

## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

By Chamber Vice President, Nancy Helmbrecht, Owner of Dandelion Floral & Gifts



As the owner of the Dandelion Floral & Gift Shop located on the main street of Mora, I am very excited to welcome the Chamber and Executive Director Karen Amundson, to their new location on the south end of main street. People with questions and needing assistance of the chamber will be drawn downtown, just another reason to discover the many offerings of our

downtown area.

What better time than the holiday season! It's time to 'Sneak a Peek' in all the shops to see what's new! Our downtown comes alive during the holidays - lights, music and decorations, even Santa! Unlike the big box stores people are enjoying the hustle and bustle of seeing and visiting with people they know. As the heart and the beginning of Mora, the downtown offers a welcome-ness that the big malls are trying to copy.

On the 13th of November many of the stores and homes will open their doors with crafts and sales to join the annual 'Holly Fair' Craft Show at Trailview Elementary School. This is an attraction that people come to from far around. Put the date on your calendar. Make a day of it!

The next day to be sure not

to miss is the day and evening after Thanksgiving - Moonlight Madness! It continues to be a fun event that people look forward to. Santa makes his first appearance. There are usually carolers or bands playing. The shops have lots of sales and stay open as long as the customers keep coming - usually 10 p.m.

Karen and the chamber are a great addition to this atmosphere. Karen's open door policy makes everyone feel welcome and she will do everything possible to help those that contact her. In fact, she and the chamber have joined the 'Grow Minnesota' movement to utilize the Minnesota Chamber organization to help our local businesses solve challenges that all small businesses are facing. Who knows? Maybe new businesses will want to move to Mora, Minnesota because of our relationship with "Grow

Minnesota." More info on this membership will follow!

Also, Karen and I are once again starting our Friday morning meetings with local business owners. This year these meetings will be held at the new office - plenty of room for meetings! Anyone interested can contact Karen or myself here at the Dandelion for details. Through this group we can share collectively and learn from the pros and cons that others have experienced. During these times it is even more important that we plan events that our customers want to stay in town to experience.

Yes, I am happy to have Karen and the chamber downtown. She will work with us to make downtown more of a destination, which will help all businesses in the community!!

As a Member of the Mora Area Chamber of Commerce you are cordially invited to November's

*Greet the Day - Coffee and Networking Meeting*

Casual Mingling with your fellow Chamber Members



Build Business to Business Relationships

**Dandelion**  
Floral and Gifts

Tuesday,  
November 30th  
7:30 a.m.  
at  
**DANDELION  
FLORAL &  
GIFTS**

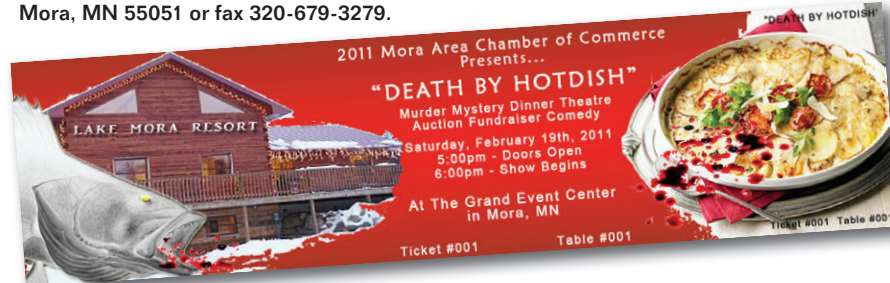
Enjoy light conversation, a morning snack & coffee. Nancy will share her knowledge of the history of Dandelion Floral, spread holiday cheer and give us information about her shop. All Chamber members who come in with this postcard will be entitled to 15% off their purchases for this one day event only!  
Hosted by Nancy Helmbrecht and the Mora Area Chamber of Commerce ~ 679-5792

## 28th Annual East Central Home, Business & Community Expo

Online applications are available at [www.moramn.com](http://www.moramn.com), click on the Home Show link.

## FAVORITE HOTDISH RECIPES NEEDED!

The 2011 Mora Area Chamber of Commerce play is putting together a hotdish recipe book. Send the baker's name & recipe to [karen@moramn.com](mailto:karen@moramn.com) or Mora Area Chamber of Commerce, 111 S Union St, Suite 2, Mora, MN 55051 or fax 320-679-3279.



