time and effort to put together the messages you communicate.

To help local businesses better understand social media outlets and how they can be utilized to enhance business, the Chamber is sponsoring a breakfast seminar for its members at Space 360, at 360 Warren Street, Hudson, on April 22. Registration is from 7:30 to 8 a.m., with the seminar running from 8 to 9:30 a.m. The seminar will introduce members to social media for a cost of only \$5. The Chamber plans to hold additional educational sessions on the topic in the future.

"This seminar will help business owners learn what types of social media are out there, how they work and why they are important for business," said David Colby, Chamber president. "If you don't know much about social media it's okay; there are people who are

willing to help."

Panelists will include local marketing and media professionals who advise clients on traversing the social media landscape, and who use social media for their own businesses: Ken Blass, president and CEO of Blass Communications LLC in Old Chatham; Andrea Colby, senior account executive at e3communications in Albany; Rob Johanson, founder and COO of midhudsonmedia in Hudson; and Millie Rossman Kidd, owner of MRK Design in Chatham.

"Social media is all about relationship building," explained Blass, who runs the marketing and communication company started by his father 40 years ago. Blass uses the social network sites LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook both personally and professionally. He advises clients like museums and tourism departments how to take advantage of these tools as well.

Of key importance is learning how each social network site works, added Blass, or it will be obvious you don't know what you're doing. "Your sites will jump out as being wrong."

Besides being an important communication tool for businesses to get their message out, social media has become a key way for consumers to check out products and services.

"Increasingly, people are relying on the non-commercial opinions about a

business before they patronize the business," noted Blass. "Rare is it now that someone doesn't buy something without being better informed. Years ago, you would talk face to face for opinions. Now you can chat with people all over the world."

The biggest concerns Blass hears from clients are that they don't have the time to manage social media, they don't know how, or it's "just for kids."

The social media landscape includes not only 20-somethings but also many people in their 30s, 40s, 50s and older.

As to the time concern, "It's working on promoting your business, so what is more important than promoting it?" said Blass. "It's more not prioritizing or a fear of the unknown."

There are plenty of organizations or other businesses that can teach you how to create and manage social media, just like making a TV spot or hiring a designer, he added.

"I would suggest people come to the Chamber seminar to learn some of the advantages, but also to know who to hire. You don't have to learn everything yourself."

Andrea Colby cites a recent survey of journalists by the Society for New Communications Research to underscore the importance of social media for getting a business' message out—46 percent of the journalists who responded said they use blogs,

**Social Media
Breakfast Seminar**

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Registration
7:30 – 8:00 am

Seminar
8:00 – 9:30 am

Held at Space 360 in Hudson

Reservations Required

and 86 percent use company Web sites, for research.

Shrinking news staff and shrinking coverage at traditional media outlets is becoming more prevalent, making those outlets more apt to use company generated information, she noted. And many people of all ages use the Internet to research business details such as location, hours and offerings.

"If you're not there, someone else is," Colby said. "Missed opportunities like that cost you business in the long run. It's a necessity in doing business today."


continued on page 11

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Energy Alliance Program A Big Savings for Members

The Chamber's Energy Alliance program allows members to save significantly on their energy costs - and adding money directly to their bottom line.

Through this program, businesses of all types and sizes join together and pool their buying power to gain leverage in the marketplace.

"It's a way for members to save money on their electricity and natural gas commodity purchases," said Gordon Boyd, President of EnergyNext, Inc., energy buying agent for the Energy Alliance program. "They still have a utility, such as National Grid, for the delivery portion, but they have a supplier we select on a competitive basis."

EnergyNext works exclusively on behalf of business, municipal and institutional energy consumers throughout New York, developing energy commodity agreements for both electricity and natural gas, and monitoring key state and federal regulatory proceedings.

Upon receipt of the Participation Authorization form, EnergyNext's supplier

will review the applicant's account information, then provide a pricing offer and agreement, including a savings estimate for the account. There's no obligation to sign on, but if the offer is acceptable, the applicant simply signs and returns the form and starts saving after their next meter reading.

"Participants can save quite a bit of their energy expense," Boyd said. "Standard taxpaying businesses can save five to eight percent of their overall expense, or more. In many cases, members are looking at saving back two to three times their annual Chamber membership investment."

Chamber member Doug Geller of Petersen Geller Spruce, Inc. echoes that sentiment by saying "The Energy Alliance program represents a significant savings for us, approximately \$4,000 a year. . . . The Energy Alliance program is one of many reasons we joined the Chamber and has made our membership extremely valuable."

