

BUSINESS

Business happenings

CALABASAS

Speech champion will address women

Sean Smith, winner of the 2013 North America's Greatest Speaker competition, will discuss "How to Captivate Your Crowd" at an eWomenNetwork event from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Calabasas Country Club, 4515 Park Entrada. Doors open at 11 a.m.

Cost is \$45 for members and \$55 for others. Exhibitor fees are \$95 and \$75 for eWomenNetwork members.

For more information, contact Carrie Sharpshair at 532-2249 or carriesharshair@ewomennetwork.com.:

CAMARILLO

Seminar to discuss workplace bullying

The Professionals In Human Resources Association will present "Taking the Bully by the Horns:

Understanding and Preventing Workplace Bullying" from 7:30-9:30 a.m. Thursday at Spanish Hills Country Club, 999 Crestview Ave.

For more information, visit <http://pihra.org> or call Jeanne Mays at 497-8696.

THOUSAND OAKS

Workshop to cover friends as partners

The Ventura BioCenter will host "Partnership Pitfalls: Would Your Best Friend Make a Good Business Partner?" from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday at 1176 Tourmaline Drive.

The speaker will be attorney Panda Kroll, who has litigated business disputes for over a decade and is adjunct faculty member at the Martin V. Smith School of Business and Economics at CSU Channel Islands.

Admission is free. Food and drink will be provided. To register, email Paul Meyer at paul.meyer@techcxo.com.

For more information, visit <http://venturabiocenter.com>.

Female executives to have first session

Ventura Nafe Network will launch at noon Wednesday at Mimi's Cafe, 400 N. Moorpark Road, Thousand Oaks.

The National Association for Female Executives will meet at noon the third Wednesday of each month at noon. The meetings will feature networking and speakers.

The cost to attend is \$10 — guests pay \$15 — plus cost of lunch. Membership is \$39 per year.

For more information, call Sheryl Tash at 794-4005. The website is <http://www.nafe.com>.

To share news about your company or business-related organization, email dajustesen@vcstar.com. If there is an event involved, please email the information at least three weeks in advance.

New website sheds light on health professionals' perks

By Matthew Perrone
Associated Press

WASHINGTON—When many of us have a medical appointment we're concerned about our finances: how much will we owe out-of-pocket? What's our co-pay? But next time, you may also want to ask your doctors about their financial situation.

That's because nearly 95 percent of U.S. physicians accept gifts, meals, payments, travel and other services from companies that make the drugs and medical products they prescribe, according to the New England Journal of Medicine. This has been a common practice for decades and studies show it affects doctors' prescribing decisions. But for the first time, patients will soon be able draw back the curtain.

Starting in September the federal government will make available an exhaustive online database of payments to U.S. physicians and hospitals, under a section of the health care overhaul passed in 2010. The measure, known as the Sunshine Act, requires most makers of drugs and medical supplies to report all payments, gifts and other services worth \$10 or more that they provide to health

professionals.

"I think every patient out there should know who actually is paying their doctor," said Paul Thacker, a fellow at Harvard University's Safra Center for Ethics. "The one thing we know is that money changes behavior and people tend to respond to who is giving them money."

As a Senate staffer, Thacker helped craft the disclosure rules that are designed to lay bare the industry practice of "detailing," in which company sales people court doctors with everything from pens and mugs to lucrative speaking engagements. Pharmaceutical companies spend an estimated \$20.4 billion on these activities each year and then track doctors' prescribing patterns to gauge the return on their investment.

Using a federal website, patients will be able to search most payments made to their health care provider, from \$20 lunch bills to hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting fees. Some of this information has already come to light, mainly due to legal settlements that required drugmakers to disclose the information.

Websites like Dollars for Docs, from the nonprofit

journalism group ProPublica, pool this data together and enable users to search doctors by name to see what payments they've received. The database covers 15 pharmaceutical companies, including Pfizer Inc. and Johnsons & Johnson, and begins with payments made in 2009.

But how is a layperson to make sense of it all? And how does one separate common medical practice from truly questionable activity?

Dr. Leana Wen of the George Washington University says she simply groups all payments into two categories: research and everything else.

Most studies on new drugs and devices are funded by companies that partner with physicians to enroll patients and track their response to the treatment. Wen and others say these partnerships are a necessary part of clinical research and are common at leading medical centers. But she says virtually all other payments are problematic.

"If someone gets significant consulting fees or speaking fees, I would be more concerned about that because they are doing something that has been shown in studies to change their prescribing habits," said Wen.

