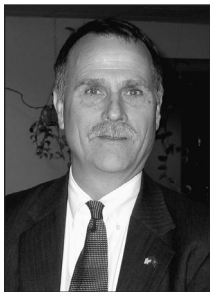




## BDCC Hosts Annual Meeting on October 24

**B**DCC hosted its Annual Meeting of Trustees and Members on October 24, 2006, at the Marlboro College Technology Center. More than 57 members and guests attended the event, which included a special presentation of the 2006 Founders Award to former BDCC President (1984-86) Stephen E. Baker. (See related article on back page.)

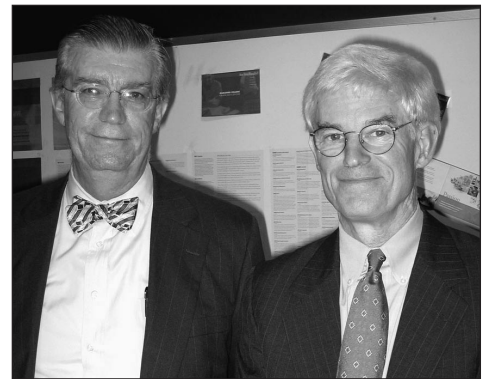


*Mike Quinn*

One notable attendee was Vermont State Commissioner of Economic Development Mike Quinn. Quinn has been serving as the commissioner of economic development in Vermont since 2003. His background includes working as the senior vice president and development team leader for Banknorth Vermont, and holding vice president positions at the Bank of Vermont, Irving Financial Centers, and Chittenden Bank. His role under the Douglas Administration involves expanding entrepreneurial activity in Vermont through coordination of business incubators, federal grants, and capital investment efforts. Although Quinn was not a speaker at the event, he interacted with other guests and members, and addressed a question that was raised regarding how best to mesh local goals with state mandates and provisions. He described the range of needs and priorities that vary between the towns and counties of Vermont, and emphasized the importance of towns or regions moving forward on their local initiatives while keeping frequent and regular lines of communication open with the state.

The guest speaker for the Annual Meeting was Michael Kane, managing partner of the economic development consulting firm Mt. Auburn Associates. Kane has been a practitioner and researcher in the community and economic development field for more than 25 years. He specializes in regional economic development planning and sector analysis and organizing, among other areas. In 1992, he joined Mt. Auburn Associates, a consulting firm working with a variety of public and private organizations to create effective economic development policies and programs that promote economic growth and stability, job generation, and the improved functioning of capital markets.

Prior to Kane's presentation, several orders of business were conducted, including updates from President Debbie Boyle, Treasurer John V.P. Meyer, and Executive Director Jeffrey Lewis.



*Jeffrey Lewis and Michael Kane*

**F**ourteen new members were elected including: Barry Beeman (Brattleboro Memorial Hospital), Larry Bloch (Save the Corporations), Bill Corbeil (WTSA), Rebecca Day (Title Examiner), David Dunn (Rescue, Inc.), Tony Elliott (Woodstone and Windham Development Group), Sally Fegley (Tom & Sally's Chocolates), Jim Hayssen (Bradford Machine), Ellen Lovell (Marlboro College), Burl Penton (Brattleboro Bowl), Julie Peterson, Bob Rusten (Town Manager, Wilmington), Artie Schubert (Windham Foundation), and Robin Stern (Potter Stewart Jr. Law Offices P.C.).

A motion was made and carried to increase the number of Trustees from 11 to 12. The name of the newest Trustee elected is Cheryl Bedard of Vermont Circuits. In addition, the following officers were re-elected: Debbie Boyle (President), Peter Van Oot (Vice President), John V.P. Meyer (Treasurer), Richard Carroll (Clerk), and Stephen Phillips (Assistant Clerk).

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### Company News

Do you have news of interest to the Brattleboro business community? Has your company expanded, introduced a new product, won an award? Send your information to:

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Brattleboro, VT 05301

Tel 802-257-7731 • Fax 257-0294  
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## From the Executive Director



Jeffrey Lewis

As you can see from the articles featured in this quarter's newsletter, autumn is a busy time here at BDCC.

In addition to hosting the Annual Meeting on October 24 (see front page article) and planning the 2nd Annual Business Plan Competition (see article on page 3), we collaborated with the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce and Building a Better Brattleboro (BaBB) to host a Legislative Day on October 20. The Boards of Directors from all three organizations were invited to meet with local legislative candidates to discuss current issues, and to tour two local businesses, Bradford Machine Company and New Chapter. Both companies are fine examples of creative enterprise and innovation right here in our own community.

