

Where Carmel Business Comes First

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REIMAGINE AND REINVENT

Jennifer and Jim Sinclair re-launch Chelsea's amidst changing markets / P2

Photo by Zach Ross

REIMAGINE AND REINVENT

Jennifer and Jim Sinclair re-launch Chelsea's amidst changing markets

By Christian Sorrell

Carmel Business Leader

In November independent retailers Jennifer and Jim Sinclair's Vera Bradley store underwent a name change and product-line extension after Vera Bradley began to open corporately owned locations across the country. The Sinclairs' three Indiana locations were forced to change names and differentiate. While two of the locations were bought by Vera Bradley, the Clay Terrace location was renamed Chelsea's and has added three new product lines during the last several months in order to extend the business.

The Clay Terrace location opened more than eight years ago. At the time, it was the only independent retailer in the nation that had been allowed to use the store name "Vera Bradley" and exclusively carry Vera Bradley products.

"I wasn't too interested at that point to start something I knew nothing about and have to go to market and find a bunch of lines. The founders of Vera Bradley were friends of ours through years in the business," Jennifer said. "We approached them and said, 'What if we open a store, you allow us to call it Vera Bradley and we only carry Vera Bradley?' After lots of discussion, we came to the agreement that they would give it a try, and it worked."

During the next three years, the store proved to be successful, so successful, in fact, that the Sinclairs opened two more locations: one in Plainfield at Metropolis and another at Fort Wayne's Jefferson Pointe, the store that would eventually become Vera Bradley's flagship corporate location.

In late 2006, Vera Bradley announced plans to open and operate its own retail stores.

When asked if Vera Bradley's decision to begin opening its own retail locations was a result of the success of their stores, Jennifer and Jim could not say for sure, but they said they believed that it had to be part of the equation.

"You can draw your own conclusions, but I would guess that," Jim said.

"From their standpoint, it only makes perfect sense," Jennifer said. "They not only manufacture it, but now they are retailing it. They just honestly weren't in the retail business (originally), and I just don't think that they had really thought of it."

During the ensuing years, the Sinclairs began to face newfound competition from their own product's manufacturer. With the opening of a Vera Bradley corporate store in the Fashion Mall in Indianapolis, the Clay Terrace location was required to either be bought by Vera Bradley and corporately operated or change its name and differentiate its product line.

"Based upon the eight plus years of success that we've had at Clay Terrace, we said, 'It's a no-brainer. Let's keep it,'" Jim said.

Using knowledge gained from 38 years in the business, Jennifer and Jim have added



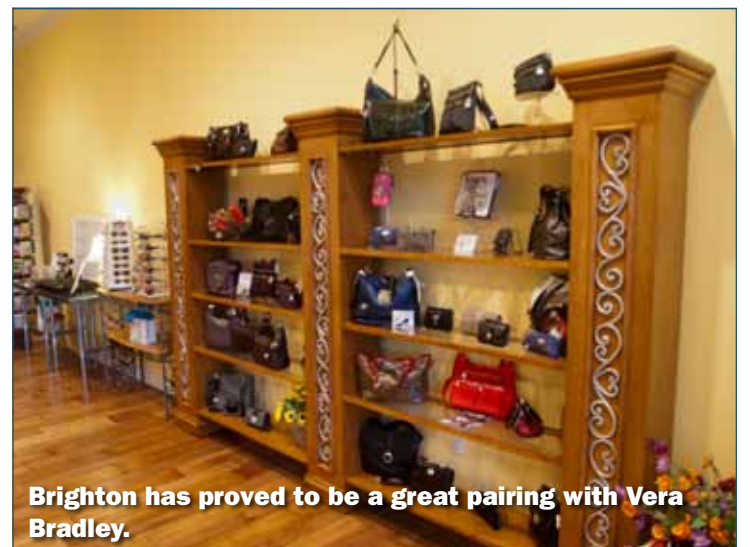
Chelsea's relaunched in November of last year with a new name and new product lines.



Vera Bradley



Alex and Ani



Brighton has proved to be a great pairing with Vera Bradley.

three other product lines to Chelsea's offerings. Brighton, a jewelry, charm and handbag line, has proven to be a great fit for stores offering Vera Bradley in the past. Alex and Ani, an East Coast jewelry line, was brought to the Sinclair's attention by a Boston retailer who has seen tremendous success in carrying the line. Bosom Buddy Bags, a Baltimore-based handbag line, features bags and purses hand-woven in Bali. Chelsea's will be the first Carmel retailer to carry both Alex and Ani and Bosom Buddy Bags. The store still dedicates nearly half of its floor and wall space to Vera Bradley products.

As more corporations find success in corporately owning and operating retail locations, it seems that local small businesses carrying well-known product lines may become more difficult

to find. With companies like Apple, Starbucks and others all seeing massive success in corporate ownership, it is a trend that does not show any sign of slowing.

"We are a dying breed, I'm afraid," Jennifer said. "I think from the consumer's point of view, the sad thing is you go into any big mall in any big city, and it's all the same. It's all the same stores and they all



Vera Bradley remains to be one of Chelsea's primary product lines.

Photos by Zach Ross

look the same. It's boring."

Despite the changing marketplace for independent retailers, Chelsea's has weathered the transition well and is continuing to find success through its new extended product lines. The Sinclairs opened two new Chelsea's locations in Indiana in the past year.

