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## A Chaldean American Success Story

From Baghdad to San Diego, Sabri Shamoun lives the American dream. **SEE PG. 11**

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# COVER STORY



## ON THE COVER:

### Living The American Dream

Sabri Shamoun, a 74-year-old Chaldean American, grew the earnings from a small grocery store in Detroit into a profitable real estate venture in San Diego that has made him millions and secured the financial futures of his family and many others through his generosity. Page 11



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### Gender Diversity Missing in Film

Martha Lauzen, founder of the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University, has documented the shameful lack of women directors in film. Lauzen says there's been a "profound lack of leadership" on the issue by film studio heads and union executives.



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### 2014 Porsche Cayman

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### Defending Against Cybercrime

Since 2011, the nonprofit organization Secure Our eCity Foundation has offered free workshops to businesses, families, students and seniors across San Diego in an effort to thwart cybercrime. We simply have to have people become more aware of their day-to-day practices, says Liz Fraumann, the executive director of the foundation.



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# Mexico's No Friend to the U.S.

## A shameful catalog of indifference By Bob Page

Where's the outrage. Wake up, America! Have we become a nation of sheep?

As the Chicago Tribune's John Kass said in a recent column, the only way a nation can lose is way is "when the people fall silent."

Is that what we've become? Do we no longer give a damn about how we're governed or how foreign governments play our government in Washington for fools.

Unless you're one of those low information people, one who would rather watch soap operas than pay attention to what the hell is going on, the rest of us better wake up and quick.

Here's what is missing in the conversation about the thousands of unaccompanied children and the few adults traveling with them who have wound up on our side of the Rio Grande River.

Mexico's complicity.

What passes for a government by its standards and which claims to be our friend and which sits on our southern border has rarely if ever lifted a finger to stop the swarm of illegals running, swimming, hiding in trunks or crawling through tunnels to get into the United States.

Mexico continues to play our fools in Washington like chump changers.

I've lost all doubts about whether Mexico is a friend of the United States.

It is not.

Think not. Then consider some current facts:

- A highly decorated Marine sergeant sits locked in a Tecate jail for making a wrong turn at the border. This must be the first time in history that the old mordida (a bribe) game hasn't worked. This must be the only tactic the sergeant's mother hasn't

tried to get her son out of that hell hole.

- Mexico's most revered and listened to newscaster denouncing residents in Escondido and Murrieta for fuming about the Border Patrol's effort to place hundreds of illegals in their cities. He said he was sorry for their 1,450-mile journey through Mexico and opined why the United States was so heartless or even giving a thought as to Mexico's irresponsible role in any of this. Remember, in Mexico it is always the fault of big bad El Norte.

- Border agents being fired at by one of the federales' helicopters that had crossed into U.S. airspace. That happened within the past month. Earlier in the year, armed Mexican soldiers were found on our side of the border in Arizona.

- An estimated 52,000 unaccompanied children from Central America have crossed the Rio Grande River into Texas this year. Border authorities expect that number to rise to 90,000 before the end of 2014.

- Nearly no effort on Mexico's part to stop the flow of drugs into the United States. Our consumption is harmful, stupid and disgraceful but the cartels move drugs through Mexico with impunity, which places the bulk of the burden to stop them on our border agents.

- We rightly complain about how our porous border is an easy invitation for illegals to cross into the United States, but what about Mexico's border with Guatemala.

- Mexico's border with Guatemala is 541 miles in length. There is not a sliver of evidence that Mexico has ever done anything to stop illegals from entering their country en route to the United States. How's that

for friendship? In a court of law, here not in Mexico, the enablers would be charged as accomplices to a crime.

- The best answer is that the smugglers and/or cartels have a thriving business, in cahoots as they always are, with the federales and local police.

- The smugglers force their clients to hop one of the network of freight trains which run the length of Mexico (1,450 miles). The trains are called La Bestia, or the Beast. Some call them the Trains of Death.

A team of American reporters working for Al Jazeera American TV recently traced a journey of immigrants who died while making their way across Mexico on a train. These are not passenger trains, no seats, no roofs. These are kids as well as adults sitting on top of box cars hoping/praying they'll make it to their final destinations. Al Jazeera says it is estimated that up to a half million migrants now ride The Beast each year, holding on for dear life. Some do survive the journey and some are beaten, killed, raped or tortured. All of this takes place inside Mexico's borders.

In the meantime, of course, we've forked over \$800 million to Mexico in the past three years in the form of "foreign aid."

And what does Mexico do to show its appreciation. You know the answer.



