

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

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The Lark

Nov/Dec 2021
Volume XXXV Issue 11

2021 ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING ATTRACTS BIGGEST CROWD EVER

With the first night of December came one of Larkfield's most popular annual events: the Tree Lighting. As in years past, the annual tree lighting was held in front of Molsberry's Market, hosted by the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce's own Brian Molsberry. Even with the recent pandemic situation, Brian commented that this year's tree lighting drew the largest crowd in the history of the event, with much of the Larkfield Center parking lot filled to capacity by attendees. A big thank you goes out to Kringle's Korner Christmas Trees for providing this year's tree! Kringle's Korner has been one of Sonoma County's best sources for pre-cut trees for years, and the Chamber is happy to support them and have their support.

The event provided plenty of holiday entertainment. One of the more prominent attractions was the singing of several carols by children from the Mark West Union School District Music and Choral programs. With classics such as "Jingle Bells", the spirit of the holidays was strong. These carols were performed beautifully, and helped liven up the night.

Of course, a highlight of the evening was the arrival of none other than Santa Claus, transported by the brave firefighters of the Sonoma County Fire District. This year, Santa was portrayed by Chamber member Todd Anderson of Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites. In addition to being stationed by the tree, Santa also climbed aboard a fire engine from the Sonoma County Fire District. With a basket full of candy canes, Santa was able to visit and have his photo taken with many of the children who attended, bringing the joy of the holidays to the Larkfield Center.

Refreshments were also available. Cookies were provided by *COOKIE take a bite*, with a variety that included chocolate chip and lemon-flavored cookies. But what could be paired with the cookies on a cold December night? Hot chocolate, provided fresh from Molsberry's Market. After the main events had concluded, the line for refreshments (served by Chamber members Stephanie Bisordi and Marco Angrisani) formed quickly, and spread well down the sidewalk of the Larkfield Center.

With the largest crowd Brian Molsberry had ever seen in attendance, this year's Annual Tree Lighting was a huge success for the Mark West community. Children and adults alike were able to celebrate the beginning of December and the holiday season. Whether there for the carols, Santa, the tree itself, the snacks, or even just to have the pleasure of mingling with fellow citizens of the Mark West Area, attendees went home happy and satisfied. A warm thank you goes out to all the members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce who helped make this event a hit, and we hope that you will be able to join us for the event next year and in the years to follow.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams. Photos by Debby Williams.



Brian Molsberry of Molsberry Markets, Inc. was Master of Ceremonies, introducing the performers (above) and sharing his Christmas wishes with Santa (below)



PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS: HOST A SOCIAL

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is here to help members promote their business to the local community. You have a great opportunity to do this by hosting a Business After Hours Social which brings many local business owners and residents to your location for an evening of fun and networking. We will assist with your event and publicize it before and after on social media, through email, and in The Lark, our local newsletter. If you are interested in hosting a Social contact us at office@markwest.org.





Steve Plamann
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.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

November & December
3rd Tuesday Of Month

January - October
4th Tuesday of Month
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Contact the Chamber
for links and
attendance information

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Cutting, contact
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Chamber at
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is my favorite time of the year. I am a holiday fan and during this season we celebrate four great holidays from the very end of October until the very beginning of January. We get scared, full, spoiled and wishful. I feel hopeful because of all the giving, sharing and togetherness I always see this time of year. These holidays also bring a lot of business to our local merchants. The stores are all decorated, which makes shopping even more fun.

I am pleased to say that we were visited by Santa Claus at our yearly Christmas tree lighting at Molsberry Market. This is such a wonderful community gathering. The music department from the Mark West Union School District once again entertained us with Christmas songs and music from their students. Hot chocolate and cookies were given out and Santa came with a bag of goodies and a lap for the children to sit on. This well-loved and traditional Mark West Christmas event started at 6pm on December 1st and lasted about two hours. I want to thank Molsberry Market for hosting this event every year. Mark West residents, this is your Christmas tree... come out and see it!