The Energy Alliance program offers the choice of renewable energy, wind

power or other environmental options. "You can apply some of your savings to renewable energy credits, allowing you to be more 'green' than your competitor down the street," Boyd said. "Renewable energy can allow you to grow your business that way, and more businesses are looking at it as something to consider."

EnergyNext provides more than just an opportunity for Chamber members to save money, Boyd pointed out.

"Chamber members can get the benefits of shopping for energy in a large group with expert consulting

service backing it up. It gives them the assurance they're getting a really good deal in the marketplace, so they can take care of their energy needs, save money and run their business," he said. This program has been saving our members money for the last five years."

For more information about the Energy Alliance program contact the Chamber at 518.828.4417 or visit www.columbiachamberny.com. You may also contact EnergyNext directly at 518.580.9224 or email Gordon Boyd at gordon@energynext.com.



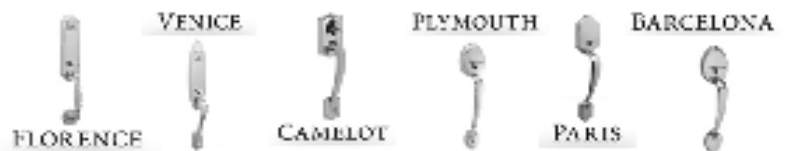
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Excellence in Business Awards Nomination

Business Person of the Year:

This award recognizes an individual who has been employed by a Chamber member business. Each nominee will be judged on accomplishments during the past 12 months as they relate to one or more of the following criteria:

- *Employee Training
- *Business Achievement
- *Impact of Local Economy
- *Commitment to the Community
- *Product, Service and/or Technological Innovations
- *Manager and Employee Relations

Most Promising New Business:

This award recognizes a new business that has been in operation for no longer than 2 years. Each nominee will be judged on accomplishments as they relate to one or more of the following criteria:

- *New Product Growth
- *Innovative Marketing
- *Impact on the Local Economy
- *Success in filling a marketplace need in Columbia County

Small Company of the Year:

This award recognizes a for-profit or non-profit business that has been in operation for more than 2 years and employs less than 25 people. Each nominee will be judged on accomplishments during the past 12 months as they relate to one or more of the following criteria:

- *Customer Service
- *Community Support
- *Employment Growth
- *Industry Participation
- *Impact on Local Economy
- *Aesthetics of Business
- *Employee- Employee Relations
- *Industry Profitability & Growth

Large Company of the Year:

This award recognizes a for-profit or non-profit business that has been in operation for more than 2 years and employs 25 or more people. Each nominee will be judged on accomplishments during the past 12 months as they relate to one or more of the following criteria:

- *Customer Service
- *Community Support
- *Employment Growth
- *Industry Participation
- *Impact on Local Economy
- *Aesthetics of Business
- *Employee- Employee Relations
- *Industry Profitability & Growth

Community Service Award:

This award recognizes exceptional community service of a business in Columbia County. Each nominee will be judged on accomplishments as they relate to one or more of the following criteria:

- *Demonstration of Community Support
- *Impact on Local Economy
- *Employee Involvement in Community Activities

The Chamber's Excellence in Business Committee will review all nominations and select a maximum of three final nominees in each category. The final nominees will be reviewed by the Chamber Board of Directors, who will vote to determine a recipient in each category. All Chamber members are eligible to be nominated for a Chamber Excellence in Business Award.

Business Person

Nominee: _____

Nominee Contact: _____

Nominee Phone: _____

Nominated by: _____
(Name of business)

Most Promising New Business

Nominee: _____

Nominee Contact: _____

Nominee Phone: _____

Nominated by: _____
(Name of business)

Small Company or Organization

Nominee: _____

Nominee Contact: _____

Nominee Phone: _____

Nominated by: _____
(Name of business)

Large Company or Organization

Nominee: _____

Nominee Contact: _____

Nominee Phone: _____

Nominated by: _____
(Name of business)

Community Service

Nominee: _____

Nominee Contact: _____

Nominee Phone: _____

Nominated by: _____
(Name of business)

Nominations are due by June 5, 2009. For a complete list of Chamber businesses go to the Chamber website. Recipients will be announced at the Chamber Excellence in Business Awards and Showcase on June 18, 2009 at Stageworks/ Hudson from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Contact the Chamber to reserve for the event at 518-828-4417.

Chamber Ribbon Cuttings



Buddy's Place Pet Crematorium

Buddy's Place Pet Crematorium recently celebrated that they have gone green with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Buddy's Place is owned by Karen and Andrea Walker. The new green system was installed by Hudson Valley Clean Energy. The system gave Buddy's Place many benefits and approximately fifty percent was paid for by NYSERDA. The solar source has significantly reduced their energy costs and as of January 1, 2009 they will be allowed to sell back the excess energy that has been produced.

