



The Official Newsletter of the
Association for Wedding Professionals, Int'l

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WINTER ISSUE

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The Moments That Made The Pros Laugh In 2005

By Keith Reid

You never know what can happen at a wedding.

From uncomfortable silence to laugh-out-loud antics, every wedding professional is bound to encounter a wacky moment or two in the heat of the moment.

In 2005, there are plenty of stories to be told.

DJ Mike Anderson, owner of Creative Memories Entertainment said his brother's wedding party "got so hot, the fire department had to show up."

"It was the last song of the night, and one of our haze machines set off the fire alarm," Anderson said, recalling the bizarre incident, which he ensures has never happened

before. "Mike Jensen was doing the video, and he got the fire department on camera congratulating my brother and his wife."

Jensen confirmed the incident. However, he said the wackiest wedding he's had in recent years was at the Vizcaya in 2004. Its theme was "Gone with the wedding."

"In the middle of the wedding the 'Phantom of the Opera,' came in singing," Jensen said. "The toilet-paper had sayings from 'Gone with the Wind.'"

Wedding coordinator Lora Ward of a Day to Remember says that for the most part, her wedding day events are

"normal." However, she admits there have

See *Moments* Page 11



Wacky events take place at most every wedding and are often the things we retell the most.

Round Up Your Wedding Business at World Conference

By Julia Markel

The 2006 AfWPI World Conference is in San Antonio, April 2-5. The conference will include a keynote on wedding trends, two days of hands-on workshops and seminars, incredible networking, a tour of local wedding sites and more. The learning is abundant, with speakers experienced in their fields as well as

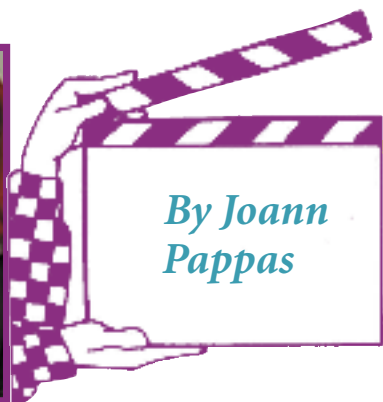
See *Round Up* Page 11

T'was Two Weeks Before Christmas...



See *Christmas* Pages 8 & 9

For more photos of this exciting holiday event!



TAKE TWO!



A tip on getting a tip – be prepared for emergencies

When it comes to discussing weddings, trust me, I have plenty to say.

As a videographer, I have videotaped close to 500 weddings in the past 12 years and have seen a lot of interesting things. My experience as a wedding professional has taught me to anticipate the most common problems and try to fix them before they get out of control.

That is why I created a little thing known as the “Bridal Emergency Kit” stocked with all the necessary items like Band-Aids, Tylenol, scissors, safety pins, breath mints, a sewing kit, and even Pepto Bismol for those who have the displeasure of an upset stomach on their wedding day.

I cannot even count how many cards, gifts, cash tips, and thank you letters I have received for saving the day.

My clients really appreciate all the little “extras” we provide that go beyond the realm of just doing our job. It just makes sense to me to have everything that the bridal party will need readily available at every single wedding we do.

The couples that are getting married for the very first time do not know what to expect. so I just cannot understand why more wedding professionals do not carry their own emergency kits.

For example, I am constantly hearing photographers complain that they are being slowed down from doing their job while

they have to wait on someone from the bridal party to find a pair of scissors or safety pins , etc.

My advice: Help a brother out. Pick up these items on your next trip to the grocery store and toss it into your bag of gear? This isn’t rocket science, but it is excellent customer service.

You see, I still feel it is an honor to be chosen as the preferred vendor on a couples wedding day. For just a few dollars and a lot of common sense, you can use your expertise to make their day go smoother or you can just complain about the same things weekend after weekend.

There has been more than one occasion where we have had to sew up a Bride right before she was to walk down the aisle because she busted out of her dress, or fix arm sleeves on tuxedos.

We even bring a small handheld fan to cool off underneath the brides dress on those hot summer days.

I can even remember one time a bride was in desperate need of a feminine products because she had just started her period unexpectedly and the restrooms did not provide them.

