



Are you ready for change?

Do you think change in your everyday life is a hassle? If you answer yes, you're probably not prepared for the future. According to Edward D. Barlow, futurist, the core tenet of the future is aligning with a continuum of change. The Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce sponsored a presentation of his concepts on Monday, Feb. 24, to about 50 people at Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks.

Barlow, a native of St. Joseph, MI has been a futurist for over 30 years. He's consulted with a literal "Who's Who" of the Fortune 500 companies. He has presented his views to many departments of the Federal Government, as well as offering testimony before congressional hearings and subcommittees.

"80% of what you need to know about the future is outside of your industry or field of expertise," he told the group of business and community leaders. "Aligning with a continuum of change is about that."

He said that the key leadership quality for the 21st century is alignment—the need to be constantly recreating ourselves. Barlow is an encyclopedia of statistics about what might impact the future, and that's something he must consistently refresh. According to Barlow, 20% of what we know today will be obsolete in a year. He continued to shoot out these bullets of information that seemed to pierce the soul of indifference, shocking the audience into the realization that the United States is hardly prepared to meet the future and seems to be doing very little to resolve the situation.

So what are we supposed to do? Listening to Ed Barlow is certainly a good start. His eye-opening presentation should be mandatory at all high schools, at all business conferences and strategic meetings, and at every level of government. Of course, that's not going to happen, so Barlow also provides tools to keep in touch and improve our own knowledge base on a daily basis.

"It took approximately 50,000 years for humanity to acquire one unit of knowledge," he said. "Human knowledge is expected to double every year by the year 2012." That's only nine years from now!

Barlow explained that we are now a generation of continuous learning. Half of the job knowledge or skills of the Baby Boomers, the group of 76 million people born between 1945 to 1964, became obsolete in 10-15 years. For the Busters, the 65 million people born between 1965 and 1984, half of their job

skills become obsolete in 30-36 months. That gives a whole new meaning to "school's out." It isn't and school districts that espouse a mission statement of "...preparing our students for lifelong learning" had better provide more than just lip service. "Most of us were educated to find the future in the rear view mirror," he warned. "The future is not in what you learned yesterday, but what you might learn tomorrow."

Barlow described three types of change that affect our lives. A fairly stable environment with slight linear variation demonstrates a level of gradual change. Many accept this change as part of the game and a routine part of their life. Continuous change includes steady change and incremental shifts in our environment over time. The response to this would be to improve the game and to be innovative in meeting the challenges imposed. Discontinuous or disturbative change represents abrupt, non-linear, profound shifts in our environment. Here we would see a change in the game altogether with breakthrough products, services, systems

and business models. To meet change head-on, Barlow suggested that business host a strategic planning session quarterly instead of annually. "No whining is allowed," he admonished. "Complaining just brings up the negative possibilities. You just have to say yes to change."

Technology and science are having the biggest influence in the way we think and how we address educational needs, business directions and a new economy. Biotechnology, nanotechnology, hydrogen power, genetics, and life science are the leaders.

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Are two Eds better than one? Ed Barlow (left) discusses the future with new member Ed Homolka.



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It's March Madness; it's Spring!

by Don Jackson, Chamber President

There is a lot happening this month. The Internet committee desperately needs assistance from nonlodging members. If you have any interest in the web and how the chamber web site can be used to help your business, now is the time to get involved. The Chamber and the Lodging Association is looking at completely revamping the website. This will be a high class site and only our imagination will determine the opportunities. Check out the calendar on the web site or call Gary Ramberg to get involved in this exciting adventure.

The Chamber Community Development Committee is looking for members. This is a great opportunity to help redefine what community development is and what the future role of the committee will be. Is this a committee that merely doles out funds to groups or does it take a proactive role in developing our communities. The committee is meeting March 19, 5 p.m. at the Harbor Grand Hotel.

Over and over, you hear that Harbor Country is ignored by the rest of the county and the state. Well, in discussing this with the county and state, they feel we never ask for anything from them. They're not sure what we need and we're not sure what the many agencies offer. The chamber, with the assistance of the Berrien County Economic Development office is trying to alleviate this situation. On March 19, we have the opportunity to learn what resources are available and to let a huge variety of organizations know what we need. Whether it is internet access, labor issues, funding, business planning-- there are a wealth of resources available. Call 469-5409 for details.