Buddy's Place is a pet crematorium, offering group, private and witnessed cremations. The Forget-Me-Not Memorial Shop at Buddy's Place has over eight dozen different urns, burial markers, pet-loss books, and pet-related jewelry such as Heather Kraty bracelets & necklaces. Buddy's Place can be reached at 828-4342.

Pictured are:

Chamber Membership Director Carol Patterson, Jeff Irish, President of Hudson Valley Clean Energy, owner Karen Walker, Madison Colby, and Chamber President David Colby.



Ed Herrington, Inc.

Ed Herrington Inc., recently celebrated the grand opening of their Greenport store with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Herrington's has been a family-owned business since 1906 and currently operates seven stores in three states. The flagship store is located in Hillsdale. They recently acquired the Dunn Builders Supply Store on Graham Avenue in Greenport. You can reach the Greenport store by calling 828-9431 or visit their website at www.herringtons.com for additional locations.

Pictured are:

Chamber President David Colby; Advertising Manager, Allison Neumann; Company President Ed Herrington; Location Manager Larry Ostrander; Greenport Store Manager Mike Agate; Vice President Rich Herrington; and Owner Marilyn Herrington.



Year Round Yarns

Year Round Yarns recently celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Year Round Yarns is the yarn shop for all your knitting and crocheting needs. From wools to acrylics, classic to novelty, there is something for everyone's taste and pocketbook. They also carry patterns, needles, hooks, cross stitch, embroidery floss, sewing accessories and more. For those who appreciate the handknit item, there is an extensive line of baby items, sweaters for the entire family (even your pet!), afghans, hats, scarves and much more. You can reach them by calling 758-9799.

Pictured are:

Deborah Spaulding, New York State Department of Labor; Nathan Winch, Chamber Board Director; Owner Roberta Lieberman Nicholson, Chamber President David Colby and Membership Director Carol Patterson.



Germantown Library

The Germantown Library celebrated its long-awaited grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. The library is located at 31 Palatine Park Rd in Germantown. You can reach them by calling 537-5800.

Pictured are:

Front Row: Chamber President David Colby; benefactor Joan Davidson; Town Supervisor Roy Brown; Library Board of Trustees President Virginia DiPalma; Director Lynn Place; trustees Virginia Atwell; Dorothy DelPozzo; Vera Colwell; Carol Ann Jason; Kathy Overington and Don Westmore; Back Row, Niki Sacco-Brown, Family Eyecare Center; Germantown Garden Club's Fran Bufi; landscaper Collin Brown and construction and mechanical wizard William Archbold.



Imaguration

Imaguration recently celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Imaguration is a retail service business that provides customers with imaginative dress-up, gifts and party supplies. Imaguration offers a variety of activities that promote imagination, creativity, experimentation, physical activity and self esteem. You can reach them by calling 392-8108 or visit their website at www.imaguration.com.

Pictured are:

Front Row: Kieran Schober and Madison Colby. Back Row: Chamber President David Colby; David Schober, Owner Tracy Schober and E'owyn, Donna Oakes, Cow Jones Industrials; Barbara Peduzzi, The Mac-Haydn Theatre; Jeff Knight, Metzwood Harder Insurance; Rachel Puckett, The Bank of Greene County; Nicole Blanchette, Paychex; Arica Cooper, The Lofgren Agency.



Nolita's Bakery and Café

Nolita's Bakery and Café recently celebrated new ownership with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Nolita's is a bakery and cafe with outdoor patio seating. They serve breakfast and light lunches with the best coffee in town. You can reach them by calling 828-4905.

Pictured are:

Mark Fingar, Fingar Insurance; Carrie Meyer, Nolita Bakery and Café; Michael Putos, Owner; Aleth Dumadag, Owner; Tom Delia, Advanced Recycling Technology; Elaine Warner, Nolita's Bakery and Café; Liz Coleman, Hudson Police Department; Chamber President David Colby; Janice Haynes, The Register Star; and Greg Fingar, Chamber Board Director.



Interim HealthCare

Interim HealthCare recently celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Interim HealthCare is home care that includes skilled care and supportive services. Skilled care includes nurses. Services are provided for companion, personal care, sitter service, respite, live in, housekeeping, shopping, transportation and medical management. Interim HealthCare can provide that extra to help keep you living independently. You can reach them by calling 610-8145 or visit their website at www.interimhealthcare.com.