I would like to thank Brett Livingstone and his crew at Anytime Fitness in Larkfield for hosting our November Social, which they have been doing for many years. His support of the Mark West Area Chamber and our community is greatly appreciated and we get to hang out in this amazing place. If you don't belong to a fitness center, you know you should. Anytime Fitness has tons of space, every piece of exercise equipment imaginable, and a staff of trained coaches to guide you and encourage a healthy lifestyle. We had a great turnout the Social and many prizes were given away through our drawings.

Well I hope your Thanksgiving was as good as mine. It's truly my second favorite holiday every year. Whether I'm facing down a defeathered large bird that's been battered and then baked for hours, or tackling a tofu turkey, once all the other great traditional Thanksgiving side dishes are added in I am in heaven and it gets even better with a huge piece of homemade pumpkin pie. Families and friends getting together to celebrate has always been very meaningful to me. Those special moments accentuate my life and leave me with lasting memories and the anticipation of next year.

As I mentioned last month and many times in the past, please support our local businesses all year long and especially during the Holidays. Our local community does not benefit when we purchase items online from other places in the world. If something is made on the other side of the globe and it is sold here, our community benefits in many ways. Support your neighbors by supporting their businesses! Support their employees by buying local!

Happy Holidays.

Steve Plamann, President



It is said that "pie fixes everything." This may be true, but its efficacy is enhanced when there are ample friends and family to share it with. Happy Holidays everybody!

NOVEMBER SOCIAL REPORT: ANYTIME FITNESS

Another year saw another fantastic After Hours Business Social held at Anytime Fitness in the Larkfield Shopping Center. For the past 14 years (barring the restrictions of 2020), Anytime Fitness has held the November social within their gym, giving Chamber members a consistent place to meet every fall. Since Anytime Fitness is, of course, open to members at any time of day, the social itself took place in one of the gym's classrooms, providing a



Paul Peck of Solstice Senior Living (right) with guest Richard Maas and his door prize of IPA.

cozy location away from the main floor. Brett Livingstone, CEO of the Larkfield and Epicenter Anytime Fitness locations, hosted the social with his usual confidence and charm.

For those who have not had the opportunity to attend a social at Anytime Fitness, or have not attended in recent years, the current location of Anytime Fitness is actually the second location the franchise has had within the Larkfield Shopping Center. Despite the hardships that were faced due to the Tubbs Fire in 2017, Anytime Fitness was able to move to its new location in 2018, and they have been going strong ever since.

In addition to Brett having the opportunity to speak about Anytime Fitness, the Chamber was able to present membership plaques to two of the Chamber's most recent additions: Laurie Pellman of Kyocera Document Solutions, and Tracy Hinman of Alegre Home Care. The plaques were presented by Chamber member Paul Peck, who warmly welcomed the new members.

Following these announcements and presentations, the time came for the monthly Pot of Gold, 50/50, and Business Card drawings. This month, the 50/50 raffle prize was a total of \$45, which was won by Tracy Hinman of Alegre Home Care. The Pot of Gold, once again, was a whopping \$300. The winner, Firebrand Safety Systems, was not in attendance, so the Pot of Gold will remain at \$300



Paul Peck presenting a Chamber membership plaque to Tracy Hinman of Alegre Home Care.

for the next social in December. For the Business Card drawing, two prizes were donated and awarded. The first was one free month of membership at Anytime Fitness, donated by Brett Livingstone and Anytime Fitness employee Dennis Johnson. This prize was won by Laurie Pellman of Kyocera Document Solutions. The other prize was a Stone – 12 Days of IPA pack of beer, donated by Alegre Home Care. This prize was won by a Chamber guest, Richard Maas. Congratulations to both of the winners, and a reminder to every Chamber member to always bring your business card to socials for a chance at these kinds of great prizes.

