



For Immediate Release: July 17, 2010
Contact: Andrea Mackin
Bainbridge Island Downtown Association
t.206-842-2982
office@bainbridgedowntown.org

***BIDA Announces JULY
Best Downtown Gathering Place Winner***

(Bainbridge Island, Wash.) – Want to know where the "Best **Downtown Summer Gathering Place**" is? The Bainbridge Island Downtown Association Design Committee thinks that it's the **Saturday Sit-ins** on Madrone Lane!

As testimony to how the community has embraced this spontaneous Saturday morning gathering spot, the members of BIDA's Design Committee presented their July award for "**Best Downtown Summer Gathering Place**" to organizer Linda Brandt, and her crew of teenage helpers, Silas Gibbins, Elena Arakaki, and Catherine MacLeod. Each Saturday morning, sometime shortly after sunrise, this crew gathers on the street next to Blackbird Bakery to set up more than a dozen café tables, chairs, and bright green umbrellas, transforming the lane into a gathering spot.

Brandt, a hands-on downtown Winslow property owner, was inspired to create the **Saturday Sit-Ins** following a presentation by Mark Lakeman of Portland's City Repair earlier this spring. Lakeman stressed the importance of creating public gathering places which encourage communication, social interaction, and provide a sense of place – all essential components for building vibrant communities. By closing off the street and providing a place for pedestrian traffic only, Madrone Lane's Saturday Sit-Ins offer a spontaneous town square and social hub in the heart of downtown.

Andrea Mackin, Executive Director of the Bainbridge Island Downtown Association, likes grassroots action like the Saturday Sit-Ins, saying "these are exactly the kind of community generated ideas that help us continue to preserve downtown Winslow's unique character, and provide spaces that welcome the friends and neighbors who make it our community's living room."

Take time to come enjoy this wonderful by-product of a little inspiration and a lot of initiative on the part of one of our downtown property owners. **Saturday Sit-Ins** happen on Madrone Lane between Blackbird Bakery and Dana's Showhouse every Saturday from dawn until dusk. Traffic closed to vehicles at Winslow Way and Madrone Lane, access still open to MORA Ice Cream via the City Hall entrance off Madison Avenue.

Bainbridge Island Downtown Association's Design Committee presents a new Best Window Display and Downtown Gathering Place Winners each month, based on creativity, effectiveness and originality. Each January the committee selects an annual "*Best of the Year*" from the previous year's winners.

Since 1998, Bainbridge Island Downtown Association has been recognized as an accredited Main Street™ Program by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. One of only 11 Main Street™ communities in Washington State and one of over 1,800 in the country.

For more information, contact the Bainbridge Island Downtown Association at 206-842-2982, or visit www.bainbridgedowntown.org