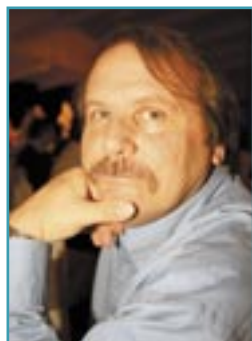
So of course I just reached in my emergency bag and gave her three different brands to choose from. Of course she was very impressed how I planned for Murphy’s Law...” if it can go wrong , it will go wrong.”

Not if I can help it Murphy.

Joann Pappas is owner of Diamond Video Productions.❤️

Word on the Street

What new wedding industry trends have you seen in 2005?



Dave Brooke, D. Brooke Photography

“More and more couples are doing the formal photos before the ceremony. No more waiting until the bride walks down the aisle before the groom sees her. I have noticed a lot of them want me to shoot that first look from the groom.”❤️



Eric and Nicole Leas, Acti-Video Productions

“On-the-Fly edits are becoming increasingly popular. Brides and grooms are

requesting that their videographers add edited footage of their ceremony and pre-ceremony activities to their childhood photos. These emotional recaps are played on a big screen projector at their reception.”❤️



ASK JULIA

Julia Markel's Ask Julia column will appear in each AfWPI newsletter. If you have a question that you would like Julia to answer, please e-mail her at julia@afwpi.com or write to "Ask Julia," AfWPI, 6700 Freeport Blvd Ste 202, Sacramento CA 95822.

Somebody talking behind your back? How to beat the gossip game

Q: I heard from a bride that one of my competitors was saying bad things about me and the way I do business. What should I do about this?

A: First, I have a question for you – bear with me on this. Have you ever played the game "Telephone" (sometimes known as "Gossip")?

Well, you have a group of people sitting either in a row or in a circle. The first person whispers something in the ear of the person next to him. That person, in turn, whispers what they heard in the ear of the next person. Then that person whispers what they heard in the ear of the next person . . . and so on down to the last person in the circle or row.

The last person says what he or she heard, out loud. Of all the times I have played this game, whatever the first person whispered in the ear of the person next to him was never what the last person heard.

In other words, a competitor can say something to a bride (or groom, or wedding professional), and what she tells you in turn may not be what that competitor said. People hear what they want to hear, then say what they thought was said.

My point? The first thing you do is to realize that what your competitor said about you may or may not have been bad.

Before I advise you on your next step, try to think of this "competitor" as a colleague or associate.

Now that you realize that you really don't know what was said – and you realize that the person who said whatever they said is a colleague – the professional thing to do is to call them and get their side of the story.

Confrontation is never comfortable, but neither is feeling angry or upset about something when you don't have all of the information.

If this doesn't work, try another professional approach

– rise above the pettiness of it all.

I'm not trying to minimize what you're going through. I agree that if someone is telling a lot of people misinformation about you, it's upsetting. I have been there – many times. There are even rare instances where I would agree that a slander lawsuit is warranted. However – and I repeat – it's rare! In most instances, it isn't worth the time and negative energy that you're going to spend on it.

If you decide to stay upset about it, your potential customers, and even your current customers, are going to feel that anger.

You will risk losing the business of the brides who are more positive and probably more valuable than the one bride who brought you the bad news and caused you so much upset. Then, if your competitor/colleague really is trying to hurt your business, they win. Or, as my grandmother used to tell me, don't bring yourself down to their level.

If all else fails, we do have a complaint process.

The ethics committee developed this process a few years ago. Recognizing that a formal complaint should be a last resort, they incorporated a requirement that the person filing the complaint show proof that they tried to work the situation out with the person they are complaining about.

Also, legally, the person the complaint is filed against has to be a member of AfWPI for us to accept the complaint. For more information on this process, visit this page on our Web site: <http://www.afwpi.com/conflictresolution.html>.

I'll leave you with one other suggestion. Use what has been said to your advantage. If they said you show up late for your weddings, send a postcard out to all of your potential customers, emphasizing how you are always early. If they say you charge too much, send a mailer (or e-mail) out listing all that you do for what you charge. These are some ways to truly turn a negative situation into a positive (and probably profitable) experience. 🍀

AfWPi Exhibits in Ireland

Newsletter staff report

Some members of AfWPi recently got to experience a unique cultural exchange with other wedding professionals. They exhibited in the Wedding & Engagement Fair in Limerick, Ireland, Oct. 15-16.

Also joining the members and representing AfWPi were President Richard Markel and Vice President Julia



The sides of the booths in the Ireland bridal show were as tall as the backs of the booths, making them more like stalls at a fair. Exhibitors prefer the privacy that an enclosed booth allows.