Sadly, our December and January socials have been cancelled due to the omicron variant of COVID-19. We are hopeful that our February social will continue as normal, and will be a wonderful chance to meet with your fellow Chamber Members and belatedly celebrate the New Year, not to mention a great time to win some of the amazing prizes generously donated to the Chamber. Thank you to Brett Livingstone and Anytime Fitness for a fine November Social, and we hope to return next year for another great time!

By Johnathan Williams | Photos by Doug Williams and Cinthya Gamino



Host Brett Livingstone of Anytime Fitness addresses the group in his facility's large and well appointed classroom.



Paul Peck presenting a Chamber membership plaque to Laurie Pellman of Kyocera Document Solutions.

AMERICA'S FAVORITE CHARDONNAY

EDITORS' CHOICE
VINTAGE 2015

91
POINTS
JULY 2017*

EDITORS' CHOICE
VINTAGE 2016

91
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APRIL 2018*

VINTAGE 2017

90
POINTS
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VINTAGE 2018

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APRIL 2020*

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SONOMA COUNTY REDISTRICTING: NEW MAP ADOPTED ON DEC. 14

Adapted from a press release by the Sonoma County Administrator's Office, December 9, 2021.

The final version of a redistricting map approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors at the fifth redistricting public hearing on Tuesday has been posted on the county's website and is available for public review.

This final map, referred to as "Revised Sonoma County Supervisorial District Boundaries" on the interactive map, was brought to the supervisors for a final vote at its Tuesday, Dec. 14 meeting, and was approved for adoption. Public comments were received as part of the agenda item but further changes will not be made as the county has a statutory obligation to adopt the new map by Dec. 15. The new map will go into effect during the next election cycle.

Residents are invited to utilize the interactive version of the new map on the Sonoma County redistricting webpage to determine whether the district boundaries have changed for their place of residence. The new map will be in use for the next decade until the next redistricting process, which is set to take place in 2031 after the next decennial federal Census.

Throughout the redistricting process, which began on Feb. 23, Sonoma County undertook extensive outreach to help drive engagement and participation from members of the public. Some of these actions included:

- Establishment of the Sonoma County Advisory Redistricting Commission (ARC), composed of 19 community members, to advise and assist the Board with redrawing supervisorial district boundaries. The ARC held 8 public meetings throughout 2021.

- Held five public hearings on redistricting.

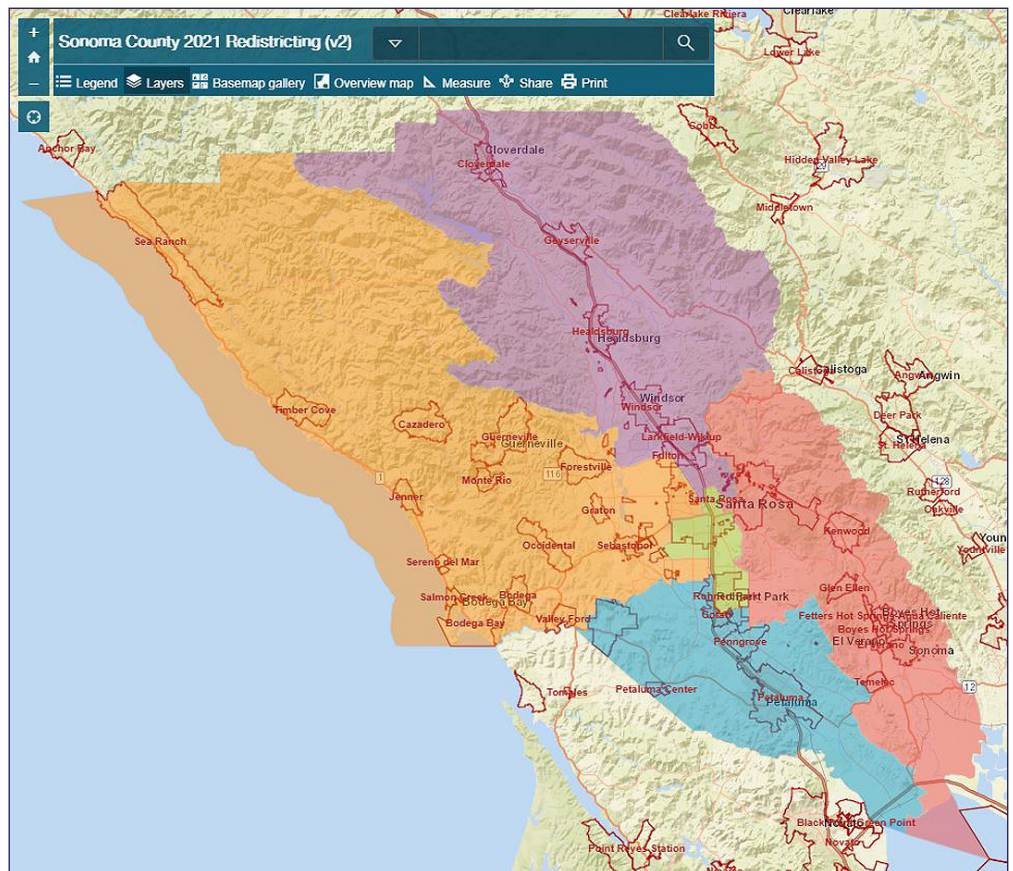
- Held two town halls and a public workshop.

