

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Compiled from staff reports

DESIGN SUBMISSIONS: The Northwest Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is accepting submissions for its 2010 Architectural Design Awards. Categories include built and unbuilt. Projects by any licensed architect whose office is located in Island, San Juan, Skagit or Whatcom counties are eligible to compete. www.nwaia.org/

ANACORTES CHAMBER DINNER, DANCE: The Anacortes Chamber of Commerce will host its annual Chamber Cheers Dinner and Dance, "It's a Wonderful Life in Anacortes," from 6 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 6, at the Port of Anacortes Warehouse. The event will celebrate the success of chamber members during 2010. Individual tickets are \$40. To become a sponsor, contact Stephanie at 360-293-7911.

EXCEL CLASSES: Burlington Parks and Recreation, 900 E. Fairhaven Ave., will host Microsoft Excel training classes on Oct. 27, Nov. 17 and Dec. 29. Each class will take place from 8 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4:30 p.m., and will be hosted by Gail Sexton, author of "How to Use It: Microsoft Excel 2007 Business Essentials." Register at least a week ahead at 360-755-9649, \$89, includes a tutorial book.

FLAGGER CLASSES: Students can earn a state traffic-control flagger's card through a course being offered at Skagit Valley College on Tuesday, Oct. 19, and Thursday, Oct. 21. Ages 18 or older. \$49. To register: www.skagit.edu/communityeducation or 360-416-7638.

SIHRMA MEETING: The Skagit-Island Human Resource Management Association (SIHRMA) will hold a breakfast meeting from 7:15 to 9:15 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 11, at the Skagit Golf and Country Club Drive, Burlington. Larry Boone of LL Boone Consulting LLC will speak on the topic "Catch people doing things right — then tell them so." \$15 SIHRMA members, \$18 nonmembers, \$10 student/displaced worker. To register, visit skagit.shrm.org.

ADMIN PROS: The Skagit Valley chapter of the International Association of Administrative Professionals will meet from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 21, at the Burlington Public Library, 820 E. Washington Ave., Burlington. Erica Work will speak on "Disaster Preparedness." \$10. Reservations: call Sherrie Ludwig at 360-293-1592 or e-mail sherrie.ludwig@shell.com.

WORKSHOPS: The Economic Development Association of Skagit County is

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Frank Varga / Skagit Valley Herald

Peter Roberge, a chef at Skagit Valley Hospital, picks up his order of fresh, local vegetables from Nelida Martinez (left) and her daughter, Lizette Flores, at the Skagit Wholesale Market on Thursday in Mount Vernon. Martinez is the owner of Pure Nelida, a farm along Highway 20 west of Burlington.

Skagit Wholesale Market takes inventory of its first season

By WHITNEY PIPKIN
Staff Writer

There's nothing glitzy about the gathering of farmers and buyers that's been taking place every Thursday morning under the bypass in the Skagit Valley Co-op parking lot.

There are no fiddle players or cinnamon rolls to woo passersby to what looks like a farmers market — but is quite different. At this market, carrots are purchased in pounds instead of bunches and sold out of the back of vans instead of from neatly dressed tables.

This was the first year for the Skagit Wholesale Market, intended to connect small and mid-sized

farms with their buyers — and to foster new business relationships — at a central location.

Lucy Norris, a project manager for Puget Sound Food Network, and her contemporaries coordinated the weekly get-together, originally suggested by the local co-op's board.

After 15 weeks of trying out the idea on the Mount Vernon audience, Norris said she thinks the market was a good fit for many buyers and sellers — but not for everyone.

"I think it makes sense for people who really want to expand their wholesale business but have graduated from the farmers market scene," said Norris, who's gathering surveys to

better assess the market's success.

So far, so good

The idea of a wholesale market has been knocked around by the agricultural community for 15 or 20 years, Norris said, but no one acted on it until this year. The season's last market in Mount Vernon wrapped up Thursday morning.

At first glance, the venture seems to have been a plus for those who were able to cut down on delivery trips while getting connected with new customers. A "pilot" wholesale market sprang up over the last three weeks at a Whole Foods parking lot in Seattle. It's quite possible more regions could follow suit by next season.

