

HURD IMMUNITY

Talking the talk

Glossophobia? If your first guess on Trivia Night is “fear of lipstick,” perhaps your evenings would be better spent elsewhere. As those of us with access to Google know, glossophobia is “fear of public speaking.”

I’ve heard it said more than once that dying is the greatest fear of most Americans and public speaking is a close second. I don’t know who conducted that poll but I have serious doubts about its authenticity. I’m not even sure that death bothers most people at this point.

As for public speaking, data provided by Kennesaw State University estimates that 75% of adults in its study are “affected” by having to speak publicly. Only 8% of those people seek professional help to become more confident and effective. The rest, I’m imagining, move to countries where English is not spoken or become lighthouse keepers.

More than a decade ago, I wrote a column for the Blair Business Mirror expressing concern that young people coming into the local workforce seemed to have little interest in either reading or writing. That indifference manifests itself in a number of ways, many related to breakdowns in communication. I recall fielding an email from an “older” business leader, expressing frustration with the preferences of the emerging workforce.

“Like your column says, they won’t read and they can’t write,” he lamented. “Well, as it turns out, they can’t speak either. That may be the worst part.”

Today I’m not so sure. I’ve seen evidence in our Leadership Blair County Youth and Young Entrepreneurs Academy programs that, given the opportunity to speak and with a sprinkling of suggestions and encouragement, young people do pretty well. I’m sure their speaking skills pale in comparison to their texting skills but there’s hope. And hope’s usually a good thing.

Beginning next Tuesday and running for the next four weeks, the Chamber is partnering with Toastmasters International on a hands-on workshop to help people become better public speakers. We’re limiting the group to ten and we are likely to have reached that number by the time you read this column. Ten might not seem like many but the fine folks at Toastmasters assure me that in order to be thorough, ten’s more than enough.

If you missed-out on the chance to become an accomplished orator this time around, be patient. It’s our intention to cure glossophobia throughout Blair County, one lighthouse keeper at a time.



Joe Hurd

Blair County Chamber of Commerce

Prestigious award to honor Dan Hoover

Dan Hoover, Co-chair/CEO of Spring Cove Container and Allegheny Mountain Spring Water, will be the 21st recipient of the Blair County Chamber’s Lifetime Achievement Award for Business Excellence. That award will be presented at the Business Excellence Dinner, to be held on October 23rd at Blair County Convention Center.

The 74-year-old Roaring Spring resident has been active in a variety of business and community-related endeavors. He has also had a number of Chamber involvements, most notably serving on the committee that created the Leadership Blair County program as well as helping the Chamber in putting together a sub-committee promoting the importance of early childhood education.

“Dan Hoover is without a doubt one of the most principled and compassionate individuals that I have ever known,” acknowledged Rodney Green, who chairs

the Early Childhood sub-committee. “Dan is not just a business person who lives in our community. Instead, he is an involved and supportive member of our community, who also has a business. That is a big distinction.

“Dan’s leadership has made all the difference to multiple generations of families who live in Roaring Spring and the Morrisons Cove area. He is a friend, a mentor and a visionary leader for our region and beyond. He is so deserving of receiving the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award.”

Steve McKnight, President/CEO of Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation, agreed.

“Dan has been one of our longest-serving board members of ABCD and a trusted advisor, mentor and friend to both me and my predecessor, Marty Marasco,” McKnight pointed out. His experience as a business and community leader has been highly valued and largely responsible for the evolution



Dan Hoover has been a longtime business leader in Blair County as well as a major part of philanthropic efforts.

of our organization over the years.”

Hoover was “humbled that a number of my peers in the community viewed me worthy of this honor.”

“I view the past recipients of this award in high regard for their impact not only on their businesses but our en-

tire community,” he disclosed. “I feel most of them are my friends and I have served on boards with several of them. I’m truly honored to be included in that esteemed group.”

The Business Excellence Dinner is one of the high points of the Chamber year,

according to Board Chair Clark Stapelfeld.

