

OAKLAND BUSINESS & Finance

Steve Allen to keynote retirement forum

Planning for retirement should be fun. That's why the Society of Lifetime Planning will feature humorist, musician and writer Steve Allen as keynote at a retirement seminar Oct. 7 at the Northfield Hilton, 5500 Crooks Road, Troy.

In addition to Allen's talk about why laughter really is the best medicine, the seminar will deal with making the most of retirement, how women alone can take control of their future, and estate and tax planning issues.

The half-day seminar will begin at 8:45 a.m. and conclude at 12:30 p.m.

Seating is open to anyone interested, at no cost. Tickets may be obtained by calling the Society at (810) 952-1744.

"Many people spend more time planning their vacations than they do their retirement," said Larry Slobotsky, director of the Society. "They're reluctant to think about retirement because they're fearful."

Fear of doing the wrong thing, fear of not having sufficient resources, and fear of complicated financial arrangements cause people to put off planning, Slobotsky explained.

"But people soon discover that planning can be a fun, learning experience, once they overcome their anxiety," Slobotsky said. "Planning can create vistas they didn't know existed."

He stressed that planning for retirement is a lifetime process, not an event,

particularly as the promise of long-term employment with one company and company-funded retirement plans diminish.

There are few role models for retirement, he said, and that's where the Society for Lifetime Planning comes in: providing

information and financial direction.

"People about to retire want to be okay — to be able to maintain their current standard of living — and that means helping them consider a variety of options often more important than money," he said.

Where one will live, how one will spend one's time, and how retirement affects relationships with spouses and friends are some of the issues on which the Society focuses.

"We're also an information source," he said. "People want to know how to

find an attorney or how to get care for an aged parent, and we can help."

In addition, the Society provides special retirement information programs for women, recognizing that nearly two out of three women older than 60 live alone.

The Society, he said, is an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people past 60.

Retirement can be anything they want it to be, he said. "Our clients are the architects, and we're the builders who help them realize their dreams. It's a dynamic team approach which works."

Card offers novel way to celebrate your birthday

By LAURIE HUMPHREY
STAFF WRITER

What's better than a free birthday cake or a free birthday meal?

Both the cake and meal, says Franklin resident Susan Brookes, president of Second Chance Novelty. To accompany the cake and meal, Brookes offers a variety of popular products and services like dry-cleaning, a carwash, flowers, tanning, printing and video rentals.

The former Livonia resident doesn't own each retail outlet that honors a patron's birthday, but she has worked out an agreement so that patrons who visit certain places on their birthday receive a complimentary gift. The price for all these gifts is \$4.95, the price of her birthday card.

"I was inspired to start the company by the fact that it was always fun to get a free carwash on my birthday," she said, "and I thought how great it would be to get free things all day."

"Most people think it's a great idea," said Brookes, about the companies she has solicited for her company's \$4.95 birthday card. "The companies don't pay anything, so

they get free publicity, and the people who accompany the birthday person (to get their free items) are usually paying customers."

Brookes won over more than 20 businesses in Oakland and Wayne counties for her first print run of 10,000 cards. Supporting businesses had their names, locations and birthday items printed on the inside flap of all 10,000 cards.

"People who are buying the cards also think it's a great idea," said Brookes, who emphasized a card was needed to receive the items. "People can spend all day getting free things and the companies will vary (from print run to print run)."

Brookes has a waiting list of area businesses who heard about her card and want to participate in the next print run. She anticipates the new card, expected out in three months, will contain these companies as well as a handful of the companies on her first card.

While card shoppers can pick up the Second Chance Novelty card at businesses in West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills and Southfield, the card is also available through chil-

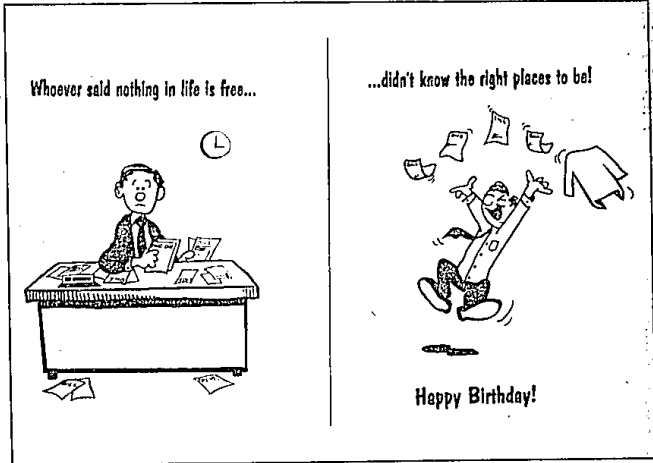
dren's fund-raisers. "We're going to be doing a lot of school fund-raisers," she said. "For every (\$4.95) card they sell, the school gets \$2."

