

Up Front



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News & Analysis



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Accounting firms, ranked by number of professionals. **PAGE 8**

Valley Style



Mark Held wants his flower shop to feel like a garden. **PAGE 42**

Inn Checking In to Foreign Markets

HOSPITALITY: Marketing deal aims to find room for Stonehaus brand.

By **CHAMPAIGN WILLIAMS** Staff Reporter

Westlake Village Inn is hoping to find room for its winery and restaurant across the globe through a new marketing arrangement with a Hong Kong-based hotel network.

The inn, which has established a presence in the Conejo Valley for nearly a half-decade, last month announced that it had entered into a marketing partnership with **Cachet Hotel Group** to take its Stonehaus brand overseas.

“This is a strategic branding partnership to grow our presence in the Asian market and also to take the Stonehaus winery and the Stonehaus brand to an even greater international market and audience.”

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PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

Cheers: John Notter and Chris Cuiilty celebrate.

Fighting Fakes Has Real Stakes

INTERNET: Counterfeit Report curbs knockoffs' shelf life.

By **STEPHANIE HENKEL** Staff Reporter

E-commerce is a great market for counterfeiters, providing criminals with a direct route to deliver knockoff products to global consumers. However, one Camarillo company is taking on the booming counterfeit industry one product at a time, even when it means going up against corporate giants such as **eBay Inc.** and **Walmart Stores Inc.**

The **Counterfeit Report** is a website that investigates and exposes counterfeit products sold in stores and online. The company aims to

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PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

Wondering: Tenants and shoppers struggle to figure out Village at Westfield Topanga.

SHORT ON SALES?

Some shops, customers call new retail site a tough sell

By **CHAMPAIGN WILLIAMS** Staff Reporter

Nearly six months after the launch of the Village at Westfield Topanga, tenants are growing frustrated and shoppers are still scratching their heads about **Westfield Corp.**'s \$350 million outdoor shopping center.

Though the Village's two dozen restaurants and eateries are flourishing, visitors looking to shop are hard pressed to buy much from the center's limited approach to fashion retailing. Worse, some tenants are grumbling about a lack of foot traffic and sales.

The Village is supposed to act as a connector between Westfield's Topanga and Promenade malls, combining the three properties and totaling more than 300 tenants. But while the Topanga continues to thrive and the Promenade awaits a different fate, traffic is not flowing from one property to the next and some tenants say the traffic the outdoor mall does get is not translating into sales.

A beauty store employee who requested anonymity said that while restaurants and ser-

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SPECIAL REPORT FAMILY LAW



COUPLED: Attorney Don Zelinsky and his wife Cindy take a team approach to negotiate divorces for clients. They've learned how to keep their office and home lives separate to strengthen their own marriage.

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Cyberstalking Law Offers New Protections

Ron Supancic has practiced family law for more than 45 years. He is founder of the **Law Collaborative** in Woodland Hills, California's first collaborative law practice, and is an advocate for the state's recently passed cyberstalking law. He served as a lieutenant commander in the Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps and taught family law at USC. Supancic discusses the significance of the new cyberstalking law and how it will be utilized in family law.

RON SUPANCIC

Is a licensed balloon flight instructor.

Is a certified advanced scuba diver and has made dives at Chuuk Lagoon in Micronesia to inspect a sunken Japanese fleet from World War II.

Hung out with the Rat Pack entertainers at Romanoff's on Rodeo Drive in the 1960s.

Question: What constitutes cyberstalking?

Answer: Cyberstalking addresses all of the forms of electronic harassment that heretofore were not included with the traditional form of stalking. It includes frequent texts, emails, telephone calls, iPad notices and posts on Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media that intend to annoy, harass, upset, demean, diminish, harm, frighten, threaten or disrespect a particular person. In this case, it would pertain to a spouse, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a former spouse, a rejected lover, an estranged fiancé or between other family members.

Why is this new cyberstalking law significant?

The new statutes (Civil Code 1708.8 and Penal Code Sections 422 and 646.9) are sig-

'The courts are now beginning to entertain electronic evidence, but I would recommend also maintaining a hard copy.' — RON SUPANCIC

nificant because they add substantially to the ability of the courts to protect women and children and others by expanding the definition of domestic violence and spousal abuse. It also attaches penalties and fines for perpetrators engaged in the prohibited conduct.

How will this new law affect your business and family law in general?

In my family law practice, I frequently encounter high-conflict cases in which one party is intimidating, terrifying or controlling the other party. In the past, unless you could show blood or a bruise, there was no relief. With the new cyberstalking law, in effect as of Jan. 1, I can now easily obtain restraining orders in appropriate cases. I'm delighted that there is finally a new recognition by the state of California for offensive behavior that falls short of inflicting physical harm and raises the awareness of the courts to appropriate instances of mental, emotional and psychological abuse.

