

Chamber E-Chat



August 2006

Welcome to our new Manager

The Bowen Island Chamber of Commerce welcomes Mary McGregor as Manager of the Chamber and the Bowen Island Community & Visitors Information Centre. Mary knows the island intimately, having lived on Bowen for 26 years. A former commuter, Mary feels that she's adding three hours a day to her life by being based here on the island. Ginny Grierson and Susanne Martin, who have been job-sharing the Chamber position for the past year and summer assistant Zoë Shatwell, have staffed the busiest summer the Information Centre has ever seen. Over 7,000 guests, both visitors and islanders, came to gather information on Bowen Island itself along with travel information on other tourist regions of the province.



The Information Centre is open seven days a week until the Labour Day weekend when the hours change to 5 days a week, Tuesday through Saturday.

Changes are coming to the Cove

As has been reported in the Undercurrent, Municipal Council has adopted consulting planner Michael Rosen's recommendation of establishing three short term task forces to 'just do it.' There is one group that will recommend which land is to be sold to recoup the \$2 million expenditure to purchase the Crippen Park surplus lands. A second task force will take the findings of last year's Community Facilities Task Force research and make some decisions regarding what facilities are needed and where they will be located in the "greater Snug Cove" area. The third, and, in our opinion, the key report, is that of the Transportation Task Force. This group will do an overview of ALL of the Snug Cove plans, transportation studies and, we hope, the recent studies done on island commerce. It will certainly look at the newest suggestion of a redevelopment plan for the Cove developed by professional traffic engineers along with a team of landscape architects. We highly recommend that you go to the municipal offices and look at, what Counselor Lisa Shatzky has said is "the best presentation on Snug Cove redevelopment" She urges all of her fellow counselors to pay close attention to it.

At the original overview of these groups, Councilor David Wrinch had suggested that the Chamber should be involved in these processes. Bowen's Chamber of Commerce is not formally represented on any of the task forces. The decision, in striking the task forces, was to appoint individuals who were experienced at getting the job done and had some background. All are to report back in September.

It's unfortunate that the Chamber, with its knowledge and understanding of the needs of business in the Cove (and elsewhere) isn't directly involved. Since, as a representative voice, we are not, it's up to individual members and your executive to make Bowen's business commerce requirements known to the task forces! **Make your voices heard!**

Bowen Guide 2006 a Success!

What a tremendous job Darcie Buzzelle and Tim Rhodes did in redesigning and re-writing this year's guide. Accolades have come to us from Chambers throughout the province and from individuals around the world. As with any new publication, we had a glitch or two. The Advertising Standards Canada notified us that there was an official complaint lodged about one of the ads in the Guide. A discussion was held between Chamber representatives and the Vice President-Standards. When it was realized that as soon as the omission of the word "Advertisement" was pointed out to us on the specific ad, it was changed on our website and we have assured them that this oversight will not happen again. The complaint file was closed.

Another challenge was that the map in the first printing of 30,000 issues showed some trails that are actually on private land. Unknown to us, this information was to be used for Emergency Services only. On being notified of this error, the map pages were corrected and reprinted. The revised map pages are being manually inserted into the guides. If any of you have an extra hour, or would like to do some "occupational therapy" while watching TV one night, we'd love to supply you with some Guides and maps for you to work with.

Chamber Growth continues

The Bowen Chamber membership continues to grow! We now have 128 members and over the past 4 months have welcomed the following new businesses to the membership roll:

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| A Place to Stay | Arbutus B&B |
| A-Pro Caregivers & Nannies Inc | Bay Breeze Cottage B&B |
| Bluewater Cottage | Bowen Fuels |
| Cove House B&B | Galley Bistro & Lounge |
| Gilt Studio Gallery | Hummingbird Cabins |
| Howe Sound Pet Services | Integrity Mechanical Ltd. |
| K9-5 Pet Services | Lazy Bowen Hideaway |
| Turner's Manāna | |

More and more members have discovered the opportunity for small business to attain medical, dental and disability insurance along with some very advantageous VISA/MC rates offered through Chamber membership. We are in the process of developing a membership kit to ensure everyone has an overview of the benefits of membership in the Chamber.

