

Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce and VISITORS CENTER



The Lark

December 2020
Volume XXXIV Issue 12

BRINGING BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

4787 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 101, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
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MARK WEST AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE KEEPS GROWING WITH FOUR NEW MEMBERS

We are excited to announce four new members this month!

We are pleased to welcome back **Homerun Pizza** in the Larkfield Center, under the new entrepreneurial ownership of Cynthia Caughie. Thanks for (re)joining, Cynthia! For catering and meal ordering, visit Homerun Pizza | Pizza restaurant, sports bar, and catering | Larkfield, California (homerunpizzalarkfield.com)

Cookie...take a bite! is committed to the community and we are so happy to have Owner Tracy Mattson as a member, just in time to order their delicious Christmas cookies and holiday gifts. Custom Cookie Tins & Gifts - Cookie Subscriptions | **COOKIE...take a bite!**

Located in Windsor, **Eyes on the Green Optometry** has many customers already in our neighborhood, and Dr. Gregg would love to serve you as well with outstanding eye care and great frames. Call (707) 837-9000.

And see page 4 for an article about new member **Banner Bank**.



Homerun Pizza offers pizza, burgers, sides, great beer on tap, and of course local wines. Call or visit their website for take-out!



The staff at Cookie...take a bite! makes cookies fresh every day using only the finest, locally-sourced ingredients.



Dr. Gregg and staff, of Eyes on the Green Optometry in Windsor, are ready to serve your family's complete eye care needs.

SUTTER HOSPITAL HONORED AS 2020 MEMBER OF THE YEAR

The Mark West Area Chamber Board of Directors selected and honored Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa as our Member of the Year for 2020. The award, which recognizes Sutter for its commitment to the Mark West community and Chamber of Commerce, was presented to CEO Dan Peterson on December 10th at the hospital.

Read the full story on page 6.





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.*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Second Tuesday
Of Each Month
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Contact the Chamber
for links and
attendance information

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all. I am always excited about the Christmas season. I delight in all the decorations, I enjoy the joyful sounds in the air, and I love the spirit of giving. Yes, my front yard and house have a million lights on them. And we have a tree. Last year for the first time we bought a live tree, to be donated after Christmas to the Larkfield Resilience Fund, to replace one of the many lost in the Mark West area to the fires. Last year it was a ten-foot live oak. This year our live tree is an ancient spruce, also about ten feet tall. Yes, such trees are a challenge to decorate after becoming accustomed to decorating more traditional Christmas trees like fir, balsam, pine, or spruce. But once decorated they are just as beautiful in their own way.

Santa's elves have been very busy this year. They put up our yearly Christmas tree in front of Molsberry's Market and asked Santa and Mrs. Claus to stop by and light the tree. They arrived by fire truck, which is a Mark West Area Chamber tradition. Then the elves invited Chamber members, Mark West businesses, and community groups to hang an ornament. See our article on page 7.

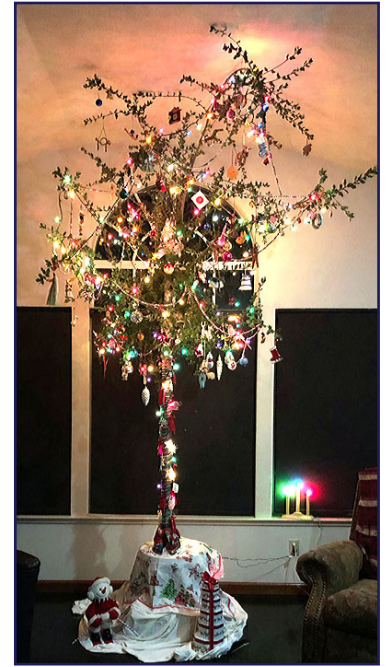
The tree is donated every year by Kringle's Korner, located at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts and run by Michael Gutzman and his daughter Morgan. Thank you, Michael and Morgan!

Last month we announced two of our Chamber's 2020 award winners. This month we are announcing the third winner. Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa has been named by the Mark West Area Chamber Board of Directors as our Member of the Year. Sutter Hospital has consistently been involved with our community and has always been a very active member and supporter. This year they further committed to our area by adding a huge addition to the existing hospital. They also amazed us with their focused response to the coronavirus. CEO Dan Peterson and his team are dedicated to high quality and caring service for our community. I was honored to present them with this very well-earned award.

Finally, I extend my personal best wishes and reluctant farewell to longtime Chamber promoter and staunch supporter John Essman, who is relinquishing his managerial roles at the Chamber so he can move on to other things. He's continuing as a Chamber member so we'll see him around a lot, but we will miss his professional insights and reliable support in our Chamber offices. Thank you for everything you've done for us, John!

Best holiday wishes to all, and remember to Shop Local!

