

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



The Lark

Oct / Nov 2017
Volume XXXI Issue 10

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
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SMALL TRIUMPHS AND BIG THANKS AFTER THE FIRES

I want to share a few stories I've heard over the last few weeks. We all know the tragic stories and our hearts will never forget. For now, I want to share just a tiny bit about the awesome people I've met or heard of during this episode of our lives.

I have to mention Margaret DiGenova, Operations Superintendent of Cal American Water and their crew in the field. I ran into her a few times after the initial onslaught of the fire. The woman was working non-stop, sunup to sundown, seven days a week. Initially she was working from the shelter that she and her husband had evacuated to, as they were forced from their home. Then she worked from a hotel where Cal American set up operations so they could get our area up and running with the assurance of safe water.



Though she was overworked and very tired, Margaret pointed out that it was the crewmembers who were working constantly and without complaint to get our community up and running again. I was reminded at that point of the PG&E service technician who was working late into the night trying to get our gas back on when we came home. He said he was happy to do it because it made him happy to help so many people. Like many of the first responders, these were people also affected by the fires.

I found it interesting that although we were warned not to drink the water, it was not because the water was unsafe, but because they were determined to test everything to make sure it was safe before they gave us the go-ahead. In my book, they risked having people be irritated with them in order to make sure we would suffer no further harm from drinking water that could have been compromised.



One of countless unsung heroes of the fires is Margaret DiGenova of California American Water (left), pictured here with article author Aggie Maggio (right) and Aggie's husband Anthony. They're shown here at the September after-hours business social hosted by Extended Childcare Coalition.

How about that Molsberry family and their BBQ to raise money for the fire victims? They raised over \$8,700 and 100% of it is going to the fire victims. The neighbors loved it. I noticed that it was the Molsberry family themselves who were out there cooking and serving. They didn't just come up with the idea and tell their employees to do the work. They served their community well.

It was so busy they couldn't visit for even a

Continued on page 4

November Social
hosted by
Anytime Fitness (Epicenter)
See p3

UPCOMING EVENTS: next AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

Hosted by **Larkfield Exchange Bank & Molsberry's Market**
500 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Thursday December 14, 2017
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM



Steve Plamann
Aaction Rents
President

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.

CHAMBER MEETINGS

Board of Directors

Second Tuesday
Of Each Month
11:30 am - 1:00 pm at
Best Western Plus Wine
Country Inn & Suites
870 Hopper Av. S.R.

Ambassadors Mtg.

Second Thursday
Of Each Month
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
At the Chamber offices

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

An entry into the journal called "My Life", from 10/17/2017.

I went to work today at 6:50 AM and the skies looked almost normal, the air smelled breathable for the first time in ten days. I know without exploring that the world around me has changed and will be forever scarred. Some people are gone forever, many special belongings are ash, and our landscape reflects the terror we all felt. To quote Edgar Allan Poe, this is what happened to us "When the rest of Heaven was blue".

Our area has been greatly impacted mainly by the Tubbs Fire. A content community has been interrupted in unimaginable ways. Our struggle back to normal will be long. How do we heal? Well, I think we have to come together even more than before the fire. We need to care for and support each other. We need to fight for a tomorrow where we have replaced devastation with rebuilding, terror with tranquility, and loss with new life.

The true depth of this tragedy is just beginning to be felt. We are all waking up every day to our new reality. How the hell do we fix this? When do we get to be normal again? My heart hurts as I see, feel and breathe the anguish of this fire. People are comparing this to the Hanly Fire of 1964. That fire took 24 hours to reach Santa Rosa. The Tubbs Fire took four hours. We are victims of an extreme disaster and our lives bear the scars. Healing is not going to come easy, but together we will rebuild; step-by-step, day-by-day, house-by-house and life-by-life, and become, once again, who we are. We do have an unconquerable soul.

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is still relevant; actually more relevant than ever before. We're going to be here throughout the recovery to help the area get back on its feet. We will be helping area businesses maintain or increase their incomes, or to rebuild if needed.

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce will work to help heal our area, our neighborhoods, our business community and our hearts... so help us God.

We need your help; we need everybody's help. This is beyond a few, beyond some, and beyond many. This needs to be everybody.