"In this business, you always have to be ready to reimagine and reinvent yourself," Jennifer said. "Nothing stays the same, that's for sure."

JENNIFER AND JIM SINCLAIR'S 5 TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Know your customer and deliver a desired product.
- In retail, location is key.
- Treat customers as you would like to be treated.
- It may be an overused adage, but provide world-class customer service.
- We spend a lot of time talking about the customer, but you have to treat your associates right and treat them as you would like them to treat you.

Marketing must happen in four dimensions

Length, width, height and time. These are the four basic dimensions of our observable world. For some reason, business owners tend to only think in three of them or, worse, two. We think in line charts, graphs, spreadsheets, ads, emails and forms. This really hurts our ability to make good business decisions,



Chris Hoyt

because the world is four dimensions (at least). Time is your worst enemy if you ignore it, and your best friend if you embrace it.

The first mistake is in data. A business puts an advertisement out in the paper, but gets no response. They assume the ad is bad and make a new one. They still get no response. They assume the paper is bad, so they try another venue. They still get no response. They continue like this until they go out of business.

Time is probably the most important part of marketing your business and gaining a reputation. Saying the same

message for a while, even if it isn't the best message, is better than saying a new message every time you place an ad. People don't process a message right away, they have to see it several times before it sinks in. If you don't let your messaging persist, you will never really know how effective it is.

There is also the "word of mouth" factor. Social media has helped to speed up word of mouth, but it is still slow. If someone likes your business, it may take them months to tell their friends or family. People only see each other, outside of work and immediate family, every couple weeks on average. Even if someone loves your business, they will take awhile to bring new referrals.

Looking for fast results and responses from marketing is probably one of the best ways to insure you never get results. You may get lucky every now and then with a shocking or gimmicky ad, but ultimately you won't grow a loyal or consistent customer base. Talking to people is better than shouting; appearing consistently is better than appearing dramatically; relationships are stronger than transactions.

The other consequence of impatience is a misunderstanding of what works. Your business today is usually from marketing you have done six months to a year ago. The marketing you do now determines the business you will have later. If you are making flash decisions to immediate responses, then you are making your decisions on false, and probably very discouraging, data.

Of course, I am not trying to tell you to keep doing things that don't work. Reviewing results from advertising spending and making adjustments is very important. The point is that you have to give things usually more time than you want to find out what really works, and what doesn't. More so, I am speaking to those of you who aren't growing your market because you get too discouraged with the bad "immediate" results you get whenever you try something.

Just like how people form relationships, it takes time to build a reputation, gain trust and grow interest. If you don't start building a reputation in your market now, you will never have one. People need to see you often and in many places. If you never start, you will never get there.

Time is your worst enemy if you ignore it, and your best friend if you embrace it.



Just because you can, doesn't mean you should

Late last month, merchants were given the ability to pass along credit card fees to their customers as a surcharge. The specific charge depends on the fee being paid by the merchant or service provider, but it generally ranges from 1.5 to 4 percent. While there have been a few stalwart business owners in the area that have held out against the encroaching number of credit card sales during the last decade by only accepting cash and checks, many have come to embrace it with others finding it to lead to generally higher sales. When customers no longer are restricted by the amount of money in their wallets but rather the amount in their bank accounts, the potential amount of money to be made off an individual customer raises significantly.

Even still, there are business owners looking to make their enterprises as efficient as possible, hoping to remove another cost. While 3 percent may seem like a small number to some, it can add up to quite a significant sum throughout the year.

I imagine that this type of charge is something that we could see working into prices during the next several years, if it is not already there. With so many people using cards over cash, it seems unusual to stick them with an extra charge at the register when business owners could work it into the pricing beforehand.

It remains to be seen just how many merchants in Carmel will take up the practice of passing along this cost to customers. Some

do not have a problem with absorbing the extra fees themselves, while others are afraid of the potential customer backlash of passing the charge along and effectively raising prices for many customers.

From my standpoint, it is a decision that nearly each and every business owner, but especially those in retail working with a high number of daily transactions, will have to decide for themselves. As a consumer, not having to carry cash and the convenience afforded to me by a credit card may very well be worth a 3-percent surcharge, but to many, that may not be the case.

Changes in pricing, particularly ones that customers may view as being voluntary, are always handled best when they are fully transparent. If you are looking to make the changes, let your customers know exactly what you are planning to do with the money. If you examine the numbers and find that you could hire one or two new employees if the business passed along the credit card surcharge, let your customers know. I am sure many people would be more than happy to front a little more money in the name of their

personal convenience when they know it is helping others in their community create jobs, have jobs and keep jobs.

Running a business is not just about making decisions. It's also about how you handle them.



Christian Sorrell

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For Hoosiers, the future looks bright

With this column, I am going to be particularly partisan. That is code for Republican. I had the honor of spending a few days with Mike Pence and 2,000 of our closest friends as Pence became our newly elected governor.

The long weekend culminated Jan. 14 with Pence's swearing-in on the west steps of the State Capitol. As I was shivering in my boots listening to Mike's remarks, my mind went back through the years of the GOP in Indiana.

