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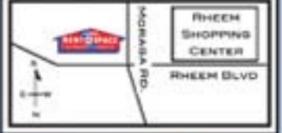
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"The Jay and Charley Show"
Fundraising in a tough economy

By Sophie Braccini

On May 13th Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, and Charley Daly, his counterpart from Pleasant Hill, presented "The Jay and Charley Show," a fun, interactive workshop on how to continue to raise money in spite of dried-up funding sources. From events to bartering, they've tried it all. It's by strengthening their communities, giving as much (or even more) than they ask, that they have found a way to continue to flourish.

"When people say, 'the economy is bad, let's cut programs,' we do the opposite," said Lifson, "we propose new events, new programs, that provide value for our members, and have a positive return for us." Lifson acknowledged that fiscal responsibility is a must, and sometimes old programs must be weeded out. Lifson offered the example of the Lafayette Concourse of Elegance: a well loved program, but one that was not productive for the Chamber.

They also recommended analyzing where the money comes from, listing sponsors in four categories, and allocating time accordingly:

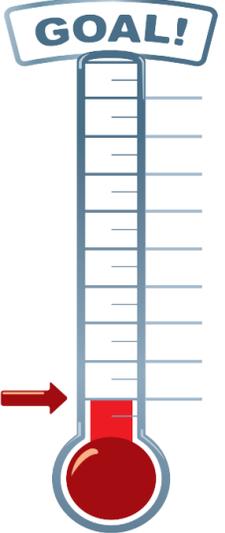
A: Sponsors that are easy to work with and give a lot of money
B: Easy to work with, but want discounts, propose bartering
C: Hard to work with, but give a lot of money
D: Hard to work with and do not give much

Both agreed that boosting marketing and public relations efforts is paramount. "The elevator speech does not work anymore," said Daly, "it is full of 'I.' Instead, create a message that speaks directly to your auditor's interests." Both believed that the economy will stay low for at least another two years and that fewer people are able to give, so fundraisers need to deliver more impact and talk to their donors' culture.

Lifson noted that sometimes bartering works well. For example, an exterminator provided bee traps for the Art and Wine Festival in exchange for free advertising. "I find it easier to go and ask for stuff than money," agreed Daly.

The two men reviewed fund raising ideas that work. "Most events that work have four things in common," said Daly, "music, food, drinks, and a good cause."

Finally, they recommended keeping an updated Rolodex. "150 is a good number of people to know and establish a real relationship with," said Lifson, "just make sure that they, too, know 150 people well, if possible in a different circle than yours."



Tips from Jay and Charley

- Put your programs under the microscope and cut dead wood
- Know where your money comes from and stay frugal
- Stay visible
- Put marketing people on the board and boost your PR
- Be the king of horse traders - barter
- Give your sponsors benefits tailored to their values
- Successful events have: Music, food, drinks, and a good cause
- Know 150 people who know 150 people (who know 150 people, etc...)

Rheem Theater – The Phoenix Rises

... continued from page 1

The organization has attracted audiences by turning a trip to the movies into an entertainment event. "Why still go to the movies when people can see movies in their homes?" asks Zemrak, "Because we create events where people can meet directors and movie stars, and share food and drinks."

CAIFFA is not planning to transform the Rheem Theater into a new permanent home for its film festival. "It is our desire to continue to present the Film Festival in Orinda, while in Moraga we will run the theater with the community and offer a wide variety of movies," says CAIFFA's Beau Behan, who will head the Rheem Theater effort.

"We hated to see that place close," adds Zemrak, "that's why we got in touch with the owner, Mike Puri, and he was very accommodating." The plan is to play blockbuster movies to continue to please families, with titles such as *Toy Story 3*, *Shrek Ever After*, or *The Karate Kid*. They will also offer new releases of independent films such as *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *Precious*, *Crazy Heart* and *The Messenger*. And that is only part of what "The New Rheem Theater" hopes to become.

"We will conduct an outreach program with the community," says Zemrak, "we will be contacting local groups and inviting everyone to join." From these discussions should come preferences for special programs and series that will be tailored to Lamorinda's needs. Ideas already proposed include a silent film program, an international film series, musicals, educational features, and children's matinees. CAIFFA hopes to partner with community organizations to support their ideas and programming. Somewhere down the road the organization may even reopen the theater's kitchen and transform one of the smaller theaters into a lounge area, offering a wine bar.

CAIFFA members have started to meet with the community. Edy Schwartz, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Council Member Howard Harpham and Carol Haag, of the Lamorinda Wine Growers Association, have been very involved in the grass roots effort to save the theater; they are very hopeful about the new deal. "We are thrilled that they could move this quickly and we are looking forward to this bright new future," said Haag. She went with Harpham to visit "The Lark," a historical community theater in Larkspur, and discussed the business model with the manager there.

"The visit was very interesting. The Lark has been very successful for six years in Larkspur," said Harpham, "but there are some significant differences between the two theaters." The organization that runs the theater in Larkspur also owns it, so investors are not hesitant to commit for the long term. And, although most anticipate that the Lamorinda community will initially be enthusiastic about the theater's new direction, its success will depend on the community's continued support.

"We are doing this to support the arts and we know that the Lamorinda community will rally around the project," says Behan, "we are committed for the long term and simply want to give back." The Rheem Theater's soft opening will be on June 25th and will feature the Adam Sandler comedy, *Grown Ups*.

For more information and updates, go to thenewrheemtheater.com. Behan is available for those who wish to share ideas and/or get involved - he can be reached at Beau@caiff.org.



Gayle Uilkema (left), Contra Costa County Board Supervisor, Orinda Mayor Tom McCormick, and Orinda Council member Amy Worth listened as U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) presented her agenda for job creation and transportation while touring the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore project on Thursday, June 3rd. The \$420 million project received \$197.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Photo Ohlen Alexander