

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
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The Lark

Apr/May/Jun 2023
Volume XXXVII Issue 2

NEW COMMUNITY PARK FOR THE MARK WEST AREA

The Mark West Area Community Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is coordinating a fundraising campaign to raise funds for the acquisition of a property that will serve the Mark West Area as its first community park. Since the 2017 Tubbs Fire devastated the Mark West Area destroying thousands of homes, fire survivors and our community have made it a mission to rebuild better and more resilient. Now that most of our homes have been rebuilt, we are turning our focus to rebuilding our community better – and that includes creating our first Mark West Area Community Park. To achieve this vision, we are seeking donations from businesses and private individuals to help raise \$300,000 by October 2023 to complete the purchase of the property where the park will reside.



These two goats, Bubs and Richard, survived the Tubbs fire on the former preschool property next to where Cricklewood once stood. This same property will now become our new Community Park. The goats were one of the first examples of our resilience.

and serve the diverse population with children/youth/senior activities, including a community garden, a gazebo/pavilion, picnic tables, a swing set, and open space with native species of plants and trees. Much like the preschool that was located on the property before the Tubbs Fire, it is our vision to create a dedicated space for our community to continue building resilience and relationships that will make our community stronger now and into the future.

This park will be a place to reflect on our rebuild accomplishments, gather as a community for meetings and events, and allow the thousands of residents who currently do not have access to an urban park the ability to walk to a park to exercise, grow food and, meet our neighbors. There is no other park or facility such as this in the central Mark West Area. We will be hosting community meetings to gather input on the future park; to get more information and/or be included in an email notification for meetings, please sign up at <https://www.markwestarea.org/park>.

We welcome you and your business to join us in this exciting campaign to rebuild our community better by building a park. To learn more about the Mark West Area Community Park campaign, our nonprofit and to make a donation, please visit our website at <https://www.markwestarea.org>. Our dedicated volunteer board of directors will also make themselves available to you and your business to talk more about this exciting opportunity.

Contributed by Heidi Would

The Mark West Area Community Fund is currently working with the Sonoma Land Trust, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, the Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council, and Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore to secure additional funding for the acquisition of the property located at 4614 Old Redwood Highway in the heart of the Mark West Area. **To date, we have secured 84 percent of our fundraising goal - meaning we only need 16 percent more to achieve our fundraising goal.**

The Mark West Area Community Park will provide our community with its first community gathering plaza



DONATE AT: [markwestarea.org/park](https://www.markwestarea.org/park)
The Mark West Area Community Fund is recognized as a non-profit cooperative association under section 501 (c) 3 of the United States Internal Revenue Service tax code. Our tax identification number is 92-2669449.





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

2nd Tuesday of Month

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Contact the Chamber for links and attendance information

To host a Ribbon Cutting, contact office@markwest.org



Interested in joining our Ambassador Team? Contact the Chamber at office@markwest.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow, my nine years as your chamber President has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I remember when I was first told that the President writes an article for every edition of the Lark. I wondered, what did I get myself into? Well, a lot more than just that. It was an experience that I will never forget... how could I?

It was a time of fun and a time of troubles. "Fire, Fire, Plague" sounds like a childhood backyard game, but it wasn't. These were extreme wide-awake nightmares. But we did it. We stayed together, worked together, and rejoiced together, even when we couldn't see each other's faces for the masks. I held down the fort, as we tried to stay the course. Yes, I was scared and yes, I am proud. My original commitment of three years was not in the cards. Thankfully, I was blessed the whole time with a very supportive board of directors and a membership that proved that it is here for the long haul, despite those colossal challenges. You have all become my friends and will always be my friends.

This is hard to write, as many emotions and memories are running through my mind. The good thing about typing on a computer is that it is nearly impossible to smudge the ink with a sentimental tear. This chamber and the Mark West community have shown a heart that can't be stopped. The warmth of that heart encouraged us all to keep going.

But now it is someone else's watch. I will stick around on the board, as a past-president, and continue to see you all at the Socials. And I will still be helping with other things as well.

I want to be clear about my support of the new President, Brad Sherwood, as he adjusts to his duties. He is a fire survivor and true community hero. He will bring all his many talents to our chamber and lead us into our bright future.

