



GALAX DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

Working to Benefit the Community of Galax, Virginia

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July 1, 2008

Merchants, Professionals, and Community in Partnership

Issue 17

2008–2009 MEMBERSHIP

The GDA membership drive is underway for the 2008-09 fiscal year. We are offering a special rate for businesses that renew or join at the next two regularly scheduled meetings. Members who renew and/or businesses that join at the general meetings held on July 7th and August 11th will pay \$25 for membership as there are no additional administrative or postal costs. The fee for renewing or joining at other times will be \$30. Memberships will still last from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, in conjunction with the fiscal year.

All members will continue to receive the benefits of advertising discounts, networking opportunities, collective marketing campaigns, and inclusion in the Holiday Gift Certificate program that kept over \$16,000 in the local business community last year alone.

The benefits far outweigh the cost of membership. For example, in the past, a full color, one quarter page ad in the Gazette's Visitor's Guide would cost a business \$125 on newsprint paper but GDA members were offered a full color, quarter page ad on glossy paper for only \$65!!

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AN ADDRESS FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

I didn't have to make a campaign speech before I became president of the GDA. Someday, I hope that leading this organization is a position for which many talented, community minded people will compete. In the meantime, you have me! So, what would I have said to you had I been required to campaign? What things, in my viewpoint, need to happen in order for the GDA to continue to flourish and grow? I stress that what I am about to share is just that...my viewpoint. What I'm hoping is that as you read this and think about the future, you will make some notes and be ready to contribute with your ideas, experience, wisdom and action as we move forward together. Here are the three things I would like to work on initially:

Planning, Branding, and Promoting.

First of all, I feel the GDA needs both a strategic plan and a business plan. With a strategic plan, we define our vision for downtown. What do we want downtown Galax to ultimately be? We need to discuss and list our strengths, our weaknesses, our opportunities and threats (called a basic SWOT analysis) and then determine our strategy for achieving that vision. With a business plan, we chart our course...what activities and processes we choose to transform the vision into reality. Having a plan keeps an organization focused for decision making. Should we do this, should we do that? Without a plan, we become an organization of default. An organization of default may engage in a great deal of activity only to find that they were busy, but not necessarily productive. Think of treading water...

a lot of good energy is expended just to stay afloat, but you're not really going anywhere. With a plan, we become an organization of design. We establish the vision and we set our course. We look at our plan (our roadmap) and select projects and activities that move us forward. In keeping with the aquatic analogy, we may use a butterfly stroke, breaststroke, maybe just dog paddle...or even backstroke a few times; but we will be getting somewhere. Essential to planning is the inclusion of a budget for both the financial and human resources. How do we establish a stream of income and how do we attract more people to help with our cause so that we build up rather than burn out our workers?

Secondly, I feel we need a brand for downtown.

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RACKS OF THANKS TO FAMILY DOLLAR

Special Thanks to William at Family Dollar for donating the clothing racks and hangers for displaying the GDA's new line of merchandise. The product looks so much more attractive and appealing on display at Rooftop of Virginia. In addition, we have a display unit to showcase our new embroidered "Best Pick in Virginia" shirts and hoodies at our tent during street festivals. Thank you Family Dollar. GDA merchandise sales will surely benefit from your kind donation.



President Continued....

The City branding of Galax as “The Best Pick in Virginia” is **FaBuLouS!** Our city, counties, and the Chamber of Commerce work diligently on Tourism and Economic Development. Their efforts are paying off and bringing more and more people and opportunity to our area. However, I still talk to people who have visited or moved here from other areas but have never even been to Main Street. How do we, as a specific element of that “Best Pick,” place an emphasis on the area defined as Downtown Galax? How do we also maintain the value of our membership for those outside the Downtown area? I believe there is a way and I think we have the talent and ability within our organization to find it.