A few days earlier, on October 17, I went before the Brattleboro Selectboard along with Grants Manager Sarah Brennan to request two motions. The first was to gain the Selectboard's approval for BDCC to proceed with an economic vitality project dubbed "Brattleboro 2020" to collect hard data to measure the community's economic health. The second motion was to have the town agree to apply for a \$30,000 block grant to help fund the project through the Vermont

Community Development Program and agree to match the grant with \$10,000, with BDCC providing \$20,000. Both motions were passed unanimously. Further funds will be solicited from other grant sources.

On another collaborative endeavor, BDCC is working with the Chamber, BaBB, and the Brattleboro Arts Initiative as a sort of brand management group for marketing Brattleboro. Together, we hope to chart a program for developing details, extensions, and franchising rules as we try to align our marketing images and messages to help build a discernable brand for Brattleboro.

Meanwhile, on September 26, the Trustees and I participated in an Annual Board Work Day, held offsite in the board room of Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC. The day's agenda included focusing on the components of strategy: successes, failures, strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, mission, stakeholders, resources, constraints, and, essentially, how to get there from here. It was a productive meeting that will continue with follow-up work sessions in November and December to determine goals, priorities, and next steps.

All of these initiatives are exciting and full of potential. We'll be reporting on our progress in future newsletters and at upcoming Member meetings.

## News and Notables

**Tom & Sally's Handmade Chocolates, Inc.**, recently launched a high-end gourmet chocolate line called Lifestyle Chocolates. Made with all-natural ingredients, the new line features six selections: Whole Almonds, Roasted Hazelnuts, Red Raspberries, Tart Cherries, Sweet Pears, and Costa Rican Coffee Beans, coated exclusively in Belgian and French Couverture and dusted with sugars and spices. For more information, call 802-254-4200 or email sally@tomandsallys.com.



Tom and Sally Fegley

**New England Fitness Equipment** recently relocated its showroom and office space to the BDCC Book Press Business Park, bringing the business park to about 53 percent occupancy. Established in 1989, New England Fitness is a retailer of fitness accessories and equipment. In addition to their showroom, they sell online via their website, nefitco.com, which was launched in April 1999.

## BDCC Announces 2nd Annual Business Plan Competition



*Nimble Arts Trapeze and Circus School was the winner of the 1st Annual Business Plan Competition.*

The 2007 Annual Business Plan Competition was publicly announced by Executive Director Jeffrey Lewis at BDCC's Annual Meeting on October 24. This year's competition has been expanded to include two entry categories — existing businesses ready to grow and new businesses needing a jumpstart. Two categories mean two top prizes of \$20,000 and \$10,000, respectively, plus three runner-up prizes of \$2,000 each and two finalist awards of \$1,000 each for both categories.

“Last year, we noticed that it was difficult to compare business plans submitted for new business ideas against plans submitted by already established businesses,” says Lewis. “Understandably, existing businesses stood out more favorably. So, with two prize categories, we hope to include more contestants and, thus, increase our impact on jumpstarting new business growth in the region.”

Last year's top-prize winner was Nimble Arts Trapeze and Circus School, founded in 2003 by twin sisters Serenity Smith Forchion and Elsie Smith. The six runners-up were: Against the Grain owned by Tom and Nancy Cain; Children's Music Hall of Fame developed by Bill Shontz; Ironwood Brand owned by Eli Gould; OK Tools founded by Fred Bullock and Robert Morris; Solinglass owned by Randi Solin; and Vermont Woods Studio owned by Ken and Peggy Farabaugh.

Judging this year will be conducted by a panel of 10 community members, including Cheryl Bedard of Vermont Circuits; Dart Everett of Everett Real Estate Services; Richard Ewald of the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance; Bruce Gardner of Omega Optical; Ed Kunttu of Merchants Bank; Lisa Lorimer, formerly of Vermont Bread Company; Patty O'Donnell, a Vermont State Representative from Vernon; Marjorie Sayer of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE); Phil Steckler of Country Business, Inc.; and Dwight Williams of Key Bank.