**Bob Page**  
Chairman & CEO  
SD METRO

# SAN DIEGO SCENE

## Zephyr Partners to Build 40-Story Towers

Zephyr Partners has acquired a full city block in Downtown San Diego for \$21.1 million and plans to spend more than \$250 million to build two 40-floor towers housing residential, boutique hotel and retail space. The San Diego-based real estate development and investment company said groundbreaking on the giant project is slated for fourth quarter 2015.

The original eight-property portfolio was built in the 1950s and had fallen into disrepair over the last 30 years, said Brad Termini, co-CEO of Zephyr.

It holds rundown and underutilized retail, parking and office space -- all of which will be demolished.

The site is on Broadway, between Seventh and Eighth avenues. Zoning allows for the development of up to 750,000 square feet.

"This transaction offered a rare opportunity to acquire property in urban San Diego," said Termini. "The site spans a full city block, and

is one of the few remaining underdeveloped areas in Downtown's core. After studying the layout of other major urban areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle, we think this project will accelerate the transformation of Downtown San Diego, as it continues to evolve into a more walkable and accessible neighborhood."

The project will be the city's first high-rise, mixed-use project since the recession. The goal, said Termini, is to create a unique urban living and retail destination that residents, locals and tourists will enjoy.

It will be Zephyr Partners' largest development. The company recently acquired property at 2850 Sixth Ave., where it will build 60 high-end, luxury condominiums, which will be completed in 2015, the company said.



Stylized rendering of two towers Zephyr Partners will build in Downtown San Diego.



NBC 7's new headquarters will be at 9680 Granite Ridge Drive.

## NBC 7 Moving From Downtown to Kearny Mesa

NBC 7 San Diego will be moving out of the Downtown high-rise that bears its name next year and moving into a 52,347-square-foot office building in Kearny Mesa that it purchased for \$9.6 million. The two story, Class A building is located at 9680 Granite Ridge Drive in the StoneCrest office complex .

"Evolving media technologies, a need for a larger studio, and today's favorable cost of funds made it advantageous for NBC 7 San Diego to purchase their own building," said Tim Cowden, senior vice president at Colliers International, which represented the television station. The station is currently housed at 225 Broadway. It expects to be in the new building in the third quarter 2016 after major improvements are done next year.

The seller of the Kearny Mesa building is T-C Stonecrest LLC, which was represented by CBRE in the sales transaction.

**The Inside View from Jason Hughes  
Class A Space in Short Supply As Companies Flock to Downtown San Diego**



What happened to Downtown San Diego? Over the past six months, Downtown has undergone an incredibly swift evolution. Starting as the “cost-effective” alternative, rents are quickly rising, though still not on par with the soaring rates of the suburbs. Today, Downtown is unequivocally the “It” place to be for companies focused on talent recruitment, employee retention, and being part of a thriving, energetic community. As a result, companies setting up shop downtown have gobbled up nearly all the Class A office space on the market.

Rest assured, this movement is not just in the tech arena. Kleinfelder, an international architecture and engineering firm, moved its team from Governor Park into a 40,000+ square foot space on 550 West C Street sev-

eral months ago. Berkshire Hathaway has its eyes set on downtown too, moving out of 20,000+ square feet in Mission Valley into 30,000 sf at 525 B Street. AECOM has moved its team from 1420 Kettner and Governor Park into a 40,000+ square foot space in 401 West A Street. Bumble Bee Foods moved its global headquarters from Kearny Mesa to the Showley Brothers’ Candy Factory for 30,000+ square feet on the outfield of Petco Park.

So what gives? Why the movement to and buzz about Downtown?

1) It’s still the most cost-effective alternative compared to other Class A and B space across the county.

2) Amenities, amenities, amenities. Downtown is the only true live-work-play

environment in the county. It’s one of the most walkable large cities in the U.S. and has more restaurants than Sorrento Valley, UTC, and Del Mar Heights has combined!

3) It’s where the talent lives. Little Italy, San Diego, was just named the Millennial Capital of the U.S. and it is the most desirable place for young talent to live-work-play. When competing with the Googles and Twitters of the world, talent recruitment and retention is one of the most challenging aspects of running a successful company in San Diego. The best way to keep them happy is to make sure they love where they work.

The only issue with relocating to downtown? There is currently no new commercial construction underway. Downtown is one of the few markets to have zero commercial high-rises constructed in the last economic downturn. However, that’s not to say we won’t be seeing some of the city’s best high-rises pop up in the next 5 years

Jason Hughes is president and CEO of Hughes Marino, a San Diego commercial real estate company specializing in tenant representation and building purchases.

