

# Trial attorney conference probes secrets of jury selection success

When the American Board of Trial Advocates meets today, March 10, some jury pool candidates in Santa Barbara County may be guaranteed a short stay at the courthouse.

The nationwide, invitation-only network of trial specialists is organizing a mock trial demonstration for the area legal community to be held at Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort. The event will feature a fictitious medical device and products liability case using actual potential jurors.

The jurors will be impaneled like a real jury. But unlike a real trial, attorneys will be able to glimpse into jurors' minds via a real-time video link from their deliberations. What's more, the case won't last any longer than the one-day conference.

The "Masters in Trial" event was coordinated by Richard Norman, of Ventura-based Norman, Dowler, Sawyer, Israel, Walker & Barton. Judge Henry J. Walsh of the Ventura County Superior Court was scheduled to preside over the event.

Other area attorneys planning to participate in the event included Alan R. Templeman of Oxnard-based Lowthorp, Richards, McMillan, Miller, Templeman, and Don A. Ernst of San Luis Obispo-based Ernst & Mattison, both of whom will participate on the plaintiff's team. Benjamin J. Engle, of Ventura-based Engle & Bride will be the defense coordinator.



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## LEGAL AFFAIRS

The case revolves around whether or not a car accident was caused by an allegedly defective insulin pump or the conduct of one of the drivers. According to a brochure for the event, "the skills presented are applicable to virtually every other civil case."

Participants paid \$380 to participate in the event, which offered attorneys a chance to earn continuing education credits required of lawyers.

### WAITING FOR HOFFMAN

The CPA Law Society of Santa Barbara will host an event on March 23 at La Cumbre Country Club on exit planning for small business owners.

Ross Hoffman, president and chief executive officer of Hoffman and Associates Financial and Estates Advisors, will be the keynote speaker. He specializes in counseling, analysis, design an implementation of family wealth plans and has 30 years of experience in the field.

Potential topics of discussion include business exit planning, tax strategies and the use of life insurance liquidity planning techniques.

Hoffman works with the Center for Fiduciary Studies, based at the University of Pittsburgh. Tickets cost \$35 for guests and \$25 for members of the CPA Law Society. Contact the society at cpalawsb@bpw.com for more information.

### COHEN NAMED PARTNER

On the verge of expanding its Tri-Counties presence, Los Angeles-based Weston, Benschhof, Rochefort, Rubalcava & MacCuish announced Jan. 16 that Thomas S. Cohen will be the new administrative partner for the firm's Westlake Village office. Cohen's practice primarily deals with land and development issues. He has an emphasis on permitting and entitlement in Ventura County and its cities.

Weston Benschhof also plans more expansion in Westlake Village. The firm has leased about 12,000 to 13,000 square feet in new office space, which will double the firm's size.

Meanwhile, Weston Benschhof is also planning to hire new personnel to fill that space. The first steps of that expansion were the recent hirings of Glenn Fuller and Sandy Smith.

### POACHING WITH IMPUNITY

Glenn Dickinson, an attorney with Oxnard-based Nordman Cormany Hair & Compton, spoke to Ventura County employers about the nuances of hiring employees from competitors, a March 1 press release from the firm's PR agency reported.

Dickinson was speaking to the West Ventura County Employers association about the issue. His practice focuses on business litigation, trademark and copy-

right law. He said in the release that companies need to focus on current laws regarding trade secrets to prevent use of that information that could prompt litigation.

### HATCH & PARENT PROMOTES FIVE

Santa Barbara-based Hatch & Parent announced Feb. 9 that it has promoted five attorneys. Lobbyist and attorney Chris Frahm was made a shareholder. Wes Strickland and Michael Fife became partners in the firm. The three are part of the firm's Water Practice Group. Steven A. Jung is now a senior counsel specializing in estate planning and Graham Lyons was named a senior associate with an emphasis on real estate and land use law.

### DINKIN BECOMES PARTNER

One of 11 attorneys promoted to partner by Los Angeles-based Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton, Jeffrey Dinkin, of the firm's Santa Barbara office, brings his experience in labor and employment practices.

Dinkin earned his law degree from the University of California, Hastings before developing his experience in labor issues for the public and private sectors. He has negotiated collective bargaining agreements for 20 years and also has experience with litigation and appeals at the state and federal levels.

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