

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Erika Erlenbach

Happy New Year!! Whew, we all made it through the busy holiday season and are hitting the ground running. Our board has seen some changes, with the addition of two new board members and a "changing of the guard" with respect to the existing board members. There is a lot of energy and desire to serve this group! 2012 promises to be quite a year for EWLKN. With a new meeting format for half our meetings, and more community involvement and business networking, we can look forward to closer bonds with our fellow members.

We listened to you with regard to your survey responses and we truly appreciate your feedback. Based on your responses, we will be actively marketing for new members and encouraging member-to-member support, both business and personal. You will see improvements to our website and newsletter, and more activity on LinkedIn and Facebook. On that note, we are asking that you all send your Bio with a headshot and three or four sentences about you and your business to Dana Jordan, in order to ensure we have the most updated information for the website on you and your business.

The new year is about making resolutions and I'm asking you all to make a resolution this year as well. Resolve to be more involved with EWLKN through sitting on a committee, participating in some of our community, charity and outreach events and attending our regular meetings, networking lunches and socials. This group is what WE make it. Let's make it the most amazing, premiere group for professional women that others would fight to be in!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

RECURRING MONTHLY MEETINGS:

- **Second Wednesday of the Month – 8 a.m.**
Executive Exchange – Alton's Kitchen, Cornelius
- **Third Wednesday of the Month – 4 p.m.**
Board Meeting – McIntosh Law Firm, Davidson
- **Fourth Wednesday of the Month – 8 a.m.**
Member/Guest Meeting w/Speaker – Alton's Kitchen

UPCOMING MEETING INFORMATION:

JANUARY 11 – EXECUTIVE EXCHANGE (NEW IN 2012!)

2012 brings a new format for the second Wednesday of the month meetings. Thanks to much feedback from the group, members requested more meeting time to learn about each other and help each other reach goals and overcome obstacles that may challenge us both personally and professionally. Therefore, this new structure will allow for a member roundtable, in lieu of a speaker, the first meeting of the month, to address various topics brought to the group from the membership. We look forward to sharing this exciting new format with you at our kickoff meeting in 2012.

Breakfast Sponsor: Marilyn Celenza, EWLKN Member and Owner of Good Clean Fun, LLC.

JANUARY 25 – SPEAKER: DR. CHIA-LI CHIEN

Topic: Navigating Through Today's Turbulent Business Waters - Understanding the top three mistakes entrepreneurs must avoid and steps to navigate through a turbulent economy.

Breakfast Sponsor: TBD. If you are interested in being a Breakfast Sponsor in 2012, please contact Dana Jordan!

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We are currently accepting submissions for future Newsletters. If you have a recipe, professional tips or an article to share, please forward to:
executivewomenoflkn@gmail.com

MONTHLY ARTICLE

LITTLE WAYS YOU MIGHT IMPROVE YOUR FINANCIAL LIFE

Some things to think about this year – and every year.

Provided by Cristen Morgan, Financial Advisor/AAMS

This is the year. You can make 2012 the year you alter your financial life for a better financial future. Let's look at some steps you might think of taking with the goal of financial freedom in mind.

No, we're not talking about those ridiculously obvious steps the usual articles recommend, like "write your goals down" and "set a budget". Let's go past the clichés and get into the real issues.

Look at your income source, your expenses and your debt. How do you earn income? If you earn it from one source, is there effectively a ceiling on it, or is there real potential for your income to rise in the next few years? Now look at your core living expenses, the ones you can't avoid (such as a mortgage payment, car payment, etc.). Can any core expenses be reduced? Investing aside, you position yourself to gain ground financially when income rises, debt diminishes and expenses stay (relatively) the same.

Maybe you should pay your debt first, maybe not. If you are a business owner or a professional, for example, you'll likely always have some debt. Your ultimate goal should be to build wealth – and you can plan to build wealth and reduce debt at the same time.

Some debt may be considered "good" debt. A debt may be "good" if it brings you income. For example; if you buy a rental property, you're paying a mortgage, but that's considered a "good" debt because you're getting passive income from the rent payments and there is the possibility the property may increase in value. Credit cards are usually considered "bad" debts because of the nature of items that credit cards are used to purchase.

If you'll be carrying a debt for a while, put it to a test. Weigh the interest rate on that specific debt against your potential income growth rate and your potential investment returns over the term of the debt. If the interest rate on that debt looks like it will outpace your income growth and investment returns, then you should really think about paying that debt down fast, because you can't afford that interest rate.

Of course, paying off your debts, paying down balances and restricting new debts all works toward improving your FICO score, another tool you can use in pursuit of your financial goals.

Implement or refine an investment strategy. You should try not to refrain from investing, even when the bears are out. You're not going to retire on the relatively small elective deferrals from your paycheck; you may retire on the growth or interest that those accumulated assets earn over time compounded over many years. Consistent investing, this year and in years to come, has the potential to help you improve your financial life. As a reminder, investing involves risks and the potential for your assets to lose value.

Manage the money you make on your way to meeting your financial goals.

If you simply accumulate assets, you may have money just sitting there open to different types of risk – inflation risk, market risk, even legal risks.

Don't neglect the risk management strategy that could be instrumental in helping you retain any wealth. Your after-tax return may be more important than your investment return, so risk management should be part of your overall financial picture.

You may want to request assistance from a financial professional for the wealth you are growing. A financial professional will help to educate you about the principles of wealth building. You can draw on that professional knowledge and assistance this year – and for years to come.

Cristen Morgan is a member of Executive Women of LKN and Owner of Lake Norman Financial Group, Inc. in Cornelius. Cristen is a Registered Representative with Transamerica Financial Advisors and can be reached @ 704-439-1370.

