



# The Lark

**Bringing Business & the Community Together!**

Volume XI Issue 3

**March 2007**

## **Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce**

642 Larkfield Center  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Tel: (707) 578-7975  
FAX: (707) 578-0397  
markwest@markwest.org  
**www.markwest.org**  
Office Hours: M-Th 1-4 pm

### **Our Mission:**

*The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the economic well-being and uniqueness of the Mark West Area so that its citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper.*

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## **After Hours Business Social**

**March 8, 2007**

**5:30pm - 7:30pm**

*Hosted by:*

**Sue Larson  
Financial Services  
194B Wikiup  
Santa Rosa**

### **Daylight Saving Time Comes EARLY This Year!**

Did you know that **Daylight Saving Time** begins three weeks early this year, on **March 11, 2007?**

Passed by the U.S. Congress in July 2005 (The U.S. Energy Policy Act of 2005), Daylight Saving Time in 2007 will be four weeks longer than previously observed. It will begin three weeks early, on March 11, and will end one week later, on November 4.

It is important to make sure that your computer systems are appropriately updated to reflect the changes in Daylight Saving Time this year.



Pay particular attention to appointments you have scheduled on your computer between March 11 and April 1, as well as between October 28 to November 4.

### *from the State Compensation Insurance Fund:*

Recently California experienced a spell of unusually cold weather that affected businesses and communities throughout the state. If the freezing temperatures have disrupted your business operations and/or hindered your ability to report your payroll figures or submit timely payment, please contact your broker or the

**State Fund Customer Service Center  
at (800) 388-0902.**

State Fund has set up this special phone line to help policyholders, brokers and their clients affected by the freeze, and we will work to accommodate your needs.

**Visit your Chamber's office, or call 578-7975:  
642 Larkfield Shopping Center, Santa Rosa, CA 95403**



*Meet Dana M. Larson-High  
New Member  
representing Sue Larson  
Financial Services,  
New Board Director,  
and March Social Host.*

### **Join Us on March 8:**

Chamber members and their guests are invited to the **Business After Hours Social** hosted by **Sue Larson Financial Services - New Member!**

**Raffle tickets** are available at the **March Social** for a brand new **Zappy 3 Pro** valued at **\$860.**

Tickets are **\$1** or **6 for \$5**



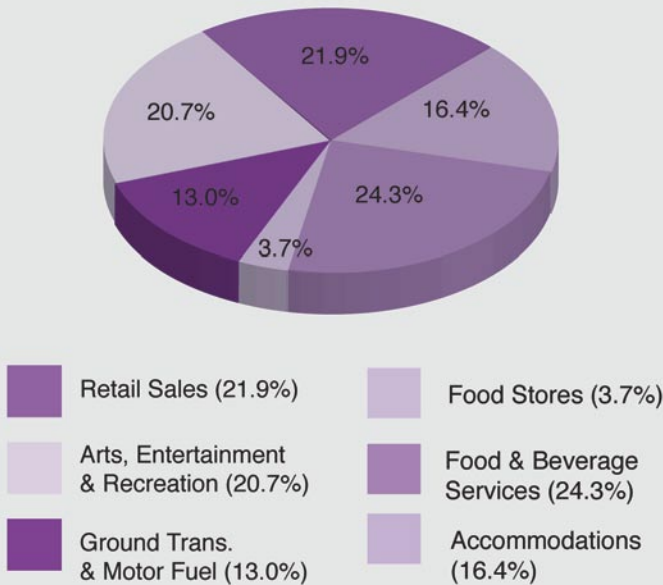
**FYI: 2007 Sonoma County Economic Indicators**

**FYI: Technical Communication in the Community**

**Destination Spending Increases for Third Consecutive Year:** The Sonoma County tourism industry has steadily increased over the past decade, increasing destination spending from \$703 million in 1994 to \$1.08 billion in 2004.

A variety of companies throughout the county benefit from destination spending. Local lodging properties, restaurants, wineries, retail and service firms, and other types of businesses that sell their products and services to travelers rely on tourism for a significant percentage of their business. Destination spending contributes to employment in several areas of the leisure and hospitality, transportation, and trade sectors. Leisure and business travelers help build Sonoma County's financial capital by supporting local jobs and generating over a billion dollars in revenue for the private and public sectors.

**Distribution of Visitor Spending, Sonoma County, 2004**



for the full report, enter:  
[http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb/pdf/2007/2007\\_sonoma\\_county\\_indicators.pdf](http://www.sonoma-county.org/edb/pdf/2007/2007_sonoma_county_indicators.pdf)

Continually barraged with questions he did not have time to answer, the president of a condominium association designed a website with FAQs for the residents. He thus freed his time to productively manage the complex.

