



October, 2011

Firm Seminars:

Lewitt Hackman presents complimentary seminars in our Board Room for clients and friends on a variety of legal topics. **John B. Marshall** and **Keith T. Zimmet** will present "Real Estate Foreclosures" on October 12, 2011. A light breakfast will be served and attorneys may earn one hour of CLE credit. RSVP to Chris Podbielski: cpodbielski@lewitthackman.com, 818.907.3271.

Upcoming Deadlines:

November 14: Most employers are required by law to display a new poster to notify employees of their rights to organize under the National Labor Relations Act. Please call **Sue M. Bendavid** if you need more information regarding this or other compliance posters.

November 15: You should consider filing IRS Form 8939 by this date if a family member passed away in 2010. Call **Michael Hackman**, **Kira S. Masteller** or **Robert A. Hull** in our Tax and Estate Planning Department for information regarding potential estate tax benefits of filing Form 8939.

Recent Professional & Community Accomplishments:

- *Los Angeles Magazine's* October online edition contains a section for "Top Women Attorneys in Southern California." The list includes **Sue M. Bendavid**, **Kira S. Masteller**, **Vanessa Soto Nellis** and **Michelle S. Robins**, who all appeared either on the magazine's "Super Lawyers" or "Rising Stars" lists in the past.
- **Keith T. Zimmet** negotiated the purchase of undeveloped, industrial property. In addition to helping our client with the purchase, Keith guided our client in obtaining approvals from several local government agencies for the future development of the property.
- **Paul C. Bauducco** obtained a writ of attachment for a construction client against an out of state defendant for nearly \$200,000, which included the principal balance owed the client together with litigation costs, including current and anticipated attorneys fees.
- **Michael Hackman** and **Robert A. Hull** successfully concluded a complicated, long-standing Conservatorship of the Estate and Person for a family where a spouse was injured as the result of medical malpractice.
- **Andrew L. Shapiro** and **Thomas Cecil** of the firm's Personal Injury Department represent the parents of a young woman killed when a Sheriff's Patrol vehicle struck her disabled car at 2 AM on the freeway. The Sheriff's vehicle was traveling at approximately 90 mph and was NOT involved in a police pursuit. The matter is now in litigation.
- **Kevin E. Rex** has been working with several landlords and tenants in order to renegotiate and/or extend their current leases. Kevin is also actively working with several clients to sell their family owned businesses and with another family owned business that is looking to acquire a competitor.





- **Sue M. Bendavid** defended a firm client who was sued for a substantial amount of waiting time penalties. Sue was able to prove that the client acted in good faith and no penalties were imposed. The client appreciated the zero verdict, as well as the hearing officer's written opinion which admonished the Plaintiff for texting during the hearing. In another matter, Sue proved to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that a Plaintiff who claimed she was terminated because of her age was actually terminated for poor work performance.
- **Michael Hackman**, the chair of our estate planning department, **Kevin E. Rex**, **Kira S. Masteller**, and **Robert A. Hull** have been working with several families and family owned businesses in developing estate plans which effectively maximize the tax exemptions provided under current law given the client's stated goals. It should be noted that many favorable tax exemptions which our corporate and estate planning departments are utilizing on behalf of clients are set to expire at the end of 2012 so time is of the essence if you desire to take advantage of the current law.
- **Barry T. Harlan** received special recognition from the Van Nuys Superior Court for his efforts in organizing and scheduling mediators for family law cases at the Volunteer Mediator's Luncheon. **Michelle S. Robins** and **Vanessa Soto Nellis**, also active in mediating cases on the Court's docket, received certificates of appreciation.
- **David Gurnick** represented an operator of popular night clubs in litigation between two ownership factions of the company. David assisted the parties in reaching a settlement that let them end their litigation and continue the operation of their successful night club business. In another matter, David obtained a full, written apology and retraction for a firm client who was the victim of defamatory remarks made orally and in writing by a supplier.
- **Vanessa Soto Nellis** assisted a client of the firm obtain a dissolution of marriage within a few months by recommending family law mediation to expedite matters.
- **Stephan Mihalovits** represented a client who was sued personally along with his business for breach of contract and other claims. Mr. Mihalovits showed the plaintiff a recovery was unlikely, and the lawsuit was wasteful. The plaintiff dismissed the case against both the client and his business.
- **Michelle S. Robins** was the moderator of a program sponsored by the Family Law Section of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association entitled "Family Law - Current Real Estate Issues and How they Impact Your Practice". This program was attended by judicial officers throughout the San Fernando Valley as well as legal and non-legal professionals.
- **David Gurnick** was installed for a one year term as Vice-President/President Elect of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association and will become President in one year. **Kira S. Masteller** was re-elected to the Association's Board of Trustees and Chairs the Association's Diversity Committee.
- **Stephen T. Holzer's** personal environmental law blog was named one of the "Top 50 Blogs for 2011" by LexisNexis staff in the Environmental Law & Climate Change category. Steve has been writing his blog regularly for over six years.
- Paralegals **Sarah Thrift** and **Addie De La Torre** represented the new Paralegal Section of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association at the Bar's Gala event on September 24. Sarah and Addie, with support from **Kira S. Masteller**, were instrumental in organizing and forming the SFVBA's new section.
- In memory of the victims of 9/11, **Sue M. Bendavid** and **Kira S. Masteller** conducted a workshop for Civics Academy students at Millikan Middle School on the topic of civil liberties. The children were actively involved in the dialogue which focused on rights to privacy and the obligation of our government and schools to take safety measures for our protection.