

The Courier-Journal

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TECH BITS

Earphones designed for women's needs

Altec Lansing has created a series of noise-isolating earphones with women in mind. Designed with smaller housings to better fit a woman's ears, the lineup features earphones that mimic the look and feel of earrings. Available in a diamond-cut style in black, pink and aqua, the Bliss Platinum MZX736 set focuses on producing top-notch bass. Priced at \$70, it includes a braided cloth cord and a carrying case. Designed with a sparkly housing in lilac, rose or violet, the Bliss Gold MZX436 earphones deliver sound, with enhanced vocals, for \$50. The Bliss Silver MZX236 model provides a sporty look in gold, teal and red for \$30. The Platinum and Gold models come with four different-sized ear tips, while the Silver has three.

www.alteclansing.com

Program remembers log-ins and more for you

Have trouble keeping track of all your log-ins and passwords? "RoboForm Desktop 7" from Siber Systems can help. Designed to work with a variety of browsers, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome and Safari for Windows, the program securely stores confidential info, such as passwords and credit-card numbers, which streamlines the completion of Web sign-ins and online forms. Multitaskers who log in to the same sites each day can use the program's "Batch Login" to sign on at several sites at once. "RoboForm Desktop 7" costs about \$30. If you need help logging in from other gadgets, the company offers "RoboForm Everywhere 7," an online account that tracks and syncs passwords for multiple gadgets, including iPhones and Android devices. A one-year subscription costs about \$20.

www.roboform.com

Scanner works with books

Scanning a page or chapter from a book can be tricky unless you have a scanner specifically designed for the task. Consider the OpticBook 3800, a scanner made for scanning books, magazines and other bound material. Thanks to its shadow elimination technology, it can scan a book without displaying the book's spine shadow or distorted text. Capable of producing a scanned image with a resolution of 1,200 dpi, the Plustek scanner costs about \$300.

www.plustek.com

Panasonic unveils high-def 3D projector

Home theater buffs can immerse themselves in lush 3D images with Panasonic's Full HD 3D home theater projector. Able to project both 2D and 3D images in 1080p high definition, the PT-AE7000U model delivers 2,000 lumens of brightness and a contrast ratio of 300,000:1. Using its 2x zoom, it can produce a 120-inch diagonal image 11 feet to 24 feet from the screen. It also can convert 2D content into 3D images. It will go on sale in September for about \$3,500.

www.panasonic.com

BLOG BYTES

My colleague Marcus Green and I saw a lot of eyesores around Louisville when working on our June series about vacant and abandoned properties. But the one I noticed a few weeks ago at 513 E. Kentucky St. is, well, something else.

MORE ONLINE

Read more from reporter Chris Otts' blog at derbycity-centers.courier-journal.com.

Business

The Courier-Journal



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SUNDAY
AUGUST 14, 2011



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By Bill Luster, The Courier-Journal

Pascal Deschatelets, left, and Cedric Francois of Apellis Pharmaceuticals are working on a new medication to treat asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, with the goal of selling it to a larger company.

How to launch a WONDER DRUG

Potentia executives pursue new breakthroughs as Apellis

By Patrick Howington | pHowington@courier-journal.com | The Courier-Journal

Two years ago, in one of the biggest successes ever for Louisville's young life-sciences industry, Potentia Pharmaceuticals sold a potentially groundbreaking vision drug to Alcon, the world's largest eye-care company.

Now Potentia's two main officers and their new company, Apellis Pharmaceuticals, are using the scientific concept behind that drug to develop a medication for two lung ailments — asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The drug is designed to block the flawed immune-system activity that causes the inflammation that figures in those two diseases and many others, including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, said Cedric Francois, the company's chief executive.

Apellis, located in Crestwood, is in the early stages of developing its drug, with animal tests to begin soon.

But Francois said it has already raised \$8 million — mostly from East Coast and foreign investors — to pay for ongoing research to gauge the drug's potential. Apellis is expected to release details of its financing soon.

Success in attracting money from major health care venture funds outside Louisville was also key for Potentia, which raised about \$25 million to de-

"We believe that we have something ... that could be very, very important medically. Hopefully (we can) create a conceptual shift where people target those diseases in different ways than they do today."

CEDRIC FRANCOIS, CEO of Apellis

velop the macular degeneration drug it sold to Alcon.

That deal came six years after Potentia moved to Louisville from Boston, where it was established after some of its founders won business-plan competitions at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Apellis hopes it won't take that long to develop its lung drug to the point that a larger pharmaceutical company will buy rights to it. Francois said he hopes that will happen in one to three years.

"We kind of know how to do it now," said Francois, a physician trained in Belgium and at the University of Louisville.

The compound in the Potentia and Apellis drugs binds tightly to an immune-system protein to block the process that can cause chronic inflammation when the system fails to turn itself off properly after at-

tacking a virus or bacteria.

Scientists at the University of Pennsylvania discovered the drug, and Potentia acquired the rights to it in 2006.

After that, Francois and Pascal Deschatelets, a Harvard-trained chemist who is chief operating officer of Apellis, developed the compound into a drug that could be injected into eyes of patients with age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness.

Now they hope to create a form of the compound that can be inhaled into the lungs to treat severe asthma and COPD.

Beyond that, they see the possibility of adapting the compound — which blocks a disease's basic mechanism rather than treating its symptoms — for use against other conditions.

