



Regional Reporter

Volume 24, Issue 149

January, 2024

Happy New Year!

We hope everyone enjoyed a blessed and healthy holiday season.

As we close out 2023, we reflect on a year that is hopefully the beginning of a rise in businesses in our communities. We have had so many wonderful events and happenings to look back on this year. Each year has its ups and downs but with the support of our members and communities we are able to be here for the businesses and the economic growth of this region. One thing you can always count on is the strong bond of the Mon Valley community. We are extremely proud of our members and being a part of this Valley.

We will be kicking off some new initiatives as well as continuing a few of our traditional ones for 2024. Our chamber is always trying to change with the times and give our members the best service we can. One way we do this is by planning events that are beneficial to members and their businesses or organizations. We hope you will continue to partake in our events to get the largest return on your investment in the chamber. Thank you for believing in our community and dedicating your time to making this region a success. As always, we look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback.

We will continue to create a climate for economic development, encourage new business investment, grow existing investment, support educational programs, and promote tourism in our area. We are here to serve as your voice, so we encourage you to use it.

On behalf of the Chamber Board of Directors, Melissa, and myself we would like to wish our members a very happy, healthy, and prosperous new year! We look forward to serving you this upcoming year and for what lies ahead.



If you are not already on our email list & you would like to keep up-to-date on the latest chamber/member news, please scan here to enroll

Join us in making a difference!!

Your Director,

Leanna Spada

Inside this issue:

Members News ----- Page 2-4

Ribbon Cuttings ----- Page 2

Awards Gala-----Page 5-8

Year in Review----- Page 9

Member News

Sunrise Perks
1129 Fayette Ave
Belle Vernon, PA 15012
724-880-0303
Coffee Shop

Charleroi Sweeper Company
618 Fallowfield Ave
Charleroi PA 15022
724-483-3397
Sweeper Repair
"NEW OWNERSHIP"

Mon Valley Notary & Tag Services, LLC
1 Chamber Plaza, Ste 3
Charleroi, PA 15022
412-230-8530
Notary, Car Titles

**New
Members!**

Ribbon Cuttings



New Owners: Rick Kalinowski, Jimmy Lemon and Nick Sebold



New Location: 141 Pennsylvania Ave, Charleroi

David Brescoach, Lindsay Moore, Cory Grandel, Washington County Commissioner Nick Sherman, Dan Komacek (CEO/President), Gary Loomis, John Yates and Harry Springer.



Front; Zoe Adams, Mandy Russo, Jim Davies, Leanna Spada, Krissy Allison, Frances Flores, Kristin Hopkins Calcek
Back; Evan Carson, Taylor Herb, Isaac Abbott, Sam Pierre, Charles Morgan, Chris Szuminsky, Brennen Murray, Scott Oshell, Dave Masaitis, Dave Connely.

Why **renew** your membership?

For help
in times of
crises.
— Susan Bates

IT BRINGS
CREDIBILITY TO
YOUR BUSINESS.
— Dorcas Hebersham

THEY
ADVOCATE
FOR US.
— Missy Nau

YOUR BUSINESS
NEEDS A STRONG
NETWORK AND
COMMUNITY.
— Mason Waters

BIG THINGS
ARE
COMING!
— Ben Hartman

let's **stick** together

RENEWAL REMINDER

Renewals went out the end of December, if you have not received one, please contact the Chamber, 724-483-3507



Upcoming Events

These are tentative dates.

JANUARY—Renewals out

FEBRUARY—Make sure you sent your dues in!

MARCH 13—cfsbank Kickoff

Women in Leadership Series

MAY—Connecting Communities

JUNE—Legends of Commerce Golf Outing

JULY—Women in Leadership

SEPTEMBER—Winery after Hours

NOVEMBER—Love Local Mystery Bus Tour

Women in Leadership

DECEMBER—Celebrating the Season of

Business Awards Gala

Kicking Off the New Year!!

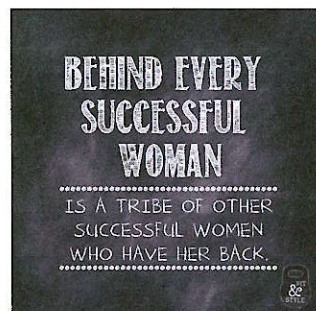
We are so excited to announce our chamber in partnership with cfsbank will be launching a Women in Leadership Series which will kickoff on March 13, 2024, at Nemacolin Country Club.