Through the years I discovered the best part of being involved with a chamber, which is "that's where the really good people hang out". The Mark West Area and Chamber of Commerce are very special to me and they have enriched my life.

Steve Plamann, President

WELCOME PRESIDENT BRAD SHERWOOD

Greetings Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce! I am excited to work with you and our business community to accomplish our chamber's mission while improving our community and having a little fun along the way – ok, a lot of fun. First, I want to acknowledge the incredible leadership of Steve Plamann. Since 2014, Steve has led the Chamber as our president and fearless leader. His ability to lead our chamber through wildfires, COVID, and economic uncertainty has been second to none. Steve has remained steadfast in his ability to ensure the Chamber has remained strong and through his creativity even adapt to new multi-media opportunities to grow community engagement. The same can be said for the entire Chamber board of directors. Their commitment to our business community has been unwavering and for that we owe each of them a heartfelt thank you.

As the Chamber's new president, it is my goal to continue that same level of commitment and passion for our chamber and community. While I am not a business owner, I am an individual Chamber member, or as I like to say, a proud consumer and supporter of the Chamber and community. As an active Mark West Area community member, I have served on the Mark West Union School District board of trustees and Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council. When the Tubbs Fire hit, our family lost our home and we became very active in the rebuild effort. My involvement included volunteering as a rebuild Block Captain and co-founder of the Larkfield Resilience Fund – a rebuild non-profit. Most recently, I have worked with the Chamber to build our community's new non-profit – the Mark West Area Community Fund. I am excited about the many opportunities this new non-profit will provide our community and businesses, including a new park plaza on Old Redwood Highway – more to come on that fun project!



Brad Sherwood

Continued on page 8

APRIL SOCIAL REPORT

On a beautiful April evening, members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce gathered at Treasure House Fine Home Consignment Shop to celebrate the April Social for 2023. The social was one of the Chamber's largest collaborative efforts to date, as Treasure House co-hosted the event alongside Tambayan Filipino Eatery, Mayacamas Mountain Living Magazine, and The Lodge at Piner Road. The event saw additional assistance from Home Run Pizza, Susan Mullins of KW Realty, and FirstLight HomeCare, which resulted in an amazing event that was full of community cooperation.

The evening began with the usual mingling period seen at most socials, where attendees were free to eat food provided by Tambayan Filipino Eatery and Homerun Pizza of Larkfield. After the initial mingling period, the bell was rung and attendees gathered in the rear of the store in order to hear the announcements from MC Paul Peck of The Lodge at Piner Road.

Paul first introduced the various hosts of the event, thanking them for hosting and allowing them to tell the gathered crowd about their businesses. The Chamber also gave the various guests who were in attendance the opportunity to speak about their businesses and what services were offered.



Wendy Davies, from Treasure House, welcomes Mark West Area Chamber members and their guests. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.



We have many business card drawing prizes at our Socials. This winner is Michelle Boom and Treasure House donated the prize. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

The major announcement was for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Installation Dinner. This Dinner will take place on July 13 at 6pm at Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club. All members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce are encouraged to buy tickets and attend this event.

Following the announcements, the various drawings were held, starting with the 50/50 drawing. It was won by Cindy Butner of Mayacamas Mountain Living Magazine, who proceeded to donate the \$55 prize to Treasure House.

Next was the Pot of Gold Drawing, which was \$60 after the full Pot had been won at the previous month's social. For the second month in a row, the Pot of Gold had a winner! This month, the winner was Doug Williams of the Williams family. This meant that the Pot of Gold would remain at its base value of \$60 for the following month. As a reminder, Chamber members must be up to date on their dues and present at socials in order to win the Pot of Gold.

The final set of drawings were the Business Card drawings, and there were multiple great prizes to be had:

- A Plate of Goodies from Treasure House, won by Michelle Boom of Vs Electric
- A Bottle of Wine from The Lodge at Piner Road, won by Maria Mann of FirstLight HomeCare
- A Box of Cookies from COOKIE...take a bite!, won by Cindy Butner of Mayacamas Mountain Living
- A Gift Bag from Assisted Living Locators, won by Peggy Martin of Rainbow Investments Solutions
- A Baseball Cap from Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards, won by Tracy Mattson of COOKIE...take a bite!