Business briefs

CALABASAS

Water group makes panel appointment

The Association of California Water Agencies has appointed Barry Steinhardt, a member of the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District board of directors, vice chair of its Business Development Committee.

Steinhardt lives in Agoura Hills.

The association is a statewide organization with over 400 member agencies that helps assure reliable drinking water supplies for Californians.

OXNARD

Reuters ranks city 35th on LGBT list

Oxnard has been ranked No. 35 on a list of U.S. cities most friendly to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender travelers that was recently released by Reuters.com.

Los Angeles was ranked No. 1.

For visitor information, call 800-269-6273 or visit <http://www.visitoxnard.com>.

SIMI VALLEY

Realtors group picks president for 2016

Joel Reznick was elected future president of The Conejo Simi Moorpark Association of Realtors. Reznick, 35, will succeed JoAnn Levine and will begin his term in 2016.

Reznick is a licensed real estate broker and has been selling real estate in the Conejo Valley for more than 12 years.

Reznick is one of the youngest realtors to be awarded Realtor of the Year. Reznick is the founding chairman of the Young Professionals Network, a committee geared toward young real estate professionals

working toward positions of leadership.

The association is a member service organization of professionals in real estate. For more information about Reznick and the association, call 857-3707 or visit <http://www.csmar.com>.

VENTURA

Ferguson Case hires tax attorney

Lane Lopez has joined Ferguson Case Orr Patterson LLP to practice tax law, estate planning and administration, business law, real property law and related litigation.

A Ventura County native, Lopez received his bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in Japanese from Duke University. He received his law degree and Master of Laws degree in tax from Loyola Law School.

Before joining Ferguson Case, he was a senior associate at Slater Cosme PC in Pasadena.

Lopez is admitted to practice before all state courts in California, as well as the U.S. District Court for the Southern, Central, Eastern and Northern Districts of California. Lopez also represents taxpayers before the United States Tax Court.

For more information, visit <http://www.fcoplax.com> or call 659-6800. Lopez may be reached at llopez@fcoplax.com.

VENTURA COUNTY

County Commerce names assistant VP

Monica Carter has been promoted to assistant vice president of County Commerce Bank.

Carter joined the bank in 2012 and is operations officer in the Camarillo branch.

County Commerce Bank was founded by local professionals and

business leaders in Ventura County. For more information, visit <http://www.CountyCommerceBank.com>.

VENTURA COUNTY

3 at collaborative receive certificates

The Economic Development Collaborative — Ventura County's Small Business Development Center's director, Ray Bowman, loan officer, Marvin Boateng, and program manager, Jason Ham, completed a Six Sigma training course.

After the 15-week program, the three received their Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Level 1 certification.

Developed by Motorola in 1986, Six Sigma is a program in which inefficient procedures in companies are eliminated and replaced with those providing better performance.

For more information about the collaborative, visit <http://www.edc-vc.com>.

St. John's receives innovation honor

Avatar Solutions, a provider of patient, employee and physician surveys, gave St. John's hospitals in Oxnard and Camarillo the Avatar Solutions' Silver Innovation Award. Representatives from St. John's accepted the award May 27.

The award evaluates improvement, scope of change, degree of innovation, ability to spread ideas externally and barriers overcome.

St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard and St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital in Camarillo, members of Dignity Health, comprise the largest acute health care organization in Ventura County. For more information, visit <http://www.stjohnshealth.org>.

To share news about your company or business-related organization, email dajustesen@vcstar.com. If there is an event involved, please email the information at least three weeks in advance.

Company spotlight



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Attorneys Monte Widders (front row left) and J. Roger Myers (front row right) helped found the law firm in the early 1970s. Current partners are (back row from left) Erik Feingold, Dennis Neil Jones, Kelton Lee Gibson, Steven Lee and Douglas Bordner.

Company Spotlight: Myers, Widders, Gibson, Jones & Feingold LLP

Name of partners: Kelton Lee Gibson, Dennis Neil Jones, Erik Feingold, Steven Lee and Douglas Bordner

Product or service: Legal services

Address: 5425 Everglades St., Ventura (Other office locations include Thousand Oaks.)

Date established: 1971

Hours open: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays

Telephone: 644-7188

Email: sbalchum@mw-gjlaw.com

Website: <http://www.mwgjlaw.com>

Number of employees: 16 attorneys and 10 support staff

Person answering this: J. Roger Myers

What prompted you to start your own business?:

I always knew I wanted to study law. My first job out of law school was working in the Ventura County District Attorney's Office. One of my colleagues, Omer L. Rains, left to start a private practice. In 1971, he asked me to join him, and we founded the law firm Rains & Myers. At first, we handled primarily criminal defense and divorce cases, as well as civil litigation and business matters.

