

BUSINESS

In Brief

Darien Sports Shop to hold benefit

DARIEN

The Darien Sport Shop at 1127 Post Road will hold an event to mark 10 years of carrying Vineyard Vines products from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 7. The event will include a family day of games, cotton candy, hot dogs, live music, whale hats for the children and other gifts.

Ten percent of the day's Vineyard Vines proceeds will be donated to benefit SoundWaters and Playground by the Sound at Weed Beach in Darien.

PR association to honor Ian Kerr

NORWALK

The Fairfield County Public Relations Association will present Ian Kerr of Greenwich with the 2008 Charter Oak Award for "integrity, fortitude and perseverance in communications," at its annual meeting at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 18, at Shore and Country Club in East Norwalk.

Kerr has been involved with public relations for six decades. His career extends back to his native England, where he worked for Save the Children and starting in the 1950s in the U.S. for British Airways, Renault and Parker Pen. He later operated his own public relations agency for many years.

Cost of the event is \$40 for members with reservations, \$50 for nonmembers and walk-ins.

To make your advance reservation, visit www.fcpra.org.

Mitchell to speak at business event

DARIEN

Jack Mitchell will discuss his new book, "Hug Your People," as the featured speaker at the Fairchester Business Resource's June meeting from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 19, at the Darien Community Association, 274 Middlesex Road. Continental breakfast will be provided by Fairchester Business Resource.

Mitchell is chairman and CEO of Mitchells/Richards/Marshs, a three-generation family business that operates men's and women's specialty stores in Connecticut and New York. The author of "Hug Your Customers," Mitchell has just completed his second book, "Hug Your People: The Proven Way to Hire, Inspire, and Recognize Your Employees and Achieve Remarkable Results."

Cost of the event is \$20 for nonmembers. Annual membership in the Fairchester Business Resource is \$175 per year. Register at www.fairchesterbusinessresource.org.

For more information, contact Peter Helmer at (203) 661-5356 or Isaiah Cooper at (203) 497-9969.

Westport Chamber to hold wine tasting

WESTPORT

The Westport/Weston Chamber of Commerce will hold its third annual Wine Tasting Event at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, at the National Hall Plaza. This year's event will raise money for Westport's Green Energy Task Force.

Tickets are \$50 per person and may be purchased from the Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call (203) 227-9234, or e-mail info@westportchamber.com.

Norwalk Chamber sets upcoming events

NORWALK

The Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce will hold its New Member Reception/Business After Hours/Expo on Thursday, June 19, at the Norwalk Inn & Conference Center. Cost is \$25 for members and \$40 for nonmembers. Exhibit table is \$200, which includes admission for two.

The Chamber's Golf Classic is set for 11 a.m. on Monday, June 23, at Shorehaven Country Club.

To reserve a spot or for more information, call (203) 866-2521 or email info@norwalkchamberofcommerce.com.



Tony Ancona, owner of Fat Cat Pie Co., accepts congratulations from Mayor Richard A. Moccia, Chamber Chairman Charlie Howell and Chamber President Edward Musante Jr. after receiving an award at the 2008 Small Business Awards event held Wednesday at the Norwalk Inn & Conference Center.

Small businesses grab spotlight

NORWALK

BY CHRIS BOSAK
Hour Staff Writer

With small business ownership comes many tribulations and many rewards.

"There's no day off," said Tony Ancona, owner of Fat Cat Pie Co., Fat Cat Joe and Fountainhead Wines in Norwalk. "Every day you wake up and think of what's going to happen today: either putting out fires or enjoying the day. But there's nothing better."

Small businesses were in the spotlight on Wednesday afternoon as the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce played host to the 2008 Small Business Awards at Norwalk Inn & Conference Center. Stew Leonard Jr., president and CEO of Stew Leonard's, was the featured speaker and delivered a humorous, uplifting address.

"As we celebrate you, we are really celebrating all small business in the community," Edward Musante Jr., president of the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, said. "It's hard work. Folks in small business have what it takes, but there are rewards."