How will this law be used in cases?

It will be used as material for ... asking courts for immediate injunctions and in

obtaining restraining orders that protect women, children and others in cases where cyberstalking has been going on. When a person starts getting hit with fines and sanc-

tions, the court will be getting the message across to the perpetrator that this behavior, that was previously acceptable, is now beyond the limits of acceptability. They could get away with it in the past – not anymore.

How do you prove cyberstalking?

The courts are now beginning to entertain electronic evidence, but I would recommend also maintaining a hard copy of evidence that is factual, detailed and in a format that is easily absorbed, just in case someone drops your phone or electronic device in the toilet. There's an old Chinese proverb that says, "The palest ink will outlast the best memory by 1,000 years." You can add "electronic hard drive" to that.

Do you foresee people abusing this law and pretending to be cyberstalked to help their case?

I do foresee abuses to the law by those who exploit the law for their own personal gain, due to a lack of integrity. Like any other law, it's a law we need. It's going to be the job of the lawyers to distinguish real claims from false claims.



Supancic: New law will help his practice.

How will this law affect divorce settlements monetarily?

It affects divorce settlements in three ways: attorneys' fees, child support and spousal support. Perpetrators can be held responsible for attorneys' fees, and victims are entitled to higher amounts of child support and spousal support.

In general, it's going to increase the safety of victims of domestic violence and reduce the level of physical violence, emotional violence and abusive conduct throughout the marriage. This, in turn, will reduce the amount of contested cases and, hopefully, the caseload in family court. But the best outcome will be in saving families' money and children grief and anguish in any kind of family conflict – civil, probate, family, business or any other areas of law.

— Stephanie Henkel

Collaborative Style Comes Together for Clients



Daneshrad

Michelle Daneshrad is a family law attorney and past president of **Family Divorce Solutions of the San Fernando Valley**. She is the founder of her Woodland Hills' practice, **Completion Law Firm**, as well as collaborative practice group **San Fernando Valley Collaborative Professionals**. Daneshrad graduated from Southwestern University School of Law in 2001 and is a speaker and trainer for personal development organization **Landmark Worldwide** in San Francisco. In her free time, Daneshrad leads personal growth and leadership seminars, promoting well-being and development. Fluent in Farsi, she came to the U.S. from Iran when she was just 14 years old and is currently a board member of the **Los Angeles Collaborative Family Law Association**. She hopes to take family law in a direction of

mediation and cooperation as opposed to litigation and conflict. She also has an interest in the related concept of "restorative justice," which emphasizes ways to repair the harm caused by a crime with the involvement of victims, offenders and others. Daneshrad discusses the benefits of collaborative law and its monetary impact on both the families involved as well as the attorneys.

MICHELLE DANESHRAD

Does Crossfit workouts daily.

Put herself through law school to finish her own divorce; up to that point, it had taken five years, five attorneys and cost almost \$500,000.

Fluent in Farsi.

Has a dream to give a TED Talk on restorative justice this year.

Question: What is collaborative law?

Answer: It's a nonadversarial legal process whereby a team of professionals works with the parties to resolve their matter and avoid going to court.

What types of cases is collaborative law used for?

Family law including separation, divorce, parental rights and premarital agreements are the most common. It is also used for civil matters such as estates, trusts, probate, business and employment.

What are the pros and cons?

Pros: Clients have control over the process and the outcome. They are provided with legal, emotional and financial guidance and are able to create options based on their real interests in life rather than competing against each other. The clients look toward the future rather than "getting even" for past events. The process allows for closure and finality rather than regret and resentment lingering on and leading to future litigation.

Cons: If the parties' intentions are to take

advantage of one another, this process will not be appropriate or successful.

Since collaborative law discourages litigation, does it have a negative effect on your practice monetarily?

Although collaborative professionals make substantially less money from a collaborative case in comparison to a litigation case, their overhead expenses and the personal costs due to the stress of conflict are substantially less also. The fulfillment and reward of supporting a family through this healing divorce process is immensely valuable for the professionals.

How do you charge for collaborative law? How does the cost of collaborative law compare with litigation?

Generally, each professional charges on an hourly basis. In litigation, many hours and thousands of dollars can be spent in discovery motions and waiting in court. The collaborative process is an outcome-building process. According to the International

Currently, how often is collaborative law used over litigation? Which do lawyers prefer?

