



Futurist to target Chamber concerns

Tickets to the future may be limited. Futurist Ed Barlow will bring his insights to the Harbor Country community and offer his perspective on the way that things are developing in a struggling economy and in the shadow of war with Iraq.

Barlow has an extensive professional career that includes executive positions in healthcare, business, higher education and a Washington, D.C. based management consulting firm. He holds a master's degree in management from the University of Notre Dame.

As president of Creating the Future, Inc. based in St. Joseph, Michigan, Barlow is dedicated to enhancing an understanding of the future and the influences which will affect personal, professional, organizational and community settings. He averages about 120 speaking and consulting engagements each year. The media regularly interviews him. He has also testified before Congress on several occasions regarding issues of workforce, transportation, travel and tourism. Leaders in business, government and the non-profit sector continually seek his advice.

At the dawn of the millennium, Barlow was extensively interviewed about his projections for the future. His advice at that time was for people to become anticipatory thinkers who can scan, discern and align themselves with change. The events of 9-11 exposed a shortfall in our own government's "anticipatory thinking." It is evident that the world has changed since then, yet many of Barlow's insights about the future still hold true.

He observes that transportation needs will diminish in an aging society relying on a better public transportation

system, internet retail shopping at 55% of all sales, and even computer links to your doctor's office for telemedicine.

On education, Barlow feels there will always be a need for the traditional gathering of students and teachers at a school, but he says the delivery system will be enhanced to provide a lifelong learning experience: one-third campus based, one-third on the job and one-third electronic. In the long run he feels the agrarian-based K-12 schedule of teaching will be replaced by a year-round model.

Barlow sees new horizons for health-care, financial management, web-related businesses and international trade. He advises that as China enters the free trade market, Mandarin Chinese as a second language might not be so far-fetched. You'll need to know how to communicate to one billion new customers. He cautioned one of the biggest problems facing industry will be skilled worker shortages.

Technology advances can almost sound like science fiction, yet Barlow predicts that we will receive telephone numbers at birth that we will use throughout our life for all communication needs. Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) will go beyond date books and include our phone, computer and more. The biggest and most significant technological strides, however, will come through genetic engineering and health advances, according to Barlow. How long we should live and whether we should

tamper with life through genetics will become the most engaging philosophical debate of mankind within the next 10 to 15 years.

We will also become an aging society. According to Barlow, the population will continue to grow until 2025. As developing nations become wealthier, the need for larger families becomes unnecessary. He also sees that in 50 years the population of the United States will be 25% Hispanic. Currently, the Hispanic



Futurist Ed Barlow will share his insights at the Vickers Theatre, Feb. 24.



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Using the Chamber as a tool

by Michael Hojnacki, Chamber Vice President

Many years ago the only time I had to deal with the Chamber of Commerce was when I had to pay the dues or the deadline for the Guide was drawing near. I paid the dues because I enjoyed the benefit of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance. I met the deadline for the Guide because I wanted to make sure my free listing got in.

Then I got involved.

“Oops, that’s where you went wrong, Mike,” I can hear you say.

Certainly, there were and there still will be days that being part of the leadership of a Chamber of Commerce with almost 400 members can be a headache. We always struggle to be politically correct toward both sides of an issue. We listen with a balanced ear because the board generally represents a nice cross section of the business climate in Harbor Country. Still, when the conversations become political, it is best just to accept the headache and listen with your heart.

Yet, as the Chamber evolves, the reasons for serving get better. Over the years we have been trying real hard to make the Chamber more useful to its membership on a day to day basis.

We have upgraded this monthly newsletter to provide our members with helpful information. As of this month, there’s a new column called, “Ask the Connection,” where we’ll try to answer your business related question or at least direct you to someone who has the proper answer. Coming soon, we hope to develop regular features that enlighten you to specific trends in tourism, the economy and new horizons.

The Membership Committee is constantly considering this question: “What more can we give our members?” This year, chairperson Margaret Anderson, hopes to bring a number of informational seminars and presentations to the mem-

bership. One example is bringing futurist Ed Barlow to the Vickers Theatre on Feb. 24, where he’ll address our concerns about what people in business should be doing right now to get ready for tomorrow. The committee is also considering a few seminars to deal with retirement planning, financial planning, investing, and several others.

Our Internet committee, led by Ray Vasquez and Gary Ramberg, is busy revamping the content of the site. Did you know you could receive this newsletter as a PDF file from our website ten days before you receive it in the mail? Did you know you could find out when any committee meeting is being held through an interactive calendar on our website? Did you know you could link your website to ours and vice versa? These are important matters in an era of electronic information.

The Guide Committee, under the direction of Jerry Welsh, is moving forward to meet its deadlines. The beautiful book should hit the stands right on time at the end of April. This keepsake, often used, one annual payment guide reaches 75,000 people each year. It’s a nice addition to any marketing plan.

And we’re considering many more “tools” for our members. President Don Jackson is trying to organize a business fair that would link Harbor Country businesses with the “big guys” of economic development, utilities, telecommunications, workforce development, and education. It would be an opportunity to share our vision with the powers that can help make it happen.

Maybe just like I did a number of years ago, it’s time for you to dust off the “reasons” you joined the Chamber. Sure the insurance is a benefit, the guide is a benefit, but now we are more. We invite you to look at us as a tool-- on the cutting edge of technology, able to cut through the thickest cow poop and get to the core of a problem, and easy to plug into and get all the powerful information you might need. Take us off the shelf; use us.

Harbor Country® Connection

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Antiques that loose value

Unlike that family heirloom that has passed through generations acquiring a handsome value, the computer you bought five or even three years ago is now an antique probably worth less than half its original value. Not only that, the advances in technology have surpassed the expectations of that computer's capacity.