- Creation of a dedicated redistricting English/Spanish webpage, to enhance transparency and enable a consolidated experience for members of the public to learn about the process, leverage mapping tools, access information in several languages and observe the redistricting meetings.

- And much more.

Read the entire press release at the Sonoma County website at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/Redistricting-2021/News/Redistricting-process-map-adoption-on-Dec-14/>

*The final, approved district map.
Read the article for a link to the
interactive version.*



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Born and raised in Sonoma County, Jeff Kowell always loved the outdoors. So when he started working for a local tree service at age 23, it was a natural fit. In 1995, Jeff founded Image Tree Service, Inc. His in-depth knowledge of native species and how to maintain and nurture their healthy growth, combined with his personable approach to doing business, has since made it one of the most successful tree companies in Sonoma County. Licensed and insured, Image Tree Service serves all of Northern California with a safety-conscious work ethic and a high degree of customer satisfaction.

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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

ALEGRE HOME CARE: CARE WITH COMPASSION



Tracy Hinman of Alegre Home Care

For many people, being independent is crucial to their well-being. That is why, rather than going to an assisted living facility, many individuals can instead benefit from home (or “in-place”) care. Instead of having to leave their life behind, those using home care can instead continue to live in their home or independent community while still being cared for in an effective way. This has been the goal of Alegre Home Care, a locally-owned and operated home care provider, for the past 28 years. And for Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce member Tracy Hinman, working with Alegre has been tremendously rewarding.

Alegre Home Care was founded in 1993 by Charles Symes, using his previous 10 years of experience in the caregiving field to create a business that could provide quality care to those in the San Francisco area. Over the past 28 years of Alegre’s existence, the areas served have expanded to include nine different locations in 13 Northern California counties, including Sonoma County. The main goal of Alegre is to provide its customers with the ability to age (or recover from things such as surgery) in place. Specifically, Alegre is able to provide care for those still at home or in independent senior communities, care for those with dementia and related diseases, recovery services for those making a comeback from a serious illness or injury, child care for families who need assistance on short notice, and LGBT+ care. Alegre recognizes that LGBT+ seniors have many specific needs, and is certified by

the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

Tracy Hinman, who has recently joined the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, has worked with Alegre for the past seven years, joining their team in 2014. Serving as a Care Manager with Alegre, Tracy has also been able to work with many other senior-related groups, including the Sonoma County Section on Aging. She has also served as both a hospice care volunteer and performed additional volunteer work at senior facilities. With Alegre, Tracy has been able to form a strong relationship with Solstice Senior Living, where Alegre has worked with many of the seniors in Solstice’s independent senior community.