Steve Plamann, President



Our 2019 Christmas tree: a live oak. It's now a permanent resident somewhere in the Larkfield area.



I'm a big fan of Christmas lights and other decorations. If your neighbors have not put up many, please enjoy this photo of mine!

ONE OF THE CHAMBER'S BEST: A LOOK BACK AT JOHN ESSMAN

Over the years, the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce has been on a tremendous journey. Many members have come and gone. Sonoma County has seen multiple disasters transpire. On top of it all, technology keeps getting crazier. With all of these challenges, not enough can be said about the efforts of the volunteers and staff that help make the Chamber function behind the scenes. In every aspect, they have helped make the Mark West Chamber survive and thrive. However, the time has come for one of those top contributors to step back and enjoy his well-deserved rest. John Essman, who has been with the Chamber since 2002, is retiring from his leading role with the Chamber. Now, we get a chance to honor him by reflecting on his time with us.

Though John has been a longtime member of the Mark West Chamber, his first experience with a Chamber of Commerce actually came in 1991, when he and his wife, Kathleen Palmer, joined the Healdsburg Chamber of Commerce. After 11 years spent with the Healdsburg, Windsor, and the Santa Rosa Chamber, however, they eventually dropped in to the Mark West Chamber offices. The president at the time, Daryl Anderson, gave John and Kathleen a warm welcome, and asked if they could update the Chamber website. Before long, John and Kathleen became interested in the behind-the-scenes aspect of the Mark West Chamber, and signed on to the ambassador program. "I fell in love with the Chamber right away. The members felt like real people," says John.

Though there were a fair amount of challenges early on—John recalls that it took quite a lot of consensus building just to update the Chamber website—John and Kathleen were encouraged by members of the Chamber at the time, especially Daryl Anderson and Don and Barbara Wilson. These early challenges, and the support John and Kathleen received, prepared the couple for their future service. Other members, including Steve Plamann and Peter Loughlin, are among the standouts John fondly recalls as providing tremendous support over the years.

As the years went on, John and Kathleen would serve many roles. Kathleen served as both Chamber ambassador and as Chamber Vice President of Public Relations, as well as leading volunteers to install a water conservation landscape in front of the Chamber office in 2009. For her many community building volunteer efforts, the Mark West Chamber honored her with a Sonoma County Spirit Award in 2013. John, too, has worn many hats with the Chamber. He has served as treasurer for two stints, and has been an active ambassador since 2003. Both John and Kathleen were also longtime editors, formatters, and publishers for *The Lark*, until Kathleen passed away in 2013. John has continued to serve as a contributing photographer and event photographer until his retirement this month. "John, along with Kathleen, took on many tasks to keep the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce functioning. Whether it was the website, maintaining the Chamber building and landscaping, Visitors Center, and office operations, and handling finances, arranging socials, organizing trade shows, taking pictures, or a variety of other activities, the Chamber was the beneficiary of a constant commitment to its success," says former Chamber President Doug Williams.

One of John's favorite memories as a volunteer was the 2011 Trade show. Everything went well, and the sheer number of people who attended impressed John. "It was an overall amazing experience that really stands out as an event," says John.

All in all, John and Kathleen's work with the Chamber cannot be overstated. The many roles they have filled, the advice they have given, and the work they have done have allowed the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce to be among the county's very best. Current Chamber President, Steve Plamann, says, "John Essman is a community hero for all his involvement in so many local organizations. What he has done for the Mark West Area Chamber, for over a decade, is remarkable.



John and Kathleen at the 2009 Chamber Installation Dinner.

Continued on page 7

NEW MEMBER BANNER BANK WINS MORTGAGE BANKERS ASSOCIATION AWARD

Welcome to the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce, Banner Bank! We congratulate them on recently being awarded a 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Residential Leadership Award by the Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA).

The Banner Bank "Becoming a Truly Community Bank" campaign garnered an award in the "Market Outreach Strategies" category for companies with over 1,000 employees. This award recognizes company initiatives specifically developed and designed to increase outreach, marketing, and products to attract customers from the industry's fastest-growing

market segments. Their campaign stood out for its intentional alignment with internal and external programs, clear goals, and metrics. The campaign also reflected Banner Bank's commitment to creating new positions, financial education, and expanding office locations to increase access and build community relationships.

"Creating affordable loan programs and helping people get smart about home buying are two reasons that Mortgage Bankers Association presented us the 2020 Market Outreach Strategies Award," said Teresa McCallister, Vice President & Branch Manager, Santa Rosa Branch #85. "We're honored because we love helping homebuyers."

The Santa Rosa Banner Bank location is at 4845 Old Redwood Hwy, Santa Rosa. Visit www.bannerbank.com/about-us/news to learn more.



The staff and management of Banner Bank is proud of receiving an award for Market Outreach Strategies from the Mortgage Bankers Association. Banner Bank is a new Chamber member.