This event is open to members and non-members alike. Our first Speaker will be Carole DeAngelo, Director of Advertising and Events at the Observer-Reporter. Carole is a pioneer in her industry. Along with many years of experience in mall and retail management she also owns and operates a small business, Vintage Grace Boutique in Washington.

There will be two more events to follow in this series to take place July 10, 2024 and November 13, 2024.

Stay tuned for more details to follow or call the chamber for more information 724-483-3507.

We will also be working with *Dress for Success*. Stay tuned for ways you can help, or things you can donate to help this great charity.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS®
PITTSBURGH



Love Local Mystery Bus Tour



The 2023 Love Local Mystery Bus Tour started with 2 buses in Belle Vernon at Dawg's Sports Bar & Grill for a pancake breakfast, then off to our stops; Creative Elegance Floral, "It's Totally You" Lisa Leggings, Sol Wellness Center, next was Bentleyville's, Wild Buffalo Trading Co, Finleyville for Giant Oaks Winery, then to Charleroi for lunch at the River House Café, ending at The Crafty Cannoli Co and Prima Diva. The participants ended the day with a Basket Raffle at the Chamber Building. Can't wait for next year! If you are interested in being on the bus tour, call the chamber now to get on the list, we fill up fast.

THIS YEAR THE TOUR WILL TAKE PLACE ON NOVEMBER 9TH, 2024

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THOSE THAT MADE OUR DAY POSSIBLE, WHETHER YOU WERE A STOP, DONATED A BASKET, GAVE FOR THE SWAG BAG, OR DID SOMETHING ELSE TO HELP MAKE OUR DAY SUCCESSFUL, WE APPRECIATE YOU!!!

Prima Diva Boutique
The Crafty Cannoli Company
Wild Buffalo Trading Company
Giant Oak Winery
It's Totally You, Lisa Leggings
Creative Elegance
Sol Wellness Center
River House Café
Joseph's Nursery and Garden Center
Westmoreland Drug & Alcohol
All Seasons Travel
Dairy Queen, N. Charleroi
MMVTA
Via Quest
Audrey's Custom Draperies
HHS, Deb Puglia
cfsbank
Janney Montgomery Scott

Penn Highlands Hospital, Mon Valley
5th Street Escape Room
Adele Hopkins
Sunrise Perks
Edward Mendola Accounting
Frick Financial Federal Credit Union
Highway Appliance
MarBill Diamond and Jewelry
CJ's Furniture
Observer Reporter
SWC Realty
Instant Brands
Winslow Winery
Stoney's Brewing Company
The Mon Valley Independent
Sign Mill
Dawg's Sports Bar & Grill



Celebrating The Season of Business

BY GEORGE ~ “OUTSTANDING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT”

This award recognizes a member who has successfully expanded its product lines and/or facilities and has shown significant growth and employment. This award also recognizes leadership and the entrepreneurial spirit of the principals of the organization.

George and Ronalyn were both born and raised in Monessen and now reside in Belle Vernon. They married in 1999 and have three sons Markello, Niko and Dimitri.

After 23 years working in the Carpenter's Union George found himself laid off and didn't want to travel out of the area for work. He knew he had to make a decision. Since cooking was always his true passion, he started to sell shish kabobs in the parking lot of Ronalyn's then scrapbook store on third street in Monessen. After a few weeks he was approached by Monessen Fireman's club and asked if he would be willing to open their kitchen and cook a few days a week, George agreed.

After 13 years running the Fireman's Club kitchen George felt it was time to step out on his own. In September of 2015 By George was officially open for business on Grand Blvd in Monessen, seating 62 people and employing 15 to 20 workers.

In 2017; George and Rona were able to purchase the Monessen Fireman's Club and renovate it for a catering facility. The catering business outgrew the facility so the pair decided this would be a great time to move the restaurant and have a larger venue. They would now be able to seat 125 people. So, in September of 2019 the move took place and their staff nearly doubled to 37 employees.