Markel.

This is the second year of the Exhibitor Exchange Program, started by Richard Markel.

“It’s the same concept as a student exchange program,” Richard said. “I thought, if they can do it, why can’t exhibitors?”

Richard, who has also produced Bridal Expo in the Sacramento area for the past 20 years, saw a benefit in wedding professionals learning about weddings and other professionals outside of the United States.

“The cultural education was the best part of the trip,” said Julia Markel. “To see the similarities and differences in professionals and brides in a different part of the world was amazing.”

The differences, according to Julia, include the importance that is placed on the wedding ceremony and the family’s involvement.

“Many brides told me that they would never dream of getting married outside of the church,” Julia said. “And even those who wanted a destination wedding wanted it close enough for family to attend.”

The professionals, according to Richard and Julia, were much more casual in their approach to the brides. They were willing to wait for the brides to come up to them, rather than attract them to their booths.

The most unique aspect of the show, according to

the Markels, was the way the booths were set up. The sides of the booth were as tall as the backs of the booths.

“It was like they wanted to have their own store within the show,” Richard said. “When I asked (the exhibitors) why they preferred being closed off so much, they told me that they preferred privacy when dealing with the brides.”

Richard recently learned that the United States Textile Board is interested in becoming involved in the exchange program in order to promote garments produced in the U.S. (including wedding gowns). They will sponsor part of the show in Ireland next year, as well as a show in Barcelona, which will be included in the AfWPi Exchange Program.

Other AfWPi members who exhibited were Wisconsin Chapter Leader Sue Diehl (Visuellé Productions), Donna Nemecek (Artistic Cakes and Cookies in Wisconsin), Marietta Benero (D’Elegant Weddings & Activites in Puerto Rico) and Lisa Light (Destination Bride based in New York). Diehl will return to Ireland next year to produce the fashion show for the Wedding & Engagement Fair.

If you are interested in the Exhibitor Exchange program, please contact Richard at 916-392-5000 or e-mail him at richard@afwpi.com. 🌍

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THE VIDEO *bridal* GUIDE

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE



Gallardo creates "Buzz" on AfWPi board

By Brandy Foust

Buzz Gallardo – Board Member Profile

The only thing Buzz Gallardo has been doing longer than hosting trade shows is creating one-liners.

Gallardo has been in the trade show business for nearly 22 years. In 1984 he made a career change and went to work for a major business-to-business trade show company in a sales capacity.

After four years, in 1988, he was promoted to vice president of sales. He and his wife, Sue (who also had experience in trade shows), acquired the Sacramento show and the rights to the Northern California market. That same year, he changed the name of the show to Biz-Tec and went on to produce that show in Sacramento and other markets for many years.

During that time, several of their corporate clients asked them to produce a bridal show that was upscale like their business show. In 2001, after three years of research, they produced their first bridal show, "The Dream Wedding Show." It did not take long for Gallardo to become very active and very well known in the wedding industry. In 2004, Gallardo was elected to the AfWPi Advisory Board.

He said he wanted to bring his experience to the table and, along with the other board members, give Richard and Julia Markel a sounding board to help them build the association.

As a member of the board, Gallardo said he wants to raise the level of knowledge through teaching AfWPi members how to be the best business people they can be.

He "loves the passion that people in the bridal business have for what they do" and he knows that many wedding professionals "need help in growing and running their businesses in a very competitive arena." Through his role on the board, Gallardo is able to help so many wedding professionals, both directly and indirectly and he truly "feels blessed to be a part of such a wonderful industry."💕

AfWPi Web site a resource for the pros

By Amber Law

In this month's newsletter, we are featuring the AfWPi Web site, www.afwpi.com.

The Web site is one of the highest valued benefits of membership. Google ranks the site as a 6 out of 10, with the individual directory pages maintaining ranks of 5 and 6 out of 10. Alexa ranks the website as 45,500 out of all of the sites that they rank.

Those statistics put us right up there with other major Web sites, such as knot.com and [The Wedding Channel](http://TheWeddingChannel.com).

However, the price difference is tremendous.

The site handles more than 40,000 unique visitors a month. You can check the monthly statistics for each page on the directory, in the professional section.