To host a Ribbon Cutting, contact...

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PETER JOHN LAMONICA, JAN 20 1944 - SEP 3 2020

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce mourns the passing of a colorful and devoted local citizen.

Peter John LaMonica, 76, passed away peacefully in his home on September 3, 2020 surrounded by family. Peter was known and loved locally as the owner and operator of the Wikiup Tennis and Swim Club.

Peter was born in Casteldaccia, Sicily to Josephine and Augustino LaMonica. He was the youngest of eight children. He came to the United States at age 11, with his brothers. He eventually settled with his Uncle Joe in San Francisco.

Peter's life was the epitome of the American Dream. He spoke very little English when he arrived in the States, but his ambition propelled him through life and he began a career at San Francisco Federal Savings In 1965, he married Exine Emanuel.

Peter excelled in the world of finance but also nurtured a life-long passion for real estate and wine. He enjoyed many different business projects and always enjoyed the art and skill of making a deal—he truly believed every successful deal should be a win-win. In 1971, his work brought him to Santa Rosa. In 1976 he bought Wikiup Tennis and Swim Club, unleashing his new passion for tennis as well as his excitement for building a small business from the ground up.

While Peter enjoyed his business success, perhaps his greatest joy was his family: Exine and children Cybele and Marc. His pride in them was palpable and his devotion to them unwavering. He was a citizen of the world and loved to travel. Being engaged and involved in the local community was also very important to him. He was longtime Rotarian and was active in all aspects of the Santa Rosa business community.

Peter's life was grounded in his ardent belief in The Golden Rule. He truly believed that the most important guideline in life was treating others exactly how you would want to be treated. This compassion defined all his relationships. He was also known for his overwhelming generosity. He was a kind mentor to many and was very giving with his time and resources. But what most defined Peter was his steadfast loyalty—he was completely devoted to his wife, children, grandchildren, siblings and community of close friends.

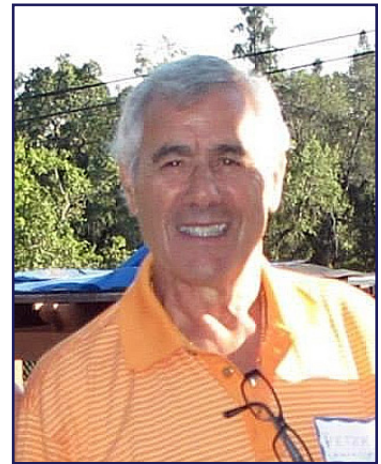
Peter's generosity and kindness made a positive, indelible impact on every life he touched. He will be deeply missed.

Peter is survived by his wife of 56 years Exine, his daughter Cybele, his son-in-law Ted, his son Marc, and three grandchildren: Alexander, Davis and Sabina. He is also survived by his three brothers Matteo, Larry and Sam.

A funeral mass was celebrated at St. Rose Catholic Church, with Fr. Denis O'Sullivan officiating. Private entombment has been held by the family at Calvary Catholic Cemetery in Santa Rosa, California.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Sutter Hospice of Santa Rosa.

<https://sutterhealth.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donate.event&eventID=529>




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SUTTER HOSPITAL HONORED AS 2020 MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Sutter Health has been providing state-of-the-art medical service to the Mark West area since 2014. Constructed to meet seismic safety standards, their 300 million dollar 84-bed hospital features all private patient rooms, a modern design, and green building construction. Serene garden spaces offer a tranquil setting where patients and visitors can relax, relieve stress, or enjoy a quiet moment. In late 2019 they began a 160 million dollar three-story addition, which will add 40 more beds and 22 more emergency room bays. This is another substantial investment in our community. This year they also rose to the occasion to professionally and courageously handle all that the coronavirus could throw at them. CEO Dan Peterson leads a team determined to win the fight against Covid-19, while still meeting the challenges of all the other incidents they normally need to deal with. Several Chamber members and I met many of the emergency workers during the food deliveries from the Lunches for Lifesavers program (always at a safe distance and with everyone wearing masks) and I can honestly say they all had great attitudes and they come to work every day wanting to help all of us in need. The personal involvement of the past and current leadership of Sutter Hospital reflect this same caring attitude.

For all the above reasons, and for their active support and involvement in the Mark West Area and the Chamber, the Mark West Area Chamber Board of Directors selected and honored Sutter Hospital of Santa Rosa as our Member of the Year for 2020. The award was presented to CEO Dan Peterson on December 10th at the hospital.

Contributed by Steve Plamann, President



Left to right: Ed Sheffield, Sutter Santa Rosa Manager of North Bay Government Affairs (and Community Faire Dunk Tank Hero!); Dan Peterson, Sutter Health CEO with the award plaque; Doug Williams, Chamber Past President; Steve Plamann, Chamber President.