Pictured are:
 Patti Stockman, The Executive Connection; Randall Schmit; Elizabeth Gambee, Companion; David B. Colby, Chamber President; Lisa Evans, Co-President; Kathy Sampson Antonovich, Branch Manager; Rose Tousant, RN Supervisor; Mary Greene, Home Care Aide; Assemblyman Tim Gordon; Mark Fingar, Fingar Insurance and Jeff Knight, Metzwood Harder Insurance.



Game Face Web Design

Game Face Web Design recently celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Game Face Web Design works collaboratively with Columbia County businesses and organizations to develop high-traffic websites that are competitive, beautiful and functional. They feature the S-words of web design: Searchable, Speedy, Sexy, Sticky, Smart and Spot-On. Their new division, PPC Tarmac, provides Adwords management and Landing Page development to get sites found and sales made. You can reach them by calling 845-750-6554.

Pictured are:
 Gary Pollard, M&T Bank; Chamber Membership Director Carol Patterson; Jim Svetz, Muddy Cup Coffee House; Michael Putos, Nolita Bakery and Café; Bram Moreinis, Principal, Game Face Web Design; Mark Fingar, Fingar Insurance; and Chamber President David Colby.



Chatham Kids

Chatham Kids recently celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Chatham Kids represents "Where Every Child is a Star!" Unique and wonderful products for the young child... with an emphasis on "made in the USA." They offer organic options when possible. Chatham Kids is located at 34 Main Street in Chatham. You can reach them by calling 392-5848.

Pictured are:
 Don Gibson, The Bank of Greene County; Chamber President David Colby, Jesse DeGroot, Chatham Town Supervisor/ Chamber Board Director; Owner Kathy Stumph; Madison Ford; Barbara Peduzzi, The Mac-Haydn Theatre; Donna Oakes, Cow Jones Industrials; Perry Lasber, The Bank of Greene County; Gina Nelame, Chatham Makes Scents, and Mary Gail Biebel, Chatham Keep Farming.



Otto's Market/Germantown

Otto's Market/Germantown recently celebrated their grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce. Otto's Market is located at 215 Main Street in Germantown. Otto's is a small country store that has just about everything including basic groceries at excellent prices, best of the natural food products, specialty European and gourmet products and every local product they can find. You can reach them by calling 537-7200.

Pictured are:
 Ya Yoi McIntyre, Barbara Shepherd, Fairlight Writner, Taral Cort, Mattie Gifford, Owner Otto Leuschel, Ken Roberts, Denise Fiore, Jennifer Choinsky and Travis Thompson.

**20th Annual
 Golf Tournament
 May 18, 2009**



Get your golf clubs ready for the 20th Annual Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament on Monday, May 18, 2009 at the Columbia Golf and Country Club. The day will start with registration and lunch provided by Columbia Golf and Country Club Catering and play begins at 1:00 pm with a shotgun start. Reservations include golf, cart rental, lunch, open bar cocktail hour and dinner. Singles or foursomes can register by contacting the Chamber. The early bird rate of \$140.00 is available until May 8.

Shopping locally supports those

Local business owners are key supporters of the community, especially of non-profit organizations



Main Street, Valatie

who support your community

Economically, shopping locally supports our community because every dollar spent in Columbia County is spent here an additional five times, on average, thereby benefitting us repeatedly.

But there is another important reason to support local businesses, one that is not as obvious to the general public – local business owners are key supporters of the community, especially of non-profit organizations.

At least weekly, and in some cases daily, local business owners are approached by sports teams, school organizations and a variety of non-profit groups. The requests for monetary donations, gift certificates, silent auction prizes or services come on a regular basis.

Most business owners are happy to oblige, to the extent their own finances allow. They want to support the community, and they don't do it for the publicity or extra business the donations may bring them (which in most cases is minimal). All they ask in return is for people to remember local businesses when shopping for their own needs.

"We're happy to help but please shop Columbia County first. Just give us a chance before you run off to the malls," said Rita Van Alstyne, owner of R.H. Van Alstyne Jewelers on Chatham's Main Street. "We really appreciate those who do shop locally. Because those donations are money that comes out of our bottom line."

Van Alstyne supports a variety of non-profits each year with silent auction donations, ads in programs, sponsorships, gift certificates and cash donations. Requests come in almost daily, and sometimes as many as four a day. So far this year she has supported 34 organizations, from animal rescue organizations to hospitals to fire companies. She donates tiaras every year for the prom and lends her store window space to non-profits. Van Alstyne is also a member of the local Rotary Club, a service organization,

and attends many events benefitting local nonprofits.

"I try to stay local in my support. I have a box full of requests I just can't respond to; I simply don't have enough money to support them all. It's a very difficult thing. I know it's tough for the non-profits, too."

