



# The Village Current

An e-Newsletter of the  
Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce, through the efforts of our membership, shall be to contribute to the cultural, social and economic development, growth and sustainability of Blowing Rock while preserving the charm and character of the village.

## Chamber Picnic is May 12 Fun is Waiting for You!

The Annual Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce Picnic is coming up on **Tuesday, May 12 at 5:30pm, at the Rotary Pavilion at Davant Field.** Davant Field – the town’s baseball and soccer field -- is located on Clark Street, just past the pool. This year, you’ll notice some changes, thanks to our sponsors and our active events committee. The theme is "Time To Work - Time To Play: Hometown Traditions." Hamburgers will be provided by Diane Schnabel from Pat’s Almost World Famous Cheeseburgers at Tanger Shoppes On the Parkway and Hot Dogs will be served up by Jim McDonald

from Franks 'n' More in the Shops at SouthMarke. Décor by Pat Moser of Events By Pat Moser and Florals by Darlene at the Mustard Seed Market. As usual, please bring a serving spoon and a side dish or dessert to share. The picnic is free for Chamber members, but we do encourage a \$2.00 per person optional donation. Even though it’s a picnic, remember to bring your business cards for networking. Guests are encouraged to bring a small (4" x 4") table tent or card identifying their business and their dish to share. Our next networking event — May 19th’s



Our chefs for the evening at the 2008 Chamber picnic.

Business After Hours — will be at Glidewell’s. Glidewell’s is located at 1128 South Main Street. Be sure to stop by and check out one of Blowing Rock’s newest restaurants. If the weather’s nice, we’ll see

## Rural Center Grants \$20,000

Sen. Steve Goss (D-45) this week announced a grant of \$20,000 to Blowing Rock to fund a feasibility study for the North Carolina Wine and Culinary Institute at Blowing Rock. The grant from the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center is in response to a proposal from the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a North Carolina Wine and Culinary Center in Blowing Rock. The center would be a nonprofit, educational and experiential gateway

to the North Carolina wine, food and culinary industries. The concept involves leveraging the substantial High Country tourism base to create and support a destination tourist attraction for the purposes of promoting the North Carolina wine, food and culinary industries; marketing North Carolina wine and food products; providing educational facilities focusing on the history of the North Carolina wine industry, viticulture and enology and the culinary arts; and providing a high quality facility which will generate additional, high end tourism for Blowing Rock

and the surrounding High Country area. The feasibility study to be completed by the end of 2009 will determine the economic, demographic and available facility realities, and the ultimate size and scope of the center given various scenarios. The total budget requirement for the project is \$45,000. The Rural Center grant of \$20,000 is contingent upon written confirmation from the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce that it has in hand firm commitments sufficient to fund the study.

Volume 5, Issue 9

Friday,  
May 8, 2009

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### Calendar of Events.

- Tuesday, May 12, 5:30pm—  
7:30pm Chamber Cookout,  
Davant Field
- Tuesday, May 12, 7pm Town  
Council Meeting
- Saturday, May 16, 10:00am—  
5:00pm, Art in the Park, American  
Legion Grounds
- Sunday, May 17th, 4:00pm,  
Concert in the Park, Cans and  
Pans Steel Drum Band
- Tuesday, May 19, 5:30pm-  
7:00pm, Business After Hours,  
Glidwell’s
- Monday, May 25, Memorial  
Day, Chamber Office CLOSED
- Tuesday, May 26, Concierge  
101, Hayes Center

## Meet Your Board of Directors Greg Clark of Gregory Alan's



*Greg Clark of Gregory Alan's serves on the Board of Directors.*

Greg Clark, of Gregory Alan's located at 110 Sunset Drive, Suite #2, is among that group of people who got to Blowing Rock as soon as they could. "I've been coming up here for nearly thirty years," Greg said. "Gregory Alan's is my third business in Blowing Rock." Greg's first time in Blowing Rock was in the early '80s, when he left the corporate world to start a restaurant on Sunset Drive, Sweet Season. After that business burned, he

returned to American Airlines. Greg came back to Blowing Rock for good about four years ago when he bought the Subway. It was during this time that he was first elected to the Board of Directors. He recently sold the Subway to his daughter and son-in-law. Now, Greg owns the shop which was named the Chamber's New Business of the Year for 2008. Greg is very active as a Business At Large representative for the Blowing

Rock Chamber. He serves on the membership committee and can often be found volunteering for Chamber events. "I really enjoy working with the Chamber and the Membership Committee. This is how we keep this town special." Having lived all over the United States, Greg really appreciates that Blowing Rock is a unique place and is working hard to keep it that way.