Please help us help our community by providing feedback to us. We need to know:

- How can we best help those businesses that have lost their structures and other facilities, or whose employees have lost their homes and had to move out of the area?

- How can we encourage people to come back to Mark West / Larkfield and shop at the businesses that remain?

- How can we help those who have lost their homes?

It is especially important now for all of us to support and help our communities

Continued on page 6



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NOVEMBER 9 SOCIAL SPONSORED BY ANYTIME FITNESS AT EPICENTER

We gathered at Anytime Fitness at Epicenter, the North Bay's largest all-in-one destination for sports, fitness, and entertainment. Those of us who were able to attend were happy to see each other and share anxieties, losses and hopes for the future.

For Anytime Fitness owner Bret Livingston, this event was about more than showing off his business. "It's a way to create a sense of normalcy," he said. Immediately after the fire, they opened the doors for anyone in the community to come and use the facilities regardless of membership status. They wanted to support anyone who needed a shower, a workout, or just a safe place to come and relax.

The club has opened a GoFundMe account for seven employees and many members who lost homes in the fires. They have also been able to keep normal pay for all employees.

Bret was happy to talk business. He obviously loves what he is doing. We wrapped up the evening with a tour of Epicenter, which has 3 1/3 acres of sports fields, trampolines, a sports bar, the Anytime Fitness health club, bowling, a game arcade, and other attractions, all under one roof.

Anytime Fitness has been at Epicenter for just over a year, and eight years in Larkfield. The Larkfield location will soon be moving to a larger space on the north side of the center. Brett and his colleagues now have four Anytime Fitness clubs with two more lined up. It's been exciting and encouraging to see one of our local businesses growing so steadily over the years!

Brett encourages any of us to try the club out for a week for free. No intent necessary.

The annual Holiday Tree Lighting will take place Wednesday, December 6, at 6:00 pm. Hosted by Molsberry's Market, it is always a fun event for the kids and everyone gets to enjoy cookies and music by kids in our schools. Santa will be arriving in a fire truck.

Donors & Winners

The pot of gold was \$440. The winner was not present, so it will be \$460 next month.

Jim Bajgrowicz won the 50/50 drawing and went home with \$42.00.

For the second month, John Essman won a great door prize donated by the hosting business. This time it was Cabernet wine and three months membership at Anytime Fitness. Congratulations John!

Next month our social will be the Christmas party, December 14, at Exchange Bank, hosted by Exchange Bank and Molsberry's Market.

Contributed by Aggie Maggio, Realtor @ Coldwell Banker



Left to right: Bret Livingston and Rachel Livingston (owners), and Dennis Johnson, VP of Operations.



David Mohle of Accent Printing (left) and Ignacio Jacinto of Aaction Rents get into the swing of things, taking the opportunity to get a little fitness along with their socializing.



In another great action shot, Steve Plamann of Aaction Rents (standing) presents Jim Bajgrowicz with his \$42.00 prize from the 50/50 Drawing.



Bret of Anytime Fitness (left) provided the prize for the Business Card Drawing, a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon. Longtime Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce member and volunteer John Essman (right) won it.

SMALL TRIUMPHS AND BIG THANKS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

short time. Many people mingled and ran into friends from other neighborhoods. We sat with two different couples whom we'd never met before and heard their stories. One was able to tell about a person who was burned out of her home and her particular need matched our particular resource. Several people told me about similar situations that came together that day.

Let me also applaud the road crews who worked largely without recognition, making our roads safe again and maintaining them that way. This includes the street sweepers who made it possible for all the service trucks to get in and out of the staging grounds in the fields near the Graton Casino. There were hundreds of trucks from PGE, telephone companies, and Southern California Edison, along with various trailers parked in the field on the corner of Stony Point Rd. and Wilfred Ave. Someone even placed shakers in the ditch that shook the dirt & rocks out of the big tires so they wouldn't put rocks all over the Sonoma County roads.

Coming back home, Mark West Union School District Superintendent Ron Calloway asked for a few volunteers to help move furniture from school to school. He said they ended up with over fifty private trucks, besides two big moving trucks, so the kids displaced from Riebli School could go to other schools in Mark West. He was overwhelmed with help and support.

