



CHAMBER MADE

Newsletter of the Markdale Chamber of Commerce

August 2008

Six local businesses honoured with STARS awards

At the STARS in business Awards gala, held in Arthur on October 29, six area businesses won awards.

Taking home awards were John (JD) Daly of Sidekicks Café—who won the Corporate Citizen of the Year Award; Debbie Clark of Top o' The Rock in Eugenia took home the Company of the Year (under 15 employees) award; Doug Crawford of Markdale Foodland won the Customer Service Excellence Award and Sean McGivern of GrassRoots Organics in Desboro won the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. Diana Irwin of H. Devereaux was selected as runner-up in the Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Also nominated was Debbie & Harry Janzen of Four Seasons Party Rentals. They were mentioned and thanked at the gala by Meg Hallman of The Inn at Walters Falls, which took the other two awards of the evening—Entrepreneur of the Year and Company of the Year (over 15).

Next up are the SCoBE Awards, which cover West Grey. For info see www.sbdc.ca.



LOCAL STARS: Award winners were (clockwise left to right): Debbie Clark—Top o' the Rock; Sean McGivern, GrassRoots Organics; JD—Sidekicks Café; Doug Crawford, Foodland.

Santa weekend activities celebrate family traditions

A weekend full of Christmas fun comes on November 28th and 29th for Markdale's Moonlight Madness on Friday and Santa Parade on Saturday at 1 p.m.

Moonlight Madness has downtown merchants open late with special pricing for customers on Friday, November 28th. The Markdale Chamber of Commerce will sponsor the ever-popular horse drawn village tours throughout the evening, there will be hot cider at the Olde Firehall and Santa and his elves are expected to make an appearance as well that evening. A new addition this year will be the Rhythmix Quartet of the Harmony North Chorus. They will stroll the downtown singing carols.

On Saturday, November 29th, get ready for the parade with **Breakfast with Santa** at Cooke's Presbyterian Church from 8 a.m to 10:30 p.m. Put on by the Markdale Youth Group, the breakfast offers pancakes and sausage with the Jolly Ol' Elf himself for only \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

After breakfast, Santa will be hurrying off on some quick local visits then he'll be featured in the **parade at 1 p.m.** With a route from Scotland Street through down-

town to the Recreation Complex grounds, there's plenty of space to set up chairs or just crowd the downtown with the whole family to celebrate Christmas Family Traditions, the theme of the parade this year.

For those thinking of entering a float, registration is the day of the parade at the muster grounds at the former Nordic Furniture plant parking lot. Prizes will be awarded for best children's float, best musical float and best overall float.

There is also a **"best dressed window"** contest being sponsored by the Chamber, for village retailers. They will put their best faces forward to celebrate the upcoming season. After the parade, Santa and his elves will be at the Walter Harris Memorial Library again to hear children's wishes and hand out treats.

It's a full weekend of fun – get some shopping done and let Santa know your heart's desire. Every year the Chamber puts on the parade with the support of sponsors including the Municipality of Grey Highlands, Rotary Club of Markdale, The Flesherton-Markdale Branch 333 of the Royal Canadian Legion and many more local businesses.

Entrepreneur & Volunteer Skills Development Day a Success

Over 60 people gathered at the Flesherton Kinplex on October 22nd to hear from five separate speakers on a variety of topics as part of the Entrepreneur & Volunteer Skills Development Day.

Sponsored by the Markdale Chamber, in partnership with the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), the day was the final training event required under the Chamber's Trillium grant in support of volunteer development.

Speakers for the day included Gregory Smith, who lead off the day with a motivational talk about the Journey With In—asking people to search their own inner motives for actions. Charmaine Peever of Twin County Bookkeeping gave an excellent talk on financial record keeping while Denise Edwards presented two talks—one on volunteer and worker recruitment and retention and the other on risk assessment. Anne Frost spoke about grant-writing as business planning.

All the sessions focused on cross-over skills needed by both small business entrepreneurs and volunteers. The day celebrated Small Business Week and fulfilled the Chamber's Trillium grant work plan for volunteer training.

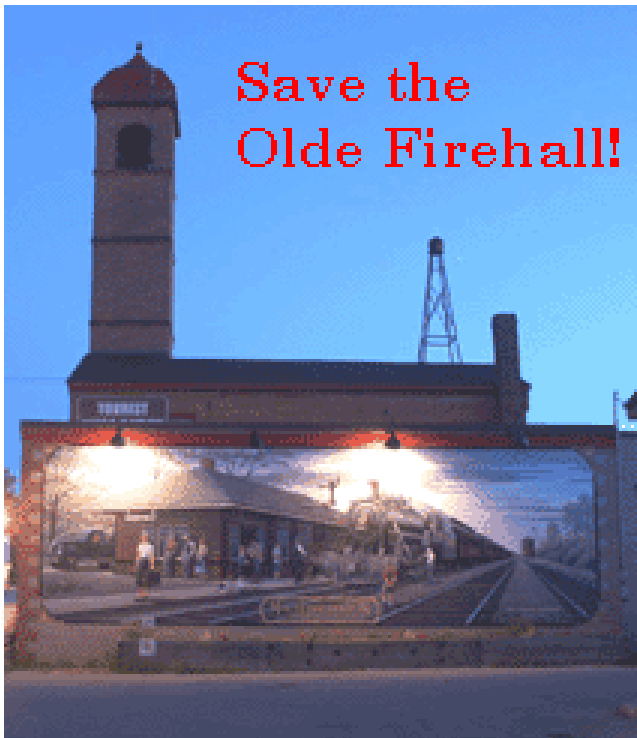
Participants in the day reported positive feedback, with representatives from the SEDC; The Family Y Employment Counseling; Twin County Bookkeeping; Secure Insurance; Telizon and the Chamber tending information tables for attendees.



