

February 2012

# Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

Newsletter

Growing



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## The Other Side of the Story

You may have noticed the recent dust up about the adoption of our new name. There has been a lot of disparaging information from our sister chambers. With the temporary injunction hearing behind us, I wanted to take an opportunity to speak directly to you, the members that make up our chamber.

First, the name change was not an impulsive decision. This change is a natural outgrowth of the 2005 strategic plan that modified our mission statement to “support and enhance the business community of Southern Rhode Island”. The board was working on regional activities before I joined the board, and the lead up to the official vote took place over more than 18 months. Over 36% of our membership is from outside South Kingstown, and almost all of our members transact business across town lines. As the judge recognized, Rhode Island chambers of commerce have traditionally have operated as “fiefdoms.” This was one of the major drivers for this chamber to identify itself with a name that does not have a specific geographic boundary.

Second, the dispute with our sister chambers was not a fight that we wanted. We have taken every opportunity to try to meet with them and understand their concerns. We responded to their joint statement with a letter to their executive boards. It went unanswered. We responded to their legal action by instructing our counsel to open a dialogue with their attorney. We established a negotiating team of three board members willing to meet anytime, anywhere. They did not take us up on this. We have continued to include our sister chambers on emails regarding potential joint events. They have asked to be taken off of the invite list. We will continue to look for opportunities to partner with all chambers in Rhode Island. Whether our sister chambers treat us a partners or competitors, we will remain focused on delivering value to you.

Third, as the judge mentioned in his legal decision, the chambers job is to focus on the prosperity of our members. Our response to the legal action was to assemble various teams, from our volunteer board, to resource the legal response. This enabled our paid staff to remain focused on you. Given the state of the Rhode Island economy, it is unacceptable for anything less than a full focus on fixing the underlying drivers of Rhode Island’s economic weakness. We held our annual board retreat on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Very soon, you will start to hear about our action plan going forward. We have a dynamic board, made up of local business owners and business leaders, that are very committed to making it easier (and fun) to do business in Southern Rhode Island.

In closing, I would like to mention that I understand the deep resistance to any kind of change. I grew up in South Kingstown. More than half of my life has been spent within 1.5 miles of the chamber offices. This resistance is present in my DNA. And while there are many aspects of South Kingstown that are essential to preserve, like the natural beauty, it is also important for us to embrace the ideas that will make this area more prosperous. We must avoid any reflexive response against change. Instead, we must look in the mirror, examine our challenges, and focus our limited resources on solutions. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can help you. Call, write, or stop-by. We are YOUR chamber.

With Rhode Island’s success in mind,



Clay Johnson, Chair of the Board

# Calendar Of Events

## February

3rd

### First Friday Coffee

Hosted By Buckley Heating & Cooling

1632 Kingstown Road, Peace Dale

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

\$5 per person

7th

### Making The Media Connection Lunch 'N' Learn

230 Old Tower Hill Road, Wakefield

12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

\$10 per person/ \$15 at the door  
(includes lunch)

Presented & Sponsored by  
Independent Newspapers

15th

### RI Chamber Hoops Night The Ryan Center

1 Lincoln Almond Plaza, Kingston

5:00 p.m. - State-wide Networking

7:00 p.m. URI Men's Basketball vs.

St. Joseph's University

Early Bird Special \$30

Call 401-783-2801 to register

18th

### 2nd Annual Project Sweet Peas, Plunge for Preemies

George's of Galilee Beach

250 Sand Hill Cove, Narragansett

For more information visit

[psplunge.com](http://psplunge.com)

24th - 26th

### Paradise Park Performed By The Contemporary Theater Company The Towers

35 Ocean Road, Narragansett

visit [www.thecontemporarytheater.com](http://www.thecontemporarytheater.com)  
for more information

For a complete list of events visit our  
website at [www.srichamber.com](http://www.srichamber.com)

## Can't make it to the Networking Events?

Donate a raffle prize and  
you can still have a  
presence at the events you  
can't attend!