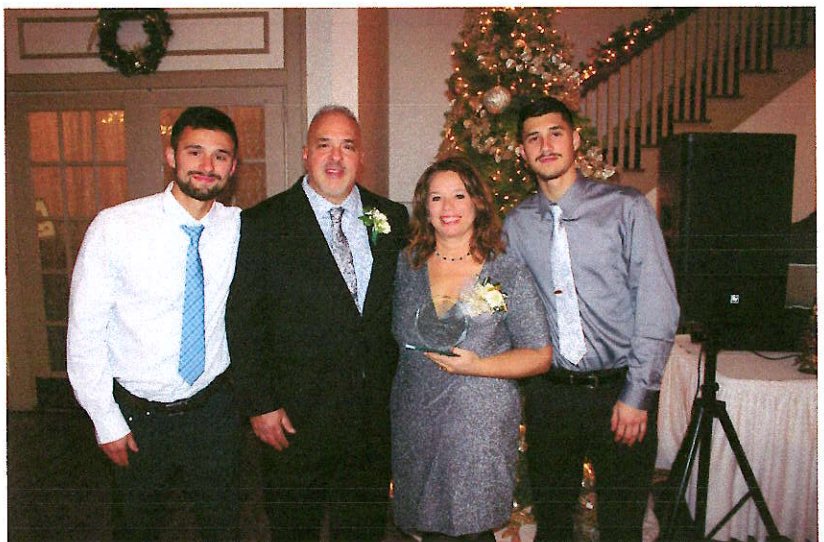
Also, later that year in December By George became the exclusive caterer for St Spyridon's Hellenic Center.

Fast forward to June 2023, By George had the honor of a lifetime by appearing in an episode of America's Best Restaurants. If you haven't seen the episode, you can find it on YouTube.

From starting with no restaurant experience to growing to a 125 seating capacity restaurant, staff of 37 and becoming an exclusive caterer for an event center, all in the matter of 8 years.

When asked what makes it all work, the first thing they agreed on is staff. Especially one staff member in particular, head chef Jamie Kepich who has been with them from the start.

I would like to take a minute to mention their generosity. George and Rona give back to their community, through private donations, countless hours of volunteering and services to many charities and organizations. If there is a need in the community George and Ronalyn are always quick to provide support. Always wanting to fly below the radar. They appreciate and value their community and that is evident by their actions.



STUDIO K ~ "EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS"

This award recognizes a member business that continually and consistently provides its customers with outstanding products and/or services. Demonstrated longevity is an important aspect that the Chamber of Commerce wishes to recognize, and considers businesses operating for 20 years or more.

Studio K is owned and operated by Miss Karen Kosh. Karen was born and raised in Rostraver where she lives with her significant other, Jim Posey, and 2 step children

Karen attended Westmoreland CCC majoring in business with the plan to go into fashion. During her last semester of college, she was looking for a side hustle to make a little extra cash until her career got up and running. At this time the nail business was just starting to become popular and being ambitious, she started cosmetology school in Uniontown in tandem with finishing her last semester at college.

Upon graduation in 1997 she started to work at a local nail salon in Belle Vernon. There she would meet Gianna McFaddin and Rachel Berklovich. Immediately these girls formed a strong friendship. They continued to work together and build their clientele over the next five years. Karen, being from a family that was no stranger to business ownership and knowing what it takes, she was starting to get the itch to take the leap and start her own salon.

After careful consideration, she knew the building at 329 Fallowfield Ave in Charleroi was the perfect future home for her business. With her girls Gianna and Rachel joining her crew, she was ready. Studio K opened its doors, July 9th, 2001.

Studio K Serves as a full-service salon doing Nails, Pedicures, tanning, spray tanning, massages, facials, and permanent makeup. Karen's family was there every step of the way to help and support her. Since 2001 her business has never stopped growing. She currently has 3 other nail techs besides herself, (Rachel, Paige and Gianna) an esthetician (Debbie) and massage therapist (Sydney).

Karen is that business owner that no matter when you enter her shop you are greeted with her smiling face. She invests her heart, soul, and endless hours into her business.

Karen is also committed to the community. Whenever donations are needed for Christmas, for the town fireworks or Halloween festivities, she generously gives, she has sold more tickets for the fire department and organizations than most people combined. When you walk into Studio K, you feel as if you are the only, most important client that has ever walked through the door.



