

TrueVision eyes expanded product distribution

By STEVE SINOVIC
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

told the News-Press.

Santa Barbara-based TrueVision 3D Surgical's two-year collaboration with Leica Microsystems has paid off.

Leica, a German-based manufacturer of microscopes and scientific instruments, has become a key customer by distributing TrueVision's 3D surgical guidance systems through its sales channels.

Thanks to the boost provided by Leica's sizable sales force and network of dealers, "We've had more new orders in the first quarter of 2014 than any previous year in the company's history," said Forrest Fleming, TrueVision's CEO.

The TrueVision software suite, which gives surgeons better views when they are operating, sells for about \$70,000. It is then integrated into Leica's microscopes, which in turn sell from \$200,000 to \$300,000.

The two companies' alliance last year resulted in the first surgical microscope combined with TrueVision's visualization technology for neurosurgery.

Now an extended collaboration will see TrueVision's technology combined with Leica's entire line of ophthalmic microscopes, Mr. Fleming

The microscopes are less invasive and allow observation of the operating field in cataract surgeries on a monitor rather than through eyepieces — giving the operating team the same field of view as the surgeon, Mr. Fleming said.

The Leica partnership will help increase sales from an estimated \$3 million to \$4 million in 2013 to something approaching "the \$6 million to \$9 million range" by the end of 2014, he said.

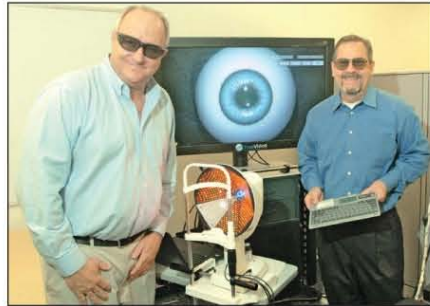
"That will be a quite a milestone if we reach it," Mr. Fleming said of a company founded in 2003 by scientist Mike Weissman.

The company's growth has been boosted by the financial backing of 100 investors, many of them high-net-worth individuals and physicians who clearly see the upside potential in surgical microscopy with TrueVision's product line.

"There's a lot of smart money invested in this technology," said Mr. Fleming.

Neurosurgeons and ophthalmic surgeons each comprise 40 percent of users. Ear, nose and throat specialists and orthopedic surgeons make up the remaining 20 percent of TrueVision's physician-customers.

Sales calls are made at hospitals, surgery centers and academic medi-



TrueVision CEO Forrest Fleming, left, and Vice President of Marketing Robert Reali don 3D glasses during a demonstration of TrueVision technology.

cal centers in the United States and worldwide.

With Leica taking so many of TrueVision's products to market, might the alliance one day result in a merger?

"There have been discussions about them (Leica) acquiring us, but no term sheet has been extended," said Mr. Fleming. A term

sheet implies the conditions of a business transaction, as proposed by a party.

Despite the strong interest, Mr. Fleming said TrueVision is content for the time being to see how the distribution relationship unfolds in the next year.

In the meantime, the company, which has about 40 employees, has



NIK BLASKOVICH/NEWS-PRESS FILE PHOTOS

The company's global growth keeps the crew busy at its Santa Barbara headquarters.

inked another co-development and distribution deal with Orlando, Fla.-based LensAR. The business will overlay TrueVision software in its cataract surgery laser system.

The outlook for strategic partner-

ships with medical manufacturers is positive and bodes well for future employment at the Santa Barbara company, Mr. Fleming said.

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Author Brock Brower dies at 82

By MARILYN MCMAHON
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Author and journalist Brock Brower, whose literary output ranged from novels to television writing to political speeches, died April 16 at Serenity House at the age of 82. His family gave the cause of death as cancer.

The author of seven books, Mr. Brower was the creator of "The Last Great Creature," a satiric Hollywood novel featuring an aging horror film star who uses his last movie to scare America into confronting its own frightening psyche.

A finalist for the National Book Award in 1973, the book recently was reissued by Overlook Press.

Mr. Brower also left his mark as a magazine journalist, contributing to Life, Esquire, Harper's and New York Magazines, among other leading publications in the 1960s and '70s.

Well-known journalist and author Lou Cannon knew Mr. Brower well.

