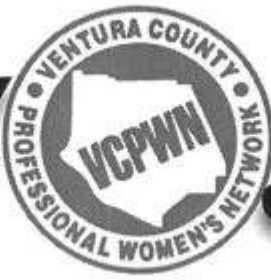


Focal Points



Ventura County Professional Women's Network

July - September 2006

Promoting the professional and personal growth of Ventura County women through education, mutual support, and sharing of resources

VCPWN

Meeting Calendar



Location:

Wedgewood Banquet Center
5880 Olivas Park Dr. Ventura

Thursday, July 13

Zoe Taylor, Ventura Chamber of Commerce CEO

Thursday, August 10

Networking & Silent Auction

Thursday, September 14

Joyce Sherwood - Brain Gym

Networking begins at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner, with networking continuing at 6:30

Program 7:15

Adjourn 8:45

VCPWN Board of Directors Meetings

All members are welcome to attend board meetings, and Minutes are posted on the website at www.vcpwn.org:

Tuesday, July 25

Tuesday, August 22

Tuesday, September 26

Location:

Cypress Place
1200 Cypress Point Lane, Ventura
Dinner and meeting 6:00 p.m.

MEMBER PROFILE

Carol Powell



I grew up in Torrance, California in the 50's. It was a great time to be a kid, to grow up then. I feel very fortunate to have experienced that simpler and safer time period, with such great music, now known as the Oldies but Goodies!

I married fairly young, divorced after 12 years, and raised my three kids in the Thousand Oaks area of Ventura County. They are all grown and married now, with 5 children between them, meaning I have five grandchildren.

After my divorce, I was fortunate to work for 17 years for a major developer in Woodland Hills, where I built my career in commercial property management. I eventually became the Senior Manager for the high rise development known as Warner Center Properties. It was like being the mayor of a small city. We were all so proud of what we had created, our excellent tenant relations programs, our successes, our ethics. We grew, we cared, we learned, we prospered. Life was good. I was able to support my children, and buy a home.

Then in the 1990's commercial real estate values declined, and essentially drove the smaller developers out of the business. The survivors were the big money companies, I call them Corporate America. They took over our development, and it wasn't the same anymore.

I went to another company for 3 years, and of course that wasn't the same either. Then I was offered a position as Vice President of a Property

Management Division for a

Real Estate Development company in Santa Barbara. I thought maybe a total change of scene would be refreshing, and it was for awhile. Three years later the company experienced a major financial loss in one of its other divisions, and to survive they laid off the heads of three divisions, me included. I received a good severance package, and drove away with a big smile on my face. It was the end of April, and I was going to take the summer off!

I knew I did not want to go back into "Corporate America." I wanted a small company environment, with good ethics and values and friends. Or perhaps I would go into my own consulting business in the specialized areas of commercial property management. I didn't really know.

And in the meantime, while I was mulling things over, I traveled and was having a great time. I went to Italy, to Maui (all alone!), to Lake Tahoe, on a cruise to Alaska, and to New York. I discovered I like to travel very much! I took the rest of the year off.

And I discovered VCPWN. After visiting once, I joined and found a lot of support and encouragement from a caring group of professional women. That was in May of 2002.

In late 2002, after much thought and discussion, I joined Troop Real Estate. I would start my own business, providing residential real estate

From the President

This year promises to be an exciting one – full of surprises and activities. There should be something to stir up everyone during the course of the year. Watch Focal Points and listen at the general meetings for news of happenings. You might notice some small changes at the meetings – see if you can catch some and give us your feedback.

The August meeting will feature our every-popular networking event and silent auction. What a great time to invite friends to experience the camaraderie of VCPWN. Our website continues to evolve and grow to meet the changing needs of our organization and our technology-savvy world.

Our new Executive Secretary, Denise Lawrence, is a welcome addition to our “family.” If you haven’t met her yet, introduce yourself at the next meeting.

Your involvement is vital to the energy and the continuity of this wonderful organization. YOU are what attracts new members – keep it up!

Thanks!

