



# NCALERA NEWS

**JULY-AUGUST**

**2003**

## Era Annual Golf Tournament

by Ron Jenkins

The 2003 Golf Tournament is scheduled for Monday, September 29 at Crow Canyon Country Club in Danville. This venue is the best-valued lunch, golf tournament and banquet offered anywhere in the bay area. The total cost is just \$130 per player. Everything is included except the no-host cocktails.

Crow Canyon, nestled against the foothills of Mt. Diablo, is a premier private Country Club offering challenging recreational facilities as well as the perfect ambiance for elegant social and business gatherings. Golf banquets are accommodated in the Mark Twain Room, the Country Club's main dining area. The windowed eastside of this room overlooks the golf course and offers a spectacular view of Mt. Diablo.



A relatively short course of 6052 yards, it still offers a significant challenge for every level of golfer. There are numerous bunkers, several waterholes and out of bounds on all holes to add to the difficulty and offer the shot maker a satisfying risk-reward opportunity.

The tournament date at the end of September has historically perfect weather. The temperature is cooler than the hot summer days, the fall rains are a few weeks off and the course is in perfect condition.

Prizes are awarded based on individual stroke play in three divisions: Gross, Net (NCGA Index required) and Callaway (non handicap players). The Net & Callaway will have 3 flights each. Awards go to about one third of the field.

Entries will be mailed in August. Please return completed entries promptly to secure your reservation. Dinner choices this year will be Grilled Filet Mignon with Wild Mushrooms and Jack Daniels Sauce or Chicken Wellington with Mushroom Duxelle and Puff Pastry, Bordelaise Sauce. (Continued on page 2)

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**NCALERA NEWS**

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**R.W. (Bob) Parsons, editor**

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**MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS**

**August 3 – Michaels at Shoreline, Regular meeting.**

**August 12-14 – WESCON 2003, Moscone Center.**

**September 10-14 – Keystone 2003, A Forum for Professional reps.**

**GOLF TOURNEY (Continued from Page 1)**

**You can also download an Entry Form at <http://www.ncalera.org/golfentry.html>**

**The day's schedule is:**

- 10:30-11:30** Check In and Match--Making
- 11:00-12:30** Lunch (Grilled Chicken, Burgers & Dogs)
- 12:30** Shotgun Start
- 5:00-6:00** No-host Cocktail Hour
- 6:00-7:30** Awards Dinner

**The practice range is not available - we will play 19 holes. The 1st hole is for practice and to loosen-up. For additional information you may contact the golf committee listed below:**

<b>Ron Jenkins</b>	<b>Westech Associates</b>	<b>650) 961-1422</b>	<b><a href="mailto:rjenkins@westechassociates.com">rjenkins@westechassociates.com</a></b>
<b>Don Onken</b>	<b>Bridge Marketing</b>	<b>(650) 827-3600</b>	<b><a href="mailto:don@bridgerep.com">don@bridgerep.com</a></b>
<b>Bill Walsh</b>	<b>Westech Associates</b>	<b>(650) 961-1422</b>	<b><a href="mailto:bwalsh@westechassociates.com">bwalsh@westechassociates.com</a></b>
<b>Mark Conley</b>	<b>O'Donnell Associates</b>	<b>(408) 456-2950</b>	<b><a href="mailto:mconley@odonnell.com">mconley@odonnell.com</a></b>

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

**By Bill Hedgpeth**

**Well here we are two thirds the way through 2003 and the calendar of events scheduled for our Northern California Chapter of the ERA. One thing we can share is that this has been a unique year in electronic sales and the life of a manufacturer's representative. It has consistently been trying, challenging, disappointing, and occasionally even satisfying.**



**I believe the manufacturer's representative business, as we know it, is in constant change. We have to go with the changes in order to survive and grow to meet our life objectives.**

We must adjust the way we address our principals, the manner in which we sell, and who we sell to. That is what our principals look for -- our knowledge of and our expertise at working with our customer base. Learn it well and it will become invaluable. I am finding it essential to maintain the rapport we have with our customer base, and gaining an ever-increasing understanding of the local economy.

I want to thank the officers of 2003 for having all done a good job. I believe we all continue to learn more when we get involved with ERA. Involvement in ERA has given me an appreciation for cooperation and working together as a team. What could be ineffective because of time demands for an individual gains importance and accomplishes a lot as a team.

After the August 5th meeting, we enter a less demanding phase of Chapter life as 2003 winds down: The annual golf tournament; Past President's night; and the Holiday's Parties (your own personal as well as ours) for instance. Know that your officers will still be meeting and planning for 2004. A new slate of officers must be selected and nominated for your approval. A schedule of meeting topics must be put together and the preliminary coordination of those events must be set into motion. And we must review current programs and develop new ideas that can be turned into new programs that will continue to make membership in ERA a meaningful and profitable activity.

