

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Business Education Program Speakers Bureau for Local Schools

The speakers listed here are members of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce and have expressed interest in speaking to local schoolchildren about a variety of topics. While they are all currently business professionals, many of them can speak to a variety of topics, including soft skills, job searches, the importance of education, and topics specific to their professional field.

If you choose to ask a speaker to come to your classroom, please notify them directly to coordinate the speaking engagement. They are prepared to speak for as long as 30 minutes. A packet of evaluation for each speaker is available at the office of your school. These evaluations must be filled out for each speaker that comes to each class. Tracking these speakers will not only help us to improve the program and give valuable feedback to the speaker, but will also allow us to keep accurate records of speaking engagements so that we might fund future educational outreaches.

The following list is organized alphabetically by last name. You'll find contact information for each speaker, as well as a list of possible speaking topics and a short bio.

The Business Education Program (BEP) was created as a part of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce to provide and enhance a direct interface between the business community and the school district. Our belief is that by doing so, students will gain invaluable insight into their personal learning options that prepare them to be productive employees and they will also gain considerable understanding of the way a business works. The Speakers Bureau is but one part of an overall vision that aims to coordinate students and business professionals to create valuable relationships.

For more information on the Speakers Bureau or the BEP, or if you would like a speaker for a topic you do not see listed here, please contact Amelia Cook at 360-428-8547 or ameliac@mountvernonchamber.com.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Carlos Bejar
Spanish Language Programming Director
Skagit Valley College – KSVR Radio

Terry Belcoe
President/CEO
North Coast Credit Union
360-685-4000

Tbelcoe@northcoastcu.com

Topics: Business Administration, Accounting, Information Systems Management, Finance, Financial Services

Terry holds undergrad degrees in Business Administration and Accounting and an MBA degree with an information systems management concentration. She has worked in many different areas related to finance, including: accounting, management, information systems, and financial services. Currently Terry is the President/CEO for North Coast Credit Union. She is a big believer in community involvement and has shown her dedication by serving on the following boards: Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce, Santa Cruz Boys and Girls Club, United Way of Whatcom County, United Way of Skagit County, and Youth Net. Terry is also a partner in Skagit Food Share Alliance with SCCAA and Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland. She is a 2007 graduate of Leadership Skagit.

Carrie Case
Go Dig Corp
carrie@godigcorp.com

Topics: Soft skills, Sales skills, Marketing, Advertising, Business start up or operation, Customer Service, New home sales, Real Estate

Carrie Case started her career in retail sales 25 years ago as a sales person for a popular men's clothing store chain. Early in her career she attended the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, CA. She became the first female manager for the popular chain. Her sales team and store were the top producers. After a long successful run in the retail industry she then went on to work in the banking industry and quickly advanced to the Sales and Marketing department where her responsibilities included sales training programs for the bank branch personnel. From 1995 – 2000 Carrie owned and operated both a general contracting business and a retail/mail order company while serving as the Camano Island Chamber of Commerce President in 1998. In 2002 she joined Landed Gentry Homes and Communities as their Sales and Marketing Director and played a key role on their senior management team. Here she helped spearhead the company's growth from \$3 million to \$26 million in annual sales. Carrie holds several professional designations in the building industry and is currently the 2007 Chairman of the Board for the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce. In 2006 she started up Go Dig Corporation in an effort to help companies strategize and achieve their business growth objectives.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Tony Cook, CPA
Williams & Nulle CPAs, PLLC
360-336-6611
ajc@wncpa.com

Topics: Financial accounting, auditing, charter fishing, sales, financial literacy

Tony Cook earned his CPA in October of 2005. Previous to that, he was a charter fisherman out of Ilwaco, WA, and has worked in sales most of his life. He was named "New Professional of the Year" by the Washington Society of CPAs and currently sits on the WSCPA strategic planning committee and the New Professionals Committee.

Amelia Cook, MBA
Communications Director
Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
360-428-8547
ameliac@mountvernonchamber.com

Topics: Marketing, Customer Service, Living Abroad, and Speaking to French Classes.

Amelia grew up on the Long Beach Peninsula, an area that is immersed in tourism. During junior high and high school, she helped her parents in the hotel they owned and worked as a salesperson in a local kite store. She obtained an honors degree in history, cum laude from Whitman College in 2003 and immediately took a job teaching high school English in Nantes, France. Upon her return to the United States, Amelia began studying for her Masters in Business Administration, which she received in 2007 from Western Washington University. Amelia is now the Communications Director at the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce where she handles PR, marketing, and some groups, including the Skagit Young Professionals, for the Chamber. Amelia is fluent in French and enjoys reading, cooking, running and hanging out with her husband, Tony, and her dog, Buster.