Fat Cat Pie Co. was one of nine Norwalk businesses honored with Small Business Awards. Benefit Planning Services, Genuario's Floor Covering Center, O'Neill's Pub & Restaurant, Palace Production Center, Rex Marine Center, Shakespeare on the Sound, Soundview Medical Associates and Two Men & A Truck were also honored.

"You represent a cross-section of the city," Norwalk Mayor Richard Moccia told the award winners. "You all merge to make Norwalk a better place."

The honored businesses represent several industries, sizes and lengths of time in business. Genuario's and Rex Marine Center have each been in business in Norwalk for more than 60 years.

"Each year our customers get more fussy and demanding, but we don't mind," Bill Gardella of Rex Marine Center said. "We don't like to say 'no' to our customers, we always want to say 'yes.' That's what we're here for. We've succeeded because of the people who work with us and our customers' support."

Jim Tomaselli, president of Genuario's, reaffirmed that it



Eileen Smith, executive director of Soundview Medical Associates, accepts her award as Mayor Richard A. Moccia and Kevin McMahon of the Chamber's small business council, look on.

takes hard work and long hours to run a successful small business.

"Whoever told me, 'Go work for yourself. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want.' I'd like to find that person," he said, although he later acknowledged a 2:45 p.m. tee time for a round of golf.

Shakespeare on the Sound, now in its 13th year, was recognized as a nonprofit business. Its produc-

tion of "Julius Caesar" will run from June 12 to 28 at Rowayton's Pinkney Park, and again from July 4 to 13 at Greenwich's Baldwin Park.

Mary Osborne, director of Shakespeare on the Sound, suggested a performance as a business outing during her acceptance speech.

Soundview Medical Associates started as a small medical practice with seven physicians on West Avenue and is now a 17-physician outfit located in iPark that sees more than 300 patients each day. Executive Director Eileen F. Smith said the move to iPark — the former Perkin-Elmer site on the Norwalk/Wilton border — was a "tremendous change for us" and thanked Norwalk Hospital for its "vision and support."

Chris Campbell of Palace Production Center, a film production company located at the historic Palace Theater in South Norwalk, reminded business owners of their "obligation to society" and, citing the Bible added, "For those to whom much has been given, much is required."

Campbell also expressed pride in helping to turn around South Norwalk with the renovation of the Palace Theater.

"Look at South Norwalk now," he said. "We didn't set out to

see CHAMBER, D2

Bentley honored by Chamber

Larry Bentley, a longtime member of the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce and tireless community volunteer, was honored by the Chamber and given a key to the city during the 2008 Small Business Awards event held Wednesday at Norwalk Inn & Conference Center.

"When you hear the body of work of volunteerism he has, it's really amazing," said Charlie Howell, chairman of the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce.

Norwalk Mayor Richard A. Moccia said he turned to Bentley when he needed someone for the city's zoning board.

"He said, 'If you need me, I'm willing to serve,'" Moccia said.

Bentley, in his quiet, unassuming manner, gave a short speech of acceptance.

"Thanks to the members of the small business council and the Chamber," he said. "It's been a real pleasure to work with you."

— Chris Bosak



LARRY BENTLEY

Giving the gift of life insurance to a charity

Charitable organizations, and those who support them, are feeling the financial squeeze resulting from shrinking levels of government funding. By default, the financial burden to support these organizations is being shifted even more to the private sector.

The contributions of individual donors plays a key role in allowing non-profit organizations to maintain a consistent cash flow and carry out both day-to-day commitments and work toward longer-term goals.

The reasons for people's dedication to any given charity are highly personal, often stemming from a heartfelt concern for an organization's financial well-being and a belief that supporting a charity can make a difference. And, while

the extent of financial support varies greatly, some people hesitate to contribute because they assume the amount they can afford to give might not make much of a difference. Most representatives of charitable organizations would agree that this concern is unfounded as even the most humble gift is appreciated and provides help. Expecting a modest gift to make less than a dramatic impact, however, may have some merit. This is why the gift of life insurance can be so effective.

The gift of life insurance is a practical and affordable way to



WARREN PENA

achieve your philanthropic goals through charitable contributions. Donors need not be wealthy to make a significant and meaningful gift. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to accomplish this with life insurance.