With the economy picking up, slowly, but picking up never-the-less, I look forward to seeing that growth during the rest of 2003 and with all of 2004 continuing the trend.

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## **NEWS & VIEWS**

By: R.W. (Bob) Parsons

We are rather looking forward to hearing our speakers in the upcoming August meeting. We hear a lot of commentary about a lot of things but people have not been discussing "tax problems," per se, lately. A few years ago, well, that was different. Reps joined the fraternity led by those\* wondering where they could put their money to prevent over-payment of taxes. Today, many of those same reps are wondering where the money they so carefully invested has gone!



\*We cannot forget the not-all-that-old joke that used to go around, "Q. How does a dentist change his practice to earn \$100,000? A. He cuts his work week down to three days."

As a matter of fact, things are looking better. Prognosticators are a bit edgy, of course. A few professional forecasting firms, usually headed by a famous financial guru, have found themselves subject to ridicule (law suits?) as a result of commentary publicized during the downward curve. So don't expect too much in the way of optimism for awhile.

All we can say is that we talk with reps daily. Most are still cautious. But they are only cautious, not panic-stricken. They know that they have to pay a price for independence. We have added at least one new member who has decided to return to the rep business. We know of several “new-hires.”

So, going back to square one, we are eager to hear our accountants talk about the new tax laws and their ramifications to the individual as well as the business bottom line. None of us are so wise that we don’t need this kind of input, particularly when things change positively. See you there.

☀ We have been reading a lot about Keystone 2003. ERA has put out several bulletins and may very well put out more. MANA is pushing it in all their publications, including their magazine, *Agency Sales*. NEMRA’s web site ([www.nemra.org](http://www.nemra.org)) makes a worthy presentation of this key event.

We are glad to see the cooperative effort being put into play among the three Trade Associations involved. Our sales efforts are not that far apart, when you get right down to it. And, meetings of this type seem to get better as attendance goes up and diversity comes into play. Not only do the participants share new ideas and solutions, the show management gains knowledge that they might not otherwise obtain -- just by being there. Yes, they network too.

It is important to remember that this event is for reps only. Not only is the program filled with interesting subject matter, much effort has been put into the generation of productive networking sessions among the participants. These informal networking sessions are interlaced with more formal roundtable discussions. Outstanding speakers and program participants will share their real life success stories. (We’ll have at least two key rep owner/managers from this chapter giving their time; Mark Conley is a member (co-chair?) of the planning committee and Gary Lessing, President of Ewing Foley, will be moderating a break out session.)

We note that ERA has stressed in their brochures the necessity of “taking the risk” by attending this program. Our leadership in Chicago has certainly faced the reality of tight controls of their daily expenditures. Participating in this show will be a financial challenge for them as well as for you. But they are encouraging their membership to participate for the same reason that they are going to be there. Any risk involved is worth it!

**We are glad to see the cooperative effort being put into play among the three Trade Associations involved.**



**Mark Conley  
National Director**

If you are working, *new knowledge will be used*. Sales professionals do not exist in a vacuum, they are constantly reaching down into their memory banks to find new solutions to sales situations. There are several ways to replenish your supply of solutions, of course. You can learn them by the simple act of just making out-and-out goofs -- loosing sales and looking bad in any given sales situation or ...

You can attend seminars, read books on self-improvement, watch and learn from watching others at work and **ATTEND KEYSTONE 2003!** All the key ingredients are there for you. The risk? You could spend \$2000 or more on the trip. Or you could miss that "right" answer and lose a large order. It is hard to believe that a sharp salesman can't realize a \$40,000 increase in sales after attending this event. ( $\$40,000 \times 5\% = \$2000$ )

**ATTEND KEYSTONE 2003!** All the key ingredients are there for you.

I'm always reminded that commissioned salesmen are not paid by the month, day or hour. They are paid by the *second!* That *second* that they get the opportunity say the right thing, come up with a solution to a customer's challenge, or just know enough to keep their mouth shut -- *that's* when they earn their money!

If you are not being paid a commission, you know that your performance is monitored and you will profit in the long run by improving your performance. And if you are not working? Hell, it doesn't matter, does it?

☀ This was not a good year for membership. We lost a total of 13 from last year's beginning. Our current total is an even 70 companies. We look to see the return of many of those former members who dropped out this year. Practically every one we talked with said something like, "we'll sit it out for a year or so but we'll be back." We'll keep them informed of Chapter activities so that *not coming back* will not remain an option.

Of course, some just went out of business. We certainly cannot fault them for not renewing their membership. We presume that they are now working for one of their principals as a regional manager or something. Or, perhaps they landed a better job at a factory. Or maybe they are just un-employed. We wish them well, whatever solution they arrived at.