In addition, under most wedding search terms, the AfWPi website comes up within the top three pages, which is an important ranking factor. Most Web surfers will not look beyond the first three pages of a search term.

As a member of AfWPi, you are automatically listed in the printed and online directory under one category listing. Your phone number, e-mail and Web address are listed along with a 20 word description of your company.

You also have the option of having a photo or logo added to your listing for only \$10 a year. You may also want to have your listing appear under additional categories, which can be added for an additional \$10 per category.

This can be a large advantage to companies that can be listed under several categories, as each page is likely to have several hundred to several thousand hits each month.

The marketing value of the site is not its only benefit, either.

The main page is divided into two sections. The left is resources for the bride (where the professionals directory is located) and the right is devoted to information for the professional.

The resources on this side include links to associate members and AfWPi affiliates who offer discounts to professionals, calendars of professional events and tradeshow, useful wedding statistics, and much more.

It is worth the time to familiarize yourself with this part of the Web site and to check back often for updates. There are also links to member benefits, a job board and industry updates.

Check it out at afwpi.com.💕

CORRECTION

In the last issue, we failed to mention that J.D. Firestone of J.D. Productions was the emcee and provided music for the June 2005 mixer. Our apologies to J.D., as he did an excellent job - especially with the unusual program we had at that mixer.💕

TRADE SHOW

Wedding tradeshow offers chance to compare marketing opportunities *By Julia Markel*

AfWPi held its inaugural Wedding Industry Tradeshow in Sacramento on Nov. 8. Arden Hills Resort Club and Spa hosted the event.

Representatives from 16 bridal publications, bridal shows, associations and even a credit card acceptance program were there to give wedding professionals information about their rates and services.

“We wanted to give the wedding professionals a chance to compare marketing opportunities in one place at one time,” said Richard Markel, AfWPi president and coordinator of the tradeshow.

Along the same line, the exhibitors had the opportunity to demonstrate what they have to offer. It was a better opportunity than at the mixers because they had more time with each of the professionals at the tradeshow.

Approximately 60 professionals attended. Many of them took advantage of the discounts that exhibitors offered that evening only.

Some of the lucky professionals also walked away with door prizes donated by the exhibitors. The grand prize was a quarter-page full-color advertisement in *Wedding Sites and Services*, valued at \$1,995.

Other prizes included two six-month full screen packages on *The Video Bridal Guide* DVD and Web site, valued at \$550 each; a junior booth at *Bridal Expo*, valued at \$625; a banner ad or photo gallery ad plus a premium listing with link on *The Wedding & Special Events Yellow pages* Web site, valued at \$350; and a choice of two quarter-page

ads or one half-page ad in the *Greater Sacramento Wedding & Party Ideas*, valued at \$250. 🍷

Exhibitors were:

Associations:

- Association for Wedding Professionals, International
- National Association of Catering Executives
- Sacramento Professional Videographers Association

Bridal Shows

- Bridal Expo
- The Dream Wedding Show
- E and A Events (Woodland Bridal Show)
- Make Your Dreams Come True Bridal Show (Suisun City)

DVDs, Publications & Web Sites

- Beautiful Weddings & Events (JR Publications)
- Greater Sacramento Wedding & Party Ideas
- Here Comes The Guide
- The Perfect Wedding Guide of Sacramento
- Today's Bride Magazine
- The Video Bridal Guide
- The Wedding & Special Event Yellow Pages
- Wedding Sites & Services Magazine

Credit Card Acceptance Programs

- First National Bank of Omaha Merchant Solutions



Wedding professionals gathered at Arden Hills Resort Club and Spa on Nov. 8 for the inaugural Wedding Industry Tradeshow.

AfWPi to Hold Regional Conference in June

AfWPi will present its first regional conference June 20. The conference will feature up to three seminars and/or workshops, lunch, a tradeshow and a mixer.

The AfWPi Advisory Board developed the idea from their concern that more education be made available to members. They agreed that a tradeshow, similar to the one held in November, be held as part of the conference.

The regional conference will be at Arden Hills Resort Club & Spa in Sacramento. 🍷

V I D E O G R A P H Y

Sacramento videographers to establish the first world-record wedding shoot. *By: Jim Foust*

The Sacramento Professional Videographer's Association (SPVA) along with other California videographer's associations and various local wedding professionals will attempt to set a new record for the number of video cameras to tape a wedding ceremony on Feb. 15.