As a kid, I distinctly remember friends from out of town ask my Dad why Indianapolis, in particular, was in the press all the time because it was on a "roll." In fact, when I was in high school, the nickname for Indianapolis was "Nap Town." Upon graduation from college, the goal was just to get a job anywhere but Indiana, much less Indianapolis. By the time I graduated from college, we were building tall buildings, we were making fun places for young people to come downtown and "party."

Eventually, places like Ruth's Chris and Morton's steak houses that would have never considered moving to Indy previously were becoming part of the landscape. We did not even dream of an NFL football team, much less being a two-time contender to play host to the Super Bowl!

Talk about dreaming big – Indianapolis now is in the history books for being one of the NFL's favorite Super Bowl locations. We did not dream of a downtown mall or a world-class convention facility, either. Who would have thought that one day "Indy-no-place" could become "Indy-show-place?" It is certainly a great time to not only be a Hoosier but to be proud of our Hoosier heritage!

So why do we have these assets? We have them, in large part, because of Republican visionaries. William Hudnut, a former Republican mayor of Indianapolis, convinced Hoosiers that if we built the former Hoosier Dome, then an NFL team would follow. And yes, in the middle of the night, it came. Mitch Daniels proved to be the right governor at the right time. When he took over the office from the other party, we as a state were hopelessly \$1 billion in debt. Through eight years of fiscal

responsibility, during the second-most trying economic time in our nation's history, and one toll road later, we have turned a handsome cash profit in Indiana.

One of the largest criticisms of the new governor, Pence, is that he decided to give an abundance of that cash back to Hoosiers, the ones that gave it up in the first place! What a stupid idea, some in his party say. Why? They do not trust the government to continue to be that prudent again. They just know Daniels' abundance was a fluke, and subsequent legislatures will squander it. Pence suggests that if we just remain vigilant, we will always have a profit. Yes, state politics should be just that simple!

I think by now, most of the tuned-in businessmen and

businesswomen realize that the states with Republican governors are operating at a profit, and those run by Democrats largely are running at a loss. No, I am not against the Democratic party at all, just to be profitable as a state requires tough decisions and the GOP has led in these decisions.

Whatever the GDP is in the U.S. dictates, by and large, the quality of life in the business world. We would all agree that the quality of life is better in a 3-percent growth state than a 1-percent growth state. We all agree that the consumers purchase more by household when unemployment is at 5 percent than when it is at 8 percent. This is true with any state.

Pence's comment in his inaugural address that was a good challenge for himself and Hoosier government alike is to make "Indiana the heart of the Heartland." If he builds on Daniels' "goodness," he will develop his own "greatness" for the state of Indiana. In so doing, Indiana will continue to be one of the best states in the nation in which to be a small-business owner. He even gave all in attendance a personal challenge. He said, "If you can start a small business, then start one!" Now, that is my kind of a governor. For the next several years, to be a Hoosier business owner, the future looks bright.

Howard Hubler is a partner with Hubler Express Collision/NAPA, and the owners of St. Augustine Toyota. He can be reached at hhubler@statoyota.com.



Howard Hubler

Merchants can now charge credit card fees to customers

By Christian Sorrell
Carmel Business Leader

Businesses throughout the U.S. are now allowed to pass credit card fees on to their customers. If businesses take advantage of this, it could mean higher prices for goods and services overall.

The legal surcharge may range from 1.5 to 4 percent of the total purchase and depends on how much the specific business pays in fees to card companies.

Participating businesses are required to post notices at checkout of the additional charges. Customers paying with cash or debit cards would not be affected by any additional charges.

While ten states currently ban credit card surcharges, Indiana does not currently have a ban in place and as such, business owners may begin taking advantage of the practice immediately.

It remains to be seen how many businesses will take advantage of the surcharge. While some businesses have been looking to pass credit card fees on to their customers for years, others fear that rising prices, no matter how small, could turn some customers away or turn off those customers that do not understand why they would be charged more when using a credit card.

Is your business planning to charge customers who pay with a credit card? Let us know at Christian@youarecurrent.com.



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Rachel Villavicencio AVP, Business Officer 317-706-9060	Ryan Hart Assistant Vice President 317-706-9065



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Clock shop hopes location change will help business thrive

By Christian Sorrell
Carmel Business Leader

Village Clock Shop, Indiana's oldest and largest clock shop, moved to a new location in Clay Terrace this month. After more than 40 years in Zionsville, owner and operator Andy Brogden said it was time to make a change.

"We did a test market at Clay Terrace three months ago, and it was very successful. It had a massive draw," Brogden said.

Brogden not only saw more customers buying more merchandise than in the shop's former Zionsville location, but he also saw more customers from more places. The test location at Clay Terrace attracted customers from Kokomo, downtown Indianapolis and Castleton, places from which the Zionsville location rarely drew.

"It used to be that way in Zionsville," Brogden said. "I think Clay Terrace is one of the reasons it's not (like that) now."

Like many businesses, Village Clock Shop has had to adapt to meet new customer needs, especially with such a specific product line.

During the last several years, Brogden has seen his product's primary selling point shift from quality and mechanics to style. Wall and floor clocks today need to first match the interior of customers' homes; their quality and construction comes second.

"(Clocks) now appeal to almost every generation as well. They used to think clocks were only for those in their 60s.



Brogden: There will always be customers for products they create a legacy.