Greg Fingar, owner of Fingar Insurance, with offices in Columbia and Greene counties, knows he can't compete with the advertising budgets of big companies like Geico and Progressive, but he does offer services they can't. Besides employing local people and paying local taxes, his company supports many local organizations.

Fingar Insurance sponsors sports teams, Chamber events, Sean's Run, golf tournaments, and a school district scholarship. The list of organizations and events on the business's donations list includes PTAs, Little League, Lions, Rotary, Elks, Kiwanis, VFW, fire departments, schools, cancer organizations, Flag Day, Boy Scouts, Sons and Daughters of Italy, Clermont Easter Egg Hunt, C-GCC, Camphill Village, libraries, historical societies, plus various arts organizations. And that's not the entire list.

"That's the kind of thing that Geico and Progressive don't do; they don't have to support local organizations. I don't think people realize that," Fingar said. "We just believe it's the right thing to do."

Businesses on main streets tend to receive more solicitations because of their visibility. Chuck Shattenkirk, owner of Crazy Daisy Florist in Valatie and Hudson, averages a request a day for donations. He, too, tries to keep his support local and within a reasonable expense.

"It's non-stop (the requests). We do a lot of everything," he said.

Crazy Daisy sponsors softball teams and supports fire companies, booster clubs, local service organizations, Cooperative Extension and the nearby

*'Every dollar
spent locally
is spent here
an additional
five to seven times.'*

— David Colby, Chamber CEO

Barnwell Nursing Home, among others. Every Monday morning he donates flowers to Community Hospice and every week provides flowers to local churches at a reduced rate.

Shattenkirk is also a Rotarian, and has volunteered for Ichabod Crane's booster clubs. Community service is another way local business owners give back to our community. Gaston Robert Jr., owner of the Shed Man in New Lebanon, has been a volunteer firefighter for more than 15 years and has served as chief of the Lebanon Valley Protective Association (LVPA) for several years. Not only does he sponsor sports teams and donate to local organizations, he also responds to emergency calls at all hours of the day.

"Any local business owners who are in the fire company are the ones who respond to calls during the day, because very few local businesses and employees are left, or people aren't allowed to leave work to answer calls," noted Robert.

Lori Selden, owner of Mexican Radio restaurant on Warren Street in Hudson, is

another business owner who dedicates much of her time to the community.

"We support the community on a number of different levels. We get, literally, hundreds of requests a year for donations of food, gift certificates, etc. We don't give to them all, but we do a lot," she said. "It's difficult; I don't think people realize how much local businesses get hit up. You want to do as much as you can, but at the same time you really have to pick and choose."

Besides giving donations from Mexican Radio, Selden volunteers her time at numerous community events, and has initiated several of them.

The Chamber encourages all businesses and residents to support our local business community by shopping local whenever possible.

For a directory of member businesses, check out the Chamber's Web site at www.columbiachamber-ny.com.

20th Annual Crystal Apple Award Recipient



The 20th Annual Crystal Apple Award was presented on February 27 at Lippera's at the Chatham House. Pictured is Robert Colarusso, Emcee Assemblyman Marc Molinaro, Crystal Apple Award recipients, Paul Colarusso of A. Colarusso & Son, Inc. and Chamber Chairman, Michael Sullivan of Crawford & Associates.

The Columbia County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce A. Colarusso & Son, Inc. as the recipient of the 20th Annual Crystal Apple Award. The Gala was held on Friday, February 27, 2009 at Lippera's at the Chatham House in Chatham. Over 100 attendees enjoyed a fabulous dinner crafted by the staff

at Lippera's at the Chatham House. A video created by Midhudsonmedia highlighted the 2008 accomplishments of the five finalists and a Steuben Glass crystal apple was presented to A. Colarusso & Son, Inc. by the event Emcee Assemblyman Marc Molinaro and Chamber Chairman Michael Sullivan.

The other finalists included: The Bank of Greene County, Columbia Land Conservancy, Ginsberg's Foods, Inc. and The Olana Partnership. The annual award is presented to a Chamber member business to recognize an extraordinary contribution to economic progress, community improvement, and the quality of life in Columbia County during 2008.

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Peter G. Colarusso Jr. <i>President</i> Paul Colarusso <i>Vice President</i>	ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS NY STATE APPROVED MANUFACTURER & SUPPLIER P.O. Box 302 • HUDSON, NY 12534 • 518-828-3218 • 518-828-0546 (FAX) WWW.ACOLORUSSO.COM • INFO@ACOLORUSSO.COM	Robert Colarusso <i>Secretary/Treasurer</i> Robert Colarusso Jr. <i>Vice President</i>

continued from page 3

Social media does require more "sweat equity" but it drives down costs in the long run. "It's reaching a very large, broad audience but it also allows businesses to focus on a specific audience and reach out to them as well," added Colby.

