



MT. BAKER FOOTHILLS CHAMBER of COMMERCE

FALL/WINTER 2005 ~ VOL. 6
www.mtbakerchamber.org

From the President

Dear Chamber Members,

As I write this, I am grateful for what looks like the very best opening of ski season in over 25 years!!

Our Annual General Meeting will take place Thursday December 1, starting at 7:00 p.m. at The Inn at Mt Baker.

I'm hoping that as many as possible of our 65 members will be in attendance....to hear annual reports... (they will be very brief).... to nominate and vote for Board members... and mostly to celebrate the year and be together to "break bread and share a cuppa" before the busy, busy season is upon us. Dawn Marr is the Chair Person for this event. If you are willing to help her out in any way, please call her at 599-2881.

From talking to businesses, I believe we have all had a good summer season... better than the one before... even though we and our guests had to endure the DOT delays for the paving projects. The businesses in Glacier especially felt the impact.

'Ride 542', which your Chamber co-sponsored, was a huge success. Riders said that because of the ride and the great paving job, this is now the best mountain bike ride course they have done. The number of participants in 2004 was 176. This year there was a 62% increase to 281. If that happens again next year—which everyone who participated expects will happen—we're looking at 450 participants! Thanks to Charlie Heggem the organizer, and to Phil Cloward and Lou Piotrowski, Diane Galbraith, Joanne Cloward, and Carole Sharpe who all were out very early in the morning to direct the parking that day!!!!

To date, our friends and neighbors at the **Kendall Watch** have removed 20,000 pounds—that's **ten tons**—of litter from their residential area.

The Kendall Clean event removed 425 junk cars, 33,700 pounds (17 tons) of garbage, 7 tons of scrap metal, and 1.55 tons of Hazardous waste. Now that is a real neighborhood co-operative accomplishment! And their work is ongoing! Congratulations Kendall Watch! What a great example for working together and restoring your neighborhood!

The County Executive will be appointing a Community Advisory Committee for the updating of the Foothills Sub Area Plan. If you are interested in being on this committee, please see the EDA Web site: www.foothillseda.org for an application you can download.

Our Chamber Web site is now linked to both Foothills EDA and Kendall Watch web sites. There is a lot of resource information available on those three sites.... please look. Speaking of Web sites, *many* thanks to Deborah Taylor Smith of Mt. Baker Web Design for doing a wonderfully professional job on both Chamber and EDA Web sites.

In November we are co-hosting a "walkabout" in the Kendall area, led by Dan Burden of the County Transportation Advisory Group. He will give us his suggestions. Please see his Web site at www.walkable.org to learn what he is about.

Norma Otto of the Foothills Community is attending the **Leadership Whatcom Program**. Co-sponsors for Norma are our Chamber, Norma herself, and the Leadership Whatcom Program Tuition Foundation. We will be excited to hear a report from Norma at the end of the session in May.



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MAIN ~ STREET

News & Notes

Welcome to the 6th edition of 'Main Street News & Notes' ... news of what is going on with the businesses and Chamber members up and down our main street ... Mt. Baker Highway ... from Nugent's Corner to the Mt. Baker ski area.

You are cordially invited to attend (the brief) Annual General Meeting and Holiday Social of the Mt. Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce! Thursday, December 1, 2005 7:00 p.m. at The Inn at Mt. Baker

Get an update on your Chamber's accomplishments and works in progress. Express your own thoughts, desires and hopes for this wonderful community's future. Participate in elections for the board.

New to the area? Whether you've retired to the foothills or are beginning a new venture in the area, come and raise a cup 'o cheer with your friendly neighborhood business owners. You'll be amazed by all the interesting, skilled, knowledgeable, and incredibly eclectic people we have living in these here hills!

Directions: Take SR 542 (Mt. Baker Highway) east. The Inn is located on the north side of the highway at milepost 28.



Wanted! Your Information!

We would like to encourage any of you who are currently Mt. Baker/Foothills Chamber of Commerce members to submit any business related information regarding your business, and we'll include it in our Chamber Newsletter!

