

May, 2011

Firm Seminars:

Lewitt Hackman presents complimentary seminars in our Board Room for clients and friends on a variety of legal topics. **Paul C. Bauducco** and Paralegal **Sarah Thrift** will present "Utilizing Legal Professionals to Avoid Litigation," on July 13. We will keep you posted on the exact date and further details, but a light breakfast will be served and attorneys may earn one hour of CLE credit.

Recent Professional & Community Accomplishments:

- **Keith T. Zimmet** renegotiated the terms of an existing \$40,000,000 loan for a client involving numerous banks, rating agencies, and loan servicing companies throughout the country. The loan workout enabled our client to continue to own and operate a large shopping center.
- **Tal Grinblat** submitted comments on legislation proposed by the North American Securities Administrators Association that would regulate the use of Development Agents by franchise companies. Tal's comments were made on behalf of a subcommittee of the State Bar of California Franchise Law Committee, which he chairs.
- **Sue M. Bendavid** submitted a brief that prompted the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to dismiss an age discrimination charge against a client of the firm. In another matter, Sue showed that there was no merit to an employee's claims for disability discrimination lodged with the California Department of Fair Employment & Housing against our client. The agency dismissed the claim based on Sue's argument.
- **David Gurnick** negotiated a mutually agreed early termination for a national brand franchisee about to lose its business location to eminent domain. The franchisee lost money and wanted to terminate rather than relocate the business, as the franchise agreement required.
- **Andrew L. Shapiro** of our Personal Injury Department obtained a favorable settlement for a client who suffered serious injuries in a crosswalk as a traffic light turned red. The case garnered media attention focused on pedestrian safety, and reminds drivers to be attentive at all times, especially when approaching crosswalks.
- **Nicole Kamm** helped settle a matter involving a former employee who claimed she was induced to leave her prior job to work for the firm's client. After two weeks, the individual demanded nearly \$20,000 for alleged claims. Nicole showed the lack of merit in the former employee's claims, which resulted in a fractional settlement of the initial demand.
- **Kira S. Masteller** is helping a client maximize use of the temporary \$5,000,000 lifetime gift tax exemption. The client is making a real estate gift to each of his children now so that the growth in the value of the properties will not be taxed in his estate years from now, when the property will have grown in value and when the federal estate and gift tax exemptions may be lower than they are in 2011 and 2012.
- **Nicholas Kanter** convinced a third party to agree to substantially limit the use of its trademark through a co-existence agreement with a firm client, avoiding potentially costly trademark dispute proceedings.



- **Kevin E. Rex** assisted a client in negotiating a letter of intent to repurchase a business, which the client previously sold and worked for post-closing. The letter of intent was possible because of a right of first negotiation that Kevin previously negotiated for the client.
- **Barry T. Harlan, Stephen T. Holzer, and Vanessa Soto Nellis** settled a marriage dissolution and related civil lawsuit involving ownership of a large art and antiques collection, complicated by claims of misappropriated assets.
- **Tal Grinblat** assisted a hair care manufacturer in expanding trademark protection to other countries using the Madrid Protocol. This international treaty lets U.S. companies and individuals extend U.S. trademark registrations to other member nations of the Protocol, without hiring local trademark counsel. **Nicholas Kanter** and Tal assisted the client in recording the trademark with the U.S. Customs Service, so the agency can intercept foreign imports that would otherwise infringe the client's trademark.
- **David Gurnick** assisted a client in negotiating a lease for placement of power-generating windmills on the client's property. In another matter, David assisted an equipment company in developing a consignment program for industrial photographic equipment.
- **Sue M. Bendavid** obtained a favorable ruling from the Employment Development Department in response to an employee's request for unemployment insurance benefits. The employee falsely claimed she was forced to resign and that she was a victim of wage sex discrimination. The EDD denied the employee's request for benefits. In another matter, Sue prepared a response to a request for unemployment insurance by a terminated employee who sought benefits by falsely claiming he was terminated as a result of his race.
- **Kevin E. Rex** assisted a client in selling a minority interest in a company to a majority shareholder while preserving the client's ability to work in the same industry. In another matter, Kevin assisted an accountant in acquiring the business of another accountant.
- **Barry T. Harlan and Vanessa Soto Nellis** defeated an effort by an ex-spouse who sought to obtain custody orders on an emergency basis.
- **Nicole Kamm** counseled a client in transitioning an employee to exempt status, including revising job description to add management and decision-making responsibilities and drafting an offer letter stating the new terms and conditions of employment.
- **Robert A. Hull** helped several firm clients transform businesses into limited liability companies by drafting operating agreements for each. Robert also helped clients plan their estates to safeguard their families for the future.
- **Michelle S. Robins** of our Family Law Department taught a self defense class to other attorneys as part of a San Fernando Valley Bar Association program. The course addressed the physical and mental aspects of personal safety, and protection in today's cyber-world.
- **Michael Hackman, Kira S. Masteller and Robert A. Hull** hosted a "Tax & Estate Planning Q&A." The seminar addressed concerns regarding new tax laws, gift planning and trust administration issues for our clients and friends.
- **Nicole Kamm** led a round table discussion on employment issues for members of San Fernando Valley Estate Planning Council.
- **Vanessa Soto Nellis** attended a lunch with the Los Angeles Superior Court Family Law Judicial Officers, to learn about each court's procedures and practices.