Hello, folks - Keith Thelen here. I'm the owner of Kanabec Systems, the technology service and consulting firm here in Mora. Lately we've been seeing a few particular computer-related

problems appearing more and more frequently. I wanted to take this opportunity to make you aware of said problems, and to offer some simple solutions in case you might need them.

Antivirus software: If you use Windows, you've no doubt experienced the joy of acquiring and maintaining antivirus software. You've also likely been through the yearly ritual of upgrading or renewing this software at least a few times. Customers often ask if there's a better option for antivirus protection, one that is less costly, presents less hassles, and inflicts a lower penalty on system performance.

So far, our answer has been to try Grisoft's AVG products. They offer both a free and a paid version; for most of our customers the free version has been sufficient. It can be had at <http://free.avg.com>. Though the free version

does try to "upsell" before you install it, it's completely free (as in free lunch), costs nothing to use, and won't pester you later to purchase anything.

Routine updates are free and download/install automatically; a yearly major update is also made available free of charge, though it must be downloaded and installed manually.

Dealing with malware: AVG will take care of any virii that might find their way to your system. But there's also malware to be concerned with - software that, although similar to a virus, spreads differently and is written for a different purpose (to profit its creator, usually through displaying popup ads, scaring the user into buying products they don't need, etc). To protect against malware, our recommendation is twofold: get Malwarebytes Anti-Malware and use it regularly; and choose an alternate Web browser for added protection.

Malwarebytes (<http://www.malwarebytes.org>) is a handy little application that scans your system for many forms of malware, and offers to remove them if found. It's the most thorough program we've encountered, finding and removing the vast majority of malware without further intervention.

As with AVG, there is both a free and a paid version available; the paid version adds the ability to scan your system automatically. If you don't mind running it by hand, the free version will meet your needs - just remember to run it regularly.

Even the cleanest-looking systems are often found to be harboring dozens of infected files; many machines come in holding hundreds, with severe cases being in the thousands. As such, we recommend Malwarebytes to all Windows users - regardless of what other products they may have installed.

Safer surfing: As for web browsing, be aware that most malware can (and does) take advantage of weaknesses in Microsoft's Internet Explorer (and, by extension, MSN Explorer) to infect your computer. Our advice is to try downloading some other browsers - such as Mozilla's Firefox, Apple's Safari, or Google's Chrome - and start using one of them for your day-to-day surfing instead. This will help protect you from accidentally becoming infected.

Remember to also be careful about downloading and installing programs that are of unknown origin. If a user is bound and determined to throw caution

to the wind and download an infected program or file, no amount of protection will save them from themselves - so make sure that both the site and the file are trustworthy before proceeding.

Also, be aware that Outlook and Outlook Express (now known as Windows Mail under Vista and 7) make use of Internet Explorer for displaying message content, so a tainted e-mail viewed in one of those messaging programs can also result in infection. We advise turning off the preview pane - that way you can delete any suspicious messages without automatically viewing them. Also, if you're not committed to your messaging program, be aware that there are alternatives available (such as Mozilla Thunderbird) which are not susceptible to such attacks.

If you have further questions, or if you need assistance with these or other issues, feel free to contact us. I can be reached by phone at (320) 679-5575, or by e-mail at [kthelen@kanabec.net](mailto:kthelen@kanabec.net). You can also visit our website - [www.kanabecsystems.com](http://www.kanabecsystems.com) - to find more information on our wide array of products and services, along with a page containing links to the free programs mentioned above.

### A note from Karen Amundson, Executive Director

I believe that Keith Thelen got started in his computer business about the same time that I arrived in this wonderful town (2006). He was the first business owner that I met, other than the Chamber Directors at that time. Since then, he has grown his business into one that has withstood the tests of our economy by delivering great service with ingenuity (if you don't think that there's a way, he'll find one), intelligence (he's one of the smartest fellows I know), empathy (for those of us who are computer and office machinery challenged), and sincerity (he wouldn't know how to be any other way). I guess I would have to say, I am truly grateful for Keith and for all that he does for me at the Chamber office. He's kind of a knight in shining armor who charges in and takes care of the damsel in distress (me). If you are looking for computer help, I couldn't recommend Keith enough.