Calleen Coorough
Multimedia
Skagit Valley College
Calleen.coorough@skagit.edu

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Ron Cornett
Vice President
3D Corporation
360-671-4906 ext. 427
ronc@3dcorp.us

Topics: Customer Service, Working in Teams, Professionalism, Technology in Business, Defining Target Markets

Ron began his professional career in 1987 as manager and co-owner of a family owned independent computer store. Ron built and ran the repair, system build, and sales facets of the business. Ron married his wife Terri in 1990 and they had twin girls in 1992. In 1993 Ron sold his interest in the family business and acted as a freelance custom programmer. Then staying on with a client in California after doing some work for them, Ron became their Operations Manager. Ron has traveled the United States training, installing and supporting POS efforts for internal staff and clients such as McDonald's, Burger King, KFC... After tiring of extensive travel, Ron joined with 3D Corporation after finding they shared his high standards of customer service. He currently holds the position of Vice President.

Dani Cox
Culinary Arts
Skagit Valley College
Dani.cox@skagit.edu

Topics: Pastry/Baking, Sanitation, and Management Program Advisor

I would like for students to come tour our facility and learn about being a chef, and the culinary arts programs available at Skagit Valley College.

Jeanette Degoede
Co-Owner
Skagit Valley Bulb Farm
360-424-8152
tulips@tuliptown.com

Topics: Agriculture

Jeanette has been a co-owner of Skagit Valley Bulb Farm and Tulip Town for the past 25 years. She has experience in planting bulbs, landscaping ideas, disease and the history of bulbs in Skagit County. Some of the places she has presented are WSU extension, nurseries and school programs. Jeannette has attended the World's Tulip Summit meetings in Ottawa, CA and Australia.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Marie Duckworth
Communications Consultant
Skagit Valley College
360-416-7613

Marie.duckworth@skagit.edu

Topics : Journalism and Marketing/ Public Relations. Communication (Life Skills)

Marie is a communications consultant at Skagit Valley College, where she does writing, photography and graphic design. She worked previously as a reporter for a daily newspaper, newspaper page/layout designer, and as a non-profit coordinator in both event planning and family literacy outreach/education. She has a BA in journalism with dual minors in Spanish and Political Science.

Doug Faber
Mount Vernon Towing
336-3535

dougfaber@mountvernantowing.com

Allen Grenz
Oasys Office Automation Systems
360-755-0309

alleng@gotooasys.com

E.P. Hackenberg
Attorney
Law Offices of John W. Murphy
360-424-6090

ep@jwmurphyllaw.com

Topics: Becoming an attorney, what attorneys do.

E.P. attended Gonzaga University from 1999-2003 and graduated with a B.A. in Economics and a minor in Political Science. He then attended the University of Baltimore School of Law from 2003-2006. E.P. currently works for the Law Offices of John W. Murphy, previously he has worked for the State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City where he was a Student Attorney for the fall of 2005 and completed his internship in the spring of 2006.

Martin Hahn
Culinary Arts
Skagit Valley College
Martin.hahn@skagit.edu

Scott Hall
Automotive
Skagit Valley College
Scott.hall@skagit.edu

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Carol Hildahl
Marketing Manager
Cascade Mall
360-757-2072

Carol.hildahl@macerich.com

Topics: Market Research, Fashion Merchandising/Buying, Advertising, Interviewing/Hiring, Retail Management and Event Planning/Coordination

Carol currently is employed by the Cascade Mall as the Marketing Director, she is able to utilize her experience with Macy's as a buyer to enhance the shopping experience and tenant/landlord relationship at Cascade Mall.

Donnie Keltz
Wycoff Insurance
360-336-2112

donniek@wycoffinsurance.com

Topics: Insurance (personal and commercial) and Networking

Donnie attended Mount Vernon High School from 1990-1994, where he played basketball and won two state championships. He then continued to play basketball for Clack CC and won a NWAC championship. Donnie owned an Allstate Insurance Agency from 1999-2006 and recently joined Wycoff Insurance in 2006.