After numerous interviews they have chosen Alysia Thomas and Farai Melton as their bride and groom to be married at the Library Galleria on the day after Valentine's Day.

"I can safely say that this is one of the most exciting educational opportunities for wedding videographers to come along in years," said Kathy Ritondo, producer of Wedding Video Talk, a podcast and talk show for wedding videographers. "The unique concept will set the bar higher for all future educational endeavors in our industry."

The event is designed to bring attention locally and nationally to the value of professionally produced wedding video and encourage camaraderie between those who choose to participate.

The event will also include a "virtual" getting-ready seminar at the historic Julia Morgan House, and a Glide-cam display during the photo shoot at the California State Capitol.

All pre-wedding and ceremony footage will be edited into a dramatic Same-Day-Edit at the Library Galleria and shown to guests at the reception.

The entire editing process will be projected to seminar participants live.

The estimated fees for attending this historic event will be less than \$100 and include dinner, a finished DVD (including an event documentary) and a commemorative world's record T-Shirt. Although all wedding professionals are invited to attend, this will be a limited seating event, so

first come will be first served.

Please contact Mike Jensen at info@jensenvideo.com for more information on the event. 🌐



Photo: Library Galleria



1-800-242-4461

Afwpi Christmas Party

Twas two weeks before Christmas at Arden Hills Resort Club & Spa. Friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate the season at an event that was enjoyed by “kids” of all ages.

The children were kept very busy with their own special buffet and a host of activities including photographs taken with Santa Claus, Christmas movie time, and story time with Mrs. Claus. The children were offered cookies and milk while they listened attentively to the stories told by Mrs. Claus.

Meanwhile, the adults enjoyed a fabulous French buffet prepared by Arden Hills and a delicious and beautiful cake made by Shelton’s Wedding Cake Designs. The elegant tables were decorated with floral arrangements by Beautiful by Nature, Camino Flower Shop, Eve’s Blossoms, Flourish, and Visual Impact Design. All of the stunning centerpieces were auctioned off to raise money for our fellow wedding professionals who were affected by hurricane Katrina.

All photographs by Jeff Sharpe - Sharpe Photographers



Annabella Souza shows her parents - Elaine and Aaron - on which item she wants them to bid.

As usual, Judy and John Shelton created a festive cake, fully equipped with blinking lights, for the Christmas Party.



From left to right, McKenna Bartlett, Frankie Jo Smith and Hallie Rumph wait excitedly for Mrs. Claus to read to them.

Afwpi Christmas Party Continued



Enjoying their time at the Christmas party, from left to right, MacKenzie Roberts, Chuck Roberts, Lynne Sharpe and Judy Shelton.



Representing the Sterling Hotel, Kacy McKinley, Linda Maher and Chris Delgado (left to right) were having fun even before Santa arrived to the Christmas Party.



More than 250 people attended the AfWPI Christmas Party on Dec. 11 at Arden Hills Resort Club & Spa.



After Santa leaves and dinner is done, Leo Steinman decides it's nap time. The children were invited to change into their pajamas for story time.



During story time, Bev Hendrickson, dressed as Mrs. Claus, reads to the children in front of a giant storybook and sugarplum tree, provided by Visual Impact Design.

MIXER REPORT



AfWPi members enjoy seeing Chapel in the Grove, one of the newest Sacramento area wedding facilities.

Monthly networking mixers - something for everyone

By Brandy Foust

There are so many reasons to attend the monthly networking mixers. You have the chance to help others, get ideas, generate leads, and meet new people. Networking is about forming relationships. Members are always invited to bring flyers, brochures, magazines, and/or business cards to set out on the members' brochure table.

There is always an abundance of great food and exciting raffle prizes. Best of all, the mixers provide a relaxed atmosphere that is perfect for developing connections with fellow wedding industry professionals.

October Networking Mixer – Chapel in the Grove

Wedding Professionals met to celebrate Oktoberfest and our great industry at one of the Sacramento area's newest wedding facilities – Chapel in the Grove.

Anthony Avery of A&A Music Events kept the party going while guests were treated to an abundance of German inspired fare provided by Golden Gourmet Catering and drinks from Bar Masters Inc.

Attendees were also introduced to the following featured vendors: Any Event Party Rental, Honeymoon Heaven, and The Video Bridal Guide.