**Send your information with a photo to:
Chamber Office c/o Crystal Plesha
P. O. Box 866
Maple Falls, WA 98266
E-mail: info@mtbakerchamber.org**

Lost River Alpacas Open House Saturday, Dec. 3

Lost River Alpacas, 601 W. Third Street, Nooksack, hosts its annual Holiday Open House Saturday, December 3, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The store offers warm and unique gift items. There will be refreshments and door prizes. *For information, call Linda Bylsma at 966-5763.*

Everybody's Store Annual Cheese Fest Saturday Dec. 3

Everybody's Store on Hwy 9 in Van Zandt is celebrating its 35th Christmas season with its annual Cheese Fest Saturday, December 3, from 10 a.m.– 4 p.m.

Everybody's has long been known for its year-round cutting-edge presentation of food and gifts. There will be special artisan cheeses for tasting from North American and European centers. Unusual wines and specialty breads, cured meats and sauces will be highlighted.

All Santa's helpers will find a respectable selection of jewelry, scarves, far-out ski hats, purses and kitchenware, as well as local music CDs and musical instruments. It is one of the few stores that still offer

complementary gift wrapping.

For more information and photo opportunities, contact: Jeff Margolis, 592-2297.

Rome Grange Monthly Pancake Breakfast Dec. 4

The Rome Grange offers monthly pancake breakfasts the first Sunday of each month October thru June. The next one is Sunday, Dec. 4, from 8 a.m.–1 p.m.; no waiting from 11–noon! It features made-from-scratch pancakes, French toast, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice and coffee. Servers and cooks include many of Whatcom County's elected officials, including County Executive Pete Kremen, County Auditor Shirley Forslof, Judge Chuck Snyder, Judge Dave Grant, Council members Ward Nelson and Barbara Brenner, and State Representative Kelli Linville.

Adults \$5; Kids 6-10 \$2; Kids 5 & under FREE. The Rome Grange is located at 2821 Mt. Baker Hwy, about 1/2 mile east of the "Y" Road.



Meet Crystal Plesha New Visitor Center Coordinator!

Let's all welcome Crystal Plesha, our new Visitor Center Coordinator!

Crystal has been working hard to make the Visitor Center a great asset for our community. She brings great experience and enthusiasm to the Chamber, and we're thrilled to have her with us. If you haven't had a chance to meet Crystal at the Visitor Center, here's a little introduction.

Originally from Seattle, Crystal is the great-great granddaughter of Seattle pioneers. She's spent the last fourteen years living in Kittitas County. While studying Tourism Management and Environmental Studies at Central Washington University, she worked extensively with nonprofits. Her work included founding the local chapter of Toys for Tots and managing several community events and fundraising projects for the Northern Kittitas County (NKC) Chamber of Commerce in Roslyn. (Roslyn is located just off I-90 on the Eastern side of Snoqualmie Pass and was a small logging and mining town that became famous when the hit TV series *Northern Exposure* was filmed there. It is now a popular travel destination and hosts the adjacent Suncadia resort.)

Crystal recently moved to Whatcom County and lives in a small home she purchased in Kendall with her ten-year old son Jacob, their four dogs (Melody, Harmony, Sophie and Leo), and a couple of goldfish (no names). She attends Western Washington University where she plans to complete her degree.

"I loved living the small town life in the mountains near Roslyn, but I really missed the climate here on the west side and was impressed by the campus at Western. Also, I love the fact that we're close to two large cosmopolitan coastal cities, yet can enjoy the quiet of the area amidst so much great recreation, and the state's best skiing. (Jacob likes to snowboard.) We're really looking forward to exploring the region further and have met a lot of great people so far."

Crystal enjoys working in community tourism development and brings many ideas and much enthusiasm to the Mount Baker Foothills Chamber. "I'd like to see if there are new events that we can develop, as they bring economic benefits and are so important to community spirit and cohesiveness. Of course there's a lot of background work that has to come first, but I'm impressed at how much the

Chamber has accomplished, how dedicated they are, all the hard work that's taken place, and the clarity of vision exhibited by its members. I think the area has great potential for enhanced recreation, cultural events and providing ecology education opportunities to people countywide, while my background inspires me to look at sustainability issues and beneficial impacts locally. I try to take a holistic approach to development and want to contribute to the community in a meaningful manner. I'm most grateful for the opportunity to work where I live, and to have been so graciously welcomed by the people here. I hope I can live up to people's expectations of me. I understand that the fundamental part of this job is serving the Chamber's members' needs and will work with that in mind."

Crystal invites everyone to come in and say hello. Discuss your needs and ideas with her at the visitor center on the weekends or call her at home with any questions or concerns at (360) 599-1191.

