



Wednesday, June 23, 2010

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**Events****Buffalo Niagara  
SCORE offers  
Speaker's Bureau**

The Buffalo Niagara SCORE chapter is offering a Speaker's Bureau for presentation to groups about services provided by SCORE, as well as other business-related topics, such as how to locate business financing, home-based businesses, franchises and human resources. Speakers are available free of charge for presentations to business, civic, nonprofit, educational and service groups. More information and registration is available online by visiting [buffalo.scorechapter.org](http://buffalo.scorechapter.org).

**Interns sought  
for governor's  
Buffalo office**

Gov. David A. Paterson is seeking college-level (undergraduate and graduate) interns to provide assistance and support his Region 1 Buffalo Office. Candidates should have an interest in state and local government. Internships are available for interested students during all semesters and quarters of the school year, including the summer. Students gain firsthand knowledge of the legislative and political process and will be exposed to government, public policy and significant work with real responsibilities. Beginning and ending dates are flexible, and applicants should be available for a minimum of eight hours per week. For more information, call Janique Curry at 783-0726 or e-mail [Janique.Curry@chamber.state.ny.us](mailto:Janique.Curry@chamber.state.ny.us).

**BNHRA to hold  
networking on  
Miss Buffalo II**

The Buffalo Niagara Human Resource Association will provide an evening of networking aboard the Miss Buffalo II at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 21, at the Erie Basin Marina. Boarding time is 5:30, and departure is 6 p.m. The boat will dock at 8 p.m. The private charter includes networking, food and a disc jockey. The cost is \$30 for members and \$40 for nonmembers. All Western New York human resource and business professionals are welcomed to join. Registration can be made online at [www.bnhra.org](http://www.bnhra.org).

# Group aids job hunt for professionals

by BRIANNE GALLI  
Intern

For eight years, Amherst resident Donna Chesnut was a geographic information systems analyst for the Town of Amherst.

Her responsibilities included working with the Engineering Department on projects such as modeling the town's drainage systems and managing projects involving historic preservation and emergency response planning. A significant amount of her time was spent working on teams to create grants, one of which totaled \$550,000.

When the state budget forced municipal governments to cut jobs, 20 to 30 town employees took advantage of a voluntary separation. However, more cuts were made in addition to these, and one was Chesnut.

On a tip from a former co-worker's mother, Chesnut started going to the Erie Community College One-Stop Center where she met Bob Durante, a business services specialist at the center.

Chesnut began attending Durante's "Breakfast Club" group at the One-Stop but was not interested in the entry-level job openings that the group was finding.

"How do you find the next level position?" asked Chesnut.

Durante looked into her job experience and introduced her to the Western New York Executive Candidates Group, 35 prescreened professionals from the area who meet once a week to use their experience and resources to maximize their job-searching efforts.

Before the group was created in September, the One-Stop Center saw an increased number of mid- and high-level professionals who had lost their jobs and were coming for help. Those being referred had years of experience as managers and supervisors, making it difficult to serve their needs in the center's typical groups.

After a prescreening process and being placed on a waiting list, Chesnut officially joined the group in February, soon discover-



Donna Chesnut of Getzville works on her laptop computer, searching the Web for job opportunities.

Photo by Jim Smerecak  
Purchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)

ing how valuable it is to work in a group of similar educational backgrounds, to share ideas and to gain feedback. In working together, the members have learned how the job search process has changed and have found new ways to market themselves.

At its weekly meetings, the WNY Executive Candidates Group assigns tasks to each of its members, which they must work on outside the meetings. In doing so, they use the same skills as they would on a job and learn new ones from their respective assignments.

Chesnut referred to these as "weekly staff meetings" where the group discusses job leads and interviewing tips and critiques each others' resumes. Durante stressed that the group wanted to do more than just meet once a week, citing the weekly "elevator speeches" given by each member, as well as guest speakers from different companies to support the group's proactive approach.

