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BY AMY KEPFERLE

All in the Family

MOM, POP AND A BUSINESS PLAN



DINNER TABLES are often the primary locale where those with familial bonds meet at the end of the day to catch up on what's happened in their busy worlds since they scurried out the door in the morning on the way to their separate lives.

For a growing number of Whatcom County residents, however, there's no need to share the minutiae of every second, minute or hour spent apart.

This ability to communicate so easily isn't due to the lightning-fast capabilities of modern technology, but instead the fact that, in many cases, they've already spent a hefty portion of their workdays together trying to make a success of their family-owned businesses.

To draw attention to those who make commitments well beyond those included in a typical relationship, Western Washington University's Small Business Development Center is working with Sustainable Connections and the Downtown Bellingham Partnership to urge community members to support "National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day."

And although Tues., March 29 is the designated day to get out and about to do so, the event is also meant to be an encompassing shout-out to those who manage to successfully merge their personal lives with their working ones.

"There are unique challenges in running a husband-and-wife-owned business," says Washington Small Business Development Center's Jennifer Shelton. "Getting through the recent recession has worn many of them out. We don't want to lose their businesses or the jobs they create."

Overall, Shelton says, bringing these types of businesses to the forefront of the community's attention is a way to keep their momentum rolling.

For a sampling of power couples that are making a go of it in Whatcom County, maps are currently available at the Downtown Bellingham Partnership and participating locales.

Examples include bakers Ralf and Kacy Sigl of Ralf's Bavarian Bakery (see photo), Peregrine Expeditions' Michelle and Joseph Anderson, Kids Northwest owners Michael and Janet Hodgins, Jessica and Mataio Gillis of Ciao Thyme/In the Kitchen, Kulshan Cycles' Eric and Kae Moe, Erica and Chris Gerston of Backcountry Essentials, and countless others.

Whether they're feeding and clothing the population, fixing vehicles, tricking out boats, helping sporty folks stay that way, checking tonsils, roasting coffee, building homes, planning weddings or lighting up your living rooms, one thing the duos have in common is that they're all doing what they can to make Whatcom County a viable place to both work and play.

"Mom-and-pop businesses have always been a vital, yet not fully appreciated part of the U.S. economy," Shelton says. "There are many husband wife business owner teams here in Whatcom County that work together to provide local jobs and unique products/services, and we wanted to take the opportunity to acknowledge these businesses."

©



ATTEND

WHAT: National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day

WHEN: Tuesday, March 29

WHERE: At 92 participating local businesses. Maps and directories are available at the Downtown Bellingham Partnership, 1304 Cornwall Ave., as well as partner locations

INFO: 778-1762 or www.sconnect.org

doit

WORDS

WED., MARCH 23

BOYNTON POETRY CONTEST: Submissions will be accepted through 5pm Fri., April 1 for the 6th annual Sue C. Boynton Poetry Contest.

📍 WWW.BOYNTONPOETRYCONTEST.WORDPRESS.COM

THURS., MARCH 24

MICROSOFT ESSENTIALS: Gail Sexton leads a PowerPoint presentation focusing on her tutorial, *I Just Want to Know How to Use It: Microsoft Excel 2007 Essentials*, at 7pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St. Entry is free.

📍 WWW.VILLAGEBOOKS.COM

FRI., MARCH 25

ALEX KUO: Award-winning author Alex Kuo reads from and signs his latest political thriller, *The Man Who Dammed the Yangtze*, at 7pm at Anchor Art Space, 216 Commercial Ave., Anacortes. Entry is free.

📍 WWW.ANCHORARTSPACE.ORG

SAT., MARCH 26

BROKEN GROUND: John Keeble reads from his new book, *Broken Ground*, at 4pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St.

📍 671-2626

SUN., MARCH 27

WRITE-O-RAMA: Kids ages 8 to 18 can take part in the Young Writers Studio's "Write-O-Rama" at 4pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St.

📍 WWW.VILLAGEBOOKS.COM

MON., MARCH 28

OPEN MIC: Writing instructor Laurel Leigh helms the monthly Open Mic at 7pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St. To read your words, sign up at the main counter on the first floor.

📍 671-2626

POETRYNIGHT: Read your original verse at poetrynight at 8:30pm at the Amadeus Project, 1209 Cornwall Ave. Sign-ups start at 8pm.

📍 WWW.POETRYNIGHT.ORG

TUES., MARCH 29

ALASKAN MEMOIR: Cara Lopez Lee reads from her autobiographical tome, *They Only Eat Their Husbands: A Memoir of Alaskan Love, World Travel, and the Power of Running Away*, at 7pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St.

📍 WWW.VILLAGEBOOKS.COM

OPEN MIC: The new weekly Spoken Word, Poetry and Open Mic occurs from 7-9pm every Tuesday at the Blue Horse Gallery, 301 W. Holly St. Entry is free.

📍 WWW.BLUEHORSEGALLERY.COM

WED., MARCH 30

LEGACY OF IDA: Skagit author Arlene Sundquist Empie discusses her award-winning book, *The Legacy of Ida Lilbroanda: Finnish Emigrant to America 1893*, at 4pm at Mount Vernon's Skagit Valley Food Co-op. Entry is free.

📍 WWW.SKAGITFOODCOOP.COM

COMMUNITY

WED., MARCH 23

SALMON CELEBRATION: The rescheduled Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association's Community Celebration will take place from 6-9pm at the Majestic, 1027 N. Forest St. The free event features speakers, refreshments and more. Entry is free.

📍 715-0283 OR WWW.N-SEA.ORG

FRI., MARCH 25

JUNIOR GRANGE: Kids ages 5 to 14 can find out more about the reorganization of the Haynie Junior Grange at a potluck and ceremony starting at 6:30pm at the Custer locale at 3344 Haynie Rd.

📍 332-2255

SAT., MARCH 26

CELEBRATING CHILDREN: The Whatcom Center for Early Learning hosts its 7th annual "Celebrating Children: Creating Futures" fundraiser starting at 5:30pm at the Bellingham Golf & Country Club. Tickets are \$75.

📍 671-3660 OR WWW.WCEL.NET

SUN., MARCH 27

BENEFIT FOR ROCKET: A schooling show, equine educators and a silent auction and bake sale will be part of today's "Benefit for Rocket" at 9am at Smith Road Stables, 517 E. Smith Rd. The event will raise funds for the 12-year-old gelding who was recently diagnosed with a rare disease (*cryptococcus gattii*). 📍 Marisa@fifthstx.com

BOWL FOR KIDS: The annual "Bowl for Kids' Sake" fundraiser happens from 10am-7pm at Park Bowl, 4175 Meridian St.

📍 671-6400 OR WWW.FIRSTGIVING.COM

TUES., MARCH 29

FLARE CLASS: A free Financial Literacy and Renter Education class (FLARE) starts today from 12-2pm and occurs every Tuesday for six week at the Union Depot Building, 1322 N. State St. Entry is on a first-come, first-served basis.

📍 734-5121, EXT. 210

WED., MARCH 30

PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCE: "Mad-agascar and the Peace Corps Experience" will be the focus of talk with a returned volunteer at 6pm at REI, 400 36th St.

📍 650-3017

HEALTHCARE MEETING: United for National Healthcare will hold a meeting at 7pm at Bellingham's Laborers Hall, 1700 N. State St. All are welcome.

📍 398-2295

TRIVIA BEE: Form a team now for the Whatcom Literacy Council's annual Trivia Bee, which happens April 1 at Bellingham High School, 2020 Cornwall Ave. *Jeopardy!* champ Ken Jennings will join the fun.

📍 WWW.WHATCOMLITERACY.ORG

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