Chris Johnson, chef at United General Hospital in Sedro-Woolley, was first drawn to the Skagit Wholesale Market because he could grab his usual orders from Hedlin Family Farm and Sakuma Brothers Farms in one place. But by this week, Johnson had placed orders from almost every farm at the market.

The market "was a huge success this year. I want to see more chefs taking advantage of it," Johnson said.

Norris said almost 50 individual buyers took advantage of the market this year, many of them restaurateurs from Seattle or nearby, such as Nell Thorn

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GETTING HIRED

When a firm backtracks on a job offer

By MARVIN WALBERG
Scripps Howard News Service

DEAR MR. WALBERG: After considerable effort, I got an interview with a company I have a strong interest in. A few days later, the human-resources manager who interviewed me called and offered me a part-time position including benefits. I was ecstatic. It was more money than my present full-time job and gave me more time to spend with my family. I was to come in two days later to complete the paperwork and establish a start date. When I arrived, an HR associate informed me that the only position available was a seasonal part-time job that did not include benefits.

I explained what the HR manager had said and asked to see her, but she was out of the office. The associate was firm that she was presenting what she had been told

to offer me. I explained my frustration and disappointment, and asked for a day or two to consider the new offer.

Should I continue to try to reach the HR manager about the original offer? I am very disappointed, but don't want to spoil a possible opportunity.

E-mail from CW, Durham, N.C.

DEAR CW: First, let me tell you that you did the right thing, and now you need a plan of action. Yes, you need to talk to that manager, and hopefully you haven't already given notice on your current job.

Understand that life happens, and who knows what happened to change the original offer to something entirely different, so you need to find out. Hopefully, when you talk to the manager, you'll learn something positive, and even if you have to accept the job offered, you'll have your foot in the door and the opportunity to wow them.

Life does happen and so does strife. I had a client who had a similar experience, being offered a better position than was waiting for him. When he asked to speak to the HR manager, he learned that she had been fired the day after making his offer.

Stay focused, stay assertive and stay active in your pursuit of an explanation.

Marvin Walberg is a job-search coach. Contact him at mwalberg@bellsouth.net, marvinwalberg.blogspot.com.

IRS to stop mailing out paper tax forms

The Associated Press

The Internal Revenue Service says it will no longer mail out tax packages with forms and instructions for filing a paper return. The change comes as an increasing number of taxpayers are filing their returns electronically.

In early October, taxpayers who filed paper returns last year will instead get a postcard from the IRS with instructions on where and how to get the forms needed for filing 2010 returns. In short, the forms will be available in January from the IRS website or at select libraries and post offices.

The IRS says people who file electronically can get refunds deposited directly into their bank accounts in as little as 10 days. Otherwise it can take up to six

weeks to get a refund check in the mail.

The IRS says the move will reduce mailing costs. But the change also reflects changing habits: the majority of individual filers now file electronically. Just 8 percent of individual taxpayers get paper forms and instructions in the mail last year. The rest either filed electronically or used a paid tax preparer or software.

Taxpayers can file returns electronically for free on the IRS website, www.irs.gov.

The agency also gives free electronic filing help to those who earn \$38,000 or less through a program that walks taxpayers through their returns by asking a series of questions about income, expenses and other financial transactions.

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Briefs

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offering the following class at its office, 204 W. Montgomery St., Mount Vernon: **Planning and Financing a Business in Today's Market:** 1 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Oct. 12 and Nov. 9. 360-336-6114 or www.skagit.org.

WORKSHOPS FOR JOB SEEKERS: WorkSource Skagit, 2005 E. College Way, Mount Vernon, offers free workshops for job seekers: **Interviewing Techniques:** 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. today, Oct. 5.

Résumés and Cover Letters: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. today, Oct. 5.

Perfecting Applications: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 7.

Computer Literacy: 10 a.m. to noon Thursday, Oct. 7.

Skills and Abilities: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 7. **Surviving the Recession:** 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 11.

Skills and Abilities: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 12.