"We try to connect the group with people that can help them find job possibilities," said Durante. By pooling their years of

experience, reaching out to new and old contacts, and brainstorming strategies to get jobs, the group has positioned itself to gain an advantage in the job market.

The tasks assigned to the group members focus on getting both their own names and the group itself recognized in order to make more contacts and find more leads. One assignment included making business cards for the individual members and the group to take along on interviews and to pass on to new contacts.

Chesnut said the business cards act as "mini resumes," stating not only their previous job titles but also their other specialties to show that they are not limited to one area of work.

One of Chesnut's assignments was to make the media aware of what the group has done in searching for jobs and getting its name out to potential employers. Gaining coverage from the various news outlets, she was successful in her marketing, with some members having the opportunity to present their "elevator speeches" on WIVB-TV, Channel 4.

Along with their assignments, group members volunteer to present a "best practice" topic to the group. These have included interviewing, resume writing and using the networking website LinkedIn.

"I want employers to look there," said Chesnut of her LinkedIn profile. In creating an online presence, LinkedIn has been more beneficial to employers and the WNY Executive Candidates than other networking sites such as Facebook. The site allows users to maintain a "more creative resume" and to control the information about themselves.

In addition to LinkedIn, the group has expanded its online identity to include its own website. The site serves as a free "keyword-searchable resume database" that companies and recruiters can use at anytime to gain access to the members' resumes and contact information. Rather than spending money for others to search through pools of applicants, companies could visit the site where 35 qualified candidates have supplied all their necessary information.

Through the group, Chesnut says she has met great people whom she would not have met otherwise and has built friendships that will continue to help her in long-term networking. The group members have kept her motivated through her time of transition, despite the many ups and downs it may bring.

"It helps you keep your career search moving," said Chesnut, adding that some of her best job leads have come from group members.

Chesnut noted that the group has experienced a good turnover recently, as some have found jobs and new members have joined. Since the second quarter of the year, more jobs have been posted, which is promising for those still looking for work.

"Our goal is to get people working," said Durante. As of now, 30 candidates have found jobs after working with the group.

# Jewelry designer opens first store

by KEATON T. DEPRIEST  
Associate Editor

After 11 years as a jewelry designer, Karen Porterfield, decided to showcase her handmade products in her own store.

In May, she opened Wild at Heart, at 5759 Main St., at Garrison Road.

"It has really been a dream come true for me," said Porterfield, who credited husband Gordon for helping her open the store and assisting her with the business.

A Niagara Falls native, Porterfield began making her own jewelry in 1999. Until recently, her products were available only at art shows.

Porterfield said she began participating in art shows after developing a wide selection of her jewelry. She has sold the items in Western New York events as well as in shows across the mid-Atlantic region.

"I traveled to art shows extensively and regularly," she said. "Most recently, my jewelry was in the Allentown Art Festival as well as shows in Rochester."



Karen Porterfield is the owner of Wild at Heart in Williamsville. She began making her own jewelry in 1999.

Photo by Jim Smerecak  
Purchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)

Porterfield has made all the jewelry in her store, but the business also offers hair accessories, designer purses and scarves and high-end jackets from the October Sage clothing line.

"We have a little bit of everything here but mainly a lot of jewelry for people to buy," she said.

Wild at Heart will hold its grand opening during business hours on Saturday, June 26. Porterfield said the store will feature refreshments for customers as well a free item for the first 25 customers who make purchases.

"We are going to try and draw out a crowd and do promotional things for them," she said.

The store is currently open from 1 to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

After July 1, however, Porterfield said Wild at Heart will offer summer hours, extending its hours of operation from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

"We are still examining our hours, though," Porterfield said. "Being a new business, we are still trying to figure out what works best for the customers."

For more information about Wild at Heart, call 810-9006.

Further information is also available on the business's website, [www.jewelrybykaren.com](http://www.jewelrybykaren.com).

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