Emily Knopf, DVM
Chuckanut Valley Veterinary Clinic
360-757-3722

dremilyknopf@chuckanutvet.com

Topics: Veterinary Profession, Contract Negotiations, Conflict Management, Customer Service

Emily has been a veterinarian at Chuckanut Valley Veterinary Clinic for the past 6 years which not only provides her a great mix of science, love of animals and an affinity for people, it also has provided her with experience in contract negotiations, personnel management, conflict management and general customer service. She has presented for many groups including the Mount Vernon High School Science Fair, the Sedro Woolley Career Fair and several visits to first grade classrooms.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Laurie Liberty

Program Manager, Student Advising & Marketing/Outreach

Chapman University

360-257-1967

lcook@chapman.edu

Topics: Higher Education (Advising, Things to look for in a school, Things to avoid when selecting schools, preparing for college application) and Resume and Job Applications

Laurie has been employed by Chapman University for over 16 years both at Silverdale and Oak Harbor campuses. Her primary job responsibility involves student advisement for two bachelors and three master's degrees. Her main concern is helping her students complete their education as efficiently and smoothly as possible. She meets with them each term to review the long-term plan they created and enroll them in appropriate classes. She helps to resolve student issues and serves as an advocate for them. She performs bookkeeping, personnel and administrative functions. Her undergraduate study was done through Southern Illinois University in Workforce Education. She recently has completed the degree requirements for a Master of Science in Human Resources.

Barb Lowery

Vice President & Branch Manager

Peoples Bank

360-424-3319

Barbara.lowery@peoplesbank-wa.com

Topics: What Employers are looking for, Teamwork, Balancing Check books and Budgets

Barb currently is the vice president of Peoples Bank and Branch Manager for the Mount Vernon Branch. Barb joined the financial services industry in 1975 and moved into management in 1993. She has a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts from Washington State University. As a lifetime member of the local community, she is actively involved with the Mount Vernon Chamber, Kiwanis Club of Mount Vernon, United Way of Skagit County, the Tulip Festival and Junior Achievement. She has a husband, Benjamin (Jerry), one daughter and son-in-law, and a six-year old granddaughter. She enjoys downhill skiing, roller skating with her granddaughter and spending time with her family.

Bob Malphrus

Human Resources

Skagit Valley College

Bob.malphrus@skagit.edu

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Rob Martin
Executive Director
Chinook Enterprises
360-428-0140
rmartin@chinookenterprises.org
Topics: Customer Satisfaction

Rob has a Master's Degree in Adult Education and Administration from WWU. He serves as Executive Director at Chinook Enterprises, a non profit organization he founded in 1980, that develops, or directly provides jobs for disadvantages and disabled adults in Northwest Washington State. He focuses on innovative and "out of the box" methods to service delivery. Rob is currently a CARF Surveyor and an Adjunct Faculty Member at Skagit Valley College in the Human Services Program. Rob met his wife in 1969 and they married in 1973. They reside on Samish Island and have two grown sons Chris and Bob, with grandchildren Jadyn and Tycean.

Jeremy McCullough
Assistant Vice President
Business Bank
360-840-1844
JMcCullough@businessbankwa.com

Matt McKay
Human Resources, Inc.
360-424-7134
mmckay@hrcorp.net

Topics: Career Development, Resume Building, Interview Skills, Behaviors in the work place and Team Building

Matt is married and has 2 children. He has spent 15 years as a manufacturing manger with Bosch and Coors Brewing Company, then moving on to the Professional Recruiter Business for the last 3 years. Matt attended Anderson College, where he earned degrees in Psychology and Business Management. His Hobbies include cooking, gardening and golf.

Colleen McKnight
Hart's Floral
360-428-4248
colleenm@cedarbay.com

Topics: Entrepreneurialism, Florists

I started out my career doing data entry, then computer operations, then returned to college and graduated at 34 with a degree in computer design. I was a programmer, later a systems designer and analyst for City of Lacey, Lewis County and then State of Washington. While I enjoyed all that I wanted something more so I quit & bought a flower shop in Olympia. I had never owned a business or worked in a flower shop before, but I had some skills I knew would translate. Later my husband wanted to quit his job at the state also and we bought Hart's - a larger shop that could support both of us. I definitely have the entrepreneurial spirit rather than a bureaucratic mindset.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Pat McVicker
Fire Sciences
Skagit Valley College
Pat.mcvicker@skagit.edu

Brad Methner
State Farm – Brad Methner Insurance Agency, Inc
360-424-9114
Brad.methner.c2vm@statefarm.com

Topics: Customer Service, Phone Etiquette

Brad has more than 21 years experience in insurance with State Farm, and he has handled all phases of insurance. He has been a speaker for business classes previously.