Thirdly, I feel we need an organized marketing effort that couples the “plan” with the “brand” and creates an attractive and enticing message for promotion. We know that people are always looking for a great destination. The Twin Counties is an accessible retreat offering relaxation and recreation for countless people within a few hours drive. Our tourism and economic development partners are making that happen. It is up to the GDA to be certain that Downtown is considered a prime attraction, whether part of an excursion or as a destination on its own.

Still basking in the glow of a great Friday night “Groovin’ on Grayson” (meet the newest Entre Nous fan anxiously awaiting their first download), I am even more encouraged and certain that the GDA has the “stuff” it takes to make it happen. It was intoxicating to feel the energy from the team who put it all together. May I say, you guys rock!! Put that kind of energy behind a plan, a brand, and some aggressive touting, and, oh my... The sky’s the limit!!
~Sandra

UNITED WAY MOVIE SAT. JULY 19 AT 7 PM REX THEATER

GROOVIN’ ON GRAYSON UPDATE

While the rain posed a hurdle to our first Groovin’ Summer Concert at the Grayson Street Stage, families and fans came out to experience the free music event downtown. The music rocked and the clouds rolled while spectators enjoyed fare from the Bogey’s Restaurant and the Gladeville Rurians. Kabalah coffee was on hand for a java jolt while the Gardener’s Cottage offered attendees peanuts and popcorn to go with the premium beers and wine available at the event. Face painting, sidewalk chalk, and hand painted ornaments pleased parents and entertained kids for hours.

Numerous merchants remained open until 8 pm and announcements were made on stage. We are interested in obtaining feedback and ideas on how to encourage shopping after 5 pm through creative marketing campaigns or incentives. Merchants are encouraged to attend the Groovin’ on Grayson meetings, typically held on Wednesdays at 5:15 at Rooftop, and offer their suggestions on making this a retail-friendly event.

The idea of the event is to raise funds for the GDA through the sale of beverages and GDA merchandise while offering members the opportunity to showcase their products to a group of people that don’t shop downtown during the workday. The GoG committee is always looking for volunteers to help with monitoring, sales, set up/break down and idea creation. If you are interested in helping the endeavor with ideas or volunteer time, please contact the GDA by email at galaxdowntown@yahoo.com or leave a message at 236-0668.

At the time of this publication, the next Groovin on Grayson event is currently scheduled for July 25, the final Friday of the month thru September.

Membership Continued...

The Galax Downtown Association has worked diligently to become a recognizable, proactive organization which improves the quality of life for the community. Through unity and dedication, our efforts resulted in attractive, informative marketing materials that work to bring people into our historic district and strengthen the economic vitality of our business community. We have had many successes recently and will continue to pursue growth and prosperity for all of our members. **Please join our efforts and share the success.**

The GDA board wishes to extend our heartfelt prayers to Doris and Jim Cuoghi as they continue to fight Jim’s battle with cancer.

***Courage is the ladder on which
all other virtues mount.***
Clare Booth Luce

3RD HOSPITALITY TRAINING

Blue Ridge Host will be offering the third in the series of informative business sessions at the Crossroads Institute on Monday July 21st from 7 – 9 pm. The focus of this session is “Tourism Hospitality Opportunities,” answering the questions “What is an ambassador to tourism?” and discussing cultural / business attitudes and finding local business information. Don Foster and Donnie Turner will be the speakers at this event which is **FREE** to GDA members. Several members have attended these sessions and reported that the information is very useful and applicable to all types of businesses. Refreshments provided.

On August 11, Donnie Turner and Don Foster will be conducting a “FAM tour” (Familiarization Tour) of areas of interest within Carroll County and the surrounding area. Those interested in participating will meet at Crossroads at 8:00 for an 8:30 departure. The tour will last through 4:30 pm. Be prepared to purchase your own lunch that day.

Questions regarding the Tourism Ambassador / Hospitality Training can be directed to Don Foster by email at info@innatorchardgap.com or by phone (276) 398-3207.