Typically, a donor applies for a permanent life insurance policy on his or her own life and names the charity as both the owner and beneficiary of the policy. Since the charity is the owner, the donor's annual premium qualifies as a charitable gift and may be tax-deductible. Furthermore, no complex probate procedures

The Hour

GE, hospital establish new business

Associated Press

FAIRFIELD — General Electric Co., the international conglomerate with a stake in everything from jet engines to network television, is investing \$20 million in technology that will allow doctors to share and transmit images of microscopic human tissue.

The partnership with a Pittsburgh hospital marks GE's entrance into a \$2 billion market and could help expand its GE Healthcare division.

GE Healthcare and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center are each putting up \$20 million to establish Omnyx LLC, a business to develop and commercialize technology allowing doctors to store and display on computers, digital images of human tissue from microscope slides, allowing colleagues anywhere to participate in consultations.

Jeffrey Romoff, president and chief executive of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center said the deal "puts together the people — GE — that know the technology and the market with us, who know the science and the patient care."

GE Healthcare, a division of Fairfield-based GE, already manufactures imaging for radiology and cardiology.

"Pathology imaging is a natural extension that GE would likely want to get into," said Gene Cartwright, chief executive of Omnyx. "I think the intent is to provide freedom and generate more of an entrepreneurial environment outside GE or any other big company so we can move more quickly," Cartwright said.

Other companies, such as Aperio Technologies Inc. in Vista, Calif., already are in the business of scanning biopsies and transforming computers into virtual microscopes. Aperio CEO Dirk G. Soenksen welcomed GE's new venture.

"It will do tremendous things to accelerate the market. It's a major move on the chess board," he said. "There's certainly enough business for everybody. It won't take business away from others, it will make the market bigger."

The advantage for doctors, researchers and medical teachers is that biopsy images can be shared electronically and vast amounts of information can be stored in databases.

Transforming biopsies and human tissues into digital images also helps improve the study and diagnosis of diseases such as cancer and micro-organisms that can lead to lung ailments such as tuberculosis, said George Michalopoulos, chairman of the Department of Pathology at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Omnyx promises to come up with a product in about two years that will speed up scanning materials from a slide into a digital file from between two and five minutes now to about half a minute, he said.

GE and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center believe Omnyx could reap revenue of \$500 million — 25 percent of the worldwide market — in about seven years, said Wendy Zellner, spokeswoman for the medical center.

GE's \$20 million investment is a virtual drop in the bucket. The company's first-quarter profits fell 6 percent this spring but still registered at \$4.3 billion.

Chamber honors members of small business community

From D1

change South Norwalk, but we did, along with the city and other businesses.”

Benefit Planning Services was an appropriate business to be honored as it works with small and mid-sized businesses to meet their benefit planning and insurance needs. “I’m proud to have them (clients),” said Jim Murphy, CEO of Benefit Planning Services. “They are the backbone of the economy.”

Murphy also praised the Chamber, calling it a “pillar of support.”

O’Neill’s has been in South Norwalk since 1999 and will soon move into a new location about 100 yards away. Oliver O’Neill cited “Irish hospitality” as a key to the restaurant’s success, along with “doing right by your staff, customers and community.”

Fred Shaw of the moving company Two Men and A Truck, said the company employees, “all work hard to provide great service. It’s like a family here, that’s what keeps us going.”

Ancona offered more advice for small business owners, especially in these

uncertain economic times.

“Be aggressive and dynamic,” Ancona said. “Deal with issues and not problems. If you can do that, you’ll have a successful business.”

Prior to the awards ceremony, all of the business owners received tips on running a business from Stew Leonard Jr.

Stew Leonard’s, a Norwalk-based dairy and grocery store, has grown from a small family business to a regional powerhouse with four locations and more than 2,000 employees.

In a talk filled with

humorous and inspiring stories, Leonard said the following values were instilled into him by his father: people (staff) are important, make people shopping with us feel right, always look for new ideas, stay positive, and don’t give up.

“Lean into the sharp edges of life,” he said, remembering advice he once gave to his own daughter. “If you’re comfortable and you’re palms aren’t sweating, chances are you’re not changing.”

Connecticut Light & Power and First County Bank sponsored the event.