

Soundings January 2022: Caitlin and Ken

Here we go: welcome to 2022, and we have BIG News....keep reading.

Happy New Year from Caitlin Pszenny and Ken Riehl! Caitlin is the Board President for the Chamber's 100th year, yes, our Centennial, celebrating *100 Years Young!* And of course you already know Ken, the Chamber's CEO. We are enthusiastically looking forward to working with each other, and most importantly, all of you.

Rounding out our Executive Committee are Susan Gould-Coviello, now the Chairperson; 1st Vice President Loran Caputo (Cape Ann Motor Inn) who will preside over the Chamber during the Gloucester 400 celebrations next year; 2nd Vice President Karen Ristuben (Essex County Community Foundation / Creative County Initiative); Mike Luster (Cape Ann Savings Bank) who remains as our trusted Treasurer; and Tony Sapienza (Blue Shutters Beachside Inn) a proven leader who remains on our Executive Committee as At-Large member. Please see our full 2022 Board of Directors, here: [2022 Board Slate](#)

We express our sincere appreciation to Susan for her service as our 2021 President during another incredibly challenging and impactful year. Working with Ken, the Chamber Team and the Board, Susan literally spent hundreds of hours last year helping our businesses and region navigate through the pandemic. A historic milestone was the integration of our newest community, Ipswich, and the team spent considerable time getting to know that community and businesses. And last year was the first full year at our new Harbor Loop home, featuring beautiful new Visitor and Community Collaboration Centers which were highly utilized by many in our community. Please come on by if you have not already toured the space – it is yours to enjoy and utilize as a Chamber Member. Susan was a main reason for our impactful year and is very much still a part of our leadership team.

Caitlin brings a broad base of Chamber and community involvement to her role as our President. She and her husband Nic are the co-owners for Cape Ann Lanes and Laneside Pub & Brewery. Caitlin is a co-leader of our Young Professionals, Next Gen. Cape Ann, so important as we bring our next generation of business leaders together to help build the future of this amazing region. And especially meaningful, as the Chamber turns 100 years young.

The Chamber's Imperatives remain unchanged for 2022, with the over-arching focus continuing to be helping our businesses and community to weather the ever-changing pandemic environment, with three main imperatives:

- **Promote Our Members and the Region:** as a membership-based organization, our top priority is to promote our member businesses; we also promote the Cape Ann region as an incredible place to work, live, and visit.
- **Strengthen Our Businesses:** we help businesses thrive by advocating for business-friendly policies and programs, fostering connections, providing training and education, and offering many benefits including access to health care and our Greater Cape Ann Gift Checks.
- **Support Our Community:** we support the economic, educational, and cultural growth of greater Cape Ann by leading critical community priorities.

These Imperatives are much more than simply how we describe the Chamber – together with our Mission and Vision, they guide our member programs, our community initiatives, and our plans for the organization going forward.

The **Cape Ann License Plate** embodies all these imperatives. We see more on the road every day, and the success of the plate helps to promote our region and supports community programs. The Cape Ann Community Foundation manages the license plate proceeds, which, over the past five years has provided more than \$70,000 in grants to many Cape Ann non-profits and school projects. We are looking forward to seeing many more of our Cape's plates on the road, and to awarding additional grants this coming year.

As the pandemic has impacted all aspects of life in our region, so has it impacted our Chamber Team. We are starting 2022 with several new team members, all of whom are quickly coming up to speed – please see below a full listing of team members.

Sam Bevins, Member Services Manager, resides in Gloucester. Sam joined our team in August, coming on for Olivia who took over a new position as Community Relations Director. As a recent college grad., Sam has bountiful energy and new ideas to best communicate with and serve our 1,000 members. He has quickly come up to speed on our programs and services for our membership. His primary responsibility is to look after YOU, our members, to ensure that your business is best represented by the Chamber and to be available to help you in person to answer any questions or discuss any comments that you may have. Sam leads the Chamber's weekly newsletter (Soundings) and our Ambassadors Committee, and he reaches out to all members regularly, over email with updates including "Did You Know?", by phone and in person. If you have not met Sam, please contact him and say hello, and let him know if there is anything that we can do to better support your business.

Sara Bowen, Events Director, resides in Gloucester with her young family. By far, our Chamber does more events than any business organization on the North Shore – and perhaps the Commonwealth. We held course through 2021 and averaged two events a week, including weekly in-person and zoom networking, more than 50 ribbon cuttings, and a dozen large community and Chamber events. Sara also serves as staff representative on our Businesswomen's Committee.

Re(Becca) Campbell, Office Administrator, resides in Rockport with her family. Becca joined the team in August and is quickly came up to speed on our office operations and jumped right in on event support. Becca manages our often-frenzied office, greeting members and visitors, while simultaneously answering multiple phone lines...and issuing hundreds of Greater Cape Ann Gift Checks this past Holiday Season.

Charlene Delaney, Visitor Services and Cape Ann License Plate Support, another Glosta Gal, has been with us for five years, helping with our front desk operations, assisting visitors, and promoting the Cape Ann License Plate. Charlene is terrific with visitors and her love for and knowledge of the region make her an invaluable part of the team.

Vince Mainetti, has taken a pure design role as he focuses on a Masters in Fine Art in Boston. Vince continues leading all the design work at the Chamber including most recently our 100 Years Young branding and Annual Celebration invitations.

Olivia Perez-O'Dess, Community Relations Director, resides down the street from the *Fisherman*. Olivia is charting new water's in this new position. Her main responsibility is to be present and engaged in all of our communities, meeting with members and attending the myriad of community meetings occurring everyday / evening. The objective is that we will become better informed and more proactive in taking policy positions and advocating for your business.

Ken Riehl, CEO, resides adjacent to the Great Marsh in our smallest Cape Ann community, Essex. He is entering into year nine with this incredible organization, and could not be more honored and pleased to work with you all towards the continuous betterment of this amazing region. He also sits on the Boards of the Cape Ann Community Foundation and Cape Ann Plein Air, and is a proud Rotarian. Ken is the Chamber's staff representative on our Government Affairs Council, Cape Ann Innovators Collaborative and Contractors Committee.

Debbie Walter, Finance Lead, is a Rockporter, and heads into her eighth year with the Chamber. The greatest testament to Debbie's work is that Ken does not have to think about the finances -- Debbie just gets them done! She also leads the finances for the Cape Ann Community Foundation.

Peter Webber, Sr. VP, also hails from Rockport, and is celebrating his 17th (that's right 17th!) year with the Chamber this coming year. He remains our senior statesman, Rockport lead, Government Affairs liaison, sits on the Board of Discover Gloucester, is on Rockport's Re-opening Task Force, is a Trustee for the Essex National Heritage Area, is a Rotarian...and serves as staff representative on our Tourism Council. If that's not enough, Peter is the rock in our often-frenzied office environment, and his knowledge and love of the region, the business community and our residents make his services invaluable.

2021 was a challenging and impactful year for us all, and we look forward to continuing our work together into 2022 *Greater Cape Ann Strong*. From our new office on Harbor Loop, we and the entire Board and Chamber Team look forward to working with you, as we roll up our sleeves to make 2022, the Chamber's Centennial Year, a landmark year of renewal and prosperity for our businesses, our community, and the region as a whole.