Shirley Lorraine

Multi-talented momma

Fashion Coordinator and so much more!

slgumby@msn.com

www.weekenders.com/shirleyscloset

www.spencerlorraine.com



Between the Lines

When I moved to Ventura from Valencia two years ago, I joined VCPWN and the Ventura Chamber with the hope

of developing new clients in my handwriting analysis practice. As a dyed-in-the-wool introvert, it’s always been a challenge for me to go into a group of strangers and start talking.

What I’ve learned from attending VCPWN meetings is the importance of focusing more on developing relationships, which means genuinely being more interested in what others have to say, rather than simply selling one’s services.

This allows other members to get to know us over a period of time, which helps them to feel comfortable in referring us to their clients and friends. Let fellow members know *you* by participating in *Focal Points*. Submit an article about your specialty, take out an advertisement, and/or contribute a *Blow Your Horn* item.

The new Board is in place and already hard at work. It’s our fond hope that our tremendous spirit of cooperation and camaraderie rubs off on all the members and that together we continue to grow in our personal and business lives. Sheila Lowe, handwriting analyst/handwriting expert. sheila@sheilalowe.com



VCPWN Welcomes New Executive Secretary

My name is Denise Lawrence and I am your Executive Secretary for the 2006-2007 board year. I am pleased to be a part of your lives and look forward to getting to know you and establishing new friend-

ships.

Most of my career life has been in large corporations working as an Executive Assistant. I recently left that world and started my own company (Scentillating Soy) making and selling Natural Soy Candles—“*Do what you love and the money will follow!*”

My most successful roles and my favorite roles are that of a wife, mother, stepmother and grandmother. I have been married to a wonderful man named Jeffrey for just over 3 years. I have 2 grown children of my own, a stepson and a 3 year old granddaughter.

Thank you all for being so kind and welcoming me with such exuberance.

Denise Lawrence
Scentillating Soy
denise@scentillatingsoy.com

“*Friends don’t let friends burn Paraffin!*”

Focal Points

A quarterly publication of
Ventura County Professional
Women’s Network

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MEETING REVIEWS

Carol Leish

The Importance of Having Healthy Boundaries

Meeting Review By Carol Leish

Why will someone never speak her mind at the dinner table, but she will go to the bank and go to the front of the line? How does modern technology affect our boundaries?

Our June speaker, Dr. Deborah Mandel, answered these questions and focused on how we develop healthy boundaries. She discussed how she was not raised with healthy boundaries.

"My parents, who were both immigrants, came to this country from Poland and Estonia," She said. "They spoke 12 different languages. None of them were the same. They did not have healthy boundaries. Sometimes they were too strict, and other times they were too loose."

"Boundaries are a fluid motion that we are always making decisions about," according to our speaker. When Deborah asked the people at her table what the definition of boundaries is to them, one person said that it meant, "too restrictive or limited." Another person said, "It's your ability to say 'no' and set limits."

Deborah noted that there are physical boundaries and emotional boundaries. Walls and cities are examples of physical boundaries. "There is no definition of a boundary as being right or wrong. Boundaries have a huge flexibility." Emotional boundaries dovetail physical boundaries deal with what our concept of being a separate individual from each other is.

How we develop healthy boundaries in our childhood plus the current condition of our lives can affect boundaries, according to Deborah. "If we are deprived of emotional needs, such as not getting enough attention, or abandonment of a parent, our boundaries will be affected." She said that society raising girls not to say "no" causes guilt for women when they do say "no."

Technology also affects boundaries by making our lives easier. "We can get consumed," said Deborah. Her own life requires structure, since she has a relationship, a child and lots of email. "Without boundaries, burnout happens. We could experience problems with eating, have sleep deprivation and/or self-esteem issues. We don't realize what our choices really are."

Remember that the positive part about having boundaries is "accountability, balance and choice," according to Deborah. "Thus, being able to set and have healthy boundaries, we maintain accountability, balance and choice in our lives."