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## UC San Diego Leads Statewide Initiative to Map the Brain

The California budget signed by Gov. Jerry Brown creates a statewide research grants program called Cal-BRAIN, an initiative led by UC San Diego. With an initial allocation of \$2 million, Cal-BRAIN -- short for California Blueprint for Research to Advance Innovations in Neuroscience -- is a state complement to the federal BRAIN Initiative announced by President Barack Obama in April 2013. It aims to “accelerate the development of brain mapping techniques, including the development of new technologies.”

According to a report put out by the university, UC San Diego played a significant role in the national initiative and will now lead the state effort to revolutionize our understanding of the brain and the diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders of all kinds. “By improving our ability to see what goes on in the brain in much greater detail and at a much faster timescale, we aim to make discoveries around autism, Alzheimer’s, PTSD and other behavioral health issues and injuries that affect every-



one from our children to our homeless veterans,” the report said.

In this leadership role, UC San Diego will guide the collaboration among the UC campuses and is currently discussing a significant financial investment of non-state, university resources in Cal-BRAIN.

Ralph Greenspan, director of UC San Diego’s Center for Brain Activity Mapping, established at the university in May 2013, is coauthor with Paul Alivisatos, director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, of a proposal to the University

of California Office of the President and to the state Legislature that served as a blueprint for the bill just signed into law.

Said Chancellor Pradeep Khosla, “We will be developing the next technology cluster in ‘neurotech’ just as we did in high-tech, clean-tech and more, creating high paying jobs and world renowned results. I am confident that, with our strengths in neuroscience and biotechnology in San Diego, we will be producing ground-breaking research with significant social impacts.”

## Cal State San Marcos Seeks NCAA Division II Status

California State University San Marcos has applied for NCAA Division II status and plans to build a 1,400-seat multipurpose arena. Cougars athletic teams have competed in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics -- a separate organization outside of the NCAA -- for 15 years.

If the application is accepted next month, the transition would take place over a three-year period beginning in fall 2015, according to the school, which made the announcements in its semiannual Steps magazine. CSUSM would become eligible for NCAA

post-season events in the 2017-18 academic year.

The attraction for CSUSM is in joining the California Collegiate Athletic Association, which encompasses a dozen public universities in California, including UC San Diego.

“CSUSM Athletics is ready to take that next step in the department’s competitive growth,” said CSUSM Director of Athletics Jennifer Milo. “That next step for us is becoming a part of the NCAA Division II as a member. Our coaches, staff and student-athletes have worked extremely hard to build a strong foundation that will give us the opportunity to have an immediate impact in

the NCAA and the CCAA.”

The planned arena would host men’s and women’s basketball games, volleyball contests, campus recreation and community events. The school said construction was set to begin this fall, with opening scheduled in two years.



Girls soccer.

## UC San Diego Names Deaf Professor as New Dean

Take it as a sign of support. UC San Diego has named deaf professor and “Genius Grant” recipient Carol Padden as dean of the Division of Social Sciences after an extensive national search

An award-winning scholar of sign languages, Padden has been on the faculty of the UC San Diego Department of Communication since 1983, when she earned her Ph.D. from the university’s Department of Linguistics. She won her MacArthur Fellowship, popularly known as the “genius grant,” in 2010.

Born in Washington, D.C., the second deaf child of deaf parents who were both on the faculty at Gallaudet University, Padden first attended a school for deaf children but transferred to the public school system in third grade.

It was a long adjustment for her and one she describes as being “akin to being educated abroad.” Her interest in linguistics and culture, she writes, “is strongly rooted” in those formative experiences of “moving between different worlds and languages,”

Padden served as associate dean and faculty equity advisor in the Division of Social Sciences from 2008 to 2013. She currently serves as UC San Diego’s interim vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion. Her appointment as dean takes effect Oct. 1.

Padden’s main areas of research are language emergence, sign language structure, and cultural life in deaf communities. She plays a central role in promoting research on sign languages around the world and in shaping policy and practices that promote the full participation of deaf people in society.

— Times of San Diego

## Cal State San Marcos Names School of Arts Director

California State University San Marcos has named Jacquelyn Kilpatrick the founding director of the new School of Arts in the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral, and Social Sciences. Previously, Kilpatrick was a professor and former associate vice chancellor at the University of Hawaii, West Oahu.

The School of Arts will be home to the programs delivered by the Visual and Performing Arts Department, an interdisciplinary major with distinct subjects that students may specialize in, including arts and technology, dance studies, music, theater and visual arts/visual culture.