“It has become a highly-anticipated event and one that speaks to the outstanding leaders in our business community,” he noted. “Adding Dan Hoover to our list of recipients is a terrific thing.”

American Eagle Paper Mills topic of next Breakfast Club

As success stories go, this one was tough to beat. Twenty-years ago, a group of business leaders and investors came together to revive a paper mill that had been closed in 2001, putting 265 employees out of work. Two decades later, American Eagle Paper Mills in Tyrone is, needless to say, back on its feet and doing just fine.

The presentation at the next Chamber Breakfast Club, set for September 14th at 7:45 a.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park, will be entitled, “Working Together: Twenty Years of Progress at American Eagle Paper Mills.”

The speakers will be Philip Devorris, whose father Don helped spearhead the mill’s resurgence, and current V.P of Finance & Administration Clark Adelman

“It was an incredibly impressive effort that showed



Philip Devorris

the resolve of people willing to work together for an important cause,” Devorris pointed out. “It was one of the county’s finest moments, a definite source of pride.”

Adelman agreed. “Even two decades later, people in the Tyrone community still talk about the amazing commitment of business leaders who refused to let this project die. Many of those people are



Clark Adelman

no longer with us but their legacies will always remain tied to our current and future success.”

The cost to attend Breakfast Club is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. To register, contact the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com. Corporate sponsor of the September Breakfast Club is Sickler Tarpey & Associates.

Home Run for Safety sets an all-star roster

A good Chamber event is likely to get even better as the planning phase heads-down the home stretch. Speaking of “home,” the event in question is the Home Run for Safety, held annually by the Chamber’s Safety Committee. This year’s event is on September 13th from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at PNG Field.

“We’re expecting another great turnout,” acknowledged Committee chair Lynn Gardini of CareSmart Solutions. “We’ve got some great sponsors and vendors.”

Gardini emphasized that there is still time for any business interested in serving as either a sponsor or a vendor to come onboard. Simply call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151.

Cost to attend is \$50 per person and includes a continental breakfast, lunch and all materials.

Home Run Vendors

- Advantage Resource Group
- Best Window & Door Company
- Gittings Protective Security
- Keystone Environmental, Health & Safety Services
- Mountain Research
- New Pig Corporation
- Phoenix Rehabilitation and Health Services
- Print Tech of Western PA
- Roberts Oxygen Company
- Teeter Group

Event Sponsors

- Keystone Environmental, Health & Safety Services
- Roberts Oxygen Company

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Chamber adds Swiss Alpine trip to travel itinerary for 2024

The Blair County Chamber and Ketrow KURTZ Travel will head to Switzerland next summer for an exciting trip that will involve trains, cogs, cable cars, boats and buses.

The Alpine Swiss Villages & Rails trip features a host of great locations including Zurich, Wengen, Bern, Interlaken, Grindelwald, Murren and Lucerne.

The trip begins June 18th and concludes on the 26th. An informational meeting about the trip will be held on September 13th at 6:00 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development located at 3900 Industrial Park Drive in Altoona. There is no cost or obliga-



Whether by rail, trail or bus, an adventure through the scenic Swiss Alps is sure to please even the most ardent world traveler.

tion associated with the meeting but people interested in attending should call the Chamber at (814)

943-8151 so we can save you a seat. The meeting should last no more than one hour.



COMMITTEE OF
Non-Profit
Businesses

Living, Giving, Serving Together

Best Practices Forum to address volunteer recruitment, retention

Volunteers play key roles in the business community, especially at non-profit businesses. So the next “Best Practices Forum” being hosted by the Blair County Chamber’s Committee of Non-profit Businesses will focus on ways to find and keep valuable volunteers.

That Forum will be held on Friday, September 8th from 8:15 to 9:45 a.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. The panel

discussion format includes panelists Phyllis Baker from Blair Regional YMCA, Angel Dandrea from Blair Senior Services and Michelle Walters from UPMC Altoona.

The cost to attend the Forum is \$10 for Chamber members and \$20 for non-members. Corporate sponsor is Amtran. To register to attend, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com.

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