We started in this business in 1967 and struggled. We conned sweet wife into taking a full-time job, and worked out of rented space in an Executive Office Building. We were afforded a small room, a desk, one file cabinet, a chair, a waste basket, and a telephone answering service for around sixty-five a month. The

telephone answering service was limited to the tenants of the building (a converted home) so we were assured that we received personal service. (Ha!) We worked hard enough that we were paying the bills in about six months, earning about the same money as before we entered the business in about another year.

But we joined ERA that same year and attended the first National Convention available to us, held here in San Francisco in 1968. We couldn't afford the hotel so we drove up to "the city" every morning and carried a lunch. Were we foolish? I don't think so. We picked up knowledge that year that we still call upon. And, we still have friends that we met for the first time at that very first show.

And, I might add . . .

While attending subsequent ERA Conferences, my wife and I have visited Hawaii – she got the tan, I got the learning. We played golf at Palm Springs, but only once in that heat; Disney World in Florida afforded us a chance to rent a car and tour the state; Then there was the Acapulco Princess whose golf course was great. We really remember Monte Carlo (preceded by a tour of Italy). (Oh, yes. We have re-visited Mexico and visited London to make up for that conference we missed due to a loss in the family.)

Yes, times have changed. We didn't have the "split" problems in the '60s and '70's that you all face today. And travel costs were less -- *a lot less*. But we also didn't have the market. Principals were more demanding and it was quite common for reps to work their butts off for a few years and then have their principals "go direct!" POS hadn't been invented and there was a constant hassle going on about that.

There are a few things this writer doesn't miss about the rep business. Nothing's perfect. But because of the rep business we can now live more comfortably than our parents ever dreamed Of. We keep at this job as a way to avoid the boredom of retirement. (That's a challenge we depression-raised kids face. Work was always necessary and became a part of our makeup. We would be lost without it.)

We wish you all prosperity and happiness.

The Northern California Chapter of ERA is one of the more active chapters within the National Association. We have received numerous national awares to prove it. Our success is a direct result of the interest and effort put forth by it members and the officers listed below, all volunteers.

**CHAPTER OFFICERS, CHAIRPERSONS & DIRECTORS**

<i>OFFICE</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>COMPANY</i>	<i>A/C</i>	<i>PHONE</i>	<i>FAX</i>
Chairman of Board	Chris Jumper	JEM Electronics	925	417-1033	417-1458
President	Bill Hedgpeth	Z-Tech Sales	408	257-5371	257-5651
Vice President	John Latimer	Luscombe Eng.	408	955-9515	955-9581
Treasurer	Bryan Levien	Sentech Measurements	530	792-0175	792-0515
Secretary	Phil Kipnis	Pacific Coast Visions.com	408	988-1444	988-1707
Membership VP	Michael Onken	Bridge Mktg.	650	827-3600	827-3609
Special Interest Groups VP	Chris Straube	Straube Assoc. Inc.	650	969-6060	964-6526
Past President	Bill Walsh	Westech Assoc.	650	961-1422	968-9898
Past President	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing	408	988-8111	492-0197
National Director	Mark Conley	O'Donnell Assoc. No.	408	456-2950	943-8243
Alt.National Dir.	Lon Hudson	Ross Marketing	408	988-8111	492-0197

**DIVISION VICE PRESIDENTS**

Communications	Hugh Shyba	Shur Sales	408	399-7487	399-4767
Components/Materials	Alan Kuczer	Prism Technical Sales	408	248-0700	248-2797
Computer Products	David Barrios	Dali Technical Sales	650	359-3982	359-3996
Instrumentation	Brian Levien	Sentech Measurements	530	792-0175	792-0515
RF/Microwave	Charlie Dickinson	C/G/ Associates	510	790-1193	790-1383
SAVE	Phil Kipnis	Pacific Coast Visions.com	408	988-1444	988-1707

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Ambassador	Hugo Shane	Executive Director	408	243-3372	246-4413
Ambassador	Tom Mollard	Life Member	650	968-1581	
Education	Michael Onken	Bridge Marketing	650	827-3600	827-3609
Golf Tourney	Ron Jenkins	Westech Associates	650	961-1422	968-9898
Internet	Edward Blake	Edward Blake Assoc. Inc.	408	934-3955	956-9732
Scholarship	Brian Trankle	Jack Logan Memorial Fund	650	343-2416	
Distributor Coord.	Shirley Burres	Recht Associates	650	964-6321	964-8165
Nominating	Chris Jumper	JEM Electronics	925	417-1033	417-1458
Newsletter	Bob Parsons	Chapter Office Manager	408	243-3372	246-4413

**CHAPTER STAFF**

Executive Director	Hugo Shane	408	243-3372	246-4413
Executive Secretary	Bob Parsons	408	243-3372	456-4413