

AUGUST 28, 2008

THIS WEEK:

The **next meeting** of the Tri-Valley Executives' Association will be held on **September 4** at Vic's All-Star Kitchen at 7:00am.

You will be GREETED by **Joey Minahan** of The Door Doctor and **Dave Sanchez** of B&S Hacienda Auto Body.

The LEAD CHALLENGE: Our next challengers will face-off: **Wayne Yeaw** of Allegra Print and Imaging will give a lead or sing to **Jason Cooke** of Herrmann Financial Services.

The PROGRAM will be led by **Dr. Rick Hume** and **Jason Cooke**.

SAVE THE DATE:

TVEA **Luncheon** at the Big Horn Grill at 12:00 on October 2. Please sign up and invite your associates. The cost for members is \$10 and associates is \$22. This is a good time for us to get to know some of the other people that we work with from each other's companies.

SOCIAL:

The **Annual TVEA Golf Tournament** is all set on September 11 at Callippe Golf Course in Pleasanton. Golfers, please be there no later than 11:30am.

We need more donations for raffle prizes! You can drop them off at Darlene's office on West Neal in Pleasanton or to Dave Silva's office on Valley.

There will be NO MORNING MEETING on 9/11.

DID YOU GIVE A REFERRAL THIS WEEK?

NEW MEETING SCHEDULE:

We know you've been waiting with baited breath, so here it is! The Fourth Quarter Meeting Schedule! (see attached)

Please take note of the dates you will be greeting or giving your classification, and let Cristin know ASAP if you have a conflict.

CLASSIFICATION:

Skip Hinsley was born in Durham, North Carolina, was adopted and grew up in Baltimore Maryland. Skip was a good kid, a boy scout, who attended a private college, Ohio Wesley. He graduated in 1967 and to avoid the Viet Nam war and the draft, he enrolled in graduate school at Syracuse. A tough decision was made and Skip left school and moved in with a friend's family.

He began working at his friend's father's John Deere business, but was soon drafted. Not wanting to join the armed forces, Skip was relieved that he didn't pass the physical and wasn't accepted to enlist. He ended up working for John Deere selling booking programs to their dealers. Since he had to also service the accounts, Skip took it upon himself to learn bookkeeping. Seeing no future with John Deere, he decided to go back to school, was accepted, and got his MBA from Dartmouth.

After graduating, he was offered a position with Boise-Cascade, taking him, for the first time, "out west". He was the assistant to the controller of the housing group. As the company began unraveling, Skip was transferred to Palo Alto, California to work in the real estate group working with the CFO to analyze the loss of the division. Having realized that he was working himself out of a job, he decided to go to school once again. Since he had worked on litigation during his career with Boise-Cascade,

at 32 he applied and was accepted to Hastings School of Law.

During this time in his education Skip was feeling that law may not be a good fit for him. But a twist of fate compelled him to finish. After law school he did litigation for a small insurance firm, but quickly learned that he hated the barrage of greed that he encountered on a daily basis; also, there was no money in it; he was making a fraction of what he had for Boise-Cascade.

His friend, knowing that Skip was struggling, offered him a job as maître d'. Skip found that he really enjoyed his work and was soon offered to be in charge of nights at one of his friend's restaurants. He saw a lot of weaknesses in their operations and as a good friend, he told them so. The friend's brother wouldn't allow him to be promoted to general manager, so they offered him one of his other restaurants, Frankie, Johnny and Luigi Too. Skip became a part owner, but after 11 years, the brother bought him out.

Having the experience and really enjoying the business, Skip started Girasole, which in Italian means "sunflower", in 1994. Skip Hinsley is 100% owner of Girasole Grill, despite what a past chef once claimed. Their cuisine is fresh Tuscan-style Italian with a California attitude. Where the restaurant used to focus primarily on pastas, they've added prime rib and grilled meats to appeal to a broader clientele. Their dishes are very unique, like the Chicken Gorgi, but they do offer traditional pastas for those less adventurous.

Girasole used to be the exclusive caterer for a Livermore winery, which accounted for a very small part of the business. Then, a local chef, Bill Jess, wanted to get out of the catering business and offered to sell Pampered Palate. Skip bought the business and his business doubled overnight. Catering now accounts for more than 55% of their revenue.

Pampered Palate has consistent prices and caters at wineries, community centers and private homes. Some of their clients include the mayor

of Pleasanton, the City of Pleasanton, Club Sport and the Golden State Warriors.

In 1995 a group of restaurateurs opened the Big Horn Grill with a celebrity chef and a lot of fanfare, and at the time you couldn't even get a table. Shortly thereafter, they replaced the celebrity chef with a younger, less experienced chef; the food quality diminished and the consistency was lost. Business plummeted and the owners decided to sell. A business broker called Skip and presented him with the opportunity to buy the restaurant. Skip took over in 1997 and turned the business around in 9 months.

The Big Horn Grill in San Ramon is a contemporary American steakhouse with a wood-fired grill and smoker. The restaurant was originally designed by Pat Kuleto and resembles a mountain lodge.

Both restaurants offer a spectrum of dining opportunities from an intimate dinner to a corporate event. They have banquet facilities perfect for rehearsal dinners, luncheons and business meetings.

Skip's son, James, went off to college telling his father that he never wanted to work in the family business. He got his degree and began a career with Ernst & Young. Not long after beginning his professional life, he became interested in working with his dad. James, who grew up in Pleasanton, is now running Girasole and will hopefully attract a new and younger crowd.

With two successful restaurants and a catering company, Skip is no longer just a restaurateur, he runs a food service company. His philosophy about business comes from his desire to make people happy: if you're going to do something, do it right and do it well, not half-assed. What drives a popular restaurant? Quality food, service, atmosphere and location. It's a factory and show-business all in one.

To plan your next catered event or business meeting, call Skip Hinsley at 831-4888.