We know that 70 percent of all divorce cases in California are pro per (where the parties represent themselves), with no lawyers involved. Five percent of cases are litigated. The remaining 25 percent are resolved through some kind of consensual dispute resolution. Using my experience as a guide, among people who were educated about the different options available to them, 40 percent were in favor of collaborative process, 40 percent favored mediation, and 20 percent felt the need to pursue litigation. Among family law attorneys who have experience with both types of cases, most prefer the collaborative process because of its cooperative approach.

Is collaborative law a growing trend?

Yes. The challenge for Family Divorce Solutions is educating our potential clients about this option. As people learn about their

'The process allows for closure and finality rather than regret and resentment.' — MICHELLE DANESHRAD

Academy of Collaborative Professionals, the collaborative process on average costs 50 percent less than the cost of litigation in California.

options, the demand for collaborative process increases, and more attorneys and firms include it as part of their practice.

— Stephanie Henkel

FAMILY LAW ■ ■ ■

Recession Provided a Break From Breakups

Jim Reape is senior managing partner of the Reape-Rickett Law Firm in Valencia. He specializes in family law and is a member of the family law section of the California State Bar. His firm focuses on divorce and custody cases – a market that took a downturn during the Great Recession. Reape discusses the correlation between the economy and divorce and how that impacts his law practice.

Reape

JIM REAPE
Has played guitar for 40-plus years.
Holds a second-degree black belt.
Has traveled to Ireland six times and even lived there one summer to work with the physically disabled.

Question: Does the state of the economy have an effect on the family law business?
Answer: Absolutely. Family law services are offered to individual consumers as compared to business entities. As such, the state of the economy bears directly on the finances of a family and can make access to legal services unaffordable. Also, in divorce, a family typically transitions from a single household to

a two-household model with the increased demands on incomes to meet those new additional expenses.

They say money is the No. 1 cause of divorce. How does the state of the economy affect divorce rates?
 Discord in marriage can come from any number of stressors. Certainly disagreement over finances can create a huge divide between spouses, adding fuel to bitterness and blame. So while finances can be a big issue between spouses, some simply cannot see a way to separate financially, while others can't see staying together no matter how bad the financial outlook is in separation. At times, one spouse, typically the one who can tighten their belt better, can do financially better after separation.

How did the economic downturn affect your business?
 First, many couples lacked incomes to even consider separating and continuing to meet their basic needs as well as the basic needs of their children. Absent of abuse, I found myself counseling unhappy spouses, where separation would only add to their financial distress and cause things such as a need to move from the area to seek more affordable communities. That would mean uprooting children and a possible long-distance move away from the other parent. Therefore, many couples stuck it out through the recession.

How does that compare with the economic cycle now?
 It has been a very long and very slow recovery. However, some families have seen equity return to their real estate and values of their

retirement accounts rise. Both of these become sources to tap into for the family to separate and acquire legal assistance in doing so.

During hard times, how does your firm continue to bring in clients?
 We continually update technology and focus our services to areas of need. In some cases, the firm is hired for only specific tasks, as compared to assuming responsibility for every aspect of a case. Early and rapid assessment is provided, so the person has a good view of what life afterwards looks like so they can start taking steps to build that new life. With more sophisticated consumers of legal ser-


What are some new developments occurring in family law?
 I see four things having a huge impact. The first is that the divorce rate has been on the decline. The only group trending differently is the baby boomer generation, or the silver divorce. As these people find that they are living longer, healthier lives and after raising children and fulfilling what they see as their moral obligations, they seek and find happiness apart from their longtime spouse.
 Another trend is the decline in the marriage rate. Younger couples delay or avoid marriage as they question the value of tying the knot. Without marriage, there is no

‘Many couples lacked incomes to even consider separating and continuing to meet their basic needs.’ — JIM REAPE

vices, the legal profession needs to evolve to meet specific enunciated needs of the client.
How does the economy affect other areas of family law, such as wills, estates and trusts?
 Consumers turn more often to online solutions that cost less up front. In doing so, they depend less on a lawyer to tailor documents to each client's specific needs. Time will tell if these were shortsighted mistakes leaving families exposed to more fighting after a loved one passes away due to uncertainty in their documents and their preparation.

divorce as we know it.
 The third issue is technology, which makes consumers much more educated and sophisticated consumers of legal services.
 Finally, the recession caused courts to have to respond to the ever-increasing number of people trying to make their way through the court system without the assistance of a lawyer, as they could not afford it. The courts now offer various forms of self-help as the number of self-represented parties now greatly surpasses the number of people appearing in court with an attorney.
 — Stephanie Henkel

Tired of hearing “You can’t do that” from your lawyers?



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