Now with some of the unique new designs, (young people) are thinking 'Wow, that could actually work in my house,'" Brogden said. "Old designs are still timeless in some ways, but now we have more options available."

While new styles of clocks have proven successful in recent years, Brogden also is looking to use the Clay Terrace location to expand Village Clock Shop's product offerings.

In addition to wall, desk and floor clocks, Village Clock Shop has added a number of

unique pieces of wall and desk art, drinking cabinets, poker tables and a complete line of

American-made leather furniture. Brogden is excited to move beyond only carrying clocks while still providing high-quality, American-made products that are intended to last a lifetime or more. The shop will still be doing clock repairs, custom orders, deliveries and more.

Throughout his career, Brogden has found there will always be a customer for well-made products that create a family legacy. Many customers come to Village Clock Shop looking for repairs on floor clocks that have been in their families for generations. Brogden tells his customers to treat large, floor clock purchases as a family investment.

"Floor clocks are a generational product," Brogden said. "In a throwaway world, that's great to have."

Monon Community Center to host entrepreneurship awards next month

The Entrepreneurship Advancement Center has announced the finalists for its Second Annual Entrepreneurship Celebration Awards.

Finalists in three different business categories will answer questions about their businesses in interviews with independent judging panels. The winner in each category will be revealed at a reception and awards ceremony on Feb. 28 following the Entrepreneurship Celebration Conference at the Monon Community Center, 1235 Central Park Dr.

The Entrepreneurship Celebration Awards recognize and celebrate the achievements of innovative business owners who demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they start and grow their businesses.

"It is always difficult to narrow down entries to the three finalists as each of the business owners have an amazing story," Cathy Langlois, executive director of EAC, said. "The Celebration Awards bring attention to all stages of business and their contribution to the culture and economy of Indiana communities they serve."

Emerging Business Finalists:

- James Burnes, PatentStatus
- Mike Byers, Cornerstone Painting and Drywall
- Andy Dalton, My Mobile Fans
- Established Business Finalists
- Kathy Carandang, The Walk EZ Store
- Nick Carter, AddressTwo
- Robert Karlinsey, Indiana NanoTech
- Mature Business Finalists
- Steve Cage, Stratosphere Quality LLC
- John Chambers, LeafGuard of Indiana LLC
- Michael Friery, Veteran Construction Co. Inc.

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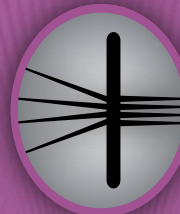
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Fifth Third Bank opens LEED-certified location

By Christian Sorrell
Carmel Business Leader

Fifth Third Bank opened an environmental-friendly, LEED-Certified financial center last week at 205 E. Carmel Dr.

To meet LEED standards, the new location reduces water use by 38 percent and energy use by 24 percent. All equipment used in the financial center is Energy Star certified, and all power used will be offset through green wind energy. The new site also includes a “cool roof”

with heat resistant shingles and three designated customer parking spaces for environmentally-friendly vehicles to park.

The new “green” financial center is an 8,500-square-foot, full-service financial center with nine offices including three drive-thru lanes, a drive-up ATM with “envelope free” deposit acceptance, dedicated safe deposit box vault service for easy customer access and advanced technology for faster transaction processing at the teller line.

Ribbon Cutting



From left, Brandon George, general manager John Zimmer, Chamber president Mo Merhoff, Max & Erma's President Steve Weis, Josh Car, executive board president of Autism Society of Indiana, mayor Jim Brainard and Dana Renay, executive director of Autism Society of Indiana. (Photo by Christian Sorrell)

Max & Erma's completes renovation, holds fundraiser

By Christian Sorrell
Carmel Business Leader

Max & Erma's, 12195 N. Meridian St., held a ribbon-cutting ceremony and reopening last month to celebrate the restaurant's recent exterior and interior renovation. Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard and Mo Merhoff, Carmel Chamber of Commerce president, both attended the

ceremony along with Max & Erma's President Steve Weis. Twenty percent of the restaurant's sales Jan. 14 were donated to the Autism Society of Indiana. Josh Carr, executive board president of Autism Society of Indiana, and Dana Renay, executive director, were on hand to express their thanks to the restaurant and the community.



Mike Hurst, Regional President | **Michael Joyce, Director of Small Business Banking**
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Karaoke hosting and trivia night a full time job

By Lana Bandy
Carmel Business Leader

How did you get started hosting karaoke nights? I had a friend who had been doing it for over a decade, working every night. He asked me if I'd fill in for him some times. I had never done it, but I said 'OK.' So I started doing that part-time while I was working as a credit manager. Over the years, I started collecting karaoke songs. I thought, this is fun: if I can make a living out of this, great. I was pregnant with my second child and my husband said, 'We are doing OK if you want to quit your day job and do this full-time.' So I have been doing it since 2007.

What special skills do you need? So many people said I had a knack for making people not feel embarrassed getting up and making fools of themselves. They also said I'm a really good singer, so I can sing along with them if they ask me to. It's about making them comfortable – it's their experience. I will sing anything they ask me to, even if I don't know the song. A few of the regulars try to challenge me. Most of the time I can get through it.

Where do you host karaoke and trivia? Nippers hired me for Friday nights (trivia and karaoke) and I host trivia on Wednesday nights at Max & Erma's on Meridian Street. It's free everywhere I do it. For the trivia at Max & Erma's, everyone on the winning team gets gift cards. At Nippers, there are t-shirts and shot glasses as well as \$25 cash for the team with the most points at the end of the night.