November Networking Mixer – Catta Verdera

It was a "Celebration of Friends" at Catta Verdera Country Club in Lincoln.

This beautiful and sophisticated facility welcomed a large number of attendees who were entertained by Rick Jenkins of Entertainment Team. Table and floral decorations, provided by Creations By Christine, added a nice touch to an already lovely venue.

Guests were invited to tour this great new facility, view work by Eagle Images, and learn more about Bride Savers Network and Dream Wedding Show. 🍷

CONTRIBUTE



Editors note: Do you have questions, concerns, complaints about the AfWPi newsletter "Professional Connection?" Don't be afraid to speak your mind, after all this is your newsletter.

The newsletter staff is eager to hear your comments, good or bad, and we'll even publish them as a letter to the editor. Please e-mail letters to newsletter@afwpi.com.

There are rules to letter writing, however. Letters must be 200 words or less, so be concise. All letters are subject to editing for clarity, accuracy and length by the newsletter editor.

Thank you for reading the Connection. We look forward to hearing from you. 🍷

AfWPi wants to thank the following for making this year's Christmas Party such a great event.

*Dara Harmon, Music on the Move -
Christmas Party Committee Chair*

Rick Byrd, Wired for Sound

Rick Francis, Arden Hills Resort Club & Spa

Doug LaVine, Music on the Move

Joann Pappas, Diamond Video

Marjorie Perez, DoubleTree Hotel of Sacramento

Darcie Swedelson, Slip of Elegance

Cathy Brooks, Visual Impact Design

Sonny Gallardo, Exquisite Entertainment

Teresa & Craig Higgins, Le Grand Confectionary

Jeff Sharpe, Sharpe Photographers

Judy & John Shelton, Shelton's Wedding Cake Designs

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Moments

Continued From Page 1

been a few humorous moments.

“Earlier this year, one of my weddings took place in a venue with a tiled floor, Mexican paving stones,” Ward said. “At the point the bride was slipping the ring on his finger, she dropped it. It hit the floor with a ‘bing’ and then rolled around in circles and then continued on down the aisle to come to rest at about the fourth pew. Nobody made a move, nobody made a sound. Everybody watched until the ring came to a rest. Then the laughter began. It made for good humor the rest of the evening.”

Ward also mentioned that she had one wedding this year where the bride and groom could not agree on a wedding cake. So they said “why compromise?” and they had both.

“I made a sign to post in front of each cake... ‘Ken’s cake’ and ‘Kristi’s Cake.’ We had spotlighting on the table - and they were lovely. The couple look a picture in front of each cake, and cut each cake to feed to each other,” Ward said.

Joann Pappas of Diamond Video Productions said she can’t think of any wacky weddings only “really cool stuff.”

“This one couple was big time Oakland Raiders fans and they decorated the entire reception room with Raider theme,” Pappas said. “I mean the center pieces, the head table and even the cake. There was nothing traditional about it.”

There are bound to be more stories out there. Would you like to share yours? Please e-mail your experiences to newsletter@afwpi.com and they will be published in next quarter’s issue. 🍷

2006 MIXER SCHEDULE

JANUARY 10, 2006	OLD SUGAR MILL • CLARKSBURG	MIXER
FEBRUARY 7, 2006	CSUS ALUMNI CENTER • SACRAMENTO	RECOGNITION DINNER
MARCH 7, 2006	WINCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB • AUBURN	MIXER
APRIL 11, 2006	CHÂTEAU BY A SHOT OF CLASS • SACRAMENTO	MIXER
MAY 2, 2006	JULIA MORGAN HOUSE • SACRAMENTO	MIXER
JUNE 6, 2006	THE ENGLISH GARDEN • CARMICHAEL	MIXER
JULY 11, 2006	VIZCAYA • SACRAMENTO	MIXER
AUGUST 1, 2006	THE BEDA PLACE • MEADOWVIEW	MIXER
SEPTEMBER 5, 2006	TOWE AUTO MUSEUM • SACRAMENTO	MIXER
OCTOBER 3, 2006	LIONS GATE • McCLELLAN	MIXER
NOVEMBER 7, 2006	DOUBLETREE HOTEL • SACRAMENTO	MIXER
DECEMBER 10, 2006 (SUNDAY)	ARDEN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB & SPA • SACRAMENTO	CHRISTMAS PARTY



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Contacts...And Learn More About
The Industry While Having Fun!*



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