Call Elizabeth Berman  
783-2801 for details

## Scan Your Way to Higher Sales

There's a new trend in marketing erupting in the US and if you're not familiar with it now, keep an eye on your competitors. They'll be adopting it any day. Travel to any major city in the US and you'll see them on storefronts, t-shirts, commercial vehicles, even in calamari ink adorning your dinner plate.

Though you may not know them by name, if you've read any magazines recently, you've no doubt seen these curious square symbols whose patchwork of black and white pixels vaguely resembles a crossword puzzle. QR (Quick Response) Codes®, as they are known, are everywhere in print advertising, and if you own a smartphone there's a good chance you've scanned one of them with a QR Code reader app.

The way they work is simple: When a QR Code is scanned with a mobile device, a reader app renders the information represented by the code on the device. That information might be your business's website, a special coupon offer, a restaurant menu or just about anything you can conceive.

The simplest way your business can benefit from QR Codes is in print advertising. A normal print ad conveys a finite amount of information. If you couple that ad with a QR Code you can drive your customers to a smartphone-friendly version of your website or a video about your company.

But there's so much more you can do with QR Codes. If you own a retail business, you likely have hundreds of potential customers walking by your storefront on any given day. In order to learn about your product selection or what's on sale today, they have to physically step inside your store. Many of them won't ever do that.

Now imagine that you have QR Code displayed in your store window, perhaps large enough that it can even be scanned from across the street.

Now passersby with smartphones (currently almost 50% of cell phone users) simply scan your code with their reader app and they instantly know what products you offer and what is on sale today. You've just increased the probability of customers actually entering your store and therefore increased your chances of making a sale.

QR Codes don't just have to be used for marketing. In fact when they were invented in 1994 by Toyota's DENSO subsidiary, they were affixed to every part along the assembly line allowing reader devices to convey critical information needed in the assembly process.

QR codes are being used in some very creative ways today such as:

- On historic buildings and points of interest to convey information to tourists
- On real estate for sale signs to provide a video walk-through
- On business cards to link to a biography, resume or video about oneself
- On wine bottles to reveal information about the vineyard

A well-executed QR Code strategy might just drive a few extra customers through your door, and in this economy who wouldn't welcome that?

*(QR Code is a Registered Trademark of Denso Wave Incorporated)*

As owner of Webworks, Catherine White has over 20 years experience in IT & website programming. Webworks specializes in adding interactive functionality to static websites, enabling your website to be an active partner in your business.



Catherine White 401-480-3281

## New Members

- Finishing Touches Custom Picture Framing
- Ford Insurance Agency
- OLLI Lifelong Learning Institute at URI
- Sprint
- Sweet Cakes Bakery & Café
- Aqua Science, LLC
- Kristy K. Armstrong CPA
- Carousel Industries
- Middlebridge School
- Orson and Brusini, LTD
- Rinaldi Law Offices, LLC
- Coldwell Banker/ Amy Sexsmith
- Eco Attic Guard
- J. Drake Turf Farm
- New England Grass Fed, LLC
- Pickles Custom Catering

## Member News

- Congratulations to Stacy Mello of People's Credit Union for her promotion to Loan Origination Manager.
- Project Sweet Peas, Plunge for Preemies (2nd Annual), Saturday, February 18th, 3pm. After Party at George's of Galilee running until 7pm. Post Plunge Party Tickets: \$16 in advance/\$20 at the door -Children 4-10yrs \$10- Children 3 and under are free.
- Congratulations to South Kingstown Police Chief, Vincent Vespia, on being named to RI Criminal Justice Hall of Fame on 1/12/2012.
- Congratulations to David Serra who was given the honor last month by the Southern New England chapter of the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science. Congratulations to Ms. Maureen Crowley, the new Economic Development Coordinator for Town of Narragansett RI
- H&R Block of South Kingstown headed by Sandra Cutting was honored as a "Top 100" office. There are over 12,000 offices nationwide.
- 25th Annual Childrens' Exhibition presented by the Hera Gallery January 28th - February 18th. Opening reception Saturday, January 28th, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

# New Members

## Orson and Brusini, LTD

144 Wayland Avenue, Providence  
401-861-0402

### **Stephen M. Brusini, Esq.**

Co-Founder of Orson and Brusini Ltd., Mr. Brusini graduated from the College of the Holy Cross (B.A. 1988) and Cornell Law School (J.D. 1991). Steve practices in the areas of corporate and business law, commercial transactions, employment law, administrative law, and real estate. He is admitted to practice in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York, and before the U.S. District Courts of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit, the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Tax Court, and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.