With no background in greeting cards or business, Brookes admits that creating Second Chance Novelty was "overwhelming sometimes" but says she was lucky enough to find people to help her. The year-old business, run out of her home, employs three people other than herself.

Despite humble beginnings, Brookes has big dreams. "I want to keep on expanding and get more help as I expand."

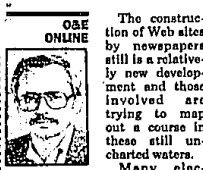
Brookes is already taking her first steps in the direction of expansion as she prepares to debut a children's birthday card, complete with free birthday gifts for children 12 and younger. She's looking to expand her business connections into western Wayne County. "We are planning to (involve) the business down in Plymouth, Canton Township area."

For information on getting your business included on the card, on having the card sold at a fund-raiser, or on where to buy the card, call Brookes at (810) 626-1872.



Innovations: Pictured are the front and inside card designs for birthday cards sold by Second Chance Novelty. Also on the inside of the card are names of businesses that give away birthday gifts to patrons. Proof of your birthdate is required.

World Wide Web, Internet boast red-hot activity



EMORY DANIELS

The construction of Web sites by newspapers, on-line columnists, and advertising Web pages. There is a recent trend, especially among daily newspapers, to tie in their Web sites to special events in their circulation area.

When the Battle Creek Enquirer, for instance, launched its first Web site, it was an informational page for the annual International Hot Air Balloon Festival in that city. The Indianapolis Star and the Indianapolis News used a Web site (SpeedNet) on the Indianapolis 500 and other major brickyard races as its first venture

onto the World Wide Web.

Now the Cleveland Plain Dealer is doing the same. A major event Labor Day weekend in the Midwest was the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland on Friday, Sept. 1. But even before the doors were open, the Plain Dealer launched its Web site to allow rock and roll fans to "tour" the new museum. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame can be accessed with any Web browser at <http://www.rockhall.com>.

"We are excited about the opportunity to provide information about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum over the World Wide Web," said Alex Machaske, Plain Dealer president and publisher. "This will not only show the world Cleveland's newest first-class museum, but also all the wonderful things to do when they visit here."

The Web site features a "walking tour" of the museum plus information about each of the Rock Hall's industries and a sample of their songs. Also included is a list of "The 500 Songs that Shaped

Rock and Roll," as selected by the Hall staff. Various contests will be offered as well.

Rock and roll fans who visit www.rockhall.com can also communicate with the Rock Hall and get information. The Web site offers opportunities to share rock music memories, and fans can offer their own selections of what songs should be on the "top 500" list.

The Web site also offers details on Cleveland as a destination for tourists, including how to get to the city and what to do after arriving. Users will find a guide to hotels, restaurants and museums, shopping and cultural events. A five-day weather forecast for greater Cleveland on the site is updated daily.

I-net growth

We have not looked at the growth of the Internet since the first of the year. We can expect, of course, that it is still growing. But how it grows is fascinating. In early August Mark Lottor of Network Wizards in Menlo Park, Calif., released the latest results

from the Internet's most basic and longest continuing measurement of its size — the Domain Survey. At about the same time, Texas Internet Consulting in Austin released its latest report of Matrix News.

The Domain Survey attempts to discover every announced host on the Internet by doing a complete search of the Domain Name System (DNS). The results were gathered in late July 1995 and announced on the Web in early August at <http://www.tic.com/>. John Quarterman of Matrix News further analyzes the three-letter global domains and offers insight on I-net growth internationally. The latest report can be found at <http://www.tic.com/> or at <http://www.mids.org/>.

A person can reasonably argue that the Internet defies measurement because it is a distributed aggregation of more than 50,000 autonomous networks. But DNS surveys have been conducted for years and do provide a basis for relative comparisons. A "host" in Internet lingo is a computer that is connected to and directly

reachable as part of the Internet via a unique address.

Some of the highlights of the Lotus/Quarterman findings are:

- There is a new total of 6.6 million Internet computer hosts.
- The Internet is experiencing a strong exponential growth rate, but very slightly decreased. At the average rate of increase over the past 14 quarters, the total projected hosts at the end of the decade is 101 million.
- There are .com domains in 54 countries, .net domains in 57 countries, .org domains in 27 countries including most of the United Nations agencies, and .edu domains in 16 countries.
- There are 1,142 .com domains encompassing 30,484 hosts in Canada, and 241 .com domains encompassing 13,260 hosts in the United Kingdom.
- Hosts in 106 country domains were counted, an increase in 18 countries.
- The global commercial domain .com continues not only to be the largest but continues to grow at a rapid rate.
- Germany and Japan are exhib-

iting very rapid growth rates among industrialized countries.