Bud Norris
Mayor
City of Mount Vernon
360-336-6211
mvmayor@ci.mount-vernon.wa.us

Topics: Career as Mayor

Mayor Norris early years were spent in Hamilton, and later Sedro-Woolley, WA. Attended the Sedro-Woolley School System. Excelled in academics, football, basketball and track. Received an athletic scholarship to Washington State University in football. After graduating from college, he was drafted by the Miami Dolphins. Injuries cut his professional football career short, and he became a school teacher in the Seattle School District. His next job was Whitworth College football coach, and while there, he earned his Masters Degree in Education. Bud next returned to Skagit Valley and started and owned various businesses, including a pre-school, sporting goods store and handball and racquet ball court. Entered politics and in 1974 was elected Skagit County Commissioner, and held that post for 8 years. Next, he was a King County budget analyst for four years. Followed that up as a Lobbyist for Snohomish County, and then later for WSU, in the Branch Campus System. He was an Allstate Insurance agent in Mount Vernon for 17 years. Bud was elected as the Mayor of Mount Vernon in November of 2003, and took office in January of 2004.

Kathy Payant
Business Management Department Chair & Instructor
Skagit Valley College
360-416-7776
Kathy.payant@skagit.edu

Topics: Business Management Program, Leadership, Customer Service, Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Business student internships/co-ops

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Pedro Perez

Owner

Pedro Perez Photography

360-840-7896

Pic79@comcast.net

Topics: Why he choose photography as a career, peppered with some personal history

Pedro attended California State University at Fresno, where he earned a BA in Communication/Photo Communications. He has worked as a photo journalist for several small California newspapers before moving up north in 1986 to work for the Bellingham Herald as a photographer. Pedro then moved on to the Seattle Times, where he worked for 10 years before going out on his own in 2001. He has been recognized both regionally and nationally for his photographs by professional photography associations and news organizations. In 2000, he was nominated for a Joseph Pulitzer Prize for photographs of protestors he took during the World Trade Organization Conference in Seattle. Pedro is a member of the Rotary Club and the Whatcom Hispanic Organization. His hobbies include fishing, gardening and tinkering in the shop.

Andy Porter

President, Customer Service Boot Camp

360-809-0661

andrewbporter@verizon.net

Topics: Customer service, Establishing a Purpose in Life, Understanding Emotions, Team Building, How to Handle Stress.

Andy Porter began his business career in Seattle in 1980 as a sales director. In 1987 Mr. Porter started to work as a marketing and business consultant. His clients were initially in the health care fields, soon branching into manufacturing and construction.

In 1995 Mr. Porter moved abroad for 7 years living in Russia, France, Denmark and Kazakhstan. Here he worked as a business consultant to various manufacturing firms, banks, public transportation and large retail sales companies, advising them on marketing programs and providing customer service training. Traveling across 5 continents, Andrew Porter delivered more than 3,200 lectures and workshops in over 20 different countries.

In 2001 he moved to New York City and helped to establish Effective Management, a consulting firm with more than 100 clients.

Mr. Porter coalesced his many years of experience into the Customer Service Boot Camp and has been delivering workshops to businesses in western Washington since 2005. You can learn more about his services at: www.customerservicebootcamp.com

Andy also teaches Customer Service workshops at the Skagit Valley College.

Now Andy lives with his wife, Svetlana, and three year old son, Maxim, in Sedro-Woolley and between working and spending time with his family enjoys backpacking and landscape photography. You can view some of his photographs at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/21047455@N08/>

Colin Sands

Financial Advisor

Ameriprise Financial

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

360-336-8965

Colin.m.sands@ampf.com

Topics: Personal Finance, Work Place Benefits, Investing for the Future, Insurance, Starting Your Own Business

Graduate of Stanwood High School and holds a BA from WWU in Finance & Accounting. From 2001 to Present he is the Financial Advisor/Financial Planning Specialist for Ameriprise/American Express Financial Advisors. he is a Fifth Generation Skagit County Resident and currently resides in Conway, with his wife, Alisa. They have two dogs and are expecting their first child in April of 2008

Cynthia Scaringe

Director of Nursing

Skagit Valley College

Cynthia.scaringe@skagit.edu

Topics: Nursing

Cynthia has been teaching since 1994 and she has been a nurse since 1975. She has done multiple kinds of nursing which added to her desire to teach. She is proud to be running a top notch nursing program that is considered one of the best in the State.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Joshua Smith
Office Administrator
Evergreen Physical Therapy
360-610-0044
joshua@evergreptmv.com

Topics: Customer Service, Healthcare, Higher Education...

