

# Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association Newsletter Spring 2009



Lake Erie  
Concord  
Grape Belt

The Oldest And Largest Concord Grape Growing Region

## Discovery Center Update

Progress continues on the creation of the Grape Discovery Center. The CGBHA is now leasing the building at 3805 West Main Rd. (Rt. 20) in Westfield from the CCIDA. In April, funds from our economic revitalization grant should be received and used to pay the IDA. Once this occurs, the building will be transferred to the Association. In the meantime R.W. Larson Architects has been commissioned to provide detailed schematic drawings of the building.

The next step will be to move from the original concept design in to a detailed design development for the building renovations. The detailed design will provide the basis for soliciting bids for the building renovations from selected contractors. If monies flow reliably from the grant, actual renovations should begin in the summer. Renovations are anticipated to be completed in the Fall or Winter 2010. The renovated building will represent the completion of Phase I of our project.

Phase II will involve the design and construction of the exhibit and retail space within the building and the funding of the initial working capital for the Grape Discovery Center. The Association has applied for Federal appropriations through Sen. Charles Schumer's office to help with this phase. The request was submitted in February and we hope to receive positive news on these funds in the near future.

The Discovery Center will not be complete however without support from Association members and private businesses from within the area. A private fundraising campaign will be kicked off in the summer with an OPEN HOUSE at the Grape Discovery Center. A fund raising booklet describing the project has been designed and will be ready to hand to donors during the Open House fund raising drive kick off. Stay tuned for more information on this upcoming event.

Dave Momberger, Chair, Building Committee

## Grapes In The Classroom



Steve Cockran from Growers Cooperative talks to middle school children about our unique grape belt region.

Grape belt middle school students are learning about Concord grapes and the weather, thanks to a grant from the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation to the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Assn. Tom DiVecchio, the weatherman at TV24, Rocket 101 radio and other stations in Erie, teamed with the CGBHA to gain funding of a program to help students learn about the grape industry, weather measurement, how weather affects grape growing, careers in weather/ grapes, health benefits of grapes, and the soon-to-be Grape Discovery Center.

Presentations have been a tag team with Tom DiVecchio and a Grape Belt representative, usually Steve Cockram. Tom leads off, asking what industry is this area's economic driver (answer: agriculture). He does a real hands on demonstration on what weather factors (temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, and air speed) allow a "wimpy student cloud" to grow into a "giant he-man storm cloud". Steve talks about how Lake Erie affects our climate, and how weather affects various stages of the growing season. Health benefits of grape juice and the new Grape Discovery Center are covered as well. What really makes the presentation go over well is the bottle of 100% Concord grape juice >>>

**Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 194, Westfield, NY 14787  
[www.concordgrapebelt.org](http://www.concordgrapebelt.org)

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**716-386-4833 cell 716-640-4641**

## President's Corner

Now that an "old fashioned" Winter is almost gone, we can look forward to Spring and new beginnings.

Over the past few months, many meetings with various officials have taken place and the site for the Grape Discovery Center has been secured. At this time, the architect and staff are doing a final assessments before bids will be announced to begin the work on this project.

In the meantime, more work is being done to secure sufficient funds so that we will be able to complete the entire project without having to phase the project.

Agriculture and tourism are two of the biggest businesses in New York State and in many states in our nation. Joining them to form a premier "Agritourism" facility is our goal in forming the Grape Discovery Center. Both the Concord grape industry and the wineries should greatly benefit from the thousands of people we expect to make this a prime destination. Restaurants and small businesses and other tourism experiences along the Grape Belt will also benefit.

History of the grape region will be an important part of the Center and we will be reaching out to people to let us know of any historical items they might wish to donate to the displays.

Helen Baran, President

## Social Networking

Emails and Internet Web pages were new technologies that have now become daily necessities for many of us. I recently had a computer malfunction and was unable to get on the internet for two days. I can attest to how dependent I have become on electronic communications. The U.S. Post Office also know of the big move from paper mail to the internet.

At the December gathering of Regional Flavor Cluster Groups in Charleston, one of the sessions was about Web 2.0. This term refers to the second generation of web based programs. Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter are a few examples of a bunch of new applications.

And now there is a new term for the way some people are using the internet, its called 'social networking'. There are free software providers (you do have to put up with a few ads as the price for using) that allow people to become part of specific groups, like a small community. Members of the group are referred to as "friends". I've created one of these social networks as a learning experience. I call it America's Grape Country Social Network. The web address is <http://amgrapecountry.ning.com>. You don't have to be a member to see most of the information on the site but you do need to be a members to participate in certain ways. Any member can post comments for everyone else to see, upload photos (I get to approve before they appear) or videos, post events on the network's calendar, etc. So, do you want to become friends with some new people? Andy Dufresne



that every student gets.

We have given presentations to classes each at four schools, and plan on visiting as many of the grape belt schools as we can later this spring. One teacher thought the presentation was informative enough that she has scheduled us back for a different class that she teaches. We thank the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation for their support of helping our youth learn about the weather and the grape industry.