There is still some hesitancy in the business world over social media because of the feeling of giving up control over the message, Colby said. But the reality is we live in a global universe and this is the way the world is going. An online presence can be important to mitigating damage to a business' reputation, too.

"The seminar will answer some questions about how to get started in

social media. It can be overwhelming, so hopefully this panel will give people some focus," said Colby. "If business owners don't have a lot to invest they will be able to measure very quickly the return on their investment."

Johanson, whose company specializes in visual media, said incorporating dynamic elements into a Web site, such as a blog (weblog) is a given with basically all his clients today.

"It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when," as far as social media is concerned, he said. "When do you engage and what do you engage in? Every social network phenomenon is unique at a certain level but fundamentally they are about sharing like-minded thoughts.

"It really should be experimented with, understood, and then you should step back a moment and evaluate what value it brings to your business," Johanson added.

At the seminar, Johanson plans to focus on the conceptual, community building aspect of social media. "It's going to be a challenge for a lot of small businesses but at some point it is going to make things a lot easier."

Kidd started utilizing several different social media outlets just last fall and is already reaping benefits. "For me it's been a really good experience. I can't tell you how much work I get and refer from it lately. And I've seen this not just with my own work, but with clients," said Kidd. The Red Lion Inn quickly

sold out a tasting event by posting the information on Facebook.

"In these trying economic times, businesses can harness social media to promote in a more cost effective way.

"It definitely is time-consuming, but I found it pays off. All the time I'm spending online is paying off in relationships and connections and other interesting aspects."

Blass, for one, believes social media won't necessarily replace other forms of marketing and advertising, but definitely has its place.

"Everything is part of a media mix. There is no silver bullet in marketing," Blass said. "Social media is now another tool in the toolbox to reach out to a target audience."



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SunDog Solar Business After Hours

Join the Chamber to visit a truly unique renewable energy business as SunDog Solar hosts a Business After Hours on Thursday, April 23, 2009. The event will run from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

SunDog Solar @ Solaqua is a full-service consultation and installation company offering residential and commercial renewable energy systems and services that help consumers improve energy efficiency, reduce energy spending, and increase building performance.

SunDog Solar is located in the former Columbia Box Board Mill. Profits from SunDog Solar go to Solaqua Power & Art, a center for green business and the arts powered with renewable energy. Solaqua Power & Art is a project under development in Chatham to rehabilitate the vacant Columbia Box Board Mill site for reuse as a center for green businesses and the arts, powered with renewable energy technologies.

For more information about SunDog Solar call (518) 392-4000 or visit their website at www.sundogsolar.net.

Business After Hours' offer excellent networking opportunities for area business people. All members of the business community are invited to attend this business event. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be offered during the After Hours. SunDog Solar is located at 343 Route 295 in Chatham. There is no cost to attend but guests are encouraged to contact the Chamber at (518) 828-4417 if they plan to attend.



Hudson Home Business After Hours

Join the Chamber to see quality home furnishings at Hudson Home as they host a Business After Hours' on Thursday, May 14. The event will run from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Hudson Home is located at 356 Warren Street in Hudson.

Hudson Home's goal is to bring timeless style and distinction to your home. Hudson Home believes that the items you choose to place in your home should be classic, timeless and most importantly livable.

Hudson Home has a wonderful environment that combines comfort of country living with a clean urban sensibility.

To learn more about Hudson Home call 822-8120 or visit their website at www.hudson-home.com.

Business After Hours' offer excellent networking opportunities for area business people. All members of the business community are invited to attend this business event. There is not cost to attend, but guests are encouraged to contact the Chamber at (518) 828-4417 if they plan to attend.

**Look for the next issue of
Commerce News
in your local newspaper on Thursday, July 2!**

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Chamber Accomplishments for First Quarter 2009

- Conducted 5 business events, welcomed over 525 members.
- Kicked off Best in Show: Discover Columbia County 2009, a public art show that will run from July 4th to Columbus Day.
- Chamber President David Colby continues to serve on many community boards and committees including the Tourism Development Board, Columbia Economic Development Corporation, Columbia County Association in New York City, Salvation Army Advisory Board and Columbia County Bounty.
- The Chamber website was viewed 38,650 times in 2009. The office received 1,600 phone calls in the first quarter.
- The Chamber produced 3,500 Membership Directory and Community Guides that are being distributed to people relocating to Columbia County as well as local businesses.
- The Chamber has welcomed over 30 new members.
- The Chamber hosted numerous ribbon cutting ceremonies for new businesses.
- The Chamber continues to support members with bimonthly Business View columns in the Register-Star Newspaper that highlight achievements.
- The Chamber continues to mail a quarterly newsletter and insert mailing (Chamber Connection) to more than 850 members to keep them informed throughout the year. A monthly electronic newsletter and tourism electronic newsletter are received by over 1,000 people each month.
- 211 Sole Proprietors and 186 Groups of two or more access the Chamber's Health Insurance programs.
- The Energy Alliance saved 70 members (227 meters) between six and eight percent of the commodity portion of their electric bill.
- Developed a Comprehensive Marketing and Advertising Campaign for Perform Columbia, the brand of the 24 member Performing Arts Collective of Columbia County, a committee of the Chamber of Commerce.