All in all, the evening was a rousing success that truly demonstrated the community spirit of the Mark West Area. Thank you to all of our hosts for their assistance.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams

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MAY SOCIAL REPORT

On a crisp May evening, the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce gathered to hold its monthly social. This month, the hosts were Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club and Lescure Engineers. Together, the hosts provided an amazing assortment of food and drink that ensured that the evening was a resounding success.

As with most socials, the evening began with a period of socializing that gave attendees the opportunity to network and sample the delicious food that Charlie's Restaurant provided, and the delicious wine supplied by Lescure Engineers. Following this MC Paul Peck thanked Charlie's Restaurant and Lescure Engineers for their wonderful work co-hosting the event, and then gave them the opportunity to speak to the gathered crowd about what services they offer. Additionally, multiple guests had the opportunity to speak briefly about their own businesses.

Once again, the major piece of Chamber news for the evening was the upcoming annual Installation Dinner, which will return to Charlie's on July 13th at 6pm. All members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce are encouraged to buy tickets and attend this important event.

With the announcements and acknowledgements finished, the time came for the evening's drawings. First came the 50/50 raffle, with a prize of \$90 this month. The winner of the 50/50 was Sally Lopez, a guest at the event.



The large crowd enjoyed the food and wine provided by Charlie's Restaurant. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.



We got another winner: Junior Ambassador Kiera Schneider. This prize was sponsored by Cindy Butner and Mayacamas Mountain Living Magazine. Photo credit: Steve Plamann.

Next up came the Pot of Gold Drawing, which was \$60 following a win at the April Social. After two months in a row of winners, however, the business drawn from the Pot of Gold was not at the social, and as a result the Pot of Gold's value increased from \$60 to \$80 for the June Social. As a reminder, Chamber members must be up to date on their dues and be present at socials in order to win the Pot of Gold.

The Business Card drawings offered some great prizes this month:

- A bottle of wine from the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, won by Tabatha Bonetti-Asker of Notary Maven
- A bucket of Mother's Day goodies from The Lodge at Piner Road, won by JoEllen Williams of the Williams Family
- A bird house from Bisordi Ranch, won by Paul

Peck of The Lodge at Piner Road

- A set of Mother's Day-themed cookies from Mayacamas Mountain Living Magazine, won by Kiera Schneider, Junior Ambassador for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce
- An Oliver's gift card, tea cakes, and a flower from Assisted Living Locators; won by Daniel Westphal of O'Malley, Wilson, Westphal
- A set of plates from Treasure House, won by Ignacio Jacinto of Aaction Rents
- A certificate for one round for two players at the Windsor Golf Club Golf Course from Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club, won by Jackie Brittan of Treasure House
- A gift basket from Corcoran Icon Properties, won by Karla Perez of Best Western Wine Country Inn & Suites
- A gift certificate from Treasure House, won by Heidi Would of Corcoran Icon Properties

With over 45 attendees, the May Social at Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club was an amazing success. The Chamber thanks both Charlie's and Lescure Engineers for hosting.

Contributed by Johnathan Williams

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: NOTARY MAVEN

Signing legal documents may seem like a simple thing, but there are still strict regulations related to such signings. As a result, there is an ever-present need for impartial third parties who can serve as witnesses to these events, and that is where notary publics, such as Tabatha Bonetti-Asker of Notary Maven, come into play. Notary Maven seeks to ensure that clients can have the smoothest experience possible when signing important legal documents.

Tabatha Bonetti-Asker was first commissioned as a notary public in 2005. Each commission for a notary public is valid for four years, after which the notary public must renew the commission to legally continue working in that capacity. Tabatha maintained her notary public commissions while working in the high-tech industry and raising a family. Tabatha is very dedicated to her work as a notary public, a role that she enjoys greatly. "I love working with the public and meeting new people," Tabatha says.