## NOTICE: NC Legislature Discussing a New Water Tax

Please take a few moments to review the bill which is currently in committee discussion at the North Carolina State Legislature. This bill, House Bill 1101, titled the Water Resource Act of 2009, would af-

fect privately owned wells in North Carolina. Please review this bill and give us your feedback. [You can read the bill by clicking here.](#) You can e-mail your feedback to Charles Hardin: [\[dince@blowingrock.com\]\(mailto:dince@blowingrock.com\) or the Chair of the Community and Government Committee, Rita Davis: \[rita.davis@wachovia.com\]\(mailto:rita.davis@wachovia.com\)](mailto:har-</a></p>
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## Art in the Park Returns May 16

Art in the Park in Blowing Rock, NC has a history which dates from the early 1960's, when artists living in and around the village would come to the town's park to display and sell some of their paintings or other pieces. Now in its 47th year, Art in the Park attracts artists from all over the Eastern U.S. This award-winning series features the works of over 90 juried artists. We have several of last year's award winners coming to the May Show. Last year's September Award of Excellence winner, Nancy Strailey, is more than excited to be there

again. Strailey is a unique colored pencil artist whose drawings reflect her experiences in Africa. Often, her drawings are done on paper that the artist makes herself and incorporates bits of plants, fiber and even dung collected in Africa. From the earliest drawing on cave walls, human being have studied animals and included them in their art. Strailey sees herself as part of the continuation of humanity's 300,000 year tradition of animal and cultural-image makers, an attitude that is clear from the images in her work. Strailey will be returning

in August, September and October as well. The May show is a great time for locals to visit and shop as May means the crowds are generally smaller and you can spend more time with each artist. The Chamber of Commerce provides free shuttles throughout the day. The show is located at the American Legion Grounds just behind Memorial Park and admission is free. Show hours are 10 am til 5 pm. Dates for this year's shows are: May 16, June 13, July 18, August 15, September 12, & October 3.



*The Migration Symphony by Nancy Strailey.*

## NOTICE: NC Legislature to Consider August 8 Start Date for Schools

**The Community and Government Committee of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce would like to alert our members to a bill coming before the North Carolina Legislature which will affect the tourism industry.** The bill that would allow schools to start as early as August 8<sup>th</sup>, HB593 Change School Starting Date, must pass by May 14<sup>th</sup> to remain eligible. At a late Tuesday afternoon House Commerce meeting after much on HB593 debate, a motion was made for a favorable report. The chair was unable to determine by a voice vote the results so the state representatives were asked to raise their hands. After two attempts at counting that way, the chair called a roll call vote. You could hear a pin drop as each name was called. There were surprise votes both ways on the bill and when the secretary called out the results they were 13 for the bill and 14 opposed! But as soon as the motion failed, supporters of the bill were lobbying to have it brought up again for another vote. It is common knowledge in the hallways that it will be heard again in Commerce for a vote. The

Commerce Committee meets again this coming Monday afternoon and we need you to contact the Commerce Committee members again as soon as possible. Tourism people from across the state have been faithful e-mailing and calling legislators on the school start bills that have been heard in several different committees this year. Your efforts have helped your lobbying team in Raleigh. Below is a listing of how the members are anticipated to vote on Monday and a sample e-mail and phone script. Attached is a committee list which contains their e-mail and phone numbers. If you have board members or belong to local associations that support this keeping the August 25<sup>th</sup> school start date, please forward this e-mail onto them. Volume really matters right now. The North Carolina Teachers Association (NCAE) is e-mailing blasting this committee and we need to remind these members of our position. When calling ask politely that Rep. \_\_\_\_\_, please vote against the HB593 Change School Start Date. Let them know your name, phone number and where you are from. Usually the legislator's assistant will take the message. The supporters of the bill are very good at turning out large volumes of

calls and e-mails so quantity will matter. If sending an e-mail, put in the subject line: Protect August Family Time Vote No on HB593. Some reasons that you may want to mention why you oppose the bills are:

- The bill would allow school to start as early as August 8<sup>th</sup>, the hottest time of the year
- The current school calendar law has a popularity level of 71% as done in a poll by Public Policy Polling
- The current law makes sure there is enough time for family vacations, camps and important engaged learning opportunities
- The current law ensures that both student and teacher have time for much-needed summer jobs
- The law has increased tourism in all areas of the state creating much needed jobs and tax revenue
- Prior to the law, 90% of schools were starting the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August, a few even on July 30<sup>th</sup>

***Now is the worst time to pass a law like this that would harm the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest industry in the state and further reduce tax revenues***



*A tourism based economy like Blowing Rock's would adversely be affected by an earlier school start date.*