Kilpatrick also served as a special assistant to the provost, and professor and chair in the Department of English at California State University Channel Islands. She was one of 12 founding faculty members responsible for the development of initial policies and procedures for the university, including the creation of curriculum for degree programs such as the Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts.

## Lindbergh Field Opening a Meditation Room

Add San Diego International Airport to the growing list of airports adding meditation rooms, a quiet space for travelers to rest, relax and recharge. A place where you won’t look out of place doing the downward dog.

Officials held an invocation ceremony to commemorate the opening of “The Spirit of Silence,” or Reflection Room, by artist Norie Sato, in Terminal 2 West at Lindbergh Field.

“The Spirit of Silence is a serene place for travelers to contemplate, meditate or pray,” says a San Diego County Airport Authority advisory. “Evocative of the San Diego environ-

ment, the room encourages visitors to sit with their thoughts shielded from the busy airport experience outside. The non-denominational space is sensitive to the diversity of travelers and offers a calm respite before or after flights.”

The sculptural piece for contemplation, the glass panels that help create private areas, the special benches commissioned from Miki Iwasaki and the external and internal surfaces of the space are combined to create the totality of the space.

The room is San Diego International Airport’s first meditation room.

Meditation room at Lindbergh Field.



## More Student Housing/Retail Coming to SDSU

Construction is set to begin on a new mixed-use student housing and retail project on the campus of San Diego State University. South Campus Plaza will include housing for more than 600 students, along with retail outlets designed to serve both the campus and its surrounding neighborhoods, creating a pedestrian-friendly destination for shopping, dining and living.

Located immediately south of the SDSU Transit Center, between Hardy Avenue and Montezuma Road, South Campus Plaza will provide a dynamic gateway to the university, helping to create a sense of place, while also helping SDSU become a more residential campus.

Demand for on-campus housing remains high, and research shows that students who

live on campus have higher GPAs and graduate faster than their peers.

Preliminary work on the site, which is currently home to temporary classrooms, will begin this month. Major project work will start in September.

The project, which was previously known as Plaza Linda Verde, will be constructed in two phases. Phase one consists of two residential buildings above ground-floor retail and an adjacent parking structure, which will serve retail customers.

Upon completion, the residence halls will offer double-occupancy student rooms and apartments for residential education staff and visiting scholars. The buildings also will feature student learning spaces, multipurpose rooms, faculty offices, study areas, lounges and a community kitchen. Student amenities in the building will include a mail room, bicycle storage, laundry room and

trash chutes.

The retail component of the first phase of South Campus Plaza will include a community market store, restaurants and other retail shops. Negotiations with future tenants are ongoing. Sundt Construction, Inc., is the design-build contractor. The project was designed by architecture firms MVEI



An artist's rendering of South Campus Plaza, which is slated to open at SDSU in fall 2016.