EMPLOYEE WANT-AD TRANSLATIONS

Energetic self-starter: You'll be working on commission.

Entry level position: We will pay you the lowest wages allowed by law.

Experience required: We do not know the first thing about any of this.

Fast learner: You will get no training from us.

Flexible work hours: You will frequently work long overtime hours.

Good organizational skills: You'll be handling the filing.

Make an investment in you future: This is a franchise or a pyramid scheme.

Management training position: You'll be a salesperson with a wide territory.

Much client contact: You handle the phone or make "cold calls" on clients.

Must be able to lift 50 pounds: We offer no health insurance or chiropractors.

Opportunity of a lifetime: You will not find a lower salary for so much work.

Planning and coordination: You book the bosses travel arrangements.

Quick problem solver: You will work on projects months behind schedule already.

Strong communication skills: You will write tons of documentation and letters.

IN THE NEWS...

Erika Erlenbach, an attorney with McIntosh Law Firm in Davidson, was recently recognized with two prestigious awards. *NC Lawyers Weekly* has named Erika as one of its **2011 Emerging Legal Leaders** and *Business Leader Magazine* has honored Erika as a recipient of one of its **2011 Women Extraordinaire awards**. Congratulations Erika!

Cristen Morgan, Owner of Lake Norman Financial Group in Cornelius, was recently inducted into the **Leaders Recognition Society of WIFS** (Women in Insurance and Financial Services). This national award recognizes top producers in the Financial Industry, where Cristen was honored in the top quartile of female producers for 2011. Congratulations Cristen!

If you have any news, business or personal, you would like to share with us, please e-mail it to executivewomenoflkn@gmail.com

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**Lisa Squatriglia, Vice-President
Summit Insurance Group, Inc.**
www.sumins.com 704.659.2141



Lisa has been an Executive Woman of LKN since 2009.

What as the best gift someone ever gave you? **God gave me a wonderful husband and two awesome kids.**

What is your favorite quote? **No favorites but like:**

Women are like phones. They like to be held, talked to and touched often. But push the wrong buttons and you're a\$\$ is disconnected.

If you could fix one thing in society, what would it be? **Morales!**

What do you think about right before falling asleep? **I usually say my prayers and fall asleep**

What is one thing that no one knows about you? **I am a softy at heart and cry at everything.**

What is your favorite amusement park ride? **Roller Coaster**

What the best band of all time? **Led Zeppelin**

Would you rather have a million dollars or true love? **I already have true love so I'll take the million**

Are you a morning or night person? **Morning, I love to get up when the world is not up running around yet and have a cup of coffee and read the paper. Unfortunately, I only get to enjoy that on the weekends.**

What is your preferred ice cream? **Don't really like it, would rather have a crunchy chocolate chip cookie.**

What is your favorite flower? **Star Gazer Lilly**

Who would you call for bail money? **Rob**

What is the one thing you like about being an adult? **Not having to do what parents say but get to listen to their advice and decide on my own.**

Where is your bloodline originally from? **Greek**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Find them at the next meeting and say "Hello!"

Hope Devall – Serenity Now Massage Therapy

Jennifer Stoops – Park Avenue Properties

Kelli Swick – Total Nutrition Technology

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

AS WE CONTINUE TO GROW OUR GROUP IN THE LAKE NORMAN COMMUNITY, WE WILL BE CONTACTING YOU FOR VARIOUS THINGS IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS. **PLEASE HELP US BY RESPONDING IN A TIMELY MANNER TO THESE REQUESTS** SO WE MAY BEST HELP YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS BE PROMINENTLY AND APPROPRIATELY RECOGNIZED THROUGH YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH **EWLKN!**

NEW AND IMPROVED: WEBSITE, NEWSLETTER, FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN & MORE!

QUARTERLY RECIPE

Spicy White Bean and Chicken Chili

Difficulty Level: Super Easy

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 tblsp. oil
- 1.5 lbs of boneless, skinless chicken, cubed
- 1 package of white chicken chili seasoning mix (McCormicks or Knorr's)
- 1 can (16 oz.) of white beans, undrained
- 1 cup of water
- 1 can (14oz) of seasoned diced tomatoes or Rotel, drained (optional)
- Dash of chili powder (optional)

Directions:

Heat oil in a large skillet and add cubed chicken. Cook and stir 3-5 minutes until no longer pink. Stir in remaining ingredients, reduce heat, simmer/stir for 10 minutes. Enjoy!

Recommended Wine Pairing – Dry Reisling

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Do You Know Any Women That May Be A Good Fit For Our Group? If so, we are now accepting applications. Please feel free to contact the Board to discuss guest eligibility and also please invite them to our 4th Wednesday of the Month meeting.

Decision maker ~ Professional accomplishments ~ Involved in the community ~ Has interests/hobbies outside of business ~ Business is not over-represented in group ~ Ambitious goals personally, professionally and for group ~ Professional image ~ Exhibits professional integrity
Has professional networking experience

The Mission of Executive Women of Lake Norman is to encourage and facilitate the growth, performance and visibility of professional women in the Lake Norman area by creating opportunities to foster relationships through support, mentoring and innovative programs.

Our 2012 Board

Erika Erlenbach, President (McIntosh Law Firm)
Cristen Morgan, Vice-President (Lake Norman Financial Group, Inc.)
Denise Williams, Secretary/Treasurer (People's Bank)
Nicole Fillion-Ashline, Speaker and Event Coordinator (The U-Center)
Kathy Holden, Membership Director (Home Helpers)
Marilyn Celenza, Membership Director (Good Clean Fun, LLC.)

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