"He was a tour de force, a very distinguished journalist. I met him in 1968 when Hubert Humphrey was the Democratic nominee for president. He was writing long pieces for Time and Fortune magazines — profiles of such political figures as Humphrey, Richard Nixon, Sen. Edward Kennedy and George Romney," Mr. Cannon told the News-Press by phone from his home in Summerland.

Mr. Cannon was senior White House correspondent for the Washington Post when Ronald Reagan was president. He has written five books about Mr. Reagan.

"Brock and I became friends on the campaign trail, and when he moved to Santa Barbara in 2007, we resumed our friendship," said Mr. Cannon. "I read 'The Last Great Creature' when it was reissued. It is very well done."

Mr. Brower later worked in television, helping to originate Hugh Downs' "20/20" broadcast for ABC News, as well as The Children's Television Network science show, "3-2-1 Contact!"

In the latter half of his career, Mr. Brower was a speech writer for Attorney General Richard Thornburgh during President George H.W. Bush's administration, and was co-author,



COURTESY PHOTOS

Journalist and author Brock Brower moved to the South Coast in 2007.

with David M. Abshire of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, of the book, "Putting America's House in Order," a salvo in the budget policy wars.

Born in Plainfield and raised in Westfield, N.J., Mr. Brower was the oldest of three children of advertising executive Charles H. Brower, who was chairman and CEO of the Madison Avenue heyday portrayed in the TV drama, "Mad Men."

His mother, Betty Brower, once held the women's world record in the 200-meter dash. His younger brother, the Honorable Charles N. Brower, a barrister in London and a former negotiator in President Nixon's State Department, is a leading international lawyer, a judge at The Hague and noted expert in international financial arbitration.

Mr. Brower's younger sister, Dr. Anne C. Brower, was a highly re-



garded bone radiologist, leader of academic medical departments and Episcopal priest in Norfolk, Va., before her death last fall.

A graduate of Westfield High School, Mr. Brower went to Dart-

mouth College in Hanover, N.H., where he was editor-in-chief of the college newspaper, The Daily Dartmouth, his senior year.

After graduation in 1953, he attended **BROWER** on a

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EVENTS TODAY

Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival: 11 a.m.-7 p.m. today, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. Alameda Park, 1400 Santa Barbara St. Theme is "Local Roots." Information booths, vendors, green car show, farm-to-table dinner, artisan marketplace, speakers and children's activities. Presented by Community Environmental Council. Free admission. 963-0593 or www.sbarearthday.org.

Soiree for Surfrider: 6:30-9:30 p.m. Walter Claudio Salon Spa, 11 W. Figueroa St. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages, raffle, music from Dustin Janson of Freakin' on Speakers, models showcasing salon's services, and guest speakers from Surfrider Foundation, the beneficiary \$20 advance or at door. 963-7579 or tina@walterclaudio.com.

Santa Barbara's Founding Day: 11 a.m. Mass, noon ceremony, 1-3 p.m. living history, 3 p.m. Solemn Vespers of Easter Sunday. El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park, 123 E. Canon Perdido St. See birthplace of Santa Barbara and enjoy costumed re-enactment of original founding ceremony held on April 21, 1782, at El Presidio de Santa Barbara, early California dance and musical performances; and presentation of Saint Barbara 2014 by Native Daughters. Presented by Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation. Free. 965-0093.

Rail Excursion: 10:15 a.m. departs Santa Barbara, 10:27 a.m. departs Goleta; returns 4:16 p.m. Goleta, 4:31 p.m. Santa Barbara. Board at Santa Barbara or Goleta Amtrak stations. South Coast Railroad Museum's trip to San Luis Obispo on two vintage rail cars. \$82, or \$79 if purchased online.

includes beverage and snack. Passengers can pre-order boxed lunches prepared by Far Western Tavern and picked up at Guadalupe train station on morning leg. For tickets, call Terry Remick at 680-0397 or go to goletadeptop.org/ride.

2014 Art Career Day Conference: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Santa Barbara City College, Fe Bland Forum, 721 Cliff Drive. For teens and young adults ages 13-25 who are interested in pursuing a career in the arts, this event features speakers, break-out sessions by professional artists and more. Presented by Art Without Limits in collaboration with other local organizations and individuals. Free. To register, call 565-1332 or go to www.artc-sb.org.