What kind of equipment do you need for karaoke? At first I used a CD player with discs – crates and crates of discs. Then the digital age came along. I burn the songs on a hard drive on my computer. Then I just search for it and the song comes up. I have binders of all the songs so people can take them and see if there's anything they want to sing. The amount of equipment I need has lessened. The basic equipment is two speakers with stands, a mixer board to mix the vocals and music, a power amp and my laptop with my external hard drive. Also speaker cables and cables to go to the TV for the words to show up. And microphones. Nippers has a DJ booth for me in the corner of the dance floor, with speakers on each side. I hand singers the microphone and they stand on the dance floor and the words come up on the TV.

What types of music do you play? I have all genres. Anything from Frank Sinatra to Nine Inch Nails. There's a huge span of music. You can download music online and I owned some discs already. You need MP3 Plus, which is 'plus graphics,' the words. There are special karaoke download sites.

What are the most popular songs? Most karaoke DJs will agree with me that there are several songs you never want to hear again –



Carrie Wehlage reads trivia questions at Nippers.

Friends in Low Places, Paradise by the Dashboard Light and These Boots are Made for Walking. Sometimes I just tune these songs out. You can count on hearing them almost every night.

What are some of your most memorable gigs? Sometimes there are eventful nights where people get too drunk and fall on the floor. One time, a guy mooned everyone. With me, I would never make fun of anyone. I stop hecklers, because it's supposed to be fun. We're

not *American Idol*, no one judges you here.

Where do you come up with the trivia questions?

They are pop culture

questions. What I did, which was painstakingly time consuming, was come up with themes, like weather. I looked for TV shows, movies or songs with weather in their titles, like *Purple Rain*. I have 50 categories. So for instance, if I saw a lot of songs or movies with modes of transportation in their titles, that became a category.

What do you like best about your job? I like the people and the atmosphere. It's not like my 12-year stuffy office job. Most people are nice and gracious and look forward to seeing you each week. It makes me feel good.

What do you like least? The only thing I don't like is how late I get home. Well, my husband doesn't like it, because it forces me to sleep in on Saturday. I'm always wasting half the day sleeping.

Do you or someone you know have an interesting job? Or is there an occupation you would like to know a little more about? Send your story ideas to lcbandym@yahoo.com and we might feature you in an upcoming issue of The Carmel Business Leader.

Name: Carrie Wehlage
Title: Karaoke and Trivia Host
Business: Carrieoke

BANKS & BROWER OPENS FOR BUSINESS ON NORTH SIDE OF INDIANAPOLIS – Local attorneys Brad Banks, J.D. and Adam Brower, J.D. have recently opened their legal practice, Banks & Brower, at 3802 W. 96th St., Indianapolis. Banks & Brower practice areas include criminal, DUI, family law, business law, construction law and education/school law. For more information, call 870-0019 or visit www.banksbrower.com.

SHIP HIRES FIVE, PROMOTES TWO – Carmel-based Senior Health Insurance Co. of Pennsylvania, which supports long-term care insurance policies, has added to its team of IT professionals as it bolsters its offerings. The company recently created Fuzion Analytics, an analytic services organization dedicated to serving the informational needs of the long-term care insurance industry, to its business portfolio. Last month, SHIP brought on Brea Day, Deb Eberhart, David Guest, Michael Herman, Kim Jarboe. Additionally, SHIP promoted two members of its IT department: Duane Birnbaum and William Long.



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Carmel High School Culinary Students

Record attendance, exhibitors at Taste of the Chamber

The Carmel Chamber of Commerce held its annual Taste of the Chamber event on Jan. 17 at Ritz Charles, 12156 N. Meridian St. This was a record setting year for the event, both in attendance and in the number of exhibitors. More than 850 people attended Taste of the Chamber, a 17-percent increase over last year's event.

Exhibitor space sold out a month before the event. A record 134 exhibitors, all Carmel Chamber members, were on hand promoting their businesses.

The Chamber's next major event is the Golf Classic fundraiser on June 25. The event will be at the Woodland Country Club where attendees will join the Chamber for lunch, a round of golf and dinner with other Carmel business leaders.

(Photos by Christian Sorrell and Maddie Scott)



Computer Troubleshooters - Kyron Walker, Patrice Abdulla, Feras Mash



Seasons 52 - Logan Scheer



Entrepreneurship Advancement Center - Sharon Robbins, Lollies Candy Shop - Heidi Wolfe



Jet's Pizza - Brandon Huebner, Mark Helmer

Carmel Chamber of Commerce Calendar

- **Fifth Third Bank Ribbon Cutting** – Join the Carmel Chamber for the ribbon cutting and grand re-opening of the new Fifth Third Bank location, 205 E. Carmel Dr., on Feb. 6 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. The ribbon cutting will be followed by an open house. City Councilor Eric Seidensticker will represent the City.
- **Arrows YP Lunch and Learn: Community Involvement** – Giving your time and talents to worthwhile causes and organizations in your community is a vital part of your own personal development. On Feb. 7 from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Art Institute of Indianapolis, 3500 DePauw Blvd., 11th floor, join the Carmel Chamber and hear longtime Carmel community supporter Jeff Worrell talk about how to get involved, where to find opportunities and how your involvement can help you personally and professionally. This event is for young professionals under 40. Reservations are required.
- **February Network Breakfast** – On Feb. 7, Network with members of Carmel, Noblesville and Westfield chambers at this informal breakfast event at La Hacienda, 14741 Hazel Dell Pkwy. A hot breakfast will be served followed by table to table rotations giving each member the opportunity to give a two-minute presentation of his or her business. Bring plenty of business cards and brochures to distribute. Reservations are required by Feb. 4. \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members.