The entry deadline for executive summary submissions is January 8. Finalists will be announced on January 15, and their business plan submissions will be due February 22. The contest will culminate in final presentations and the announcement of winners on March 12. For a contestant to be eligible, the current or proposed business must be physically located within BDCC's designated region of Windham County plus the towns of Readsboro and Searsburg, Vermont. Further rules and guidelines are available by contacting BDCC at (802) 257-7731 or [bdcc@sover.net](mailto:bdcc@sover.net).

### Profile: Where Are They Now?

At the time this newsletter was published, we managed to catch up with a few of last year's Business Plan Competition finalists to learn their perspectives and see what's new with their businesses.

Reflecting on her participation in the competition, Randi Solin of **Solinglass** ([www.solinglass.com](http://www.solinglass.com)) says, “The impact was pretty huge. Because of my proposal, I have been brought into other projects and I am currently in negotiations with the New England Youth Theatre to proceed with my business plan idea of maybe buying a building in town and seeing my business model come to fruition.”

According to **Children's Music Hall of Fame** creator Bill Shontz ([www.billshontz.com](http://www.billshontz.com)), “The experience forced me to once again look at my business proposal to make sure that I was organized. The available resources, like the SBDC, provide you with the ability to look at your business not just from the inspirational, creative, or artistic view, but from the nuts-and-bolts view of how will this business be viable.”

Elsie Smith and Serenity Smith Forchion, twin sisters and co-founders of **Nimble Arts Trapeze and Circus School** ([www.nimblearts.org](http://www.nimblearts.org)), mentioned multiple benefits from their participation. “It has been wonderful to be stopped by various people in the community who know about our work from the publicity derived from the competition,” says Elsie. “This, we hope, will help us in our next phase of expansion when we move to our downtown location and begin more official collaborations with other local businesses.” Meanwhile, says Serenity, “Our performing company is booking triple the events we did last year, our equipment sales have doubled, and our workshops and classes have also grown at the rate planned.”

## BDCC Presents Founders Award to Steve Baker

Brattleboro native, family business owner, and former BDCC president (1984-1986) Stephen E. Baker is the recipient of the 2006 Founders Award. The award was presented by current BDCC President Debbie Boyle at the Annual Meeting of Trustees on October 24. Recipients of the BDCC Founders Award are selected for their efforts and actions that have helped to make a difference to our area and to the business climate; they are known for creating value-added jobs and for promoting a climate that enhances the economic vitality of the region.

Baker is the head of Bakers, Inc., a three-generation family business originally established in 1925 in Brattleboro as a newspaper, magazine and greeting card shop. It has grown over the decades to include a group of stationery and magazine stores, an office furniture store, an office design company, and a newspaper and magazine distributing company. An active and supportive community member and volunteer,

Baker was involved with the BDCC from 1968 to 1994 and has served on several other local boards and committees.

According to Boyle, "Every community has individuals in it who make things happen and who community

groups go to when something needs to be done. Steve has not only been a leader at BDCC, looking out for the manufacturing base, but has also been instrumental in helping to establish downtown organizations to keep downtown vibrant."



*Debbie Boyle, Steve Baker,  
and Jeffrey Lewis*

## Cotton Mill Open Studio Features 50 Artists December 1-3



Come witness, celebrate, and support the diversity of creative talent here in Brattleboro! The Eighth Annual Cotton Mill Open Studio & Holiday Sale will feature the work of 50 artists and artisans all under one roof on December 1, 2, and 3. Promising something of interest for all ages, the three-day event will feature an array of work, from ceramics and blown glass to circus and aerial arts, painting, film, music, food, books, bodyworks, marquetry, toys, furniture, and more.

A small sampling of the participating artists and artisans include: Natalie Blake Ceramics, the Center for Digital Arts, Morgan Faust Films, concrete artisan Richard Holschuh, Kunamen all-natural granola, Laurielle Artisanal Croissants, Nimble Arts Trapeze and Circus School, Omondi Woodwork custom-made furniture, Slow Fire Foods, Solinglass blown glass, muralist/painter Terry Sylvester, T. Breeze VerDant marquetry and wood-working, the Vermont Jazz Center, West Upholstery, and Timothy Wood candles and guitars.

Admission and parking are free, and live demonstrations will be happening throughout the weekend. Open Studio hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, December 1; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, December 2; and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, December 3. For more information, visit the Cotton Mill online at <http://www.thecottonmill.org> or call 802-257-7731.

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