Now here's a story about how connected we are to other neighborhoods. In the wee hours of Monday morning October 9, as the blaze headed towards Larkfield, a man named Doug was evacuating his mother from her Larkfield home. She'd had a hip replacement shortly before the fire. While getting her out, his wife called from their Coffey Park home, saying that their back fence was on fire. Because of blocked roads, it took him and his mother 45 minutes to get back Coffey Park, but the home and his work truck were lost. He is now staying with his mother in Larkfield, and his wife is staying with her mother in Rohnert Park, and attending to her needs because she also just had surgery. To complete this story of tragedy and triumph, a competing company is lending Doug a truck and an office so he can continue running his business.

Here's a great big thank you to Fourth District Supervisor James Gore, and his staff Jenny Chamberlain and Jenny Mendoza. They are always working so hard for us. They put on several community meetings, bringing representatives of all the agencies that are giving support services, answering questions, and figuring out how to resolve challenges. Thanks to the Sonoma County Office of Education for providing the space for those meetings.

I remember that at one of his update talks to the Mark West Chamber, Supervisor Gore reminded us of how the past perpetuates the future and that we need to look at situations as they affect the present and the future. He is certainly showing us that in action now.

Supervisor Gore is setting up a 4th District satellite office in Larkfield, with a focus on fire recovery and rebuild. Stuart Tiffen, former editor of the Windsor Times, has been appointed Field Representative for this project. Stuart will be on hand at the Chamber office and will write an article with details as they get worked out.

Lastly, Carlton Senior Living contacted the Chamber to see how they could donate \$2,000 to community fire victims. Since the Chamber was unable to facilitate the distribution of these funds they went to Supervisor Gore's office and from there to the Mark West School District. They supplied gift cards to 230 families and 20 staff who have lost their homes.

Marnie Cameron, the District Executive Assistant of the Mark West School District reported that "Thankfully, we have received many such donations and have been able to issue out cards from Redwood Credit Union and Bayside Church in Sacramento in different denominations."

With all the public and private outreach, this will be a most beautiful Christmas season.

Contributed by Aggie Maggio, Realtor @ Coldwell Banker

Interested in joining our Ambassador Club?
Contact the Chamber at
office@markwest.org
707-578-7975



To host a Ribbon Cutting,
contact...
Aggie Maggio
aggiemaggio@icloud.com



Keep abreast of important information pertinent to local business issues: <http://edb.sonoma-county.org/>

UPCOMING BUSINESS SOCIALS

Wednesday, December 6, 2017, 6:00pm
Holiday Tree Lighting - Community Event
 Hosted by Molsberry's Market
 522 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

Thursday, December 14, 2017
 Chamber Business After Hours Social 5:30-7:30pm
 Hosted by **Larkfield Exchange Bank and Molsberry's Market**
 500 Larkfield Center, Santa Rosa

We are filling out our 2018 schedule now. If you would like to host a Social or Ribbon Cutting, contact John Essman
 707-433-8774
john@sonomaconnection.com

SPIRIT OF SONOMA AWARDS DECEMBER 8

The Annual Spirit of Sonoma County Award luncheon honors those who contribute to the economic development and enhancement of the communities in which they live, work and conduct business.

December 8, 2017 from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
 DoubleTree Hotel Sonoma Wine Country
 One DoubleTree Drive
 Rohnert Park, CA 94928

To register for this event, visit
<http://www.cvent.com/d/htqqvh/1Q>



REDWOOD CREDIT UNION OF SANTA ROSA WINS HEALTHIEST COMPANY AWARD

Adapted from an article by Gary Quackenbush on the North Bay Business Journal website, November 22, 2017

About 76 percent of Redwood Credit Union (RCU) employees have participated in a branded worksite wellness program over the past year.



Employees track their personal wellness and improvements through challenges and educational modules. Individuals and departments can challenge each other, or staff can complete challenges independently. Employees have the flexibility to choose based on personal preference.

Some activities include logging steps, drinking water, and improving sleep habits, as well as making healthier food choices. The platform also includes opportunities for staff to comment, share healthy tips, and discuss health-related topics.

By tracking activities, employees earn points to be redeemed for prizes including up to a \$250 gift card. In addition to logging points online, employees have taken the initiative to create a culture of wellness.