## Minding the Store: How to Grow When It's Slow Review

On Thursday, April 30, the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce's Business Support Committee hosted a seminar titled, *How to Grow When It's Slow*. Over 65 participants gained knowledge from the expert panel, with topics ranging from internet and social marketing to basic customer service. The panel included Bill Barr, of Handel Barr Learning Inc., Karin Moss, executive director of High Country Host, and Liz Parham of the North Carolina Office of Urban Development. Karin Moss spoke about the importance of a targeted marketing campaign. She gave businesses tips for creating clever marketing schemes and product placement that can help your business. For example, products can be featured in a way that ties them together, or for holidays and events such as tickets, flowers and chocolate for Mother's Day. Bill Barr, a performance consult-

ant and founder of Handel Barr Learning, Inc., focused on customer service. "In a tough economy, it is particularly important to remember the basics of Customer Service," he said. "Greet your customers with a smile and always be polite, it goes a long way." Liz Parham got the crowd excited about many of the free social networking sites and internet options for businesses. "Using Twitter and Facebook is a good way to cultivate a younger customer," she said. Additionally, both of those services are free. At least one local business owner with a shop in Blowing Rock said he planned to take ideas from the seminar and put them into to practice. "I got some good ideas, about how to take marketing to the next level" he said. "The Business Support Committee really appreciated the fact that our business people came out at such an early hour to attend the "How To Grow When It's Slow" Seminar," said Nancy Santay, who

leads the committee which developed the program. "This is a time when businesses must think outside of the box, so to speak, and look for ways to make the shopping, dining, and lodging experience fresh and stimulating for our visitors. We felt confident that everyone left with some very worthwhile tips and advice that could be easily implemented into every segment of business in town. We have received very positive feedback from those who attended and the committee is already working on plans for additional programs in the upcoming year." The event took place at the Hayes Center and was free to Blowing Rock Chamber Members. Breakfast at the event was provided by First Citizens Bank, Wachovia Bank and United Community Bank and was catered by Moondance Catering. Support for the How to Grow When It's Slow Seminar also came from Chetola Resort and the Hayes Performing Arts Center.

## Board Meeting Review

The Chamber Board of Directors held its May meeting on Wednesday the 6th. Items which the Board discussed include review of the Blue Ridge Wine & Food Festival and the upcoming Art in the Park season. The Business Support Committee reviewed the recent seminar and re-

ported on the upcoming Secret Shopper program. Other committees continue to move forward on their projects including funding for Wine & Culinary Center, an Individual membership Campaign, reimagining Chamber events and developing a sponsorship strategy. The Board also accepted the

resignation of Jim Steele and the appointment of John Albright. It was also unanimously decided to send letters in support of the Congressional Act required for the town's land exchange with the Park Service and the water intake by Boone on the New River.

*Minding  
The  
Store*



*Hints & Tips  
from the*

**BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE**

*The Business Support Committee is  
committed to helping you with issues  
related to your business.*



**The Blowing Rock  
Chamber of Commerce**

*The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce  
2009 Board of Directors*

Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce

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PO Box 406  
Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Phone: 828-295-7851  
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E-mail: [membership@blowingrock.com](mailto:membership@blowingrock.com)

**Keep Up with Latest on Issues that  
Effect Your Business.**

**Links to help you Stay in The Know**

[US Chamber of Commerce](#)

[NC Chamber of Commerce](#)

[United States Senate](#)

[United States House of Representatives](#)

North Carolina General Assembly :

[Senate](#)

[House of Representatives](#)

**Officers**

- Rita Davis, President**  
*Wachovia Bank*
- Nancy Santay, Vice President**  
*Cabin Fever*
- Bill Hall, Past President**  
*Blowing Rock Realty*
- Linda Gilleland, Secretary**  
*Greystone Insurance*
- Margaret Holder, Treasurer**  
*Chetola Resort*

**Members of the Board**

- Babette McAuliffe**  
*Carolina Mountain Life Magazine*
- John Aldridge**  
*Individual Representative*
- Greg Clark**  
*Gregory Alan's*
- Dan Phillips**  
*Individual Representative*

**Tim Miller**

*Blowing Rock Frameworks & Gallery*

**Betsy Collins**

*Individual Representative*

**Joellyn Gibbons**

*Individual Representative*

**J. B. Lawrence**

*United Community Bank*

**Heidi Ellis**

*Tanger Shoppes on the Parkway*

**Cathy Robbins**

*Tweetsie Railroad*

**Doug Pegram**

*Village Real Estate*

**Cindy Milner**

*Bistro Roca*

**Dick Goosman**

*Meadowbrook Inn*

**Deborah McDowell**

*Mountianaire Inn*

**Jim Steele**

*Individual Representative*



*Say Cheese. If you have photos you'd like to share, please send them to [Stephanie@blowingrock.com](mailto:Stephanie@blowingrock.com). We're especially looking for photos from our Business Members in their Businesses!*

**This Week in Photos**

Welborn Alexander, Charles Hardin and Monica Perry with "The Big Check."



Members of Watauga High's Mountain Alliance helped the BRLC clean up the New River on April 25.