For all the tourism businesses, the Southwest Michigan Tourist Council is sponsoring a Cooperative Tourism Conference on March 24 at the Lake

Michigan College Mendel Center in Benton Harbor. The conference goal is to educate and inform business owners and manager and leaders in tourism of the importance of technology as a means to increase business.

The Three Oaks Business Association is having there Annual Auction on March 15, 2003 at the Three Oaks Elementary School. They are sill looking for donations. Call Karen Gear to get rid of those presents you got for Christmas that you have no idea what to do with.

The Great Chefs of Harbor Country is featuring Chef Tim Sizer at Timothy's restaurant on March 13. What an opportunity to enjoy some of the great talents in Harbor Country. This is only \$20. The proceeds benefit the students of St. Mary of the Lake School.

And finally, the best news of all - there is a Chamber Mixer on Thursday, March 20 with Greg Bubb of Olson Insurance/Harbor Country Insurance. Yes, there has been a change in ownership. Let's all go out and welcome Greg to his newest venture.

WOW - what a busy month and how do you keep track of it all. Well that is easy, visit the Chamber website at harborcountry.org and check out the meeting calendar. This is a wonderful tool to help keep you informed of the dates, the times and the locations of the many happenings of the chamber.

mixer match-up

Olson Insurance, March 20

Greg Bubb of Olson Insurance/Harbor Country Insurance, 11 N. Elm, Three Oaks, invites everyone to a Mixer with a Twist of Business on Thurs., MARCH 20 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Please RSVP to the Chamber office at 469-5409.

Harbor Country® Connection

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Measuring your site's success

Those of you who own a web site have experienced a certain return on your investment by promoting your business online. But how can you measure its success? How do you know if you are tapping into its full potential? You can hire a high priced consultant to give you a report worthy of a Fortune 500 company, but to some extent you can boil it down to that old computer axiom, GI-GO (Garbage in, Garbage out).

If you put in only a meager effort into research, design, and promotion of your web site, it's likely you'll achieve the same results. Here are some simple

unscientific clues that will tell you the effectiveness of your site:

1) Are you getting increasing amounts of email inquiries?

2) Are you getting compliments and accolades?

3) Do most of your email inquiries translate into sales?

If your answer is 'no' to any of these questions, here are some possible remedies:

1) Email inquiries, or lack thereof, are indicators of your site's visibility on search engines and business directories. But if a large portion of those inquiries are yet more questions about your prod-

ucts or services, your site may lack detail images or content, frustrating the visitor by either leaving your site altogether or resorting to emails or phone calls to pry more information from you. That doesn't mean your site has to read like an encyclopedia. Find concise, creative and colorful ways to tell visitors more about your business.

2) If you're not hearing many compliments, your site might be stale, uninspiring, and dysfunctional. It might be time to seek design help.

3) Never underestimate the power of Internet marketing. Seek out your own cost effective niche, and promoting skillfully within it is what turns inquiries in to dollars. Never assume that you can just turn on a web site and it will bring in business on its own. You must steer it to the right audience, give them what they're looking for, and be on constant watch for trends and opportunities. The new axiom is 'Work the Web' - and when you do, it will work for you.