Your chances are better than 50-50

Over the past year, we've been offering an "opportunity drawing" at each meeting. You have an opportunity to purchase 5 tickets for \$5 or \$25 for your height. At the June meeting, Maura Raffensperger was the lucky winner of \$97.00!

Maybe *you* will be the winner at the next meeting.

EVENTS

UPCOMING

Call to make reservations: 656-6011

July Meeting

One of Ventura County's best female role models is Zoe Taylor, President and CEO of the Ventura Chamber of Commerce. Zoe has spoken to diverse audiences on a wide variety of topical issues over the course of her career, but at the July meeting she'll be sharing her own story with us.

Zoe will share her background, choices that she's made and how they've shaped her career, and she'll also discuss the role of Ventura's Chamber of Commerce and why it's no longer the "Chamber of Concrete."



Zoe Taylor

August Meeting

Come prepared with your twenty-second commercial to advertise your business. Prizes will be awarded for the best commercial, so be as creative as you can. Funny is good!

The Silent Auction needs your contributions and your purchases. Contact Special Events Coordinator Marlene Hunau-Herman at (805) 485-7573 if you have an item you would like to offer for sale.

The proceeds help VCPWN to continue as the best women's networking organization in Ventura County.

Please support our sponsors!



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All ads subject to editor approval and are due by the 10th of the month preceding publication (e.g., September 10 for October-December issue). Make checks payable to VCPWN or use credit card. Now you can book your ad and renew directly on the VCPWN web site!
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Welcome New Member Kathy McCoy

I started my scarf knitting store on eBay as a result of progressively worsening arthritis in my knees. That sounds funny, but it means I have to sit a lot and since I can't sit for long without keeping my hands busy with something, I took up crochet again. I love making scarves, they are quick and instantly gratifying. The newer yarns are fuzzy and soft, wild and carefree. This past December I had my right knee joint replacement surgery and plan on getting the left one done this next December. How nice it is to be able to walk again without the pain, at least on one side...

kmccoy93010@yahoo.com

(Carol Powell profile, cont.)

services, under the umbrella of a first class real estate company. Troop would provide the office and support, I would bring the license and experience, and my ethics and values. It's been a good fit.

Troop is the largest independent real estate company in Ventura County, starting in Simi Valley in 1987. I like that it is owned and operated by one person, Brian Troop, who has great vision and integrity. He's right there with the agents; he attends all the weekly sales meetings at the 12 different offices throughout the county. Although different, there are similarities between Troop and the developer I worked for. Vision, integrity, and ethics, which are so important.

So I'm happy in my work. I have clients that have become special friends and we appreciate each other. I'm happy with my family relationships and my wonderful grandchildren.

I still love to travel, and set a goal to take a minimum of three nice trips a year, taking advantage of the good deals out there. A side benefit of being a traveler is that I need to keep myself healthy and strong so I can walk long distances and carry a suitcase! So I need to keep up regular active beach walks and pilates exercises, and eat healthy. God works all things together for the good of all. I am open to meeting Mr. Wonderful if anyone knows him! I love referrals! Ha! carolleepowell@msn.com

Spirit of Networking Award, 2006

Each year we honor a VCPWN member who has been selected by the membership as the 2006 Spirit of Networking. This award is given to a VCPWN member who has shown exemplary support and promotion for the goals of this organization.

Our 2006 honoree joins a host of outstanding women who, as recipients of this award in prior years, are recognized and celebrated for the support and tireless efforts they have shown on behalf of VCPWN.

First let us speak of this group. The tradition began in 1984-85 with the recognition of our very first Spirit of Networking awardee, Kitty Dill. Those past winners who were able to attend the meeting were called to the stage to receive a corsage.

And now, here are some comments that were

submitted about this year's winner.

"She is always so gracious and friendly, always willing to give of her time and help in any way she can".

"She has been great for business and a true friend".

"Because she is the BEST".

"She is excellent at teaching relationship skills"

"She has been part of my personal support team even before I became a member of VCPWN. She taught me

how to organize and evaluate my accumulation of papers and keepsakes, and this has helped me to gain space and time for more desirable activities. She has been consistently patient with my repetitive questions and mix-ups. When I told her of my wishes and ambitions she encouraged me to join this group and has helped me gain confidence as a new member."