Tracy chose to join the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce this year after receiving an invitation from Paul Peck of Solstice Senior Living. Tracy knew Paul from previous work in their field, and Alegre has recently partnered with Solstice to work on-site with residents in their community. As a member of the Mark West Chamber, Tracy is happy to be a part of a chamber that is small enough to enable her to get to know other members, but also large enough to make important connections within the realm of business.

All in all, Tracy is glad to have joined a chamber of commerce full of friendly people. As a member of Alegre Home Care, Tracy is able to provide care for the senior citizens (and more) of Sonoma County, who she knows are some of our most important citizens. To the members of the Chamber, Tracy says: “Thank you for making me feel welcome!”

Contributed by Johnathan Williams. Photo by Johnathan Williams.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES ARE BACK!

Adapted from a story by Amy Larson on the KRON 4 website, Nov. 5, 2021

The future is looking brighter for one of California’s most iconic species, monarch butterflies. Butterflies fluttering in bigger numbers are being observed by volunteers and the public, according to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

The number of monarchs counted in California dropped to a record-low last year, when less than 2,000 were counted statewide, compared to 4.5 million that migrated here in the 1980s.

Over 1,300 monarchs were counted at the Pacific Grove overwintering site; about 3,000 were counted at Natural Bridges State Park in Santa Cruz, where none were reported in 2020. Some environmentalists believe butterflies are bouncing back thanks to California’s drought. Warmer and drier weather helps make the long migration an easier journey.

Read the entire story at <https://www.kron4.com/news/bay-area/butterflies-are-back-more-monarchs-seen-migrating-through-bay-area/>.

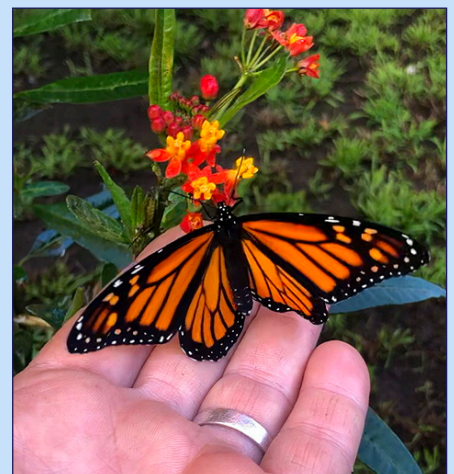


Photo credit: Julian Plamann.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

KYOCERA DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS: HIGH-QUALITY SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR OFFICE NEEDS

When doing any sort of office work, from basic printing and copying to IT solutions, it is crucial that you have the best tools to get the job done. Without the right tools, the work will suffer, and if the work suffers, the resulting product or services also suffer. Fortunately for those working in Sonoma County, there is a solution. Kyocera Document Solutions (formally known as Discovery Office Solutions), based in Santa Rosa and operating throughout much of Northern California, is ready to help. As a part of Kyocera, Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce member Laurie Pellman is happy to help with your office needs.

Kyocera Document Solutions has been supporting our Sonoma County community for over 60 years. Kyocera Document Solutions is a total technology partner providing solutions related to documents: printers, scanners, fax, copy machines, and more. Additionally, Kyocera offers a wide variety of multi-function printers (MFPs) for scanning into backend solutions/document workflows, and specialized printing: graphic color and wide format printing. Managed print services (MPS) help manage an office's printing environment, providing consistency and improved productivity. Moreover, Kyocera is an expert in IT solutions, providing the expertise necessary to keep your office's network secure and up to date. Kyocera offers network assessments with professional consultants, enabling customers to see a detailed overview of how their network is performing.

Laurie Pellman joined the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce this year. She is a seasoned veteran of 32 years in this industry. Prior to joining Kyocera, she worked for another nationally-recognized company that became too corporate and lost customer focus. Preferring to work in a more family-oriented company that focuses on the customer first, Laurie joined Kyocera three years ago. Laurie is now extremely happy to be working in her own backyard, with her Sonoma County community.