- **February Legislative Breakfast** – The monthly Carmel Chamber Legislative Breakfast will be on Feb. 8 from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Mansion at Oak Hill, 5801 E. 116th St. The Legislative Breakfast series is presented by the Hamilton County Business Issues Committee, which represents all six Hamilton County chambers. The cost is \$15 for members of any Hamilton County chamber, \$20 for non-members.
- **February Luncheon** – The monthly Carmel Chamber luncheon will be Feb 13 at The Fountains, 502 E. Carmel Dr., from noon to 1:30 p.m. Pre-paid reservations are required by noon on Feb. 11. The cost is \$20 for members, \$25 for guests and walk-ins.
- **February New Member Orientation Session** – Join the Carmel Chamber at this orientation session for new members on Feb. 16 from 8 to 9 a.m. at HCR ManorCare at Summer Trace, 12999 N. Pennsylvania St. Not a new member? Feel free to attend for a "refresher." Learn firsthand what the Chamber is all about and how best to use the many opportunities the Chamber has to offer. Reservations are required. Light refreshments will be served.
- **Business After Hours** – Business After Hours is an informal event where Chamber members can network and socialize. The event will be on Feb. 21 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Stratford, 2460 Glebe St. Free for members, \$10 for non-members. Prospective members may call 846-1049 for a special discount.

Carmel-based online store owner hit with lawsuit

Attorney General Greg Zoeller's office filed a lawsuit against Carmel-based Ultimate Sports Connection last month for collecting customers' online payments but failing to deliver.

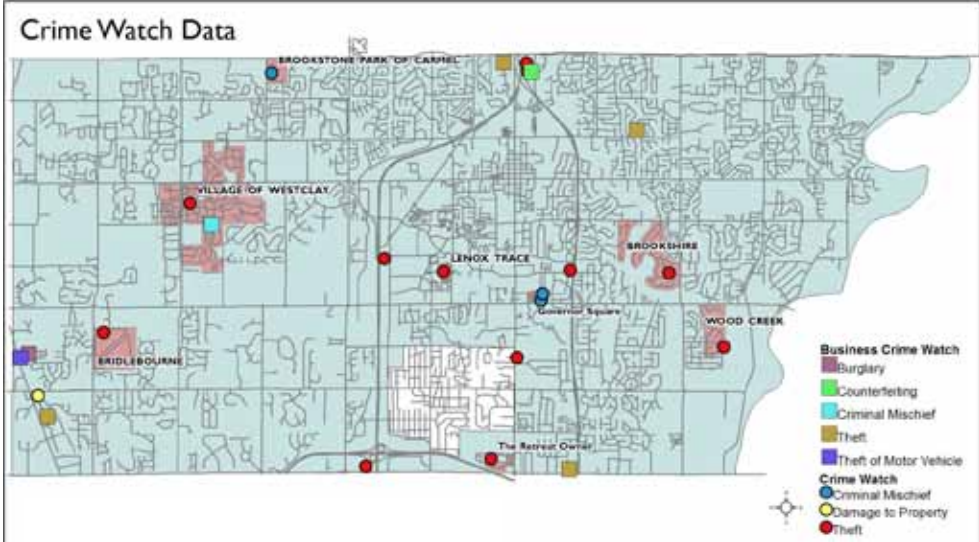
Zoeller said 17 consumers filed complaints with the Attorney General's Office after not receiving any or all of their promised purchase. According to the lawsuit, customers' payments for sports memorabilia items ranged from \$13 to \$450 and totaled about \$2,416.

The lawsuit was filed in Hamilton County against owner Brett Lemieux doing business as Ultimate Athlete Ink and Ultimate Sports Connection. The businesses are located at 13697 Seasons Bend and 1950 E. Greyhound Pass, both in Carmel.

One customer bought a Reggie Wayne autographed photo via the defendant's website for \$78.99, but did not receive the item or a refund. Another customer bought a Peyton Manning autographed photo for \$104.25 and an autographed jersey for \$164.50, but didn't receive either item or a refund.

In one case, a customer received his Gary Brackett autographed mini helmet and Peyton Manning autographed jersey – totaling \$293.95 – but expressed concerns over the items' quality. According to the complaint, Lemieux promised replacements if the customer mailed the original items back. The customer returned the items, but did not receive the new items or a refund.

The state is seeking an injunction against the company from misrepresenting its products and services, consumer restitution, civil penalties and attorney fees for violations of the Deceptive Consumer Sales Act.