Tabatha provides notarial services from the remote purchase of a car, mortgage documents and estate trusts to reverse mortgages, and much more! She also works with a wide variety of clients: mortgage lenders, escrow and title companies, the elderly, parents and guardians traveling out of the country with their children, and even hospital-bound patients. One of the major roles Tabatha plays as a notary public is to confirm the identity of the signer, and that they are signing knowingly and willingly. In doing so, she is able to give her clients peace of mind and help to ensure the signing goes smoothly.

Outside of her notary public work, Tabatha has recently joined the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce to network peer-to-peer. Tabatha was introduced to the Chamber through Paul Peck, the Chamber's head ambassador, when they chanced to meet at an Alignable Networking meeting at Blue Beagle Coffee in Larkfield. Having been unaware of the existence of a Chamber of Commerce in the Mark West Area, Tabatha was delighted to join in late 2022/early 2023.

In the end, as a recent addition to the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, Tabatha is happy to be able to meet her fellow business owners in the area. Whether they need her services themselves, or know people who do, members of the Chamber now know that Tabatha is willing and able to serve as a mobile notary public when needed. To the Chamber, Tabatha says: "This is a wonderful chamber full of great people, and it makes you feel welcome. It is an excellent way to connect with other businesses in the area, and I am looking forward to participating more as time goes on. As someone who has lived in the area, attended Redwood Adventist Academy, and lost my home in Fountaingrove in the Tubbs Fire, the Mark West Area is near and dear to me!"

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



Tabatha Bonetti-Asker, Notary Maven. Photo credit: Tabatha Bonetti-Asker

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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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Welcome President Brad Sherwood, continued from page 2

My wife and I are raising our two children in the Mark West Area and love this family friendly town. As we said after the Tubbs Fire, of course we are going to rebuild because there is nowhere else we would want to raise our family. I have also dedicated my professional career to our community through my



Brad, wielding a nail gun during the rebuild after the Tubbs fire. Photo credit: Jennifer Grey Thompson.

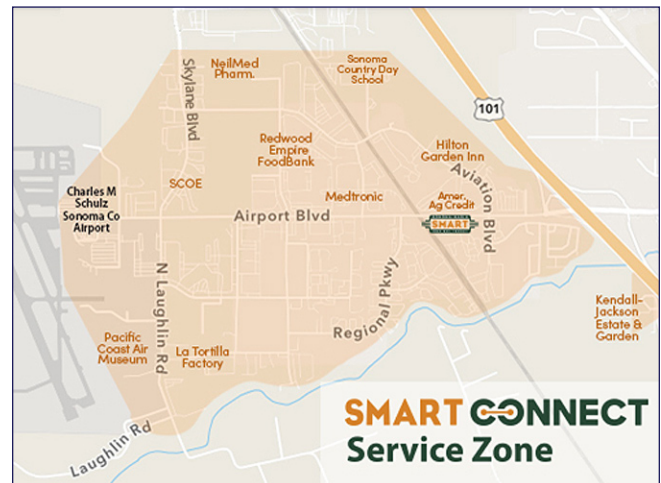
work for the past 17 years at the Sonoma County Water Agency. At Sonoma Water, I serve as an assistant general manager overseeing our business services and external affairs divisions.

I truly believe that our chamber can only be as strong as our businesses and community. Through my experience after the Tubbs Fire, I saw firsthand how the Chamber helped rebuild our businesses and community. And I saw the tremendous outpouring of support for our healthcare providers by the chamber throughout the COVID crisis. Our chamber holds true to our value of "bringing business and the community together". I look forward to working with you to continue our chamber's successes and to continue rebuilding our community back stronger and more resilient. Please feel free to contact me at any time at bradleywsherwood@gmail.com.

Contributed by Brad Sherwood

RIDE SMART. FLY STS!

We're thrilled to announce a new service coming to the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport (STS) and our community. SMART Connect is a microtransit shuttle program designed to provide first and last mile service directly between the SMART Airport Station and the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport. This new program will make it easy to combine the train with air travel at STS in a way that is environmentally friendly, convenient, and accessible to all. SMART Connect will begin service on Monday, June 12, and will operate 7 days a week 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Passengers will be able to book a trip both in advance and on-demand using the Ride Pingo™ app. The shuttle will pick up passengers at the SMART Airport Station, or any address within the approximately 1.5-mile service zone. Airport passengers can catch the shuttle at the bus stop just south of the terminal.



