

Booths Are Going Fast!

Buy Local Expo Sept. 18 At Diamond Mills

Last year, Tony Marmo and his team at Normann Staffing put on quite a show at the Chamber's Buy Local Expo at Diamond Mills Hotel and Conference Center in Saugerties.

Their "Wizard of Oz"-themed booth enchanted bypassers with costumes and props from the 1939 MGM fantasy film and a tagline that read, "There's No Place Like Normann Staffing."

At the 2024 Buy Local Expo on Sept. 18, Marmo promises another bewitching exhibit designed to drum up excitement about his company, a Kingston-based private staffing and recruiting agency.

"It's a fun experience," said Marmo, who donned a Tin Man costume at last year's Expo. "We try to get creative and make it more than just a business exchange, while at the same time, getting the message out about jobs that are available and businesses looking for folks to fill positions."

Normann Staffing is among the 100 or so local businesses that will be highlighting their products and services at the annual Buy Local Expo on Sept. 18 from noon to 4:00 p.m. at Diamond Mills, 25 South Partition St. in Saugerties.

There will be a Mixer following the Expo, from 4:00 to 6:00, exclusively for Sponsors and Exhibitors, on Diamond Mills' outdoor terrace.

Naccarato Insurance is the Presenting Sponsor, and Timely Signs is the Principal Sponsor.

Chamber President Ward Todd said, "The Buy Local Expo presents a great opportunity for our members to network with other local business leaders and be engaged with hundreds of attendees who will pass through during the afternoon. Our event is open to the public and free to attend, however, booth space is going fast."

John Naccarato, President and CEO at Naccarato Insurance, highly recommends that business owners consider reserving a booth. He believes so strongly in the Buy Local Expo that his company, headquartered in Saugerties, has backed it as the Presenting Sponsor for 12 years.

"I think it's important to have the businesses showcase what they do because a lot of people may not realize what's here in Ulster County," Naccarato said. "They may say, 'Hey, I didn't know there was this line of business here,' so it's a way to get your business out there, and it helps keep the money flowing in our community."

"I myself prefer going to local businesses because not only do they offer better service, but by doing so, you're helping them give back to the community. The more people shop locally, the



more businesses can enrich our community."

Additionally, Naccarato said the Expo is a good way for businesses to connect face-to-face with existing clients and grow their customer base.

"You build rapport with the people who come out. It's really getting your name out there and showcasing your business, and later on down the road, if they're looking for a change, they may think of you in the future."

The Buy Local Expo is held at Diamond Mills' large ballroom, with ample space for booth displays and the heavy foot traffic the event generates.

"For us, it's a perfect opportunity to support our Chamber of Commerce," said Brienne Ebel-Whalen, Director of Sales at Diamond Mills. "Our size and location make for an ideal place for the Chamber's Expo. The ballroom can be emptied and customized to suit events of all types."

Ebel-Whalen also noted that Diamond Mills has picked up its share of business from the Buy Local Expo—whether it be from other businesses or people who attend to check out the action.

"It's an opportunity to show our space off to so many people

and businesses," she said. "I love greeting and mingling with businesses from all over the county. It's like one big all-day Mixer. It's an amazing networking opportunity."

It's also an amazing time to get creative and build brand awareness in a big way.

While Marmo wouldn't disclose what's up his sleeve for this year's Expo, he did promise that Normann Staffing's booth would be timely and engaging.

"We'll maybe take a page out of the entertainment world like what's hot on Broadway. We'll start putting our creative hats on soon. The point is to just have fun and do business," he said.

The cost for an exhibitor booth at the Expo is very affordable, just \$395 for Chamber members. Sponsorships start at \$595 to be a Diamond Sponsor; \$995 to be a Platinum Sponsor and \$1,495 to be a Premier Sponsor.

To be a sponsor or exhibitor, contact Allison Costanzo at Allison@UlsterChamber.org or (845) 338-5100, ext. 7. There's more information at www.UlsterChamber.org.

Better Than The Average Bear

Deising's: A Delicious Destination For 59 Years

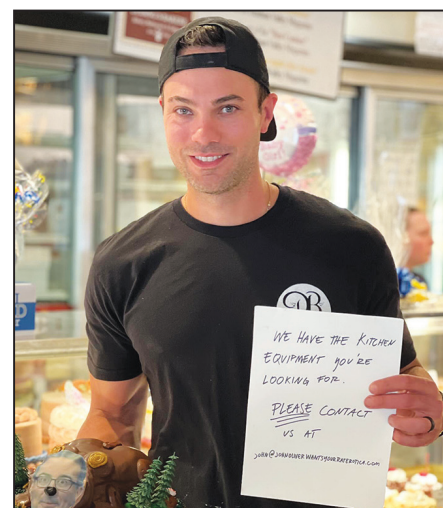
Deising's Bakery has once again captured the national spotlight, and this time, it isn't for being named "Best Retail Bakery in America." That honor, bestowed on the Uptown Kingston business in 1984 by Modern Baking Magazine, kind of pales in comparison to all the attention and publicity surrounding the John Oliver bear cakes the bakery pumped out in June of this year.