Meet

Lori Rooney

Lori Rooney is a marketing consultant with *NorthBay biz*, representing the magazine for more than a decade. A San Francisco native, Lori is well-known for her dedication to her clients and her ability to design successful advertising campaigns for any industry. What's more, she's committed to helping businesses get the most from their advertising budget—even if that means directing them to other outlets better suited to their needs.

Alongside her is Louee, a miniature bichon rescue who accompanies her at work every day, often roaming the office. She is vivacious, helpful, optimistic and a tireless promoter of Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce, where she serves on the board. She's also a Certified Tourism Ambassador for both Sonoma County and San Francisco. When Lori is out of the office, her passion is dancing and local music.

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Questions? Contact RP Chamber: (707) 584-1415 or lisaorloff@rohnertparkchamber.org

**John Essman, continued
from page 3**

John helped to keep this chamber connected, afloat and relevant to our members and involved with and important to the Mark West community. His longstanding role as Chamber Treasurer kept the Chamber Board on track regarding fiscal matters. His great photographs of all our events, over many years, has given us a record of our achievements and a lasting memory of the friendships, we enjoyed. I can't thank him enough for all he has done."

Now that the time has come for John to step down, he wishes the Chamber he leaves behind the very best: "It's time for me to get on with other things I need to do. I am thankful that Beth Henry and Millie Gibson are ready to manage the operations of the Chamber. I wish everybody well, and the Chamber a prosperous future. I feel comfortable leaving the Chamber in capable hands."

Contributed by Johnathan Williams | Photo provided by John Essman

COMMUNITY TREE ORNAMENTS

The Chamber invited members, local businesses, and county agencies to hang ornaments on the Christmas tree in front of Molsberry's Market. The response was very heart warming. We have video on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MarkWestAreaChamber/>) and on our YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mark+west+area+chamber). We are so grateful to everyone for their support of the Chamber and of this community!



Julianne Jones of The Tutoring Center, with some of her charges.



Mila Lamberson (left) and Kate Beall (right) from Salon Marcel.

LARKFIELD RESILIENCE FUND DIRECTS ONLINE DOCUMENTARY ON VEGETATION MANAGEMENT & WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION

Sonoma County wildfire survivors have released an online short documentary with a goal to educate Sonoma County leaders and community members about how properly implemented and funded vegetation management efforts can save lives and homes by preventing and slowing future wildfires. The documentary features four Sonoma County wildfire survivors who discuss how various vegetation management efforts either saved, or could have saved lives, homes, and properties.

The documentary was directed by the Larkfield Resilience Fund, a local Sonoma County community organization created by Sonoma County wildfire survivors with a mission to help rebuild our community. The Rebuild NorthBay Foundation, through a grant, provided funding to support the production of the documentary. Sonoma Film Works, a local film production company, produced the documentary.

View the online documentary here: www.larkfieldfund.com/vegetation-management

Brad Sherwood, Co-Founder and Vice President of the Larkfield Resilience Fund said, “Thank you to the wildfire survivors featured in this documentary for sharing their stories with our community. Our wildfire survivor community remains committed to helping rebuild our community, homes, and lives, but to also take what we know and have experienced to help make our community fire safe. Firsthand accounts like these stories will help better educate our community on why more vegetation management efforts must be implemented. Thank you to the Rebuild NorthBay Foundation for their support of this educational documentary and Sonoma Film Works for providing exceptional video production.”



SBA TOPS \$10 MILLION IN 2020 WILDFIRE ASSISTANCE LOANS



U.S. Small Business
Administration

Director Tanya N. Garfield of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Disaster Field Operations Center-West announced on December 9 that SBA has approved more than \$10 million in federal disaster loans for California businesses and residents

impacted by wildfires that occurred Sept. 4 through Nov. 17, 2020. SBA has approved \$67,900 for businesses and \$10,018,800 for residents to help rebuild and recover from this disaster.

Businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets, or to make improvements that protect against similar damage in the future.

For small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations of all sizes, SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic injury assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any property damage. The deadline to apply for economic injury is July 16, 2021.

Disaster loans up to \$200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

SALON MARCEL LAUNCHES NEW RETAIL SPACE

New and exciting developments are happening at Salon Marcel in Larkfield! In addition to cultivating a beautiful safe space for the encouragement of natural texture and expression, we are supporting local artists by offering their handmade wares (pictured at right) at our Boutique Marcel within our salon.

But wait--there's more!

We are proud to be offering natural nail services beginning in January 2021. We will offer full manicures and pedicures in our salon space, as well as application of Color Street Nails. Come in for a relaxing nail experience, have your hair done, socialize safely, and enjoy some retail therapy.

See you soon!



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MARK WEST AREA COMMUNITY INFORMATION

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 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:
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CORONAVIRUS: COUNTY ISSUES STAY-AT-HOME ORDER

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