Laurie joined the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce at the recommendation of Lisa Goetowski. Lisa invited Laurie to several Chamber socials, which allowed Laurie to meet many of the members of the Chamber and understand what the Chamber had to offer. Liking the Chamber's ability to allow members to meet on both a personal and business level, Laurie joined this year. She looks forward to forming more connections with fellow members, and loves to see people from the same community she both lives and works in. Outside of the Chamber, Laurie is involved with the community, including being a Windsor girls' softball board member and Bayside Church children's program volunteer along with helping with monthly community food distribution.

At the end of the day, whether you need help with printing, IT solutions, or any other office need, Kyocera Document Solutions and Laurie Pellman will be able to help you find the right solution. To her fellow members of the Chamber, Laurie says: "I'm very grateful for the opportunity to get to know each and every one of you and look forward to partnering with you, whether that be community volunteering or at a business level."

Contributed by Johnathan Williams. Photo by Johnathan Williams.



Laurie Pellman of Kyocera Document Solutions

BIG TURNOUT FOR SANTA!

On the afternoon of December 17, Santa Claus made a surprise visit to the Christmas tree at the Larkfield Shopping Center, which the MWA Chamber and Molsberry Market puts up every year for the community. We had a tremendous turnout of smiling people who embraced the chance to meet Santa and have their picture taken with him. It was a very fun afternoon. Clearly, the spirit of Christmas is alive and well in Larkfield!

Photos contributed by Steve Plamann



SONOMA COUNTY APPROVES INITIAL ARPA ALLOCATIONS FOR COUNTY AND COMMUNITY

Adapted from a press release by the Sonoma County Administrator's Office, December 15, 2021

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors this week began the process of approving the allocation of \$96 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, grounding their decisions in community recommendations that resulted from engagement with the ARPA Equity Work Group, community town hall meetings, and focus groups. By using public health data and indices like the Healthy Places Index, and the Human Development Index, and by centering the experiences of community members disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, the County has deepened its understanding of historic inequities and will focus on investment strategies to address them to achieve a more equitable recovery.

ARPA funding was approved for ongoing COVID response and monitoring, creation of a new Public Health Lab/Morgue, essential worker pay for County employees, and County investments aimed at improving cultural responsiveness. Additionally, funds were dedicated to a Rapid Economic Assistance program, housing and homelessness initiatives, development of a broadband system for rural areas, and community investment awards.

"With these ARPA investments, we have the opportunity in Sonoma County to establish generational changes to improve the lives of those most impacted by the pandemic," said Lynda Hopkins, chair of the Board of Supervisors. "We appreciate the diligent and thorough work by the ARPA Equity Work Group that went into the recommendations that our Board wholeheartedly approved."

The funds come from the total of \$96 million allocated to the county through the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act in March. The board also approved \$28.7 million to support ongoing COVID-19 response and monitoring efforts as well as the ARPA implementation plan.

Community Investment Buckets were identified through community engagement efforts including virtual town halls, community surveys, and feedback from the ARPA Equity Work Group. Based on the feedback and ideas from these sources, the major categories for community investment awards are as follows. The funding level also was based on the level of need expressed through the community engagement process.

For additional information, visit the ARPA webpage at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/ARPA/>. You can also view the board meeting from December 14, 2021 at <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Read the entire press release at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Press-Releases/initial-ARPA-allocations-for-county-and-community/>



At California American Water, we're here to help you conserve water **INDOORS** so you can use less and save water and money on your water bill. Here are some simple tips:



Install aerators on kitchen and bathroom faucets: Check for worn washers and gaskets that might cause drips. Aerators add air into the water stream so you can use less water noticing a difference in water flow.



Replace old, non-efficient toilets with a new, high-efficiency models: A leaking toilet can double the total monthly water usage by the whole household. Save water and money with every flush.



Regularly check your toilet, faucets and pipes for leaks: Download our free leak detection kit at californiaamwater.com > Conservation > Detecting Leaks. If you find a leak, have it fixed as soon as possible.



The Lark Newsletter is published monthly under the direction of:

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