This is just one of the many examples provided by speaker and award-winning technical communicator **Mick Renner, Ph.D.** who energized the audience to share ideas on how technical communication can be extended to benefit their communities. When technical communicators reach out to communities the results can be dynamic and unifying. Likewise, technical communicator **C.J. Holzhauer** states, "When communicators in the communities learn strategies from the technical communication field, they are in turn empowered to become dynamic and unifying."

**What is technical communication?** Technical communication is a field where anyone whose work makes technical information available to people who need it. Technical communication includes technical writers and editors, technical illustrators, web designers, documentation specialists and information architects, to name a few. Many people at work or in community activities exercise some technical communication. Moreover, their work quality improves by incorporating strategies used by technical communicators. Technical communication for the lay person enhances the outcome of the work.

**Here are some examples:** Renner gave the example of a group of people who met regularly. Discussions tended to ramble, causing meetings to end much later than expected and leaving attendees exhausted. Creating an

*continued on page 5*

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**February Social**  
*Hosted by*  
**Healthy Are We**

Chamber members and their guests found healthy (& delicious) home-made treats and champagne punch provided by **Jeanne M. Haddorff** of **Healthy Are We**.

Jeanne says "My Shaklee business is to 'Create Healthier Lives'. We are celebrating 50 years, with a reputation as #1 in the Health & Wellness industry. Products available; Vitamins, weight loss, face care, cosmetics, air & water purifiers, Home Cleaning & Laundry Products."

Jeanne had many of her products on display, and described them to the crowd. Visitors had a chance to ask questions and find out how Jeanne's products can work for them.

Raffle tickets are available at the **March Social** for a brand new **Zappy 3 Pro** valued at **\$860**.

Tickets are **\$1** or **6 for \$5**.



**Jeanne M. Haddorff**  
**of Healthy Are We**

**Daryl Anderson** of  
**Wikiup Properties**



**Barbara Wilson**  
**greet guests.**



**New Member**  
**Lockie Gilles** of **Wine**  
**Country Computers**  
**with Ambassador**  
**Kathleen Palmer** of  
**Sonoma CONNECTION**

*photos by Sonoma CONNECTION*



**Sonoma**  
**CONNECTION**  
John Essman  
Kathleen Palmer  
P O Box 1381  
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info@sonomaconnection.com  
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**FYI: Tax Time AGAIN!**

The **Internal Revenue Service** is reminding taxpayers to be wary of schemes that promise to eliminate taxes or otherwise sound too good to be true. These new or sometimes old scams either attempt to manipulate laws governing charitable groups, abuse credit counseling services or rely on refuted arguments to claim tax exemptions.

The **IRS** sees wide spread **Identity Theft** schemes preying on people through e-mail, the Internet or by phone, sometimes with con artists posing as representatives of the IRS.

**Please note:** Involvement with tax schemes can lead to imprisonment and or fines. Taxpayers should remember anyone pulled into these schemes can face repayment of taxes plus interest and penalties.

Persons who suspect tax fraud can call the **IRS** at: **1-800-829-0433**.

Listed below are some of the more common schemes:

**I. Trust Misuse:** Unscrupulous promoters have for years urged taxpayers to transfer assets into trusts. The promoters promise reduction of income subject to tax, deductions or personal expenses, reduced estate or gift taxes. Taxpayers should seek advice from a trusted professional before entering into a trust.

**2. Frivolous Arguments:** Promoters have made outlandish claims: The 16th Amendment

regarding congressional power to lay and collect income taxes was never ratified, wages is not income, filing a 1040 form violates the 5th Amendment against self-incrimination, or the 4th Amendment. Taxpayers have the right to contest their tax liabilities in court – no one has the right to disobey the law.

**3. Return Preparer Fraud:** Attracting new clients by promising large refunds, such preparers derive financial gain by skimming a portion of their clients refunds and charging inflated fees. No matter who prepares the return, the taxpayer is ultimately responsible for its accuracy.

**4. Credit Counseling Agencies:** Taxpayers should be careful with credit counseling organizations that claim they can fix credit ratings, push debt payment agreements or charge high fees, monthly service charges or mandatory “contributions” that may add to debt. **Note:** *The IRS Tax Exempt and Government Entities Division has made auditing credit counseling organizations a priority.*

**5. “Claim of Right” Doctrine:** In this scheme, a taxpayer files a return and attempts to take a deduction equal to the entire amount of his or her wages. The promoter advises: *label the deduction as “a necessary expense for the production of income” or “compensation for personal services actually rendered.”* This deduction is based on a misinterpretation of the IRS Code and has no basis in law.