Business Crime Watch – January 2013

Date	Address	Zip	Description
1/7	Coca-Cola	1495 Keystone Way	Criminal Mischief
1/7	RS Used Oil	4501 W 99th St.	Theft
1/7	Coca-Cola	2290 E 116th St.	Criminal Mischief
1/7	Alt & Witzig Engineering	4105 W 99th St.	Theft
1/7	Interventional Pain Care	12188 N Meridian St.	Theft
1/9	Victoria's Secret	14390 Clay Terrace Blvd	Theft
1/10	Allied Solutions, L.L.C.	1320 W City Center Dr.	Forgery
1/10	The Affordable Companies	1000 3rd Ave SW	Theft
1/11	Carmel Financial	101 E Carmel Dr.	Fraud/Deception
1/11	Whole Foods Market	14598 Clay Terrace Blvd	Theft
1/11	Victoria's Secret	14390 Clay Terrace Blvd	Theft
1/12	150 W 96th St.	46260	Theft
1/14	11035 Westfield Blvd	46032	Theft
1/14	1939 Franklin Blvd	46032	Criminal Mischief
1/14	TruWorth Auto	3006 E 96th St.	Theft
1/15	1939 Franklin Blvd	46032	Criminal Mischief
1/15	The Village of West Clay	12545 Meeting House Rd.	Criminal Mischief
1/15	Natures Canopy	1531 White Ash Dr.	Theft
1/16	Target	10401 N Michigan Rd.	Theft
1/16	3591 Hintocks Cir.	46032	Theft
1/16	5260 Westwood Dr.	46033	Theft
1/17	14598 Lowes Way	46033	Theft
1/17	11925 N Meridian St.	46032	Theft
1/17	11715 Lenox Ln.	46032	Theft
1/17	Aeropostale	14511 Clay Terrace Blvd	Theft
1/18	1921 Madison Dr.	46032	Criminal Mischief
1/18	4335 W 106th St.	46032	Damage to Property
1/18	150 W 96th St.	46260	Theft
1/18	150 W 96th St.	46260	Theft
1/18	150 96th St.		Theft
1/19	750 E Carmel Dr.	46032	Theft
1/20	11940 Somerset Way E	46033	Theft
1/20	14509 Baldwin Ln.	46032	Criminal Mischief
1/20	14480 Lowes Way	46033	Theft
1/20	2295 Chartwell St.	46032	Theft
1/20	Fox & Hound Pub	14490 Lowes Way	Counterfeiting
1/21	Enterprise Rental Car	11035 N Michigan Rd.	Theft of Motor Vehicle
1/21	Maria Montessori	4370 Weston Pointe Dr.	Burglary
1/21	1355 Sierra Spgs.	46280	Theft

CARMEL ROTARY BUSINESS CALENDAR –

- **Feb.1,** noon to 1:30 p.m., Mansion at Oak Hill, 5801 E. 116th St., Carmel. Program: Mark Robbins with Legacy Fund. Cost for lunch is \$12.00. Contact: Wendy Phillips, 501-4955.
- **Feb. 8,** noon to 1:30 p.m., Mansion at Oak Hill, 5801 E. 116th St., Carmel. Program: Matt Frey from Bub's Burgers. Cost for lunch is \$12.00. Contact: Wendy Phillips, 501-4955.
- **Feb. 15,** noon to 1:30 p.m., Mansion at Oak Hill, 5801 E. 116th St., Carmel. Program: Carmel Rotary Board special program. Cost for lunch is \$12.00. Contact: Wendy Phillips, 501-4955.
- **Feb. 22,** noon to 1:30 p.m., Mansion at Oak Hill, 5801 E. 116th St., Carmel. Program: Bill Batt, Past District Governor, with an update on efforts to eradicate polio worldwide. Cost for lunch is \$12.00. Contact: Wendy Phillips, 501-4955.

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Being different is okay

I was always different. I was one of the last polio victims. I got the disease shortly after I was born. I wasn't supposed to get polio. I had gotten the vaccine, but, for some reason, it didn't work. I was left with a limp when I walk, but the truth is, suffering this dreaded disease, in retrospect, has made me a better person.

Flashback to when our son Jackson was 6-years-old. We took him to Disney World.

After a lot of walking, I said, "Jack, let's sit and rest a while. Dad's bad leg is getting tired."

Jack tilted his head and with slightly sad eyes responded, "Daddy, why do you always call it your bad leg? It's not bad. It just works different."

That was a life-changing moment.

That day at Disney caused me to realize that being different is okay. It made me more respectful and sensitive to people who were physically different.

The world is a better place because of others who dared to be different in creative ways by coloring outside the lines.

Charles Schulz, the creator of "Peanuts," got poor grades in art and became discouraged. He almost gave up because he didn't draw the way the art teacher taught the class to draw. Instead, he always drew his figures with big heads. Can someone say, "Charlie Brown?" He persevered.

Think of how much better the world is because of people that dared to be different: Walt Disney, Abraham Lincoln, Steve Jobs, Thomas Edison, Bill Gates, etc.

Many of these people were told by others "it

can't be done," but they didn't give up.

Take even our own Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard. The roundabouts were different. Like them or not, they have resulted in dramatic drops in car accidents and injuries.

In 1987, my former boss and friend Jeff Smulyan started the first all-sports radio station. The broadcast industry, and even some people who worked for Jeff, thought he was crazy.

He did it anyway. Today, WFAN in New York City is one of the most successful radio stations ever.

Think of the greatest advertisements you have ever seen. All of them have several things in common. They are different, cutting-edge and memorable.