new members/january 2003

SLEEPY OWL COTTAGE

6555 Sleepy Owl Lane
Sawyer, MI
Brian & Kim Schmaltz, Owners

McDONALD'S RESTAURANT

18881 LaPorte Road
New Buffalo, MI
Mike & Sue Knytych, Owners

LUISA'S CAFE

13746 Red Arrow Highway
Harbert, MI
Luisa Mills, Owner

ESB DEVELOPMENT

24 N. Whittaker Street
New Buffalo, MI
Edward Billys, Owner

FINANCIAL RESOURCE GROUP

139 N. Whittaker Street
New Buffalo, MI
Edwin Homolka, Owner

EAST SHORE CATERING

15251 Lakeshore Road
Lakeside, MI
Fran Wagner/Peggy Ferguson, Owners

FOUR SEASONS BUNGALOW

16348 Fourth Street
Union Pier, MI
Ann Humphrey, Owner

NICK'S BAR & FISH HOUSE

203 W. Buffalo Street
New Buffalo, MI
Leslie Danesi, Owner

OUT OF THE BLUE GALLERY

16 S. Elm Street
Three Oaks, MI
Sean Hunt, Owner

SUPER 8

12850 Super Drive
Sawyer, MI
Chiman Patel, Owner

NEW BUFFALO COMMUNITY YARD SALE

10227 W. US 12
New Buffalo, MI
Bill Martinsen, Owner

FRENCH TWIST

9 S. Elm Street
Three Oaks, MI
Victoria Burneikis, Owner

3 ADVERTISING INC.

4893 Hanover Road
Sawyer, MI
John Trusk/Brad Wells, Owners

COLUMBIA COLLEGE

600 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL

A - COTTAGE

4862 Michigan Avenue
Stevensville, MI

RED BIRD COTTAGE

8773 Elm Valley Road
Union Pier, MI

bits & pieces

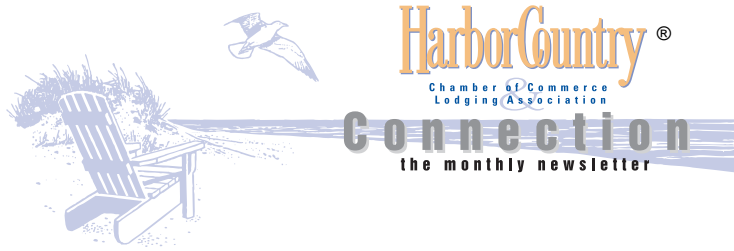
TOBA Auction March 15

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.

Coop Tourism Conference to focus on web sites

The Southwest Michigan Tourist Council is sponsoring a cooperative tourism conference at Lake Michigan College Mendel Center on March 24. The focus of the event is to educate business owners in tourism about the importance technology is as a means to increase their business. Web and marketing experts will be making presentations. You must pre-register. Call Sue Harsch at the Chamber office (469-5409) for details or the SW Michigan Tourist Council at 269-925-6301. The cost of the conference is \$30.



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**ARE YOU
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**BEST SITE
FORWARD**

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In Michigan, Life Science companies account for \$2 billion in revenue, 20,000 workers and over 300 firms. This state ranks 4th nationally with over 530,000 high-tech workers, and 2nd with \$19 billion invested in research and development, according to a Dec. 2002 article in Industry Week.

Yet, it seems that we will not have enough skilled labor to support growing job demands five years from now. Barlow predicts that America will have a shortage of 38 million workers over the next 30 years. The biggest shortage will be in highly skilled college educated employees. The aging workforce and subsequent retirement will also impact the marketplace in the next five years. By 2008, the United States will need two million teachers, one million nurses, half-million construction workers, and 330,000 accountants.

A skilled labor pool will significantly impact business growth and relocation. At any one time there are 15,000 cities, regions and communities in contention for this business in the United States alone. Barlow says that if we want to attract new business we'll either have to grow our workers or recruit them. The significant indicators of an area's high-technology success include the diversity index, bohemian index (artists), foreign-born index, and the gay index.

Barlow says that leadership of the 21st Century must possess three important qualities: aligning, path finding and empowering. In aligning, a leader will have to be an expert at quickly and effectively bringing together people and resources to address issues of critical importance. Path finding will require a leader to keep ahead by exploring unchart-

ed territory and serving as an advanced scout. And by empowering, a leader will maintain an environment that allows access to information and assistance necessary to succeed.

He concluded his presentation with an observation on life provided by Charlie Brown while lying in bed with his dog Snoopy. "Sometimes I lie awake at night and I ask, 'Where have I gone wrong?'... Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night.'"

During a question and answer session that followed, Barlow offered four points that need our immediate attention:

1) We need a very different foreign policy. We have to invest to raise the level of prosperity for the rest of the world. We have to understand the world's religions, governments and cultures.

2) We'll have to accept "appropriate" taxes in order to pay for quality teachers and provide necessary healthcare benefits.

3) We need to take a look at our at-risk industry clusters and take an honest appraisal of our workforce competitiveness.

4) We need to celebrate diversity. We have to understand that we (the United States) do not have all the talent.

"In the greater scheme of things this always remains true," said Barlow. "Some people make things happen. Some people let things happen. And some people wonder what happened."