*continued on page 5*

Promote your business by having your flyers inserted in the Chamber newsletter.  
**You supply the flyers - We do the work!**

The next Board of Director’s meeting is March 13 at the Mark West Unified School District Office from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm.



David Hartman

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Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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**FYI: Tax Time AGAIN!**

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**6. “No Gain” Deduction:** Similar to “Claim of Right”, filers attempt to eliminate their entire adjusted gross income (AGI) by deducting it on Schedule A (Labeled, “Other Miscellaneous Deductions”, and attach a statement to the return referring to court documents and including the words “No Gain Realized.”

**7. Corporation Sole:** Participants apply for incorporation under the pretext of being a “bishop” or “overseer” of a one-person, phony religious organization or society with the idea that this entities the individual to exemption from federal income taxes as a nonprofit. However, the rules have been twisted at seminars, and filers are incorrectly told that Corporation Sole laws provide a “legal” way to escape paying federal income taxes, child support and other personal debts.

**8. Identity Theft:** It pays to be choosy when it comes to disclosing personal information. Identity thieves have used stolen personal data to access financial accounts, run up charges on credit cards and apply for new loans. The IRS is aware of several identity theft scams involving taxes. In one case, fraudsters sent bank customers fictitious correspondence and IRS forms in a attempt to trick them into disclosing their personal financial data. Sometimes the scammers poses as the IRS itself. Last year the IRS shut down a scheme in which the perps used e-mail to announce to unsuspecting taxpayers that they were “under audit”.

**The IRS does not use e-mail to contact taxpayers involving issues related to their accounts. When in doubt, contact the IRS at: 1-800-829-1040 to confirm.**

**9. Abuse of Charitable Organizations and Deductions:** The IRS has noted an increase in the use of tax-exempt organizations to improperly shield income or assets from taxation. This can occur when a taxpayer moves assets or income to a tax-exempt supporting organization or donor-advised fund but maintains control over the assets or income, thereby obtaining a tax deduction by transferring a commensurate benefit to charity.

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**FYI: Technical Communication**

*continued from page 2*

agenda improved the meetings by helping the group stay on track. As the meetings shortened, the participants’ attention spans lengthened. Agendas also help speakers appear organized. This is just one of the numerous ways that technical communicators effectively use their skills.

**Renner provided a story:**

At an auction, a French restaurant worker won the bidding on Renner’s expertise to write his resume. As a result, both Renner and the recipient benefited. Armed with his new resume, the bidder gained a good job, and Mick Renner enjoyed helping someone land a job.

**Another example:** Attendees of this technical communication meeting contributed stories of how they applied their technical communication skills to the wider community. One attendee helped people in an organization get to know each other by interviewing them and suggesting they write narratives that shared a little bit about themselves.

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**New Member**

**Dana M. Larson-High**  
**Independent Insurance Broker**  
**194 Wikiup Dr., Ste B**  
**Santa Rosa, CA 95403**  
**(T) 571-1573 (F) 571-7488**  
**dmlarson@sonic.net**

**Renewing Members**

**Silveira Pontiac-Buick-GMC (1993)**  
**Paul Erickson Appraisal Svcs. (1994)**  
**Ken’s Signs (2001)**

*2007 – Pick a month to hold your Business Social.*

*upcoming*  
**Business-After-Hours-Socials**  
**Mar 8 Sue Larson Financial Services**  
**Apr 12 Open - call to schedule!**

**FYI: Tax Time AGAIN!**

*continued from page 5*

**FYI: Technical Communication**

*continued from page 5*

**10. Offshore Transactions:** Despite a crackdown, individuals try to avoid U.S. taxes by illegally hiding income in offshore bank and brokerage accounts or using offshore credit cards, wire transfers, foreign trusts, employee leasing schemes, private annuities or life insurance.

**11. Zero Return:** Promoters instruct taxpayers to enter all zeros on their federal income tax filings. The twist, filers enter zero income, report their withholding and then write “nunc pro tunc” - Latin for “now for then” -- on the return.

**12. Employment Tax Evasion:** There are numerous illegal schemes instructing employers not to withhold federal income tax or other employment taxes from wages paid to their employees. This advice is based on an incorrect interpretation of Section 861 and other parts of the of tax law. **Employer participants can be held responsible for back payments of employment taxes, plus penalties and interest.**

There are other scams lingering – taxpayers should be vigilant about scams not on the above list. New tax scams or schemes routinely pop up, especially around tax time.