To recap the multi-layered story, bakery owner Eric Deising had left a handwritten note on the door of the shuttered Red Lobster in the town of Ulster, which closed in May. An auction had been held to sell off all the kitchen equipment. Deising was in search of an oven and grill and figured he might get lucky.

Turns out, HBO had bought the equipment for the show "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver" to recreate Red Lobster's kitchen in the studio and make its iconic biscuits to serve to the audience.

Long story short, Oliver got wind of Deising's note and ended up connecting with him and his nephew, Peter Deising and then challenging them to make a bear cake with his image in exchange for new kitchen equipment.

"I ended up watching the show while I was working and immediately started brainstorming ways to make that cake with his face on it," said Peter Deising, the third-generation manager of the family-owned bakery.



sold them for \$8 each.

Customers couldn't get enough, media attention ballooned, and the ending was as sweet as the ganache drizzled over each cake.

"We sold 3,800 cakes and donated all the proceeds, \$15,183 to People's Place," said Deising. "John Oliver's team delivered a new oven the following week, and we made him a 3 1/2-foot bear cake, which he displayed on his show the next week. He also donated \$10,000 to People's Place. I can't believe how this really blew up the way it did. You can't pay for this kind of advertising."

Truth be told, Deising's doesn't need much advertising. The bakery has been around for almost 60 years and is known for its 300 pastries and desserts as well as its handmade breads, rolls, pies, doughnuts and cookies.

It all started after German immigrants Uwe and Ingrid Deising bought Ketterer's Bakery in Midtown Kingston in 1965. They ran it under the Ketterer's name until 1980 when they opened a second location in Uptown at the former

7,500-square-foot Goodyear Tire Service Center building. Not only did they purchase new bakery equipment to keep up with production demands, but they also opened a European-style cafe at the new spot.

Ever since, it's been one of Kingston's most beloved businesses and a hotspot for tourists visiting the area. Deising says while the recent bear publicity was nifty, he and his family get their greatest satisfaction in being part of so many families' milestones from christenings and birthdays to graduations and anniversaries.

"We often hear people say, 'You guys made our parents' wedding cake and now you're making ours,' so that's a very special feeling to know we've been part of these special occasions for generations," he said.

Another milestone worth noting is the 45 years Deising's has been a part of the Ulster Chamber. The family cherishes the business connections it has made over the decades, according to Deising. "It's important for any small business to be in the Chamber because it's all about community and networking with other local businesses," he said.

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Deising's Bakery is at 111 North Front St. in Kingston. For more information, go to deising.com or call (845) 338-7505.



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Ulster Literacy Changes People's Lives

Estimated 25,000 in UC Need Help Reading

"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." — Frederick Douglass.

In recognition of National Literacy Month in September, the staff and volunteers of the Ulster Literacy Association have carved out September 16-22 to bring attention to the vital work their agency is doing to instill reading skills locally.

"I think it's important for people to know that in Ulster County, one in five adults is likely struggling with reading. That's over 25,000 adults in our county who are not proficient readers," says Ulster Literacy Executive Director Amy Lenard. "Literacy is certainly the social justice issue of our time."

Lenard said poor literacy costs the U.S. economy \$225 billion a year in lost productivity. Meanwhile, children whose parents have low literacy levels have a 72% chance of reading at the lowest level in school.

Ulster Literacy is trying to turn the tide by helping about 300 adults every year through one-on-one tutoring for adults reading below a 5th-grade level. The organization also offers one-on-one tutoring for adults learning English as a new language, as well as group classes called English for Parents.

Ulster Literacy's correctional education program has helped more than 150 learners through creative writing, art therapy, and



initiatives; and hosting a fundraiser.

Lenard said businesses can also consider making a tax-deductible monetary or in-kind donation since Ulster Literacy is a non-profit.

"Literacy changes everything," she said. "A stronger literacy community is a stronger business community. It enhances every area of our civic and economic lives."

Lenard, who has worked in literacy her entire career, has been with Ulster Literacy since 2010. She took over the top spot from former Executive Director Casandra Beam in 2022 after serving as the organization's Program Director, a role that saw her teach, train tutors and organize literacy classes in Kingston, Saugerties and New Paltz.

Lenard said the job gives her incredible satisfaction watching people overcome and gain skills that open the door for employment and improving their lives.

"I'm so profoundly grateful to be able to work with adults who work extremely hard to make their lives better for their family and for their community," she said.

"My life has been greatly improved by the people that I've been able to meet who have come through our door asking for

help with their reading or help with their English. It's made my understanding of the world more enhanced. I think that's one of the things that makes it special for all of us at Ulster Literacy because we all care deeply about everybody who comes through our door."

Ulster Literacy Association, located at 480 Aaron Court in Kingston, can be reached at (845) 331-6837 or ulsterliteracy.org.



GED preparation at the Ulster County Jail. The program, which is about 20 years old, was suspended during COVID-19, but has been back for about a year with expanded programming.