In the world of technology it's not a case of buying the next best thing just to keep up with the Jones'. That five-year old PC may be able to get by and surf the web on simple pages, or store those favorite documents, but the next generation is demanding much more horse power just to function at minimal level, and that old machine of yours is now left in the dust.

The best news is that the combination of a slow economy and fiercer competition have dramatically brought the cost down of even better technology. For \$1,000 you can buy a

computer that has at least four times the power and capacity of one you paid \$2,000 for five years ago. If you've been plagued with frozen screens and crashes due to insufficient memory, or who knows what else is ailing that old dog, the writing is on the wall for you to make the transition. If you're one of those waiting for the 'right time', well, it's now.

Bargain hunters like you can now find the best prices and best deals on computers with even greater power and capacity. Not only that, the newer models will enable you to function at a much higher level of efficiency and confidence, with amazing new features and user friendly options.

As the economy improves, you are likely to see price increases, as manufacturers look to recoup recession losses, so don't wait too long. Not sure what to buy? Check out consumer reviews at Cnet.com, Zdnet.com, Internet.com, and ConsumerGuide.com

Q: Where can I gather information about obtaining a Michigan liquor license?

A: The best place we have found for obtaining any information about Michigan government and its many departments is at their official website:
www.michigan.gov

Since your question concerns the Liquor Control Commission you would want the pages dedicated to Consumer and Industry Services (type /cis after the above address to get there quicker).

Here you'll find answers to a myriad of business related questions such as commercial services and corporations, construction codes and fire safety, family health and services, financial and insurance services, hearings, appeals and mediation, liquor control and workplace

*Ask
the connection*

safety and health. This page also provides news updates for various departments, consumer tips, product hazards and recalls, and a listing of further email contacts.

Another great resource for Michigan businesses is the reference page from the State eLibrary:
mel.lib.mi.us/michigan/MI-business.html

You'll find tons of information in the form of links that will direct you to business organizations, small business start-up concerns, economic overviews and forecasts, and much more.

If you have a question about business, we'll try our best to find a resource for you. Just send an email to Mike Hojnacki, editor: mhojnacki@triton.net

Please include your name and phone number for verification purposes.

bits & pieces

TOBA Auction March 15

The Three Oaks Business Association annual auction will be held Saturday, March 15th, 2003 at the Three Oaks Elementary School Cafeteria at the corner of U.S. 12 and Oak Street.

You're invited to arrive at 9 a.m. to browse the auction items. A Silent Auction also starts at 9:00 a.m. and continues until approximately 11:30 a.m. The Oral Auction begins at 10:00 a.m.

Donations of used furniture, household items, toys, games, new items, and gift certificates will be accepted until Monday, March 10. Please contact Karen Gear at Alliance Bank at 756-2265 to make pickup or dropoff arrangements.

The annual auction for TOBA helps support promotional opportunities for the business group.

"It's really becoming a social event," says chairperson Gear. "We get a lot of the same faces in the bidding crowd each year, yet we welcome all the new faces as well. It's fun to see how someone's discard can become another's treasure.

NB Lions Cabin Fever Party

The New Buffalo Lions Club invites to their 60th Anniversary and Cabin Fever Party on Friday, March 14 at the New Buffalo Yacht Club. Admission is \$10. Evening includes Vegas-style gambling and DJ music.

new members/january 2003

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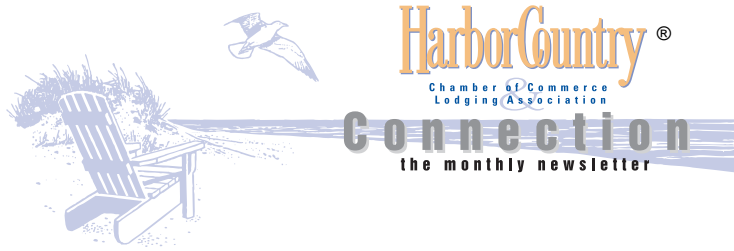
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population in the U.S. is larger than the entire population of Canada. While learning to speak Chinese, you might want to take a refresher course in Spanish.

Look for positive changes in family values as well. Barlow feels that the more traditional extended family will make a comeback as the population ages and parents live with their children to avoid the high costs of nursing facilities. He also said that as we live longer marriage might be redefined. If you live to be over one hundred would you want to spend all those years with one person?

You can expect a dynamic and entertaining presentation tailored to Harbor Country needs. Chamber directors will be polled prior to the presentation so that Barlow can understand the concerns facing local business. Those concerns will surely look at controlled growth, workforce deficiencies, the changing face of tourism, a general economic outlook, and the future of our schools.

Barlow's client list is a veritable "Who's Who" within industry, government and non-profits including: Abbot Laboratories, American Hospital Association, Federal Express, Growmark, Hewlett Packard, Kimberly Clark, U.S. Navy, Federal Reserve Bank Systems. Whirlpool Corporation, Paine Webber, Pepsi, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others.

Reserve your tickets early for this presentation scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24, at the Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks, MI. Chamber and Lodging Association member price is \$15 per person, \$25 per couple or two people from the

same business. Non-member price is \$20 per individual and \$30 per couple or two people from the same company. Ed Barlow's presentation will last about an hour with a half-hour question and answer session following. Call the Chamber office at 269-469-5409 to reserve your space. Checks can be made payable to the Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce. Margaret Anderson, chairperson of the Harbor Country Chamber Membership Committee, organized this event.



What's more fun than a day at the spa?

A day with your girlfriends at the spa! Book a spa party at the Women's Wellness Center! Make it a day or evening of pampering and fun for you and your friends. Packages begin at \$50 each. Themes include hands, feet, face or body! Call for details.

(269)469-3100

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