

ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

> ENGINEERING ALUM MOVES THE EARTH CLOSER TO PRIVATE SPACE FLIGHTS

BRITISH MILLIONAIRE RICHARD BRANSON and alumnus and aviation pioneer **Burt Rutan (B.S., Aero Engineering, 1965)** are taking deposits for space flight tickets on their Virgin Galactic spaceline. In January, they unveiled their new rocket, dubbed SpaceShipTwo, and its carrier aircraft, VMS Eve, at an airport in the Mojave Desert. Instead of trying to launch a rocket directly into space, plans call for the carrier craft to lift SpaceShipTwo to an altitude of 50,000 feet. At that point, SpaceShipTwo – carrying six paying passengers and two pilots – would separate and blast off to about 325,000 feet, or 60 miles, above the Earth's surface. At that altitude, passengers experience weightlessness and see the curve of the Earth. Ticket price: \$200,000. □

> ANIMAL SCIENCE ALUM IS PRESIDENT OF THE CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION

Modesto-area almond and walnut grower **Paul Wenger (B.S., Animal Science, 1979)** was elected president of the California Farm Bureau Federation in December. Wenger, 54, a third-generation family farmer, will assume the role of spokesman for the organization on a wide range of issues of interest to farmers around the state, including access to water and economic pressures. □

> ENGLISH ALUMNA WRITES CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED BIOGRAPHY OF RAYMOND CARVER

Cal Poly alumna **Carol Sklenicka (English, 1971)** has written a critically acclaimed biography, "Raymond Carver." Scribner published the book in November. The book is Sklenicka's portrait of the iconic short-story writer. It was hailed as one of the top 10 books of 2009 in the New York Times Book Review. □

> BUSINESS ALUM TRADES MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL POSSIBILITIES FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

Alum and former Mustang Baseball standout **Grant Desme (Business Administration, 2008)** made headlines in February by making a major career change: opting out of pro baseball to enter the priesthood. Desme walked away from the Oakland Athletics minor league team to become a Catholic priest. □



Cal Poly alum and aviation pioneer Burt Rutan.

> VIT ALUMS' PALATE-CLEANSING BEVERAGE MENTIONED IN WALL STREET JOURNAL

What's the best way to cleanse the palate between wine tastings? It was a senior project question, and now it's a drink called SanTasti. And it was mentioned in February in a Wall Street Journal story on consumer wine tasting events and studies. Grads **Andrew Macaluso (B.S., Wine & Viticulture, 2008)** and business partner **Nicole Chamberlain (B.S., Wine & Viticulture, 2008)** are producing and marketing the drink in wine stores and tasting rooms. □

> AG BUSINESS ALUM IS NAMED KERN CATTLEMAN OF THE YEAR

The Kern County CattleWomen's Association and the Kern County Cattlemen's Association honored **Jay Hershey III (B.S., Ag Business, 1968)** for his contributions toward advancing the beef industry's interests. Hershey, 64, and his wife own Rivermere Ranches at Deer Creek, an assortment of range ground in Edison and parts of Tulare County that they lease to Rube Cattle Co. Hershey has enjoyed a 25-year career as a commercial loan officer, followed by several more years as a financial adviser. He worked his family's ranch nights and weekends. □

> BIOLOGY ALUMNA HELPS IN HAITI

Recent Cal Poly graduate **Heidi Swangler (B.S., Biological Science, 2009)** headed to Haiti in February on a medical mission in Port-au-Prince. Swangler, of Atascadero, assisted physicians from Oregon in a makeshift clinic beside a collapsed hospital. A volunteer with Virgin Islands nonprofit Haiti Community Support, Swangler held the hands of toddlers receiving stitches, created mixtures of sugar and salt to combat infant dehydration, and more. □