Summer 2005 Farmer's & Crafts Market A Great Season!

What a terrific summer we had Sundays hosting the 2005 Summer Farmers & Crafts Market! Thanks to the efforts of Greg De Mond, former Director of the Chamber's Public Relations and Marketing, 15 different vendors participated in the market at various times. This gave the public a good variety of natural and handmade products. Some vendors had very colorful displays, and all displayed a very upbeat and friendly attitude.

Sale items included locally grown nursery items for the garden, served with a host of free gardening advice from expert and owner of **Pond's Edge Nursery, Sandra Madison Gates**. Sandra, by the way, joined the Chamber this year! Welcome Sandra! Also in the line-up were delicious produce selections from **Cuthbertlee Roots, Holistic Homestead, Red Tail Farm, SM Apples Inc. Stony Creek Farm** and one favorite, **Turtle Island Farm**. They weathered nearly every weekend, keeping the locals and visitors supplied with delicious fresh greens.

We had several crafters as well as a photographer and a guest painter. Visitors enjoyed all the free body care samples from **Genuine Goods** and **Dragon Eye Arts**. We also enjoyed **Beaded Babes'** fun jewelry fashions and ever-popular local artist **Kristen Fisher of Glacier Glass Works**. Samples

Continued on next page



MAIN STREET

Farmers Market continued from page 3

of her work are in the display case at the Visitor Center. **Diane Frumerie of Oladiluna**, who makes and sells natural health and personal items, also joined the Chamber this summer. Welcome Diane! Although she had prior commitments for most of the summer, we hope she is looking forward to spending more time with us here next summer in Maple Falls.

Having the market at **Crossroads Grocery** made for a very busy community focal point. **Fools Onion Catering** hosted a BBQ stand offering hot dogs, polish sausages, BBQ ribs, and other grilled delights. We had a special treat as **Juan Ferrer**, a local chess aficionado, hosted an all ages, free chess clinic throughout the summer. Delighted chess fans found tables ready and set up for competition in front of the Visitor Center... what a better way to spend a lazy summer afternoon. To complete the relaxed ambiance of the market, **Christopher Fahad** and his band **Orpheus** entertained shoppers with some exciting rhythms and song. **Kristen O'Brien of Raven's Light Massage** offered chair massages for the weary traveler, a welcome respite.

Overall, the energy was terrific as locals and visitors gathered at the busy corner mall. Each week a different Board member came to oversee the market, and by all accounts it was a great second year success. Several inquiries were made about plans for next year by new local farmers and a professional clown who would like to offer face paintings and other children's games and delights.

Although sales were a little slow the first few cooler weeks of spring, vendors reported being very satisfied with their brisk sales during the busy high summer. The **Mount Baker Experience** published a great article on the market, which drew the attention of guests from around the County. We certainly can look forward to another bustling season next year!

Be Bear Smart!

There have been several reports of bear activity recently, and you can understand how to prevent bear nuisance behavior with the help of Understand Bear Smart and the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Outreach Project (GBOP).

Visit <http://www.bearinfo.org/bearsmart.htm>, call (+1) 360.734.6060 or email: chrismorgan@insightwildlife.com.

Applause, applause...

Several member businesses of the Mt. Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce have been recognized as outstanding: Sasquatch Books, publishers of *Best Places™ Northwest*, the uncontested authority on the best of our region, selected The Inn at Mt. Baker as not only a 'Best Place' but one of the 'Most Romantic' places, too! The Northfork Brewery received the coveted "Editors Choice" award!

The Bellingham Chamber recently gave awards to two of our mutual members: The Mt. Baker Ski Area was voted "Best Large Business" in Whatcom County, and The Print and Copy Factory won "Best Small Business of the Year." Take your bows, folks!



MT. BAKER

Mt. Baker Ski Area now has the deepest snowbase of any ski area in the world!