Contributed by the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport

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JUNE SOCIAL REPORT

Despite the gray clouds that had been hanging overhead for much of the week, the skies cleared up just in time for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce June Social. Hosted by Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards and the Williams Family, a great barbecue dinner was prepared, welcoming in the summer.

The evening began with a period of socializing under the walnut trees, where guests were treated to delicious sausages, hot dogs, hamburgers, and salad, all prepared by Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards' own Robbie Bisordi. After everyone had a chance to sit down and eat, MC Paul Peck of The Lodge at Piner Road rang the bell and brought everyone's attention forward for announcements.

Paul first thanked Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards and the Williams Family for hosting the event, and had the Bisordi family speak briefly about their business. Following this, guests were recognized and had the opportunity to introduce themselves.



Ramona Maurer, from Assisted Living Locators, was one of our many winners. Social co-host and Chamber Treasurer Doug Williams provided the prize. Photo credit: John Nelson.

- Fresh jam and a \$20 gift card from Assisted Living Locators, won by Wendy Davies of Treasure House
- A box of See's candy from the Williams family, won by Ramona Maurer of Assisted Living Locators
- A box of cookies from COOKIE...take a bite!, won by Johnathan Williams of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce
- A box of cookies from COOKIE...take a bite!, won by Brian Molsberry of Molsberry's Market
- A bottle of wine from Corcoran Icon Properties, won by Nate Glaeser of CAL FIRE
- A bottle of wine from the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, won by Deborah Pulido of Treasure House
- A set of charcuterie plates and board from Treasure House, won by Robbie Bisordi of Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards

At nearly 50 attendees, the June Social at Bisordi Ranch and Vineyards was one of the Chamber's most well-attended events so far this year. The Chamber encourages all of its members to attend socials, and even more so for the upcoming Installation Dinner.

There will be no July Social due to the Installation Dinner, but the August Social is still available for any Chamber Members who wish to host. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Contributed by Johnathan Williams



The Bisordi family, represented by three of the six generations that have lived on the ranch. Photo credit: John Nelson.

The biggest Chamber news of the month was the upcoming annual Installation Dinner, which will be held at Charlie's Restaurant at the Windsor Golf Club on July 13 at 6pm. Chamber members are encouraged to buy tickets and attend this event, and to do so soon, as tickets are selling fast.

After the announcements, the time came for the evening's drawings. The first drawing was the 50/50 raffle. The winner was Debbie Molsberry, who was awarded a \$72 prize.

The next drawing was the Pot of Gold, which had an \$80 prize. For the second month in a row, the winner was absent, which means the Pot of Gold will rise to \$100 at the Chamber's next social in August. As a reminder, Chamber members must be up to date on their dues and present at socials in order to win the Pot of Gold.

With the Pot of Gold drawing complete, only the Business Card drawings remained. The prizes and winners for this month were:



June Social attendees got to enjoy the beautiful vineyards and walnut orchard at Bisordi Ranch. Photo credit: John Nelson.

SKUNKED

Why Are Skunks Important?
By eating insects, moles and grubs that are eating your prized plants, they are great pest control for your yard. And they are particularly fond of Japanese beetles, cutworms and hornworms, all of which damage vegetables and flowers.

They are omnivorous and eat a variety of other garden pests, including mice, voles, beetles, various larvae, wasps, yellowjackets and crickets. Skunks are also scavengers. They will seek out animal carcasses, which helps keep an ecosystem free of carrion. And since they are immune to snake venom, they will eat poisonous snakes as well. Of course, they do dig holes looking for some of those critters, but that can be considered aeration of your soil.

Skunks have an average life span of 2 to 4 years in the wild. Because of their limited eyesight, they can fall into uncovered wells or empty pools. And, as they do have a sprayer, if you see one at night, please keep your distance. They usually do a warning dance, to scare you off, before they spray. They raise their tail straight up and repeatedly pound their two front feet on the ground. So, stay clear, but be thankful they are here doing the work they do.

Adapted from "Why are Skunks Important?" located at <https://weilerwoodsforwildlife.com/skunks>

Contributed by Steve Plamann



Night camera photo by Steve Plamann



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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.


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