Ulster Literacy does it all with over 100 active tutors, many of whom are retired and dedicated to helping. "It's the volunteers who really carry out our mission," Lenard said.

Lenard said she saw many volunteers and learners "become very close to each other," which was especially true during the isolation of the pandemic.

"It's a very beautiful relationship to see," she said. "It makes our community better to see how deeply people learn to care about one another and their experiences."

Lenard said Chamber members can help spread the word about Ulster County Literacy Week by posting flyers, bookmarks and other materials in their businesses; providing social media support; and by donating a portion of sales from some point during the week.

Chamber members can help all year by encouraging employees to become a volunteer tutor for one hour each week; supporting workplace literacy by hosting a literacy or English class for workers; including Ulster Literacy in workplace giving

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UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

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Networking Mixer @ Front Street Tavern
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Sponsor: Berardi Realty

Thursday August 22 | 9:00 - 10:30 am

Business Card Exchange
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 1835 Ulster Avenue | Lake Katrine, NY
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Sponsor: Hudson Valley Credit Union

Wednesday September 4 | 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Networking Mixer @ Stone Dock Golf Course
 12 Stone Dock Road | High Falls, NY
 There is no cost for Members and Prospective Members. Reservations are required.
Sponsor: Village Apothecary

Reserve Your Booth Now!
Wednesday September 18 | 12 noon - 4:00 pm

Buy Local Expo
 Diamond Mills Hotel & Conference Center
 25 S. Partition Street | Saugerties, NY
Presenting Sponsor: Naccarato Insurance
Principal Sponsor: Timely Signs

Thursday October 24 | 5:30 pm Cocktails 6:30 pm Dinner

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More Info and Registration UlsterChamber.org
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Travis Rask - Vice President
 Category: Accounting Services
 Description: *Accounting, Payroll, Sales Tax, Individual and Business Taxes.*

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5 Washington Terrace
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www.myindependentliving.org
Kelly Wright - Director of Marketing & Development
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Shataya McComb - CEO
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Exciting Times Ahead Best Western's New Local Owner Has Big Plans

Debra Harris has been Director of Sales at Kingston's Best Western Plus, formerly the Holiday Inn, since 1986, and she's never been more optimistic about the future of the 50-year-old hotel at 503 Washington Ave.

That's because it recently changed hands and now has a local owner, who is more accessible and has a real stake in the community, according to Harris.

On July 19, 2023, the Patel family, who owns properties in Kingston and Middletown, purchased the 208-room hotel from Cooper Hotels, a Tennessee-based developer and management company.

"It is great to have owners who are here," Harris said. "Before this transition, if you needed a new roof or anything else, you'd have to go to the corporate office in Memphis, but our new owners are right here, so if something requires attention, you can actually show them what's needed. That's refreshing for us."

The Patel family decided early on to keep the staff in place for continuity and a seamless transition, including John Turner, a 42-year hotel employee, who was promoted to General Manager after the transition. The family said his institutional knowledge of the hotel has been invaluable as they settle in at the new property.

The family's initial goal at the Best Western was to ensure all "processes and procedures were more fully automated" and make sure the staff was happy.

Going forward, they have a "pretty big list" for property improvements, including a new parking lot within the next two years. Further projects include updating the structure and enhancing the guest rooms with new lighting and removing the carpets to add flooring.

Another goal is to host more weddings, parties and business functions. The hotel has been a Chamber member for 55 years, and its on-site, customizable event space known as The Venue Uptown hosts most of the Chamber's monthly breakfasts every year.

Harris said the hotel is also the go-to place for film crews, construction workers, tourists, business gatherings and big wedding groups that need to have all their guests in one spot.

Not only does it boast 8,800 square feet of flexible space for large functions like black-tie galas and awards ceremonies, but there's also a spacious outdoor courtyard. In addition, the hotel features a restaurant and bar known as the First Capital Bistro, an indoor heated pool, fitness center and arcade games for kids of all ages.



The hotel's Executive Chef Dane Fullenwider and his catering team create sumptuous breakfast and brunch buffets for early events, plated and buffet luncheons as well as plated and buffet dinners with carving stations. Packages are affordable and customizable for every price range.

Harris, who got her start at the Syracuse Marriott while she was a college student, said she has grown in her role and enjoyed watching the hotel evolve over the decades.

"I can still remember my first day," she said. "I had a typewriter, file cabinet and phone. Things have changed in a big way. The job is constantly changing with technology, and you're always learning more, even when it comes to selling hotel rooms, so that makes it exciting."

"Even though it's the same job I've had since 1986, it's not. It's

evolving. You're not bored. The phone is going to ring. You never know what client is going to call and what they're going to need. I love what I do," she said.

As for the future, Harris said she can't wait to work more directly with the new owners and said the sky is the limit to what they can achieve together. "It's going to be an exciting time for the Best Western Plus and all our guests. We look forward to seeing all the great things they're going to do in Kingston."

The Best Western Plus is located at 503 Washington Ave. in Kingston. For more information, go to bwpkingston.com, or call (845) 338-0400.



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