What is your educational and career background?: In college, I played football at the University of Nebraska, where I studied political science and English; my goal always was to study law. After graduating, I joined the Marine Corp as an officer. After serving in Vietnam. I left active duty in July 1966 and started law school at UC Hastings College of Law one month later. I graduated with my juris doctor in 1969 and landed

my first job at the Ventura County District Attorney's Office.

How much research did you do before starting your business?: Since Omer Rains approached me and initiated the formation of Rains & Myers, I didn't have to do much research. I had experience at the DA's office and from running his own private practice for a few years.

What were the most helpful sources, including websites?: Our most helpful sources were other attorneys and judges, who were kind enough to answer our questions. At the time, there were only 300 lawyers in Ventura County. Now there are more than 2,000, so the competition was much different.

When were you the most discouraged?: It is always challenging when you lose a client, but of course, business often goes in waves. It was actually quite challenging between 1972-1974. At that time, Monte Widders had joined the firm and was working with us about half time, since he was still maintaining his private practice in Santa Barbara. Both Rains and Widders were campaigning — Rains for state Senate and Widders for Carpinteria City Council — so I was handling pretty much all the business in the office myself. After Rains was elected, he left the firm and, in 1974, we changed the name to Myers & Widders. After that, the firm started growing.

What company or individual do you admire?: When we were getting started, I remember specifically admiring and looking to Don Benton and Bill Hair for inspiration and help. Benton

is one of the partners of Benton, Orr, Duval & Buckingham — Ventura County's oldest law firm. Hair helped found Nordman, Cormany, Hair & Compton, which used to be the largest law firm in the region. Both are great men and great attorneys.

What will make your business stand out from competitors?: We are now, after 43 years, an established full-service law firm. Our team of 16 lawyers are all committed to providing top caliber and effective legal representation through ethical practices while serving our community. In every aspect of the legal work we perform — counseling, transactional work or litigation — our goal is to provide the best services while keeping our clients' budgets and best interests in mind.

Who is your target client base?: Anybody in need of legal assistance, from individuals up to multinational corporations. Our team has proved track records of handling every stage of legal representation from forming a business to the final sale and everything in between. Our multi-jurisdictional offices serve individuals and businesses in Southern California, the Central Coast, Mammoth Lakes and Nevada. We are qualified to handle insurance cases and litigation, including construction defect; personal injury; employment law; estate planning; homeowners association law; intellectual property; municipal law; real estate; construction law; collections; elder care; and class actions.

For more details or the questionnaire, email freelancer Maria Saint at mcsaint73@yahoo.com. Please put the word "Questionnaire" in the subject header.

E-BOOKS from 1E

Stars," I got readers' guides and other companions, but not the actual books.

Both services have selected titles from Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins and lots of smaller publishers, but other major U.S. publishers — Hachette, Macmillan and Penguin Random House — remain holdouts. And even when there's a deal with a publisher, newer books tend to be excluded.

Avid readers won't be bored, though. When I signed up, Scribd asked about the types of books I like. Oyster didn't but still made good recommendations based on what other subscribers are reading.

I quickly found about two dozen books between the two services. Each time I added a title, I got recommendations for more. I just

finished books on lobster populations and the Ben & Jerry's ice cream company. I'm now reading about Lance Armstrong and the doping scandal — another book I wouldn't have known about if it hadn't popped up on Scribd.

There are enough books to keep you busy for years. Oyster has more than 500,000 titles, while Scribd has more than 400,000.

THE APPS:

Neither Oyster nor Scribd works on dedicated e-readers such as Amazon's Kindle Paperwhite. Rather, you need a device that lets you install apps.

Both work on iPhones, iPads and Android devices, including Kindle Fire tablets. Oyster also works on Nook tablets, while Scribd has apps for Windows devices. Only Scribd lets you read on Web browsers on personal computers.

Apps for both services

offer features typical for e-books. You can start a book on one device and pick up where you left off on another, though I've often run into syncing problems. You can see where you are in a book, change text size and add notes. The options aren't as extensive as what I'm used to with Kindle, though.

Oyster lets you store up to 10 books per device to take with you on the road, while Scribd lets you save up to 20 books.

THE BARGAIN:

There are plenty of other ways to get e-books for free or for a set price. Check your local library for starters. If you have Amazon's \$99-a-year Prime membership, you can read an e-book for free each month if you also have a Kindle device or the upcoming Fire phone, though you're not offered everything that Amazon makes available for purchase.