## Pickles Custom Catering

135 Frenchtown Road, North Kingstown  
401-884-1828

Connie Palagi, owner/operator of Pickles Custom Catering, has been in business for almost 15 years.



Located on Frenchtown Road in North Kingstown, Pickles Custom Catering offers complete services for 2 to 400 guests throughout the tri-state area. Corporate luncheons, private parties and complete wedding planning covers the spectrum of events. Tableware, flatware, glassware and linens are also available for rent. Theme cakes, logo cookies and healthy school lunch programs for private schools are an extension of her varied menus. The tag line of "ketchup to caviar" is a true testimonial to the accommodating and quality customer service Connie provides. She has lived in East Greenwich for 18 years and her hobbies include golf, kayaking, golf, biking, golf and traveling.

## Coldwell Banker/ Amy Sexsmith

527 Main Street, East Greenwich  
401-884-8050

Amy Sexsmith became a Realtor almost 30 years ago in Concord, Massachusetts. After moving to Barrington, RI, in 1987, she worked for Brown University and pursued her Bachelor's Degree at Providence College while raising three children. She returned to real estate with Coldwell Banker Gold in 1998, moving to Bristol for two years. Before moving to Narragansett in 2004, Amy worked at Monarch Properties in Rehoboth, MA; and RE/MAX concentrating on Providence's East Side, and East Bay. Investing and practicing the art of relocating has given her a great repertoire with buyers and sellers alike. Although Amy's primary focus now is South County, she is particularly qualified to help relocating buyers look at several areas for comparison Barrington, EastSide, Seekonk/Rehoboth, Edgewood and South County.



## Carousel Industries

659 South County Trail, Exeter  
800-401-0760



Carousel Industries designs, delivers and supports technology solutions that become the foundation of our clients' businesses. This includes unified communications, virtualization, VoIP, visual communications and collaboration and data infrastructure solutions. Carousel holds top partner status and certification with many leading technology companies including Avaya, Juniper Networks, Extreme Networks and Microsoft. Our technical team has over 250 service technicians deployed across the country, serving the needs of our customers nationwide. Carousel is headquartered in Exeter, RI with over 1000 employees working from offices in 28 locations across the US.

## Fresh, LLC

P.O. Box 427, Narragansett  
401-578-3498

### **Michelle Girasole Chief Freedom Officer, Fresh, LLC**

Michelle is a serial entrepreneur, having started three successful ventures in the last decade. After getting her MS & MBA in marketing and information systems at URI, Michelle enjoyed a career in corporate marketing, working with the world's top brands, including APC, CVS, BMW and many others. In 2001, she started an online marketing firm, Next Step (Precision) Web Marketing, focusing on email/search marketing services and analytics. She co-wrote the award-winning *Sassy Ladies' Toolkit for Start-up Businesses*, published in 2009. She now resides in Wickford, and has chosen South County as the launch site for her new travel & tourism marketing firm, *Fresh, LLC*. The company aims to bring the people of the world here to experience Rhode Island, and send the people of Rhode Island out to experience the world.