The above information was provided by:  
**Internal Revenue Service                      IRS.gov**

*article contributed by:*  
D.P.Logan, Logan LII Investigations

After compiling the narratives and reading them at a meeting, people quickly became acquainted. Another attendee explained how she resolved a problem using her technical communication skills. She worked with a group that could not reach consensus on a volunteer project.

To facilitate communication, she drafted a document and presented it to them for discussion. After talking about the drafted document, the group was able to come to a resolution. In this instance, the drafted document and the technical writer reduced conflict to help bring about consensus.

As a teacher of visual design at UC Berkeley Extension program, Renner described interesting community projects undertaken by his technical communication students, which included creating a website for dispute resolution so that tenants in a co-housing situation could reach common ground, producing a guide for a wine and food tasting event to organize it, and helping to improve a website for the SPCA.

Renner spoke about the benefits of technical communication and briefly discussed how technical communicators differ from other writers. Technical writing is egoless, whereas other writing expresses the personality of the writer. Technical writing is not self-aggrandizing; it is by nature contributory.

The possibilities of technical communication in our communities are limitless. Simply put, technical communication bridges gaps and gets people to talk to each other, help each other, and work in teams.

*article contributed by*  
C.J. Holzhauser

**Chamber Membership Dues**  
*Effective May 1*

Standard Dues		Non-Profit Dues
\$125.00	Business (1-5 Personnel)	\$110.00
\$175.00	Business (6-10 Personnel)	\$155.00
\$245.00	Business (11+ Personnel)	\$215.00
\$625.00	Corporate Sponsor	
\$ 95.00	Individual (no plaque or voting)	



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**Mark West Area Community Information**

AREA POPULATION - within a 3 mile radius - 20,000  
ELEVATION - 160 feet above sea level  
BOUNDARIES - Area approximately bounded by:  
Shiloh Road - North  
Piner Road - South  
Mark West Lodge on Mark West Springs Rd - East  
West Olivet Road - West

About the Newsletter

Editors: Kathleen Palmer & John Essman  
Phone: 433-8774  
E-mail: info@markwest.org

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**The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce**

642 Larkfield Shopping Center  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 578-7975

Deadline for publication is the  
3rd Wednesday of each month.

**ADVERTISING**

**Monthly \$25; 3 Months \$60  
6 months \$107.50; 1 year \$200**

FLYER INSERTION: \$35 per issue. You supply 200 copies of your 8.5" x 11" flyer on 20# paper. If you would like to have your flyer typeset and printed by the Chamber, the cost is \$75.

The Lark Newsletter is mailed to member businesses each month. For more information, please contact Office Manager Patricia Morelli, at 578-7975.

**THE DEADLINE FOR LARK PUBLICATION**

The deadline for all articles, pictures, and flyers for the Lark is the third Wednesday of each month, following our Monthly After Hours Business Social.

The Deadline for the April Lark  
is **March 21**.

Please email your materials to info@markwest.org

**Chamber Board of Directors & Staff**

*President*

James Bajgrowicz  
528-2510

Office of James Bajgrowicz  
bajgrowiczjim@cs.com

*Past-President*

Doug Williams  
539-1801

Rincon Valley Fire District  
dwilliams@rvfire.org

*VP Membership / VP Community Affairs-Open*

*VP Public Relations - Pro Tem*

Kathleen Palmer  
433-8774

Sonoma CONNECTION  
kathleen@sonomaconnection.com

*Corporate Treasurer*

Marilyn Cass, CPA  
579-3170

Larkfield Tax Service  
marilyncass@larkfieldtax.com

*Corporate Secretary*

Sue Sloat  
524-2970

Mark West Union School District  
ssloat@mwusd.org

*Directors:*

Daryl Anderson  
546-8000

Wikiup Properties  
andybaum@sonic.net

Dana Ellerbe  
576-4004

Sutter Medical Center of Santa Rosa  
ellerbd@sutterhealth.org

Dana M. Larson-High  
571-1573

Sue Larson Financial Services  
dmlarson@sonic.net

Leonard Sevall  
546-2146

Sevall, Thwaites & Soper Insurance  
lens@callatg.com

Walt Smith  
546-3857

Groth Motors  
sales@grothmotors.com

Joyce Partington  
291-0399

Stoke Ranch  
joyme39@yahoo.com

*Ambassador Club*

info@markwest.org

*Office Manager*

Patricia Morelli  
578-7975

markwest@markwest.org

*Office Assistants*

Dee Gutmann  
Joyce Partington

544-9076  
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Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce  
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**After Hours  
Business Social**

**March 8, 2007**

**5:30pm - 7:30pm**

*Hosted by:*

**Sue Larson**  
**Financial Services**  
**194B Wikiup**  
**Santa Rosa**



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