At last report, Mt. Baker had 60 inches at the base and over 75 inches up on top. According to socountry.com's data base, we now have the **HIGHEST SNOWBASE OF ANY SKI AREA IN THE WORLD!** The Ski Area began operation on November 8. It was the deepest powder day opening in more than 25 years. They are warning visitors to please stay out of the backcountry. It is extremely unstable and extremely dangerous. **New Community Newspaper Comes to the Foothills!**

Foothills Gazette Newspaper

Rebecca Schwarz, former editor of the *Mount Baker Experience*, the *Whatcom Independent* and other publications, is now publisher/editor of the new **Foothills Gazette**, a local community newspaper for eastern Whatcom County. Contact: foothillsgazette.com or editor@foothillsgazette.com



VISITOR CENTER UPDATE

Visitations Increase at Foothills Visitor Center

October, 2005
by Crystal Plesha

What a terrific summer season we've had here at the Foothills Visitor Center! Over 700 guests have come through the door this summer, bringing the total for the year to date to over 1000. That's about a 13% increase over last summer's totals. The following chart shows summer visitor increases.

This year, in addition to maintaining visitor counts, we've been collecting data on where our guests are coming from. As one might guess, we've really had a broad distribution of people visiting from Canada, the

U.S. and even Europe and Australia. About 50% of all guests are coming from within Washington State. Of those, 42% are from Whatcom County, and most others are from around the Puget Sound region, including 25% from King county. We've had guests originating from all four corners of the country and the Midwest, totaling at least 26 states in all, including Alaska. That's an amazing one half of the Union, and a certain boon to our local economy!

Our guests from Canada make up about 32% of total visitations. More than a few have reported that they are frequent visitors, and many are bringing international guests with them. Many guests, wishing they had allocated more time to spend here, are planning to return. They are inquiring about amenities in preparation of future vacations. Some have come from great distances, including Belgium, England, Germany, Holland, Spain, and Australia.

People are coming into the visitor center with a wide variety of needs: maps, directions, lodging,

dining, events, and activities in the area. Quite a few are interested in real estate and vacation properties, but most are here for the day or are staying locally and looking for recreation tips. We've already starting to see people come in and ask about skiing opportunities.

Nearly every one visiting the Center has reported that they are very happy with their accommodations, dining experiences, recreational activities, and your friendly hospitality and service... keep up the good work!

Trends in Tourism

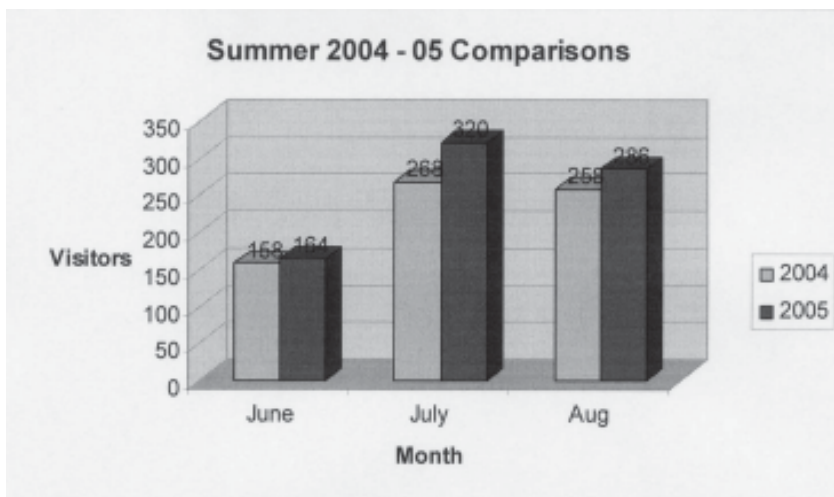
It is important to note that the current trend in tourism is for people to rely on the Internet and media when making their travel decisions. With the

advent of widespread Internet use, many travel agencies have closed their doors, leaving a need for personalized services and information. Increasingly these people use visitor centers such as ours for detailed information when planning their trips, and continue to use the center upon arrival at their destination. What is apparent

is that most guests staying at our local Inns and B&B's are making reservations through the Web site links, and then they come into the office for directions and ideas on things to do. They certainly enjoy browsing our resources, including the beautiful new publications from the Bellingham/Whatcom County CVB, the USDA Forest Service, and the *Mount Baker Experience*, which featured the Foothills Farmer's and Crafts Market in their summer edition.

Nearly every visitor to the Center reported that they are very happy with their accommodations, dining experiences, recreational opportunities, local events, and your friendly hospitality and service... so keep up the good work!

Continued on next page



Chamber Member Business Profile: Sumas Medical Clinic

After nearly two years of having no doctor in the community, Sumas is now home to the practice of **Dr. David Claypool and Dr. Rodney Thompson**. The Clinic has been back in operation since February.