One of my favorite public relations stories is from the founder of the Web site Half.com. Joshua Kopelman said,

reflecting back to the year 2000, "We were talking about how to get the company on the map and we said, 'Why don't we get on the map? Literally.'"

They approached Halfway, Oregon, a town with a population of 345. The town, in exchange for new computers at the school, agreed to change their name to Half.com for one year.

The resulting publicity for the company and the town, both named Half.com, spread worldwide.

So, what have you done lately to be different?

Jon Quick is the president of Carmel-based marketing firm absolutemax! He can be reached at jon@absolutemaxpr.com.



Jon Quick

Believing the best

Lance Armstrong changed course and admitted to doping. After years of vigilant defense of his innocence, he drastically and dramatically changed course. After years, it looks like he was more of a LieStrong than a LiveStrong guy.

Like O.J. Simpson, most people know on some level that with such firsthand evidence, he was probably guilty. However, within all of us there is a natural instinct to believe other people. It's the underlying principle of ratings, reviews, word of mouth marketing and anything that leverages the people factor.

It's also a natural instinct to believe the first thing you hear. The O.J. Simpson trial started the same way as the Lance

Armstrong saga – a firm and definitive statement of innocence followed by an unwavering commitment to that statement or claim. Once

the statement is made, despite a video of the person committing the crime, most people want to believe they didn't do it.

For products and services, a similar phenomenon exists. The first to the market, or the first to make the claim, generally grabs a share of the market that is challenging for an opposing view to overtake. The key, however, is to make sure the statement is bold and is the first. And, for longevity, it should be true! It's hard to recover from bold lies and a purposeful deceit. Still, the lesson holds true: People believe people, and we all go against our instincts to believe the best in people. The best marketing is, therefore, arguably, people.



David Cain

David Cain works at Magnitude, a sales and marketing company. Contact David at David.Cain@MarketMagnitude.com.

TRAVEL LEADERS GROUP RELEASES 2013 BUSINESS TRAVEL TRENDS – Last month, Travel Leaders Group revealed its Business Travel Trends for 2013. Nearly 80 percent of Travel Leaders Group's business-focused travel agents are forecasting that clients will be traveling as much or more than last year (fewer than 10 percent of those polled say their clients will be traveling less), which paradoxically may prove to be the reason why the survey data also reveals that cost savings will be the most important factor for business travel clients in 2013. Nearly 90 percent of respondents said that their top concern for business travels was delayed flights, with limited airline seating coming in second with 72 percent of respondents listing it as a concern.

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IT consulting firm expands Carmel operations

Allegient, LLC, an information technology and business solutions consulting firm, announced plans last month to expand its operations in Hamilton County, creating up to 36 new jobs by 2017.

The company will invest \$225,000 to add 4,000 square feet to its current 12,000 square-foot facility located at 201 W. 103rd St. Allegient will also add new information technology equipment and software. The expansion is currently slated for a Spring completion.

"Allegient and other Indiana-based technology firms are putting the Hoosier State on the map as a home where high-tech enterprises start and succeed," Eric Doden, president of the Indiana Economic Development Corp., said.

Allegient currently has 151 employees, including 116 full-time Indiana employees, and has already begun hiring additional business analysts and technology consultants.

"Allegient's tremendous growth over the past few years has accelerated our hiring plans and led us to hire both experienced consultants and recent college graduates from Indiana's top universities," Gregg Gallant, president and chief executive officer of Allegient, said. "We are expanding our investment in Indiana by developing training programs for our new hires and our current staff, and we are adding facilities and high tech equipment right here in Indiana to accommodate our growing workforce."

Founded in 2001, Allegient provides business and technology solutions for mid-sized and enterprise organizations. The company's current clients represent the pharmaceutical, medical device, health care, financial services, insurance, construction, manufacturing, education and government sectors. Allegient, one of four Microsoft Gold Certified partners in Indiana, was a 2011 Company to Watch recipient and was listed as a Top 100 Indiana company by Inc. Magazine in 2012.

The Indiana Economic Development Corp. offered Allegient, LLC up to \$860,000 in conditional tax credits based on the company's job creation plans. These tax credits are performance-based, meaning until Indiana residents are hired, the company is not eligible to claim incentives. The city of Carmel approved additional property tax abatement.

"Our focus and commitment to maintain a high quality of life is always key in attracting and retaining business," Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard said. "Therefore, I am thrilled to learn that Allegient has decided to once again invest in Carmel by expanding their company. This increased economic growth continues to provide excellent employment opportunities in our community."

This marks the company's second expansion in central Indiana in two years. In 2011, Allegient announced plans to invest \$1.65 million to expand and equip its Carmel location, creating up to 42 new jobs.

Hamilton County Business Contacts

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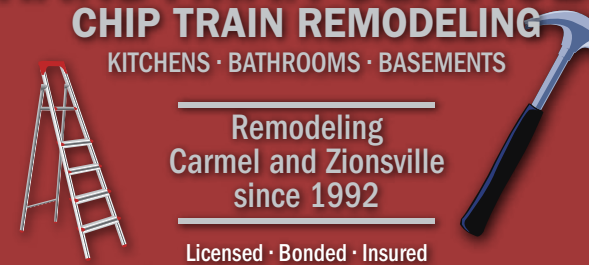
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