Celebrating The Season of Business

HIS PLACE COFFEE, COMMUNITY AND MORE ~ “REGIONAL SERVICE AWARD”

This Mon Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce recognizes local organizations and institutions that contribute to the quality of life in the Mid Mon Valley. Human services, educational, recreational, charitable, cultural and economic development entities are among those considered for this award.

A few years back, Pastor Tim Burgan and Cornerstone TV hosted a program called His Place in which the Pastor welcomed guests to talk about their situations, struggles and life in general. The Pastor thought how great would it be to make His Place a real place where people could come, gather, and support one another, to form a community family of sorts.

In comes Lisa Lyons, after some time and soul-searching, God put it in her heart to not only make a coffee shop where all were welcome but to make this vision happen in Monessen. This is where she felt led and this town was in need of such a place and she wasn't wrong. As always God's timing worked out perfectly and their sights were set on the former police and fire station on 3rd street in Monessen. September 13, 2021 their doors were open and they were ready to start making a difference. Right now, they employ many young adults from the church giving them work experience as well as learning the importance giving back to the community.

Some of the programs offered: Storytime, Kids craft day, tutoring, celebrate recovery-program held weekly to help with addiction, back to school supply drive, blessing bags at Christmas to name a few.

The coffee shop is only the beginning, they have started work on the other side of the building which so far includes a fully equipped sewing room where they welcome anyone who would like to learn to sew from a former sewing teacher, thanks to a generous donor there is a gym for kids that includes electronic equipment to give an interactive workout. They have now started a robotics program that includes Mon Valley Mammoth Robotics program. The program consists of four teams from K-12 for public, cyber and homeschooled. All teams are part of the First Robotics and are competitive teams.

His place has also arranged for a local barber and beautician to come to their center where a salon room has been created 32 students received personal invitations to get a free haircut and a new pair of sneakers and socks, appropriately called snips and sneakers. At this time, they have started with the Monessen School District but they are hoping to be able to expand beyond Monessen to other districts.

There is much much more on the horizon such as medical and dental services, pro bono legal service Tax and financial guidance, counseling, addiction services and so much more.



DR. ED ZELICH ~ “SHINING STAR AWARD”

MVRCC selects an individual that displays outstanding personal and professional attributes. This award goes to a Chamber member who shows a commitment to his/her vocation, helps to advance the mission of the Mon Valley Regional Chamber, and promotes the Mid Mon Valley community at large.

Dr. Zelich earned his Bachelor of Science in education from IUP, his Masters of Science in Educational Leadership from California University, with certifications as a secondary and elementary principal, and his Superintendent Letter of Eligibility through Edinboro University. In 2016 he earned a doctorate of Education Degree in Administration and Leadership studies at IUP.

The early years of his career took him to Waynesburg. This is where he met his wife of 32 years, Brenda. Brenda also taught, retiring last year from Laurel Highlands after 34 years of service. Ed and Brenda share two sons, Zeke and Luke, who have both followed in their footsteps becoming educators, one at Laurel Highlands and the other at Albert Gallatin.

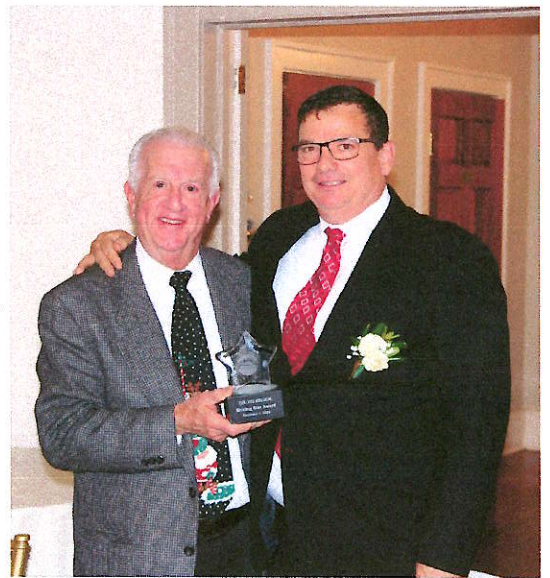
Dr. Zelich began his appointment as Superintendent of Charleroi School District on July 1, 2014. He serves more than 1500 students in the district; Charleroi Area school district is known for having a strong academic reputation as well as a wide range of educational programs and first-rate facilities. Before joining the Charleroi family, Dr. Zelich served in a variety of teaching and administrative roles from 1988-2014, he was in the classroom for 12 years, he was assistant principal, principal, Assistant Superintendent and now superintendent.