Dr. Claypool, who originally hails from Durant, OK, previously practiced in Birch Bay, WA. He is a General Practitioner and also specializes in outpatient gynecology. Dr. Thompson specializes in Family Practice, including pediatrics, geriatrics, and travel medicine consults.

The clinic offers a wide range of services, including EKG, x-rays, and casting. The doctors care for the whole range of primary care medical needs. These include but are not limited to: hypertension, lacerations, diabetes, pediatrics, geriatrics, high cholesterol, dermatology, drug screens, depression, women's health needs including PMS, menopause, PAP smears and coloscopy, osteoporosis screening, sports physicals, and well child/adult visits. The clinic can care for many types of trauma, including L&I claims. The doctors care for all ages, from newborns to the elderly, and usually can see patients the same day they call in for urgent appointments.

Sumas Medical Clinic provides an invaluable service to the county in seeing many Medicare and DSHS patients. There is a shortage of doctors in this area who will see new Medicare/Medicaid patients. In addition, they accept almost all the private insurance companies, such as Regence Blue Shield, Premera Blue Cross, United, Great West, Aetna, First Choice, and so forth. They are not providers for Group Health and the Community Health Plan of Washington (a Medicaid program).

Be sure to stop by and see all the changes, if you haven't already done so. The building has been completely renovated. In addition, Mrs. Claypool, an interior designer, has done a lovely job of redecorating the clinic building.

Contact:

Sumas Medical Clinic
112 Columbia Street
Sumas, WA 98295
360.988-9404
David Claypool, M.D.
Rodney Thompson, M.D.
Hours: Monday to Friday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed: 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Visitor Center Update *continued from p. 5*

Our Precious Environment

This year we began collecting random surveys from our guests. While summer statistics have not been fully evaluated from these samples, some striking trends are noteworthy.

People come here for the environment. The most frequent comments made are that this region holds immense importance for its natural beauty and wide-open spaces. When speaking to these guests, one gets a sense of how truly special this region is for its wild spaces, national forests, and parks. For many people it is a real treat to come to our magnificent green state, and it makes me appreciate how truly blessed we are to live here... and how fortunate to be able to share this with others. It deepens my commitment to work to support tourism products that not only are fun and educational but that are sustainable and friendly to our cherished ecosystem here. When others around the world recognize this area as one of the exceptional places worldwide, we learn that beyond a doubt, it is worth taking care of.

Marketing Your Business

With so many more people coming to the area and planning return trips, please let's keep those brochures updated and stocked! Remember, we have some very talented Chamber members who can assist with Web design, media, printing and consulting services. Give them a call or come into the visitor center if you need help improving your marketing strategies. There are a lot of available resources, so come in and we'll get you started.

New Volunteer Joins Foothills Team

In other news, our volunteer staff continues to be committed to keeping the center open and have been diligently offering friendly service to our guests. We have a new volunteer; **Mathew Schinker**, who is living in Kendall and has extended our hours by opening the Center on Wednesdays and Thursdays, when he is available. Mathew brings a bounty of local knowledge to the center as he has lived in Whatcom County some 14 years. Mathew is a retired truck driver and explorer, originally from Montana, and has two children. He believes there "is no such thing as a dead end, only the end of the roadway." Thank you Mathew for joining our team!

Continued on next page

Want to see your business featured?

Send your well-written article about your business, along with a clear, high resolution photo, to Crystal Plesha at info@mtbakerchamber.org. *Please keep your article to 600 words or less.*

Membership Update

We have several new members that have joined our ranks this summer, and we would like to give them a hearty welcome! Among these members are:

- **Ryan and Tera Lorimer of Kestrel Homes Inc.,**
- **Rob Staveland and Lance Illman of Aiki Homes Inc.**
- **Tavi Arlev of Stoneleaf Landscape and Design**
- **Diane Frumerie of Oladiluna, producing natural bath and body gifts**
- **Sandi Madison of Pond's Edge Nursery**
- **Lynne Hotchkiss of Mountain Man Espresso**
- **Kai and Catherine Janson, who have two businesses—Mt. Baker Coffee Roasters LLC and Baker Accommodations**
- **Dave Halliday, of Maple Falls Computers**

We look forward to meeting with them all at future events. If you have a chance, please visit their Web sites, which are listed on the Chamber's site.