SB Walk to Cure Arthritis: 8 a.m. registration, 9:30 a.m. walk. Santa Barbara City College, West Campus, 967 Cliff Drive. One-mile or three-mile options through campus and along beach, health expo, food, entertainment, and kids' activities. Presented by Arthritis Foundation. Pre-registration encouraged. 563-4685 or www.ccarthritiswalk.org.

SB VisionWalk: 9 a.m. registration, 10:15 a.m. walk. Chase Palm Park, 323 E. Cabrillo Blvd. 5K walk, activities for children, refreshments, live music and more. Presented by Foundation Fighting Blindness. Pre-registration encouraged. 866-782-7330 or www.fightblindness.org/santabarbaravisionwalk.

Off the Wall Art Fundraiser: 6 p.m. reception, 6:45 p.m. art selection. Ridley-Tree Education Center at McCormick House, 1600 Santa Barbara St. More than 100 local and regional artists have donated works for the event, which starts with live auction for first three picks of art; participants then select

remaining works based on order names are drawn. Benefits Santa Barbara Museum of Art Women's Board. \$350, includes admission for two and one work of art. 884-6428 or info@sbmawb.org.

Museum Marketplace: 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Carpinteria Valley Museum of History, 955 Maple Ave., Carpinteria. Includes antiques, collectibles, arts and crafts, furniture, clothing, tools, household items, toys and plants. All proceeds benefit museum. Free admission. 684-3112.

Film Screening: 4:30 p.m. Ojai Playhouse, 145 E. Ojai Ave. Ojai "Saving Mr. Banks," rated PG-13. Presented by Ojai Film Society, \$10 general, \$7 seniors 65 and older and students with ID. 646-8946 or www.ojaifilmsociety.org.

Local Artisans Market: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Calle Real Shopping Center, 5660 Calle Real, Goleta. Arts and crafts, food goods and more. Free admission. 455-9919 or www.localartisansmarket.com.

Historic Santa Barbara Walking Tour: 10 a.m.-noon. Meet on steps of City Hall by De la Guerra Plaza. Walking tour covers post-1925 architecture, landscape design and history of Santa Barbara. Presented by Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara. No baby strollers or dogs. \$10 general, free to children ages 3-12 if accompanied by an adult. 965-6307 or www.afsb.org.

Life Transitions Workshop: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Working ARTIST Gallery, 109 N. Blanche St., Suite 103, Ojai. "A Kinder Way Through Transitions." Leader is Daisy Swan, Los Angeles career coach and mindfulness instructor. \$15. To register, call 877-872-3929 or go to www.daisyswan.com/career-coaching/resources/calendar-of-events.

Homestyle Bridge Party: 6-9:30 p.m. Santa Barbara Bridge Center, 2255 Las Positas Road. Social bridge with master points. Minimum of 16 hands in four rounds. Players will play different teams on each round. Partners available for single players. Includes dinner and drinks. Reservations required. \$25. To RSVP, call Don Elconin at 452-1221.

Sierra Club Hike: 8 a.m. Meet behind Bank of America on upper State Street at Hope Avenue. Cold Spring, Forbush Flat to Grotto. Strenuous six miles round-trip. Bring lunch and water. For more information, call Tony at 682-8290.

Arroyo Honda Preserve Docent Tours: 10 a.m.-noon. Arroyo Honda Preserve, between Refugio State Beach and Gaviota State Park. Join docent on hike along creek and to lookout point with ocean and canyon views. Reservations required. Free. 567-1115.

The Mermaids Tale: 7 p.m. today and 2 p.m. Sunday. Santa Maria High School, Ethel Pope Auditorium, 901 S. Broadway, Santa Maria. Alan Hancock College youth dancers will present "A Mermaid's Tale" and their spring recital as part of the annual Magical Moments dance event. \$8 adults, \$5 seniors, students and children; at door. 922-6966.

Junior Ranger Program: 12:30-1:30 p.m. Neal Taylor Nature Center, State Route 154. Children earn a badge with help of Santa Barbara County Park naturalist as they learn about wildlife and care of environment. Children 10 and younger must be accompanied by adult. \$2 each child, \$10 park admission per vehicle. 688-4515.