"She has been ceaseless in her support of VCPWN. Beyond her work with the Board, she truly believes and shows her dedication to VCPWN in all that she does"

Please join us in congratulating the 2005-2006 Spirit of Networking, Maura Raffensperger.



Shirley Lorraine presents Maura Raffensperger with the Spirit of Networking Award and a bouquet of roses.

Memories — Memories — Memories

A Navigator's perspective by Charlotte W. Gesling

My personal experience in VCPWN has been awesome. At the time I came to the network I had just started my own business as an Independent Contractor in the Travel and Cruise industry. I knew my business, but not much about being my own boss, so I learned to take care of my business by osmosis—I watched, looked and listened to many business women. It was the first time in my life that I had contact with such a fascinating, energetic, positive group of women. The “energy” still grabs me at every meeting I attend.

After I had been involved in the Network for a while, I decided to join a committee. I found that this was a great way to meet other members and to work together to get things done. One of the first experiences that I enjoyed was being on the *Focal Points* committee. In those days, we did the work of labeling, sorting, putting postage on and mailing by hand. The committee would get together at someone's office or home and we would all be talking while working. It was fun.

Then I was asked to be on the Special Projects committee. I found that committee to be very interesting and challenging. My being in the travel industry was an asset and we hosted some wonderful events. After a few years, someone decided that I needed to be the Chair of that committee. Many Saturdays were spent in a group hike to wonderful places, with much bonding going on in natural settings. There were shopping trips at the Garment District in Los



Angeles, where we traveled by bus and had a show-and-tell on the way back. There were also many successful trips to the theater and concert halls. Ah yes, we all had fun and made lasting friendships in the VCPWN family.

Another challenge put before me was the Membership committee, which I chaired several times. I earned every bit of knowledge that I needed in order to have a successful committee that would work together in a harmonious manner. I applauded my predecessor for passing on to me my first committee of trained and willing volunteers. We had a banner year that year—400 members! Being a Member-at-Large quite a few times was a fast way to learn a lot about many committee.

Things change over the years, some for the better, some for the worse, but thank goodness for Technology! It really does make things easier (if confusing at times). I wonder how many members are reading *Focal Points* on our web site or printing it out to read and save. I must admit, I have quite a few issues I've saved over the years. Looking through them recently brought back many wonderful and happy memories of people and events that have occurred within VCPWN.

One way a few of us retain our friendships and still have fun is through the Navigator's group. Anyone who has been a continuous member of the network for at least 15 years is welcome to join. The information is listed on the web site.

I feel that I've gotten my money's worth in professional and personal growth through education, mutual support and sharing of resources. VCPWN's 25th anniversary celebration is coming up shortly. Hope to see you all there.

Charlotte W. Gesling represents Pre-Paid Legal Services and Go Small Business Associates.

c.bosladycwg@verizon.net

Is Your Net-Working?

By Linda McCarthy, Executive Director of Business Network International

Making contacts that turn into relationships is the foundation of a prosperous word-of-mouth based business. People new to networking repeatedly ask me, “What can I do to meet more people and make better contacts at business mixers?”

In answer to this question, let me share with you the “Ten Commandments of Networking a Mixer,” taken from the book *“The World's Best Known Marketing Secret”* by Dr. Ivan Misner, founder & CEO of Business Network International.

1. Have your networking tools with you at all times. (i.e., business cards, name badge, pen, etc.)
2. Set a goal for the number of people you'll meet.
3. Act like a host and not a guest.
4. Listen and ask questions.
5. Give a lead or referral whenever possible.

6. Describe your product or service in 60 seconds or less. (Hint: this is not the place to close the deal!)
7. Exchange business cards with the people you meet.
8. Spend 10 minutes or less with each person you meet.
9. Write comments on the backs of the business cards you collect. (Especially if you promised to follow-up with them about anything)
10. FOLLOW UP WITH THE PEOPLE YOU MEET. (This is the MOST important step. If you skip this you've wasted your time.)