Job Search Strategies: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 12. 360-416-3600

WHIDBEY JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE: WorkSource Whidbey, 31975 SR 20,

NOW OPEN

BURLINGTON — A new chiropractic clinic, **DC Health Chiropractic**, has opened at 160 Cascade Place, Suite 106.

The clinic offers chiropractic services specializing in flexion-distraction for lower-back and leg pain due to disk injuries or stenosis, said owner Jacob Harris. It accepts most insurance providers and Medicare.

Originally from Burlington, Harris is returning to the area after practicing at a clinic in Campbell, Calif. "I'm very excited to return to the Skagit Valley to offer my unique knowledge and skills in the management and prevention of back pain," Harris said.

The clinic is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, and by appointment. 360-404-2072.

SEDRO-WOOLLEY — Hair stylist Jan Nabholz offers her clients some stress relief along with their haircuts at her new salon, **Totally Hair**, 220 State St., at the intersection with Metcalf Street.

In addition to haircuts, styles, foils and waxes, Nabholz offers manicures, pedicures and other stress-reduction services informed by her training in Reiki.

Nabholz said Reiki is a Japanese stress-reduction technique that promotes healing on the physical, emotional and even spiritual level.

One hour of Reiki treatment, including a scalp, hand and foot massage, costs \$50.

The salon is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon Saturday. Nabholz also offers evening appointments. 360-853-3678.

Suite 3, Oak Harbor, offers free workshops for job seekers. Park in the school district lot and walk to WorkSource.

Basic Computer Skills: 10 a.m. to noon today, Oct. 5.

Skills and Abilities Analysis: 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Oct. 6. 360-675-5966

JOB FAIR: The WorkSource Whidbey Job Fair will be held from noon to 4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 7, at the Elks Lodge, 155 N.E. Ernst Ave., Oak Harbor. Participation is free. Employers interested in meeting potential employees should call 360-675-5966 or e-mail ahalam@nwpic.bellingham.wa.us.

Market

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Restaurant & Pub in La Conner and Calico Cupboard Cafe & Bakery.

Johnson said preparing the local produce has lured more people to eat at the hospital restaurant, the Cobo Cafe, this season. Thursday morning, he carted boxes full of produce from the market, including carrots, corn and green beans from Viva Farms that will be worked into this week's meals.

"I'm really excited about the relationships between hospitals and farms," said Sarita Schaffer, who coordinates a farm incubator program at Viva Farms. "Farmers really are the front line of health here, so it's an important relationship."

Buying local 'no-brainer'

Nelida Martinez, who runs her Pura Nelida farm

at Viva Farms, also set aside boxes of produce to be picked up by Peter Roberge, chef at Skagit Valley Hospital.

Roberge, who's been with the hospital seven months, said he'd like to see chefs at more health care facilities participating in programs like this.

"With the hospital's mission, it's kind of a no-brainer. We're funded by the community, so why not keep the tax dollars in our community?" Roberge said.

Lyn Hight, food services manager for Skagit Valley College, brought some culinary students to the market Thursday morning. The students needed only to pick up vegetables for the next week's meals, since they'd already purchased two lambs from Hidden Meadow Ranch that they'll learn to cook and carve.

Laura Faley of Hidden Meadow Ranch in Mount

Vernon said she expects to double the size of her herd for next year after her success at this year's wholesale market.

"In the past, my customer base was individuals who had heard of me or had my meat at a dinner party," Faley said. "This has exposed me to commercial buyers."

Whitney Pipkin can be reached at 360-416-2112 or at wpipkin@skagitpublishing.com. Follow her on Twitter at www.twitter.com/biz_svh.



2010 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



Laurel Browning
Superintendent,
Burlington-Edison
School District



Barb Lowery
Vice President
Business Development Officer,
Peoples Bank



Liz McNett Crowl
Skagit Healthy Communities
Coordinator,
Skagit Valley Hospital



Anita Ordóñez
Director of Multicultural
Student Services,
Skagit Valley College



Carrie Tisinger
Vice President
Private Client Services
Bank of the Pacific

Save the Date!

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2010
5:30PM AT SKAGIT VALLEY CASINO RESORT, BOW, WA
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