■ In absolute terms, the U.S. had the largest jump, of about 24 percent.

■ Strong Russian Federation growth continues at a 68 percent half-year rate.

■ Countries appearing for the first time in the counts are Antigua, Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Nepal, Monaco, Macedonia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Lebanon.

You can direct questions to Emory Daniels by E-mail at emory@oonline.com; at voice mail at 953-2047, then dial 1910; or fax at 951-7279. To sign up for O&E On-Line, dial (313) 691-0903, at "log-in" prompt type "new" and at "Key," prompt type OLGNY2. Past columns may be accessed on-line at <http://oonline.com/tide/mark/emory/dar-chive.html>

BUSINESS MARKETPLACE

Marketplace features a glimpse of Oakland County business news and notes, including corporate name changes, new products, new store or office openings, new affiliations, new positions, mergers, acquisitions and new ways of doing business.
Write: *Business Marketplace, Eclectic Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.* Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.

TOP SUPPLIER
Manchester Plastics in Troy received a 1994 Worldwide Supplier of the Year Award from General Motors Corp. for the third consecutive year.
The quality supplier award recognized Manchester for excellence in quality, service and price. The company manufactures interior panel systems and components, door systems, garnish systems and console assemblies at

seven divisions in the United States and Canada.

SECRETARIES MEET
The Oakland County chapter of Professional Secretaries International will hold its monthly dinner meeting, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 13, at Fox and Hounds Restaurant, 1560 Woodward, Bloomfield Hills. The cost is \$18.

Susan Ehrenholz of Office Management Consultants, Troy, will discuss, "Finding the Job You Really Want."
For reservations, call (810) 268-0774.

JOINS FIRM
Sarah P. Waterman has joined the law firm Thruswell, Cheyette & Welser at 1000 Town Center, Suite 500, Southfield. The phone number is (810) 948-0000.

FUND-RAISER
Gordon & Co., an accounting

and management consulting firm in Troy, is sponsoring two fundraisers for Make-A-Wish Foundation of Michigan, which fills the wishes of children ages 3-17 who suffer from life-threatening illnesses.

Gordon & Co.'s fourth annual bowl-a-thon for Make-A-Wish is Sunday, Oct. 15. A company-wide casual dress day will be Monday, Oct. 9.

To participate in the fund-raiser, call Helen Sultana-Kelly at Gordon & Co., (810) 952-0200.

IN TRANSITION?
ACTION, a support group for people in career transition, meets in Orchard United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills.
Jim Frenck will discuss "Success Is a Journey, Not a Destination" at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 18. The fee is free.
For information, call the church (810) 629-3630.

PROTECT RIGHTS
The National Lawyers Guild Detroit Chapter will present a seminar on employment law, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23, at the Kingsley Inn, 1475 N. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills.
"Protecting Your Rights: A Seminar for Employees" covers wrongful discharge, sexual harassment, disability rights, combating age or sex discrimination, workers' compensation, and fighting intimidation from your employer without getting fired.

Howard Simon, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan, will talk about affirmative action.
Advanced registration is \$50 and includes lunch and materials. To register, call the National Lawyers Guild (313) 963-0843.

NETWORKING
The Oakland County Chamber, based in Bloomfield Hills, will

sponsor Business Network, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 19, at Mountain Jack's, 2252 S. Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills. Admission is free for Oakland County Chamber members and their guests.

Business Network offers business people an opportunity to make professional contacts in a relaxed atmosphere. The event's co-sponsors are T&C Federal Credit Union and Anthony M. France, editorial director for Southfield-based WJBK (Channel 2).

For reservations, call the chamber, (810) 456-8600.

EXPANDED FACILITIES
Southfield-based Contract Interiors has expanded its storage/warehousing facilities by buying a 400,000-square-foot building in Detroit. Since 1986, the office furniture dealer has expanded three times, buying more than 181,000

square feet of warehouse space in Detroit.

The firm said its latest expansion is due to increased business volume and expanded service. Contract Interiors recently opened Office Furniture Outlet in Detroit, which discounts selected new and used office furniture. Merchandise is sold "as is" or refurbished to meet customer needs, the company said.

Contract Interiors also has entered new markets areas, including Ohio. The firm also acquired McManus/Trupp Co. in Toledo, and Evans Office Equipment in Findlay and Lima, Ohio.

Contract Interiors also has earned supplier awards from several customers, including Ford Motor Co., Stencils, Kelly Service and Michigan National Bank.

— compiled by
Janice Tigar-Kramer