One of the newest businesses on the island is [The Galley Bistro and Lounge](#) in Artisan Square. Owned by two new Bowen families, this restaurant gives Bowen Island a fresh, take on a timeless tradition. Johnathan Brownlee, and his wife Kaz, along with their neighbours Ulli Schnur and his wife Christine developed the much talked about restaurant. They often found themselves without a place to go out to on Monday and Tuesday nights, and love

the ambiance of Artisan Square, so they jumped at the chance to start a restaurant together on their much loved island.

Johnathan feels that Bowen's growing population provides a need for more dining variety to be available. The Galley is unlike any other Bowen establishment. Its unique flare supplies the community with a much-needed refresher. They had originally wanted another couple to run the place, but four weeks prior to opening, the two families decided to take it on themselves. Being a new comer to the business, Johnathan says that he loves having the opportunity to give someone a special experience every night. But they also found that finding the right niche was quite challenging.

The Galley was named after the medieval ships, which were powered solely by rowing. Johnathan looks at the name as a metaphor for a team of staff working (rowing) as efficiently as possible to make sure that the customers "on board" have a smooth ride. "I want people to know that we are service oriented" says Johnathan. Thanks to

Internationally known chefs Nathan Wright and Michael Nagy, the food is rarely less than fantastic, with the popular favorite being the Miso Roasted Sablefish.



"It's a Bistro for everyone. We want people to bring their families for lunch or dinner, and then have Mom and Dad come back later for a drink." Johnathan says. "Our kids menu is really great, and we just started our Family Dining Special". Live music is coming soon, along with catering services and breakfast menu.

(Written By Zoë Shatwell)

Employer's Challenge

No, this is not a charity run, a golf tournament or a special event of any kind. Unfortunately, it is a day-to-day occurrence. The challenge of keeping your business open due to lack of staff! At a recent BC Chamber district meeting, we were told of some hotels that are closing floors of rooms and restaurants cutting hours because they cannot find the staff to keep them open! Whistler had a survey done which showed that they need over 5,000 new workers to fulfill every work opportunity (in tourism, banks, construction) in the area. Well, that's Whistler's problem, you may think! NOT SO! It is happening here on Bowen! The Chamber is aware of one establishment that is curtailing its hours because of a lack of staff!

In fact, the Chamber itself is wondering how the office is going to stay open over the Labour Day weekend as we don't have staff or volunteers (please call Mary at 9024 if you can spare an hour or two any day) to service the visitors. The Chamber had planned to bring a seminar by Roy Prevost (the popular guest speaker at our AGM last year) on keeping and motivating staff, but business folks were too busy keeping the doors open to attend a seminar! This is a huge challenge for all of us, employers, employees and customers alike! We need affordable housing to allow workers a place to live. We need to encourage our young people to look at jobs that were not considered careers in the past. We need to encourage employers to include some benefits in their wage package. We need to stay in business!

Chamber Challenge

Again, not a golf tournament or run, but a chance to tell your Chamber Executive what you want. What you really, really want! We are in the middle of a program with Tourism BC which will help us develop the basics of an economic development plan for the island, based on Tourism. Tourism is here. We are hopeful that we will have a plan to manage that tourism at the end of this process. However, not all of you are in tourism-related businesses. What do YOU, our members want from your Chamber? We want to have relevance to our business community! Your executive will be gathering in early September to develop further long term goals and we will look toward YOUR input. In addition, we will be hosting our first Networking Breakfast on the morning of Wednesday, September 20th... location to be advised. Mark your calendar for a meeting from 7:30 am until 9:15 a.m. Hope to see you there.



Murray Atherton, President

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Post Script.

There's always a space dilemma when putting the Chat together which is why you see some pictures here that really don't relate to the text.

I'd also like to let you know that your website is becoming more and more informative to web visitors. So far this year there has been a 14.7% increase in the number of visits over last year, 2005. The most popular page continues to be the visitor page and its sub-links to accommodation and food. The map is a close third and I note that in the top 25 pages visited, the business directory has crept up from #24 in 2005 to #8 for 2006 to date. I also see many more visitors coming to the Chamber website via a link from members websites. Thank you for the support.

Joan Wood.