SKILLED DAY: Anne Frost (top left) and Charmaine Peever were speakers at the Entrepreneur & Volunteer Skills Development Day, where lunch was provided by the Rocklyn Agricultural Society.

Health breaks for the day were sponsored by the SEDC and were in partnership with local businesses—The Bakery in Flesherton; Top o' The Rock in Flesherton—while the luncheon was provided by the Rocklyn Agricultural Society.

This initiative was well received, encouraging the Chamber to plan for future similar events.



Olde Firehall capital grant deferred to March 2009

Chamber manager Kate Russell is working on a new Trillium grant application to support the restoration of the Olde Firehall in downtown Markdale.

Originally scheduled for submission Nov. 1st, the application has been deferred to March 2009, as the Chamber awaits approval of the final report on the just-completed operating grant.

In early 2008, the Chamber renewed its lease for the building with the intent of restoring and eventually redeveloping the building into a vibrant cultural centre.

The manager has been meeting with local groups, seeking letters of support for the project. If you are interested in supporting the initiative—with a letter or by sitting on a committee about the restoration, please contact the chamber office at 519-986-4612 or email markdalechamber@cablerocket.com.

Several support letters have already been received for the application.



Markdale Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting

*Come out and hear about 2008 projects
and give your input to the 2009 direction .*

*Election of executive officers will be held.
Nominations welcome. Contact the manager.*

Nov. 20, 2008

Markdale Golf & Curling Club

Social Hour—6 p.m.

Dinner—7 p.m.

Meeting—8 p.m.

Cost: \$30 per person.

Cash Bar.

SPEAKER: Mark Kraemer—former Mayor of Saugeen Shore
Mark will speak about the need for communities to work together
toward stronger municipalities.
The strength of working together allows success at a regional level.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS:

2008: Trillium grant completed—report on initiatives supported;
tourism and community info booth stats; events report; regional
economic development report; CGHS foundation fundraising.

2009: Olde Firehall restoration grant application; initiatives and po-
tential fundraising efforts; events planning; management model.

To RSVP or for more info call 888-986-4612

Centre Grey Health Services pledge up for closure

Despite the cancellation of this year's Charity Gold Tournament by the Chamber, due to lack of interest, the executive are still considering closing out the Chamber's pledge to the new hospital build.

The Chamber pledged \$15,000 over five years to the Centre Grey Health Services Foundation to support the building of a new hospital in the community.

The pledge was largely fulfilled by funds raised from a concert given by late pianist John Arpin early in the pledge period. The remainder was raised through the years with 50/50 draws; the charity golf tournament and mostly through coin collection boxes at local retailers.

The 2008 50/50 draw was only moderately successful, as local retailers did not seem to push the fundraising effort.

The charity golf tournament was under subscribed, with the manager busy on other Trillium grant related events, the promotion for this event was slow in coming forward. The board agreed to cancel that event.

The pledge monies raised to date are almost \$13,000. The executive committee will go to the membership at the annual general meeting on Nov. 20th at the Markdale Golf & Curling Club for a decision on covering the remainder of the pledge through regular Chamber funds.

Manager Kate Russell feels it is important to close this pledge prior to moving forward into fundraising efforts to support the restoration and redevelopment of the Olde Firehall.

Over 4,000 visited Olde Firehall info booth in '08

The Olde Firehall visitors and community information centre in downtown Markdale logged over 4,000 people accessing the centre's many tourism and community information and resources.

Kept as a regular part of duties for the staff in the office, the Chamber tracks visitors in three categories: tourists, community and chamber. Tourists are those visiting from outside the area or residents seeking tourism related information; community people are local residents seeking information and non-profit groups assisted by the Chamber. Chamber listings include people who asked for assistance from the Chamber on a business or local economic development issue.

Stats have risen over the past year as more people become aware of the resources available at the Chamber's information booth.

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

A Volunteer Centre of sorts has been created in the front office as well—offering OMAFRA fact sheets on volunteer skills (these are also now available on CD and will soon be online) as well as space to post volunteer recruitment opportunities, flyers for upcoming events etc.

The Chamber manager has assisted local groups with everything from recruiting volunteers, promoting events and accessing lendable event equipment like tables, tents and easels to assisting with grant applications and consulting on administrative issues.

This year's summer student and the manager also assisted with the organization of the 150th Markdale Fall Fair among many other tasks.

The manager is now visiting with local non-profit groups to determine their needs and invite them to join .

the Chamber at a reduced membership rate. So far she has made presentations to the Hospital Auxiliary, the Markdale Seniors and has sent letters to all the local non-profit groups collected in a database at the office. If your group hasn't been contacted, let the office know.

SOUVENIR SALES UP

Also booming this year were souvenir sales at the Olde Firehall. Developed over the years, the info booth now offers everything from blank cards by artist Richard McNaughton to hike maps from the Beaver Valley and Sydenham Bruce Trail Groups (day hike maps and a "loop" book respectively).

Books available include the popular "Narrow Gauge Through the Bush" about the Toronto Sydenham railway; Telfer Wegg's popular photography book as well as a guide to paddling in the Georgian Bay area, Ontario's ghosts and other offerings for visitors and residents alike.

T-shirts, hats and sweatshirts promoting Markdale are getting in short supply. There was a plan for post-cards this year, which will be followed up on in 2009.

BENEFIT INFO ON HAND

Information on the many benefits of Chamber membership is also available at the info centre. This information includes details on the group insurance plan, discounted home and auto insurance, merchant Visa discounts as well as access to business information and statistics through a variety of regional sources.

Why not stop by the office and add your query to the thousands the Chamber receives and handles for the municipality annually. If it's not on hand, staff will research your request and get you an answer as soon as possible. More ways the Chamber works for you!