This is a man who goes above and beyond for his teachers and his students. He tries to attend all of the extra curricular activities and sporting events. He traveled with the boys' soccer team to Harrisburg just a few weeks back. Many mornings Ed stands outside greeting every elementary student as they are dropped off. He has also taken a few students under his wing and “adopted” them to make sure they have what they need to be able to graduate and at times make sure their basic needs are met.



Dr. Zelich uses one guide to make every decision, “How will this affect the kids?”

Let’s not forget covid days at which time Dr. Zelich had to set up a complete online learning system with all of the rules and regulations that were changing not only by the day but by the hour. He rose to the task and always had the students’ best interest at heart no matter how difficult the decisions were. The truth of the matter is good leadership starts at the top, and Dr. Zelich is a perfect example.



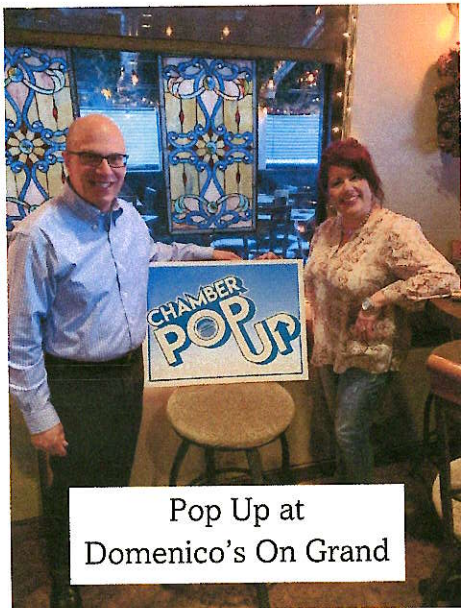
Year in Review



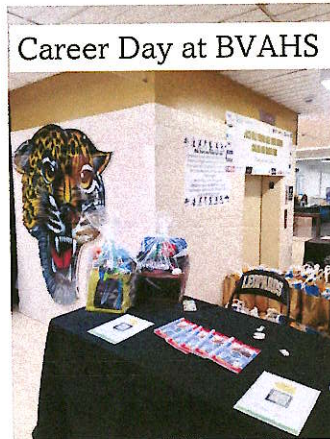
2023 Awards Gala Winners



Pop Up at By George



Pop Up at
Domenico's On Grand



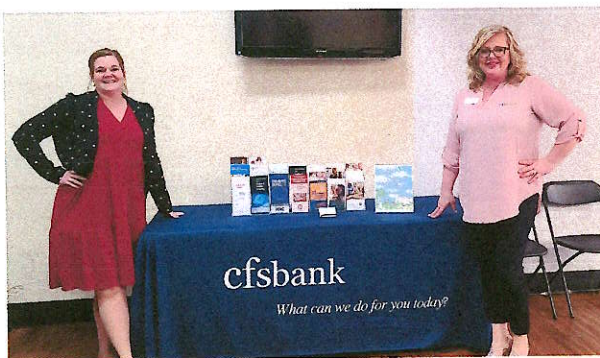
Career Day at BVAHS



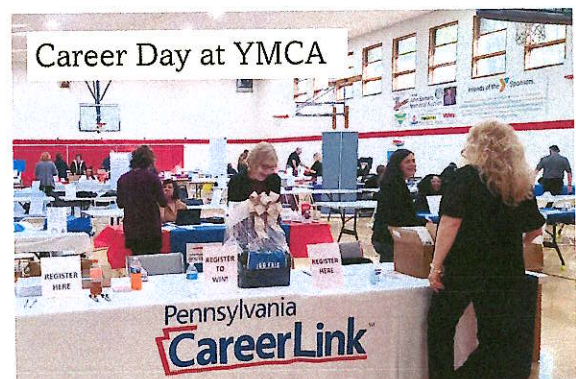
2023 Legends of Commerce
"The Davies Family"



Member Mingle with MACC



Lunch & Learn with cfsbank
"Protect against Fraud"



Career Day at YMCA