## Beaches & Backroads Realty

4A Fairview Avenue, Hope Valley  
401-862-9492

My name is Erin Diaz, I am the Principal Broker & Owner of Beaches & Backroads Realty. 2011 has been a landmark year & I am so proud of the success of Beaches & Backroads Realty. I have been in the Real Estate market for 11 years licensed in both Rhode Island & Connecticut. I started my own Real Estate office in 2008 to offer clients true old fashioned customer service. Customer Satisfaction IS the main goal of my business. Another goal is to provide a TRUE local expertise to my clients with unchallenged customer service. As a lifelong resident of Southern Rhode Island & serving the community for over 17 years, you can be sure I am the right agent for you. With experience in all avenues of Real Estate and an active clientele of both buyers and sellers, I am the agent you need for all of your real estate needs! My cell phone is always on; you can call me anytime 401-862-9492 or email me at [Erin@BeachesAndBackroads.net](mailto:Erin@BeachesAndBackroads.net)!



# Meet The Staff

Elizabeth Berman began her career with the Chamber as an URI Intern in 2009. Upon graduation she became our Events Coordinator and this past November she was promoted to a fulltime Marketing & Promotions Coordinator. Elizabeth can be reached at 401-792-4965 or at [eberman@srichamber.com](mailto:eberman@srichamber.com).

Joanne Viele began her career with the Chamber as a volunteer in 2009 and by May of 2010 she was hired as Office Manager/ Membership Services. Joanne can be reached at 401-792-4888 or at [jviele@srichamber.com](mailto:jviele@srichamber.com).

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# Member Spotlight

A New Portrait Project From Seth Jacobson  
[www.sjacobsonphotography.com](http://www.sjacobsonphotography.com)

Seth loves his community and there are some amazing people making Rhode Island a wonderful place to live. He has decided to photograph the people who are really making "IT" happen here in the community in a (hopefully) creative and fun way that tells a story about who those people are and what they are doing for their respective businesses.



Doug Brady, General Manager of the Holiday Inn of South Kingstown has been on the Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for five years. Doug has over 27 years experience with The Holiday Inn and has been at the South Kingstown location for the past 13 years. A graduate of North Eastern University, Doug is one of the founders of the Southern Rhode Island Trolley, a free trolley service that runs from Labor Day to Memorial Day. The trolley's main goal is to connect tourists with the distinct local flavor we have in Southern Rhode Island.

## SRICC Board Members & Staff

### Executive Board 2011-2012

Clay Johnson, Chairman.....The Goddard School  
 Jeanne Abate, Chair Elect.....The Westerly Community Credit Union  
 Calvin Campany , Vice Chair.....Adornment Fine Jewelry  
 Joshua Sroka, 2nd Vice Chair..... Law Office of Joshua A. Sroka  
 Jeremy Walsh, Secretary.....The Right Click LLC  
 Nina Luchka, Treasurer.....The Washington Trust Company  
 Joe Viele, Past Chair.....Liberty Rentals

### Board of Directors

David Tetreault.....Citizens Bank Mortgage Company  
 Robert Countie.....ReMax Professionals  
 Terrance Simpson, Esq.....KKRS Law Offices  
 Richard Pike.....Pike Insurance, LLC  
 Michael Paolino.....Edward Jones- South County Commons  
 Michelle Bailey.....South County Hospital  
 Nancy Batson.....Southern Rhode Island Newspapers  
 Doug Brady.....Holiday Inn of South Kingstown  
 John Gates.....Gates Insurance  
 Joan Dwyer.....All That Matters  
 Darlene Lepore.....Brightview Commons Senior Living  
 Stephanie Osborn.....Sugar Loaf Hill Bed & Breakfast  
 Leah Becki.....The Ryan Center and Boss Ice Arena  
 Brian Fish.....Pier Cleaners  
 Jean Albert.....Independent Newspapers

### Chamber Staff

Executive Director.....Joseph J. Iacoi  
 Office Manager/ Membership Services .....Joanne Viele  
 Marketing & Promotions Coordinator.....Elizabeth Berman

### Chamber Information

230 Old Tower Hill Road  
 Wakefield, RI 02879  
 Phone 401-783-2801  
 Fax 401-789-3120  
[www.srichamber.com](http://www.srichamber.com)

Email: [info@srichamber.com](mailto:info@srichamber.com)

Hours of Operation:

Monday- Friday 9:00am-4:00pm  
 Notary Public Services Available