Joshua is a graduate of S. W. High School and studied Communications, Hotel Restaurant Administration and Organizational Communication at W.S.U. He is currently enrolled in City University of Seattle. Joshua has been in management since the age of 18 and has worked numerous jobs in the food and beverage industry. He has been able to manage restaurants without documenting a loss for over 5 years. Currently he is the Office Administrator for Evergreen Physical Therapy, which inspires him to be more involved in the healthcare that is available for our communities.

Richard Sundance
Skagit Tradition Realty
360-420-4046
richards@skagittraditionrealty.com

Topics: Public Speaking, Realty, Career, U.S. Navy

Scott Sutton
Outside Sales Representative
Printwise, Inc.
360-920-9524
scott@printwiseinc.com

Topics: Outside Sales, Personal Selling

Scott started in print production and management in 1993, he then moved to customer service. In 1996, Scott left printing to teach investment seminars and in 1999 he got a job doing outside print sales and is happy to continue this avenue even though he changed companies last year. His interests outside of work include motorcycles and scuba diving.

Claus Svendsen
Environmental Conservation
Claus.svendsen@skagit.edu

Sandy Swartos
Owner, Graphic Designer
Steam Interactive
360-708-9818

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Tamara Thomas
Terre-Source LLC
360-336-3536

tnthomas@terre-source.com

Topics: Environmental Work, Soils, Composting, Recycling Food Waste, Worms (vermicompost), Value of Science and Math

Ernest Tutt
Department of Mass Media, Communications, and Theatre
360-416-7769

Ernest.tutt@skagit.edu

Topics: Education, Teaching or Public Speaking, Professional Speaking and Performing

Ernest was born in Houston, TX in 1959, He was adopted at the age of 3 by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Tutt, Jr and moved to Dallas, TX in 1971, where he attended elementary middle and high school. He began public speaking at an early age in church and school competitions and has won several regional and national competitions through Boy Scouts of America, Reader's Digest and the National Podium Association. He received an Associates Degree in Business from Grayson Community College in 1980 and then attended the University of Texas, majoring in Political Science and Philosophy. He spent the next five years traveling the country. Ending up at Grayson County College teaching communication while he pursued his Master's Degree in Education at Texas A&M. He was selected as a Diversity Enhancement Fellow and received scholarship from A&M-Commerce to pursue a Doctoral Degree. He accepted the position of Director of Special Projects, Assistant to the President at A&M-Commerce. He moved to Anacortes in 2003 and presently teaches speech communication and ethnic studies at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon, WA.

Wayne Wegner
Executive Director
Skagit Habitat for Humanity
360-873-8209

habitat@findalgo.net

Topics: Big Business Organizations, Small Business, Retail, Non-Profit and service organizations, ownership, management, sales, marketing, customer support.

Wayne currently is the Executive Director for Skagit Habitat for Humanity. Prior to this Wayne and his wife Marlene owned and operated Play it Again Sports for 15 years in Skagit County. He also worked in the computer industry in a variety of positions including management, sales, marketing and customer support and service. Companies he has worked for include Computer Sciences Corporation, Business land, Inc, and United Telecommunications. For the past 10 years Wayne has been a member of the Burlington Rotary Club and served as their president in 2001. He has also served as the club's chairperson for their Annual Autumn Fest Auction for the past eight years.

Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce Foundation Speakers Bureau

Kristen Whitener, IOM
President/CEO
Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
360-428-8547
kristenw@mountvernonchamber.com

Kristen was born and raised in Oak Harbor and moved to Skagit Valley in 1992 to attend Skagit Valley College. After college, she took a front desk position at the Best Western CottonTree Inn. She was quickly promoted to front desk manager and then to Director of Sales and Marketing, a position that she held for four years. During her time as DOS, Kristen served as the chair for the Best Western Washington State Co-op sales team. Kristen took the position of President/CEO of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce April 1st, 2001. Since then, she has graduated from the US Chamber's four year Institute Program. Kristen is involved in the Washington State Chamber of Commerce Executives and currently serves as vice president. Being bored isn't a common thing for Kristen as she is also serving as the president elect for the Mount Vernon Noon Rotary Club (prior to joining Kristen, was chosen as a Rotary group study exchange student for South Africa where she spent 5 weeks), President of the Skagit County Chamber of Commerce Executive Directors Association, member of the Skagit County Fair Advisory Board and the Mustard Seed Ministry Board. Recently Kristen was chosen to represent the business community for the National Governors Association Sector Strategy initiative. Kristen lives in Mount Vernon with her daughter Kylie, 13, and Melyssa, 10.