

Chamber serves up year-end awards

By ANNA MARIA BASQUEZ

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APTOS — Guests at Friday's Aptos Chamber of Commerce fund-raiser will get more than a \$60-a-plate meal to feast on.

A recently completed mural will make its debut at the 68th annual dinner, accompanying a Best of Broadway theme.

"It's all been hand-painted," said Karen Hibble, executive director of the Aptos chamber. "It's absolutely exquisite and it will match the program covers."

The mural, which is 8 feet tall and 12 feet wide, will be loaned out for Aptos community events.

The artwork, depicting Broadway in the rain, was painted by local resident and UC Davis student Natalie Christensen, who took time off from studio work this summer to paint the scene especially for this year's event.

At the dinner, chamber officials will spotlight community contributors. A sold-out crowd of more than 300 is scheduled to turn out for the black-tie event at the Seascapes Resort and Conference Center. The dinner ranks as the chamber's biggest fund-raiser, last year netting \$20,000 for the chamber, community tourism center and museum.

Chamber officials are looking to raise \$30,000 this year.

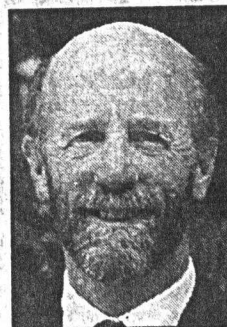
This year's honorees include Doug Kaplan, man of the year; Pat Manning and Carol Trengove, women of the year; Spoiled Rotten, business of the year; Aptos Community Alliance, organization of the year; and Larry Biggam, community recognition award.



Trengove



Biggam



Kaplan



Manning

Kaplan, who is finishing his fourth year as the Aptos district trustee for the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, was chosen based on his service to the community. He is a founding member for the Santa Cruz County Sentinel Board of Contributors and is a frequent editorial contributor. He also has served as director of the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce and graduated from the Focus Agriculture Class of 1994.

"When I found out about the award, it made me nervous because it meant I'd have to behave myself," Kaplan said. "When I told my wife I was man of the year, she said, 'That's great. You still have to take out the garbage.'"

Trengove and Manning were vital to the Valencia Hall and post office historic restoration project, chamber officials said.

By next year, the Valencia Post Office and General Store will house a museum that will display historic artifacts from Valencia.

"They worked together and we wanted to honor both of them because they were both an integral part of it," Hibble said.

Chamber authorities said the restoration will "provide a living history experience for the young people of our county."

The alliance will be recognized for the numerous duties it has taken on as an organization, including working with other groups and individuals to establish an Aptos Community Center.

Biggam will be honored as co-owner and developer of Soccer Central, the new indoor soccer arena in Watsonville that opened last spring.

About \$45,000 worth of auction items will be auctioned in a silent auction at the event.

The Seascapes Resort ballroom will take on the look of New York's Tavern on the Green and be called Tavern on the Beach, complete with the silver chandeliers, said coordinator Jackie Atchinson.