"We believe that we have something very attractive that could be very, very important medically," Francois said. "Hopefully (we can) create a conceptual shift where people target those diseases in different ways than they do today."

Mike Yeadon, former chief scientific officer for respiratory research at drug giant Pfizer, said if Apellis' approach works, it "will be the first to really get to grips with the disease."

Yeadon now has a consulting firm in England and has

See **APELLIS**, Back page, col. 1

Retiree has array of issues to decide

Financial choices can be confusing

At the beginning of the summer, at 65, a friend was laid off from her job at a major corporation. She wisely sought the advice of a financial planner, but she's still worried about making the wrong choices.

Michelle Singletary



She wanted help in reviewing her options. If she makes the wrong decision — or panics, as many investors have done since the debt-ceiling deal was announced — she could run out

of money.

As we talked, she was struggling to answer my questions, shuffling papers and getting increasingly frustrated. She's better off than many people forced into retirement. At least she has a pension. And yet, near the end of our conversation, she was in tears.

"I should have done more," she said, her voice quivering. "I just didn't know. I just didn't know."

She shouldn't feel guilty. She did the best she could with the information she had. If you're in the pre-retirement phase of your life or you've been pushed into retirement because of a job loss, you're going to face a blizzard of choices. And what a time to have to face them.

Here are just a few of the issues my friend, who asked that her name not be used, was weighing as the stock market was lurching up and down last week:

► Should she take a lump sum from her pension or opt for monthly annuity payments that continue until she dies? She's not married, so she doesn't have to worry about options that would affect a spouse. (AARP has a calculator that is useful for spouses to evaluate pension options. Go to aarp.org and search for "Pension Plan Retirement Options.") If she takes the lump sum, she controls the money. If she invests it, and all goes as planned, she could generate as much as, if not more than, the income that the annuity would have provided.

But that's a big if. Is she capable, on her own or with the help of a financial adviser, to take on the investment risk herself? Would she panic in the future when stocks fluctuate wildly?

On the other hand, the annuity payment is a guaranteed monthly stream of income. What if her former company goes out of business? She didn't know that the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (pbgc.gov), a federal agency, is responsible for paying the benefits of failed pension plans. Its operations are financed by insurance premiums and with assets and recoveries from failed plans. The maximum payment for plans that are taken over this year is \$4,500 a month for someone 65. Her annuity payment is well below that amount.

► She's got to decide if she wants to keep her 401(k) where it is or roll it over to an IRA. If she does the rollover, she'll have to decide

See **SINGLETARY**, D2, col. 4

Lean times call for careful spending

Author is proud to be cheapskate

By Gregory Karp
Chicago Tribune

Among advice-givers who talk about smart spending, Clark Howard is perhaps the dean.

Howard relays encyclopedic knowledge of money and consumer issues on his national radio call-in show and on television's HLN, formerly CNN Headline News.

Many money gurus will talk about investing and other broad money topics, but Howard is different be-

cause he gets into the nitty-gritty of everyday spending — an area on which most finance experts don't dare to tread.

Howard is equally comfortable talking about cellphone plans, 401(k) plans and travel plans. Since 1987, he has been doling out money advice and naming products and brands he thinks are superior, along with those he thinks stink. He accepts no endorsements, although he does have advertisements on his website and radio program.

Howard's breadth of knowledge is featured in his new book — his ninth — "Clark Howard's Living Large in Lean Times."



Consumer advocate Clark Howard does his daily radio show, left, from WSB in Atlanta. He also appears on cable-TV's HLN.

Undeniably affable and enthusiastic, this self-proclaimed cheapskate from Atlanta said this book is different from his others because of the dour economic climate. He didn't have to waste words justifying to readers why it's important to spend money carefully. He could just dive right into the tips.

"In the past, people thought I

was kooky or cute about being so cheap," he said. "Now, it's suddenly hip to be that way."

Here's a sampling of his advice topics from the book:

Cars

Vehicle buying is the No. 1 spending weakness for today's consumer, Howard said. "People buy cars on emotion. They buy in a day, and they're stuck with consequences for four to seven years."

Most consumers do car-shopping backward, he said. They go shopping for a car and then figure out how to pay for it. He suggests

See **SPENDING**, Back page, col. 1

APELLIS: Breakthrough drug pursued

done some work for Apellis.

He said what makes Francois and Deschatelets special is their ability to spot disease patterns that other scientists have missed.

They have “a remarkable understanding of disease pathology, and instinct and experience in seeing where science can address major unmet medical needs, and how to go about fixing it,” Yeadon said. “This is often a hallmark of striking breakthroughs.”

Potentia’s early growth was aided by two organizations that help medical-related companies grow — MetaCyte Business Lab and Nucleus, an initiative of the UofL Foundation.

The company was located in Louisville’s downtown life-sciences complex and grew to 15 employees. But after the Alcon deal, Potentia let most of those staff members go and moved to Crest-

wood, where it employs five.

Francois said the company hopes to move back downtown, perhaps into the research park that Nucleus is building on the old Haymarket property.

“This is a perfect example of how the entrepreneurial cycle works,” said Vickie Yates Brown, CEO of Nucleus. With the help of organizations like Nucleus, she said, scientists with a good idea can develop a

practical application for it and find companies to buy their technology.

“The entrepreneur then reinvests those dollars into the next good idea,” Brown said. “It is very gratifying that Nucleus has helped Cedric do exactly that as he is now growing Apellis Pharmaceuticals.”

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