At the Foothills Visitor Center we have certainly had a lot of interest in real estate. Many visitors come in to inquire about properties in the area, most for second or vacation residences. This is certainly good news to the existing businesses here that will be providing services to our new neighbors. There are likely many service, construction, landscape and design businesses that could benefit from Chamber memberships, as the Visitor Center is often the first place these people come for information. If you know of people in the services sector, please invite them to join the Chamber.



A Successful Ride 542

The Annual Ride 542 was held Sunday, September 18, 2005. Ride 542 is a 24.5-mile cycling challenge for competitive and recreational riders from the town of Glacier to Artist's Point, or to the end of the road. Every year, a portion of the proceeds goes to the Ken Meyer Memorial Foundation (<http://meyermemorial.org/>) to help local cancer care and research. This year there were 108 Competitive Riders and 163 Recreational Riders and new race records, too! Nick Clayville's time was 1:23:58, and Lise Grace clocked in at 1:34:15! Congratulations to all the participants in this fabulous event!

KendallWatch Web Site Resources & Speakers

Please take a moment to visit the Kendall Community Action Group (KendallWatch) Web site at www.kendallwatch.us/. The site offers many useful links to important local resources to improve our neighborhoods. The Mount Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Association are working to strengthen ties with, and support, this vital group. The Kendall Community Action Group regularly hosts a variety of guest speakers who share strategies for community development.

Kendall PTA Seeks Business Support

The Kendall PTA is looking for businesses willing to contribute the state-required membership dues for people who are unable to afford these dues and would like to become members of the PTA. This year the dues are \$7 per member.

If you would like to assist, please contact Rebecca Boonstra, President, Kendall PTA, at 599-9451 (email: thalimakalilitu@aol.com) or call Crystal Plesha at 599-1518.



Whatcom Community Connections

Whatcom Community Connections is a county wide business-education partnership program for Community Based Learning. Your business or organization can offer such learning opportunities to students as job shadowing, internships, community service, or mentoring for projects. Visit their Web site to register: www.whatcomconnections.org.

Contact Holly Hinman, Program Coordinator at (360) 676-3252 with questions.

Friends of the Maple Falls Public Library

The Friends of Maple Falls Public Library's annual book sale was a great success over Labor Day weekend.

To become a member, contact: Friends of the Maple Falls Public Library, 7509 Mt. Baker Highway, P.O. Box 310, Maple Falls, WA 98266. Or contact Cindy Jeffer-Hoyt at (360) 599-2020.



MT. BAKER FOOTHILLS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



P. O. Box 866
Maple Falls, WA 98266

Carole MacDonald - President
Dan Graham - Vice-President;
& Director, Marketing & Communications
Phil Cloward - Treasurer
Lou Piotrowski - Secretary
Sue Croft - Director, Membership
Linda Dorsett - Director, Visitor Center

From the President, continued from page 1

Your Board has been updating and continuously working on our **Strategic Plan**, which we started two years ago. If you are interested in knowing more about this, please contact our Professional Facilitator Linda Dorsett at 599-2900.

We are so happy to have Crystal Plesha onboard every weekend in our Visitor Center. She has been with us now for six months and is doing many creative things in that office, including a huge amount of community networking and updating our membership list so that it is available on line.

If you haven't already done so, please stop in on the weekends and visit with Crystal. Bring in your brochures and tell her more about your business so she can tell others.

One of our members, Mt Baker Ski Area, won the Whatcom County 2004 Best Large Business award presented by the Bellingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry at its annual awards luncheon on September 29. Another one of our members, Print and Copy Factory, won the award for Best Small Business of the year. Hearty congratulations to both businesses!

So that's it for now.....but there's lots more, so please come to the AGM/Christmas Social!!!! Share some warm time with friends, neighbors, and fellow business owners and operators.

I wish us all a very busy and successful winter season!

—Carole MacDonald



Warm thanks to the following for making this newsletter possible:

Carole MacDonald, The Inn at Mt. Baker ~ www.theinnatmtbaker.com
Deborah Smith, Mt. Baker Web Design ~ www.mtbakerweb.com
Linda Nathan, Logos Word Designs, Inc. ~ www.logosword.com
Becky Raney, Print & Copy Factory ~ www.printcopyfactory.com

Your ad can be on this page! ~ Call Crystal Plesha at 599-1518 or email: info@mtbakerchamber.org