Panelists that spoke at the Annual Agricultural Brunch



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Upcoming Events & Reservations

Social Media

Breakfast Seminar

Wed., April 22, 2009
 7:30 am to 8:00 am Registration
 8:00 am to 9:30 am Seminar
 Space 360
 360 Warren Street, Hudson
 The cost is \$5 for Chamber Members
Reservations are required by April 17.

Business After Hours

Thurs., April 23, 2009, 5:00 to 7:00 pm
 SunDog Solar
 343 Route 295, Chatham
Reservations are not required but appreciated.

Women's Networking Luncheon

Wed., April 29, 2009
 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.
 Mt. Washington House
 2627 State Route 23, Hillsdale
 The cost is \$18 for members and \$22 for non-member.
Reservations are required by April 24.

Business After Hours

Thurs., May 14, 2009, 5:00 to 7:00 pm
 Hudson Home
 356 Warren Street, Hudson
Reservations are not required but appreciated.

20th Annual Golf Tournament

Mon., May 18, 2009
 12:00 pm - Registration & Lunch
 1:00 pm - Shotgun start
 Columbia Golf and Country Club
 295 Route 217, Claverack
 The cost is \$140 for members.
Early bird rate through May 8. Reserve early as this will be a sellout tournament.

Excellence in Business Awards and Showcase

Thurs., June 18, 2009
 5:00 - 6:30 pm - Business Showcase
 6:30 - 7:00 pm - Awards Ceremony
 Stageworks/Hudson
 41 Cross Street, Hudson
Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door. Reserve your advanced tickets by June 12th.

Quarterly Chamber Connection July 2009

Are you looking for new connections?
 Promote your business in the next
Chamber Connection!

Reach more than 1,000 Chamber members for only \$150.

The next mailing is the first week of July
 Deadline for materials is June 15.

Please contact the Chamber for details.

Agricultural Awareness Tour

Sat., June 27, 2009
 Tour departs from Columbia County Fairgrounds at 10:00 am.
 Returns at 1:00 pm.
Cost is \$15 and includes coach bus transportation and boxed lunch. Reservations are required by June 22nd.

For more information about any of our events, please contact the Chamber at 518.828.4417.

Event Reservation Form

Please call or fax for reservations – Phone 518.828.4417, Fax 518.822.9539 or mail with check to: Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, 507 Warren St., Hudson, NY 12534. Email to: mail@columbiachamber-ny.com.

We realize that cancellations may occur. If your cancellation is made 48 hours prior to the event, we will refund the amount or apply the fee to another event. Otherwise, the payment is nonrefundable and nontransferable. If you have not prepaid for the event and you don't attend, you will still be responsible for the cost of the event.

Member Name: _____ Company Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Check Enclosed: Visa Mastercard Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

<u>Number Attending</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Names of Attendees</u>
_____	4/22 • Social Media Breakfast Seminar	\$ _____	_____
_____	4/23 • SunDog Solar Business After Hours	FREE	_____
_____	4/29 • Women's Networking Luncheon	\$ _____	_____
_____	5/14 • Business After Hours at Hudson Home	FREE	_____
_____	5/18 • 20th Annual Golf Tournament	\$ _____	_____
_____	6/18 • Excellence in Business Awards & Showcase	\$ _____	_____
_____	6/27 • Annual Agricultural Tour	\$ _____	_____

Best in Show 2009 Public Art Project Sponsorship Deadline Nears

The streets of historic Hudson will once again be home to 60 dogs of the painted variety. The hounds will be painted by local artists and become part of "Best in Show: Discover Columbia County '09" a public art project that is enjoyed by people of all ages. The public art display will open on Warren Street on July 4th and continue until the dogs are auctioned off on Columbus Day weekend.



opportunity to select the design rendered by the artist that they wish to sponsor.

There are two different dogs available, one sitting and one standing.

Sponsorship starts at just \$500 for one dog. This is a great way to support the community and tourism in the County. Sponsors

will be recognized with a plaque on their dog of choice, appear in all promotional materials and be recognized at the Best in Show Auction & Gala in October.

