

Meetings

Senior Care Web site launched

After two years of collaborative effort, WNY SeniorCare.org has been launched, offering guidance, information and a senior care assessment tool for families experiencing caregiving challenges. Many families may take this holiday season as an opportunity to talk about planning for the future and caring for an elderly loved one. WNYSeniorCare.org can offer a framework for these conversations. WNY SeniorCare.org was funded by a grant from the John R. Oishei Foundation and was developed by members and senior care professionals of the Western New York Foundation for the Aging. Over a period of two years the Web site and its senior care assessment tool was tested, reviewed and refined by families, senior care professionals and geriatricians throughout Western New York.

BN Partnership sets workshop

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is sponsoring a workshop specifically designed for accountants, attorneys, architects, engineers and all others who do not think of themselves in the role of the stereotypical salesperson. The event will take place from 8 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 665 Main St., in Buffalo. The workshop will include information on how to size up clients and discern their needs, disengage from those situations most likely to waste time, control client engagements and the outcome and eliminate unpaid consulting. Call 852-2762 or visit the Web site www.thepartnership.org for more information.

SCORE to help business startups

SCORE Buffalo-Niagara will host a workshop on starting and managing a business from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 24 at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library's central branch, located at 1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo. The workshop is offered for new business startups to learn all the elements of business management required for success. Call 551-4301 or visit www.scorebuffalo.org for more information.

The Wine Room

Finding the perfect bottle

by **JESSICA L. FINCH**
Associate Editor

Tasting every wine he selects for his store, The Wine Room owner Neil Kratzer knows how to locate the perfect bottle for his customers.

Kratzer, who has five years of retail wine experience, opened the store on March 1. He said his focus is bringing quality wine to the area, wine that is not always well known, but is just as good — if not better.

"It's a new store, with a huge selection for the size of the store. And is here to serve the village," he said.

Kratzer grew up in Pennsylvania but married a native of Rochester. He and his wife, Melinda, moved to Milwaukee, Wisc., for Kratzer to pursue his career.

Finding they weren't in the place they wanted to be, the couple focused on moving back to Western New York and settled in East Amherst in 1999.

"The people here are awesome. They are friendly and there is a sense of togetherness," he said about missing WNY when he was living in the Midwest.

He brings that attitude into his store, offering his expertise to each customer in selecting the best bottle of wine.

Kratzer plans to expand this service by creating reference cards that will describe the wine based on sweetness, aroma and other factors, and suggest the best foods to accompany it.

"This would increase the odds that a customer will be happy with



Neil Kratzer, owner of The Wine Room in Williamsville, offers a selection of wines from around the world that are of high quality and low cost.

Photo by John Rusac

the bottle selected," he said.

Another way The Wine Room helps patrons leave happy with their purchases is free sampling on Thursdays. From 5 to 8 p.m. four wines — two white and two red varieties — are offered by a tasting professional. Bottles of the samples are sold that evening at \$2 off each bottle.

Doing business in Williamsville, Kratzer said he is surrounded by well-educated people who travel the world — where they sample wines. Once they return home they want to know how to get those wines here.

"I pick wines that are different and unique — not run-of-the-mill," he said, adding that the quality and price are comparable to other wine retailers.

This season an unusual concoction

has been one of the best sellers. Chocolate Lab by Pleasant Valley, located in Hammondsport, N.Y., is a blend lambrusco red wine and chocolate.

"It's delicious," he said about the dessert wine that features a wide-eyed black Labrador on the label.

Kratzer took what started as a hobby and a passion for wine and

began studying it. He spent about a year looking for a store to own before finding his location for The Wine Room at 5651 Main St., Williamsville, in the Ed Young's Plaza.

The store is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. For information, call 632-2525 or visit www.neilswineroom.com.

Budget Rent a Car deals offered for food donations

Budget Rent a Car of Buffalo is offering discounts on car and truck rentals in exchange for nonperishable (canned) foods for the underprivileged during the holiday season.

In cooperation with the Food Bank of Western New York, Budget will give a 10 percent discount on time and mileage charges for car or truck rentals to anyone who donates food items through Dec. 31 at any one of its seven off airport locations.

Participating locations include; 1340 Millersport Highway in Amherst. For information, visit www.budgetbuffalo.com.

Business News

Buffalo-Amherst Business & Professional Women will hold a holiday social and silent auction at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 14 at Fairdale Banquet Center, 672 Wehrle Drive, Amherst. Tickets are \$25 for dinner and program. The event supports the group's Cornerstone Manor community project. Visit www.buffaloamherstbpw.com or call 832-9327 for information.

Lifetime Health Medical

Group recently won several awards in the 2006 MarCom Creative Awards competition. Lifetime Health won accolades in five categories including two Platinum Awards, two Gold Awards and an honorable mention. Lifetime Health has two health centers in Amherst, the Amherst University Health Center, 1185 Sweet Home Road and Sheridan Drive Health Center, 2075 Sheridan Drive.

Recreational music-making program previewed at Artist Pianos

Artist Pianos will offer a free preview of Clavinova Connection at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 4181 Transit Road, Transitown Plaza.

The Clavinova Connection is a group-based experience for adults that enables anyone to play music they've always loved on the very first day. Each Clavinova Connection session includes a wellness exercise, a keyboard drum circle, an opportunity to improvise and a "song of the day." Recent research using the Clavinova Connection shows that music making can reverse the DNA switches that can trigger the human stress response.

Clavinova Connection Classes for Western New York are offered on Tuesdays, from 1 to 2 p.m. and Saturdays, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Rather than emphasizing musical performance or mastery, this innovative program enables participants, regardless of prior musical experience, to creatively express themselves in a multifaceted group activity. For more information visit www.clavinovaconnection.com or call Grace Giordano, manager of Artist Pianos at 633-7004.

Seminar planned for Medicare-eligible residents

Independent Health will be holding free seminars for residents to learn about the Medicare Advantage plan at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 19 at Banchetti's, 550 N. French Road, Amherst.

Open enrollment for the plan, which allows Medicare beneficiaries to change prescription drug plans, ends Sunday, Dec. 31. The seminar helps residents make informed decisions about their coverage by speaking one-on-one with an Independent Health Medicare Specialist.

The seminar will also have information on the new lower monthly premiums, reduced co-pays and enhanced benefits beginning in 2007.

Anyone interested in attending should make a reservation at 635-4900 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. seven days a week, or at 1-800-958-4405.

Information is available at www.independenthealth.com.