



Resolution copycats

It's January 9th and all my New Year's Resolutions are solidly in play. I've set the bar so low that just waking-up each day gives me something to check-off the list.

My approach to 2023 has been to look at what others are doing and pretend that these people have a firm grip on monumental accomplishments. Thanks to Google, I was able to find



Joe Hurd

Blair County Chamber of Commerce

a list that featured 55 resolutions that did not include losing weight and cutting out alcohol. Quite a few of the 55 I'm already doing, which is far more indicative of the simplistic nature of the resolutions than anything speaking to my resolve. Arduous goals like "Drink more water," "Make your bed every morning," and "Avoid people who complain a lot" aren't likely to occupy large blocks of my time.

Among the resolutions that caught my attention was "Donate clothes you never wear." It immediately took me back to third grade when Sister Aloysius pointed out that anyone who owned more than one coat should expect to spend at least a year or two in Purgatory. That seemed reasonable at the time. I was nine-years-old, was convinced that I would have plenty of opportunities to reduce my wardrobe over the next fifty or sixty years and felt relieved knowing that Purgatory wasn't the worst option. Now, at 68, I may need to reassess.

In terms of challenging resolutions, "stop multitasking" was one that would mean a severe career change. It would require that I quit my current job and apply for something on a mountain in Tibet. One of the first questions that I ask to applicants for positions here is, "Can you multitask?" No one ever answers no. If someone did, I would refer them to another chamber of commerce.

In Tibet. Finally, Resolution #46 is "Do something that scares you." I suppose I could start watching the evening news again. Or allow my daughter McKenna to tattoo me in a location of her choice. In reality, I don't get scared as often any more. It's not because I'm getting more courageous. It's often because frustration and moral outrage have made life so very hard.

Copying the New Year's Resolutions of others is the easy way to avoid your own challenges and opportunities. It may be time to set the bar higher. It may be time to make a better plan.

Annual Meeting Awards announced

While Blair County businesses faced many of the same challenges in 2022 that had confronted them in the Covid-19 years, the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel" that had provided motivation during the darkest days was starting to yield some illumination. And a number of business leaders stepped-up to lead the charge.

The Blair County Chamber will recognize those leaders as part of its Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation on January 27th at The Casino at Lakemont Park. The event will begin at 7:30 a.m.

"We had an incredible number of nominations for our various awards, which speaks to the appreciation that the business community has for the people who have helped get us back on our feet," acknowledged Chamber President Joe Hurd. "The difficult part for our selection committee was choosing among some very outstanding nominees."

The Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for the Chamber to look back at the previous year while also setting the stage for the one to come. The event begins



Ken Decker, jack-of-all-trades at Arts Altoona, shares a moment with Sherry Dilling, Arts Altoona's Program Manager. Decker is the 2023 George Award winner.

with the swearing-in of the 2023 Board of Directors of both the Chamber and the Chamber Foundation. Prior to the presentation of the awards, Immediate Past Chair Richard Fiore, Jr. wraps-up his two years as Chair by introducing attendees who served on any of the Chamber's many committees.

The Award Recipients (listed in the box on the right) consist of Athena

winner Andrea Cohen of Blair Companies who, among her many efforts helped start the Chamber's WE-LEaD program; Matt Stuckey of Stuckey Automotive, who has spearheaded a variety of servant leadership initiatives; Kenneth Decker, a volunteer and board member at Arts Altoona; Barb Smith of Teeter Group, who has helped the Chamber's Safety Committee to play a signifi-

cant role in furthering safety and security; Christine McGeary, an elementary school teacher who has made an outstanding impact on young people; local developer Chris Cook, who has built and is building a number of small businesses; and Kirsten Stratton, a key component in the growth of the Chamber's Young Professionals program.

To register for the Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

There are also a few sponsorships available. Contact Jessie Covert at jcovert@blairchamber.com.

2023 Award Recipients

ATHENA Award
Andrea Cohen

Donna D. Gority Servant Leadership Award
Matt Stuckey

George Award
Kenneth Decker

Joseph P. Rosenhamer Chamber Spirit Award
Barb Smith

Judith A. Rossi Educator of the Year Award
Christine McGeary

Small Business Person of the Year Award
Chris Cook

Young Professional of the Year Award
Kirsten Stratton

52nd Showcase set for March; emphasis heavy on local talent



Members of the Home Garden & Healthy Living Showcase Committee discuss media buys for the 2023 Showcase, set for March 3-5.

For the second consecutive year, the Blair County Home Garden & Healthy Living Showcase will be held at the Blair County Convention Center. The Showcase kicks-off on March 3rd and concludes two days later. Nearly two months out, optimism is high, according to two people who should know.

Dave DeBiase has been part of the event since 1983 when he was Vice-President of the Blair County Builders Association. That organization (now Blair-Bedford Builders) partners with the Blair County Chamber on producing the Showcase. Stacy Hoover, a Chamber VP, is marking her 26th year in spearheading the planning and execution of the 52-year-old show.

"We were extremely pleased with last year's show, despite the fact that

Covid was still a factor," DeBiase acknowledged. "The move to a new venue carried some risk but when we surveyed exhibitors after the show, 72% felt that it was an excellent move. We had similar comments from attendees who really liked that everything was on one floor. So we're confident that the 2023 show will be well-supported."

Hoover agreed. "We had some concerns last year that smaller businesses wouldn't be able to afford to move," she disclosed. "However, they were the first ones to sign up and their comments following the show were very positive. They gained customers and built some relationships with other exhibitors that will help them in the future."

As the Home Show Committee continues to plan for this year's show, two areas

of emphasis will be on increasing the amount of participation of the Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center and determining more effective ways to involve the healthy living component of the show.

"The GACTC is the best kept secret in our area," DeBiase pointed out. "It's important that we include them in our efforts to raise the awareness of local talent."

"We're working with the Chamber's Healthy Workplace Committee to determine a better strategy to attract healthcare providers," Hoover explained. "Healthy living is very consistent with quality of life issues like landscaping and renovation."

Currently, some show sponsorships and booths remain for the show. Anyone interested should contact Stacy Hoover at the Chamber (814) 943-8151.



WE-LEaD
Women Encouraging - Leadership, Education, and Development

WE-LEaD networking set for Levity Brewing

Levity Brewing in Downtown Altoona will be the next destination for the Blair County Chamber's WE-LEaD Networking event, January 31st from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

"Our plan is to have either a networking or an educational event each quarter," explained Sara Fiore Gunnett, who chairs the WE-LEaD Committee. "We've heard great things about Levity. We're looking forward to starting our year there."

The networking event will be held on Levity's mezzanine level, which seats only 45. So anyone planning to attend needs to register as soon as possible.

The cost to attend is \$22 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. That cost includes appetizers and one drink ticket. To register, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

Corporate sponsor of the WE-LEaD event is P. Joseph Lehman, Inc.

—Blair County Chamber WE-LEaD Committee—

An Evening Of
NETWORKING
FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS **JAN. 31**

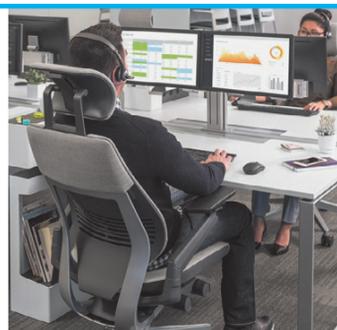
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