For example, the accounting department participates in plank and water challenges. They also challenged the Risk Management Department to a walking challenge. This culture has spread and is now being replicated in many RCU departments and branches.

Read the full story on the North Bay Business Journal website here: <http://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/northbay/sonomacounty/7622843-181/redwood-credit-union-wellness?artslide=2>



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, CONTNUED FROM PAGE 2

get back to normal. One of the best ways to help is to support your local merchants by shopping locally. This will aid in making our community strong and vibrant again. These are the merchants who also provide local jobs for many people you may know. After all, local businesses are the largest employer in the nation. The more business they do the more local people they will hire. And your sales tax dollars collected by the local merchants go right back into our community to benefit us all. Local businesses are also far more likely, (250 times more likely), to support a local nonprofit. This greatly affects local communities and their ability to lend a helping hand when it is needed, and right now our community needs that support.

Please join the Mark West Chamber in supporting our local merchants. When we help the businesses we automatically help the people.

I would like to take a moment and thank all the firefighters and sheriff's deputies, police and paramedics, ambulance drivers and utility workers, and everyone else who responded to this hell-sent fire and saved hundreds of lives in its early hours.

The 2017 Wine Country Harvest Faire and Business Showcase was cancelled due to damage to the LBC Center for the Arts. We have tentatively rescheduled the event for March 26th, 2018. Our hope at this time is to combine the Harvest Faire with a carnival for kids and a community healing event. We will keep you posted.

We had two Socials in November. The first was the Mark West Chamber's regular monthly Social on Thursday November 9th hosted by 24 Hour Fitness at their newest location in the new Epicenter, 3215 Coffey Lane, in Santa Rosa.

The second one was a special three-chamber event at Accent Printing at 5468 suite D. Skylane Blvd (off Airport Blvd.) on November 14th.

The Holiday Season is upon us, and the Mark West Area Chamber will be bringing you another family-oriented event on December 6th at Molsberry's Market. We will present our yearly Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony with Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Refreshments will be offered and a Mark West children's school choir will perform Christmas songs. It begins at 6 PM and goes until 7 PM. Everyone in the Mark West Area is welcome to attend. Please come and bring your children.

Our December Social will be held at Exchange Bank in the Larkfield Center, co-sponsored by Molsberry's Markets, Inc. on December 14th from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

I wish you all a very Happy Thanksgiving, and look forward to seeing you around town and at our many events.

Steve Plamann, President

**FIRE RECOVERY BUSINESS RESOURCES
FROM THE SONOMA COUNTY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

If you are a business owner or employee of a business that has been affected by the Sonoma County Fires, check the Economic Development Board site for information about your next steps.

The EDB is actively working with partners to ensure that the community receives disaster-related benefits from the local, state and federal government. Once the information is available it will be posted on their website. Resources listed there include potentially available funding to help rebuild, cover payroll, tax credits and incentives, and help filing claims.

Visit the EDB Fire Recovery Website here:
<http://sonomaedb.org/Business-Assistance/Fire-Recovery-Business-Resources/>



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
 West Olivet Road - West Lodge on Mark West Springs Rd - East

The Lark Newsletter is published monthly under the direction of:
 The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center
 4787 Old Redwood Hiwy, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

ADVERTISING: 6 months \$107.50; 1 year \$200
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 You supply a .pdf version of your 8.5" x 11" flyer to info@markwest.org
 You can pay online at <http://markwest.org/payment>

The Lark Newsletter is emailed to member businesses each month.
 For more information, contact the Chamber office at 578-7975.

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Deadline for publication is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.
 Please email your materials to info@markwest.org

*Promote your business with
 your flyer in the Chamber newsletter.
 You supply the flyers - We do the work!*

CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP DUES

Effective May 1, 2006

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 business affiliation)	

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VP Public Relations
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Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



4787 Old Redwood Hwy, Suite 101
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HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

Wednesday Dec. 6, 6:00 pm

MOLSBERRY'S MARKET

522 Larkfield Center,
Santa Rosa

AFTER HOURS BUSINESS SOCIAL

Thursday Dec. 14
5:30 - 7:30 pm

LARKFIELD EXCHANGE BANK & MOLSBERRY'S MARKET

500 Larkfield Center,
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THE WINDSOR TIMES