A special Sponsor-Artist reception will be held on April 30 at Stageworks to match artists with sponsors. At that time the sponsors will be able to select the artist rendering they would like and the location of their dog. The Chamber encourages businesses to sign on as sponsors as soon as possible, as the dogs are going fast! The deadline to sponsor a dog is April 24. Sponsors to date include: Casa Urbana Boutique and Salon; Crawford & Associates; Clear Channel Radio; Fingar Insurance; Hudson-Catskill Newspapers, Mexican Radio and Mid-Hudson Cablevision.

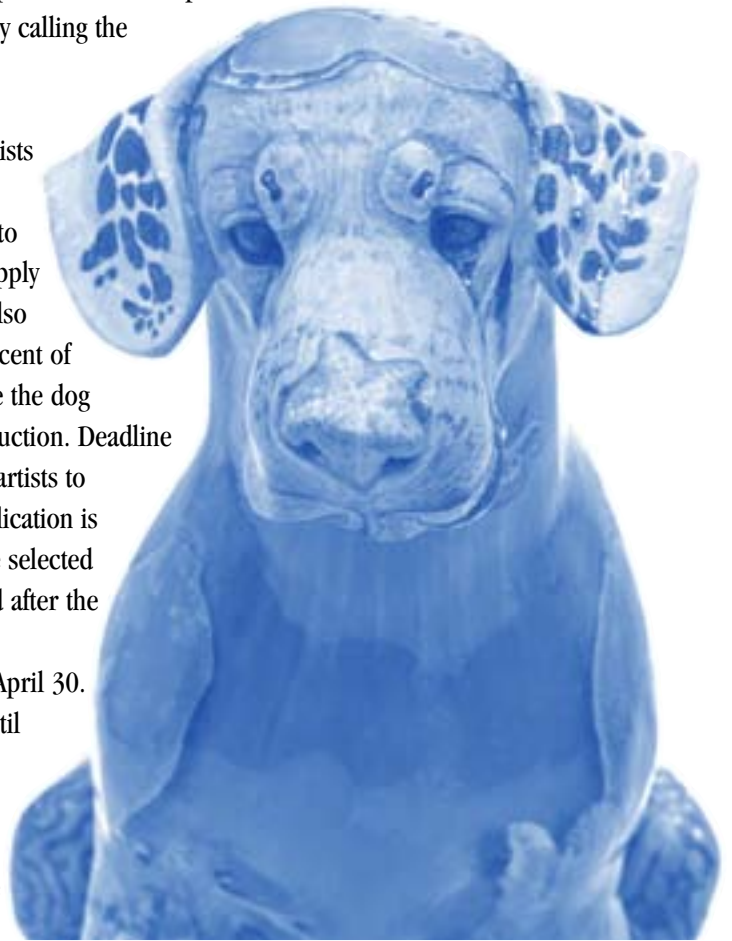
Greg Fingar, co-owner of Fingar Insurance, said becoming a sponsor was an easy decision for him. His company has offices in Germantown, Hudson and Catskill. "It's a good networking tool and a good opportunity to increase traffic flow. It's just a great opportunity for a business to be recognized."

Sponsors aren't just from the Hudson area. Businesses and individuals throughout the county are encouraged to get involved. In the future, organizers plan to expand the project to different areas of Columbia County, said David Colby, Chamber President.

Public art projects have become popular and successful promotional tools used by towns and cities around the United States, said Colby. In recent years Pittsfield, Mass., Bennington, V.T., and Saratoga, N.Y. have all used painted animals to attract tourists. Just across the Rip Van Winke Bridge, Catskill will once again display painted cats.

"There are actually groups that travel around the country to see these exhibits," Colby said. "We think it's a great partnership between artists and businesses." Sponsor and artist packets are available by calling the Chamber at 828-4417.

Selected artists receive a \$50 stipend to help defray supply costs. Artists also receive 25 percent of the gross price the dog brings at the auction. Deadline for interested artists to submit an application is April 24; those selected will be notified after the Sponsor-Artist Reception on April 30. Artists have until June 1 to complete their dog and return it to the Chamber.



Columbia County's "Best in Show" continues a public art collaboration between the city, county and various county organizations as well.

"The cooperation around this project has been great," added Chamber Board Chair Mike Sullivan.

The Columbia County Board of Supervisors is behind the project 100 percent, said Roy Brown, Germantown supervisor. "I think this brings a lot to the city and the county," he said.

Columbia County Chamber of Commerce provides advocacy, promotion and group benefit solutions to over 850 local businesses. For more details, go to www.columbiachamber-ny.com or call 828-4417.



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