## Scenes from Enhancing Our Regional Flavor II Conference



Captions: Top left - Outdoor recreation panel - Phil Swiatkowski, President, Eastern Lake Erie Charter Boat Association, David Denis, Lake Country Bike, Mark Baldwin, Roger Tory Peterson Institute and Andy Dufresne; top right - Farm, Food and Culinary Bounty panel Tim Burch, Burch Farm Country Market, Jennifer Johnson, President, Chautauqua-Lake Erie Wine Trail, Tony Piscoli, Sapore Resturante and Robert Green; bottom left—Christa Seychew, Field and Fork Network; Center Amy Kedron, Founding Executive Director, Buffalo First; bottom right—Lisa Tucker, Edible Buffalo, bottom, two of four small groups breakout session. No photo - Arts, Crafts, Cultural Events panel—Rick Davis, 1891 Fredonia Opera House, Audrey Dowling, Chautauqua—Lake Erie Art Trail, Mark Pouthier, Manager, Cross Roads Market, Mike Ferguson, Gen. Manager, Jamestown Savings Bank Areen and Stephanie Burdo, CCVB. Thanks to Tom Moore, CCIDA, for the photos!

The Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association has been one of six national pilot groups to develop and apply the concepts of “Regional Flavors” as a tool for economic development. Participants at the second Regional Flavor Conference responded strongly that they understand the concept:

“ Yes I do, The Regional Flavor concept embraces food, tourism, art, history, landscapes, entrepreneurs to join together to develop and market their local resources keeping their monies in the area to further growth in the area.”

“ Yes - all aspects that make a community unique—not just what you can eat.”

“Yes - my local economy and what it has to offer. All members of that community must work together to offer these unique and priceless attributes to others”

“Yes—great niche for the Concord Grape Belt and flavor of our region. Grape theme is good, stick with it.”

“It building on what we have—agriculture and tourism are the #1 and #2 industries in NYS. To collaborate and build our businesses—the parts becoming more than the whole or becoming a new enhanced whole.”

“I like that the ‘feel’ of the region extends beyond Chautauqua County. From Harborcreek, PA to Buffalo, NY to Athens Ohio. We heard from our Greater Region and I like that!”

### 2nd Celebrate America’s Grape Country Week Planned for August 15-23

Plans are being developed for the 2009 America’s Grape Country Week and it should be a full 9 days of things to see and do in the grape belt region.

The 2nd America’s Grape Country Wine Festival will be held in Dunkirk on August 15 and 16. The Westfield Farmer’s Market is planning another Local Food Heroes Cook-off. There will be a theme for each day - Art Trail Day, History Day, Culinary Day, Kids Day, Outdoor Adventures Day, Fredonia Farm Festival Day. There are also activities planned by other groups that will fit in well with the celebration. If you have ideas or comments please share with event leader Stephanie Burdo, Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau.



# Promoting Tourism In the Grape Belt Region



## Building Networks, Increasing Collaborations

One area where the Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association has had considerable success is in building new networks and strengthening collaborations with other businesses, organizations and leaders. Being one of six national Regional Flavors 'pilot learning cluster' has provided a lot of the spark for this effort. We realize that though promoting grapes and the grape industry is our core and primary mission, we can't expect others to support our objectives if we fail to recognize their objectives and needs. Partnerships strengthen us all.

Some twenty different businesses and organizations helped with the "Enhancing Our Regional Flavor II" 2009 Conference. Some of these we have had close ties with since our beginning, groups like the Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau, VisitErie Visitors Bureau, Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency and the Chautauqua-Lake Erie Wine Trail. The Conference also helped us to strengthen our relations with new businesses and groups representing bikers, fishermen, birders, Bed & Breakfasts Inns, culinary bounty, art galleries, farm markets, local food producers, cultural and events attractors, etc.

We are pleased to have new partnerships with the art and craft communities. The North Shore Arts Alliance unveiled their new Chautauqua-Lake Erie Art Trail brochure at the conference. The following message comes from the North Shore Arts Alliance.

A Personal Invitation from the North Shore Arts Alliance  
As artists, the work we do is always personal – our responses to the world in which we all live – responses that take a variety of forms: paintings, photographs, ceramics, sculptures, fabrics – myriad, creative, expressive, beautiful forms

We live in and find our inspiration in one of the most beautiful, picturesque regions of New York State. As you travel to visit us, see what we see every day - verdant vine-

yards and fields, lush forests, rolling hills, a spectacular Lake Erie shoreline and welcoming faces. There are plenty of places to eat, quaint shops full of unique artifacts and art and easy to find lodging along the way.

The Chautauqua - Lake Erie Art Trail Annual Open Studio Tour is your opportunity to see for yourself, to visit the personal places where we live and create our work, and get to know us. May 23-24, 2009, from 10am-5pm, is your chance to meet some of the most talented artists in Northern Chautauqua County. Many studios usually only open to the public by appointment, will welcome visitors all weekend.

But that is only part of the invitation – you can find us almost any time out and about in our communities and villages - creating art in Village Squares, along the Lake Erie Boardwalk, parks and streams. We are always willing to talk, demonstrate and share the experience. We've even organized some of those times as an opportunity to meet you and show off our work; First Fridays in Westfield, New York; Third Thursdays, at the Boardwalk in Dunkirk, Fourth Fridays, in Fredonia. Art shows starting in June – a "Second Look Show" at Intermezzo in Fredonia opens June 14th will run through September 19<sup>th</sup> and "North Shore Alliance Gallery Show" at Portage Hill Gallery in Westfield opening June 21st runs through July – will bring us back together, as well as summer festivals through out the region.

You'll find opportunities every where you look to take part, get your hands dirty or just watch - whether it's "plein air" painting or "raku" pottery firing. You can do it! We sometimes even sculpt the vegetables in our "Farmers' Market". Please visit our website at "[www.chautauquaarttrail.com](http://www.chautauquaarttrail.com)" to see additional images of our art, background information, and instructions to our locations and calendar of events. Or you can call (716) 679-9254 and we'll get back to you.

We'll be here waiting to see you.