Networking is a learned skill. Practice, practice, practice and watch how it changes your business life. Go for it!

Business Network International is a structured and positive marketing program whose primary purpose is to exchange qualified business referrals. It is the most successful organization of its type in North America today, with over 4300 chapters in operation in 29 countries. For more information on BNI, call Linda or Shawn McCarthy, Executive Directors @ 805-850-0157 or check out www.bni-venturacounty.com.

Blow Your Horn

- * **Laura Parsons** will perform in "It's Time for Twenty-Nine," the 29th Annual show put on by MacKinnon's Dance Academy of Oxnard.. Performances will be July 26th and 27th at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center. Laura's group will tap dance to "Sing, Sing, Sing," which is quite an undertaking because the song is 5 minutes long—a very long time to tap! The show features students from the Academy performing Tap, Jazz, Ballet and Scottish Highland.
- * **Shirley Lorraine and Laura Parsons** both attended a Stitcher's Festival in Las Vegas in April. While there, Shirley won a weekend stay at the Riviera Hotel! (That Laura is one busy gal!). Congrats, Shirley!
- * Congratulation **Dr. Shu Ping Li!** Shu Ping completed her doctorate degree in Acupuncture and Oriental medicine from Emperor's College. Her training included treating patients in the emergency room and acute rehab at Good Samaritan Hospital. (See her ad on page 4.)
- * **Shawn and Linda McCarthy**, Executive Directors of Business Network Int'l (BNI) of Ventura County have taken their business to the next level by opening up their new and larger headquarters. After 6 years of running BNI from their home, the more than 700 square foot office space will help them train, service and maintain the 20 chapters of Business Network Int'l (BNI) in the County.



- * **Don Williams** has passed the test and been sworn in! He's now an official notary public—have stamp, will travel.
- * **Carol Powell** went on a Danube River Cruise in May. She flew to Budapest, Hungary to begin the 7 day cruise, which ended in Nuremberg, Germany—site of the current World Cup Soccer tournament. The ship stopped along the river at many quaint villages and cities, including Vienna. At the end of the cruise, Carol took a motorcoach to Prague in the Czech Republic and stayed 3 nights before flying back home. In Carol's words, "It was a most enchanting and memorable experience. I want to go again!" Carol made her travel arrangements through a VCPWN member, Yolanda Bunes of Unique Travel.
- * **Sheila Lowe** has had articles published in several Bar magazines (that's legal, not drinking), and lectured at the Ventura County Bar Association on what attorneys need to know about handwriting experts. She also took a trip to her home country, Great Britain, where she met with several cousins who she'd been corresponding with through genealogy research over the Internet. A whole new branch of the family, overnight!
- * We heard that **Tessa Weeks** and husband Lynn took an exciting trip to New Zealand recently, but Focal Points is waiting for a report from her to hear how it all went.

Do you have news you'd like to share with fellow VCPWN'ers? Blow Your Horn items may be sent to the Editor at sheila@sheilalowe.com.

Recipients of the Spirit of Networking Award, past and present





Proud and happy Maura and husband, Dave after the Spirit of Networking award presentation.

Bulletin Board



- * Thanks to all who supported the Girls Wanna Have Fun fundraiser brunch VCPWN netted \$2100!
- * Are you interested in car pooling to VCPWN dinner meetings? Add your name and location to the list on the Networking table.
- * Have you had a problem downloading your copy of Focal Points? Contact our resident computer expert Alison Balter with the exact error message you received and she will help you resolve the issue alison@infotech-partners.com.
- * We're still looking for a new logo. If you have any ideas for designs, contact President Shirley Lorraine: slgumby@msn.com.
- * If you have used the services of another member, we invite you to share your experience. Email Carol Powell and let her know who you've been doing business with during the last couple of months: carolleepowell@msn.com
- * Remember to bring your promotional materials to place on the Networking table (and remember to remove them when you leave!).

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