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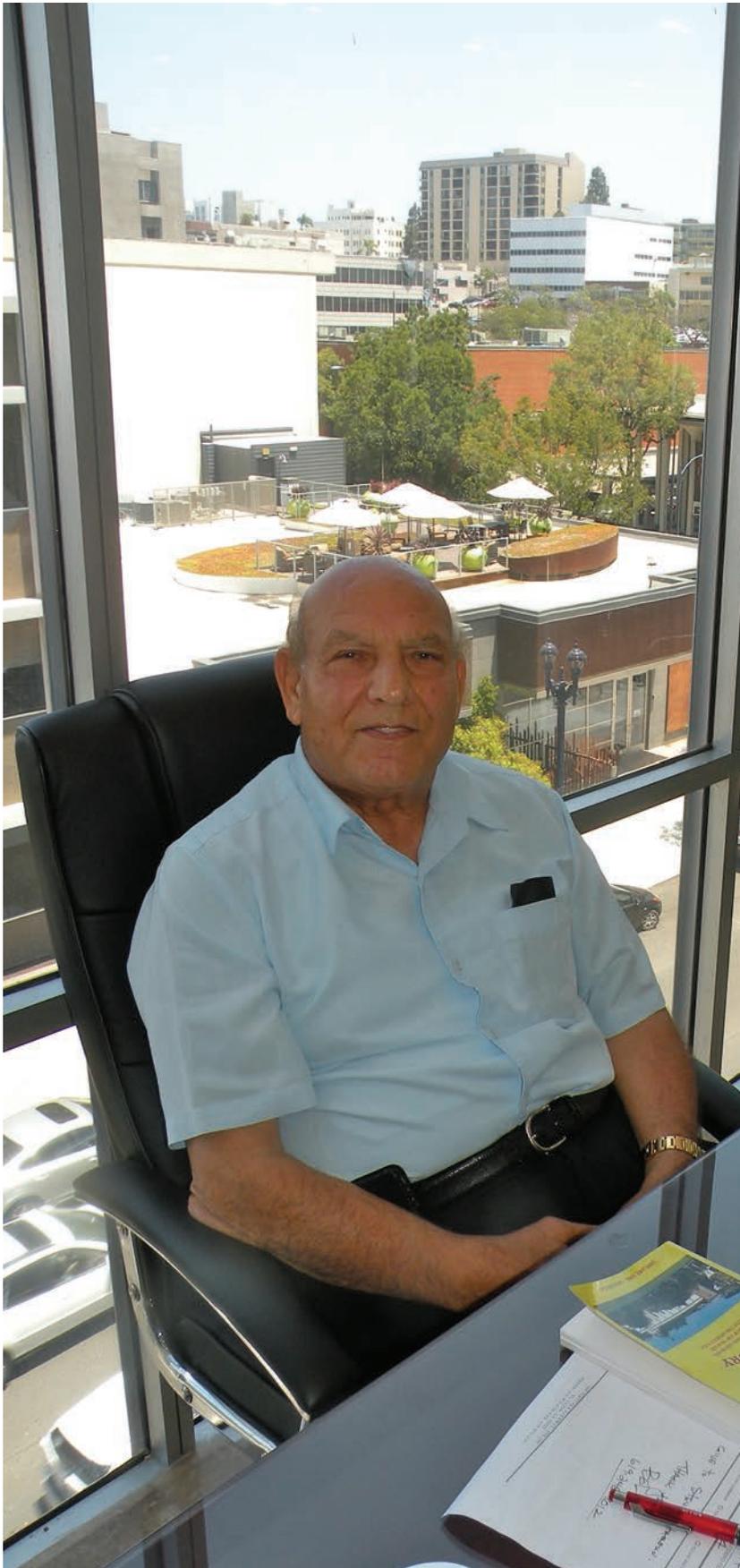
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# A Chaldean American Success Story

Sabri Shamoun lives the American dream

BY MANNY CRUZ

Sabri Shamoun, a 74-year-old Chaldean American, grew the earnings from a small grocery store in Detroit into a profitable real estate venture in San Diego that has made him millions and secured the financial futures of his family and many others through his generosity.

Shamoun's real estate holdings, assembled by him since moving here from Detroit in 1972, include commercial and residential properties around San Diego County, from Normal Heights to Chula Vista to El Cajon and beyond.

He is a gregarious man, but not one to boast about his earnings, though one can properly say that he is a self-made millionaire. Through a keen knowledge of real estate, he has been able to multiply the value of his holdings many times over, as in the case, for example, of property he purchased on Adams Avenue for \$50,000 some years ago, which is now worth \$700,000.

"I have connections with four or five good real estate people," Shamoun said during an interview in the Downtown office of RJS LAW, a firm owned by Ronson J. Shamoun, one of his sons, and where he serves as a consultant. "They know me very well. I am honest and straight. But I told them, 'I just want a good deal. If it is not a good deal, don't call me.'"

A devout Chaldean Catholic, Shamoun speaks forcefully about the things that matter most to him — family, his Christian heritage

and the importance of education for immigrants like him who want to make a productive life for themselves in the United States, and to help others when they can.

### Search for Freedom

“I saw freedom and a better way of living,” says Shamoun, who came to the United States — to Detroit — in 1961, like thousands of other Chaldeans who left Iraq for economic reasons or to escape religious persecution from the Muslim majority in the Middle East.

He would later be lured to San Diego, home to one of the largest Chaldean American communities in the United States. According to the U.S. State Department, Chaldeans have become the fastest-growing refugee community in San Diego. Shamoun lives in El Cajon, a city with a sizeable Chaldean population.

Shamoun grew up in the town of Telkaif, one of several Christian towns in the northern Iraq province of Mosul, near the ruins of the ancient city of Nineveh. According to the late historian Mary C. Sengstock, some of the earliest members of Detroit’s Chaldean American community recall hearing stories from their grandparents about the conversion of their town to Catholicism. This happened about 1830, when the town recognized the Pontiff as the head of the church.

“Chaldeans are from the Arab world, but they are not Arab,” Martin Manna, executive director of Detroit’s Chaldean American Chamber of Commerce, said in a 2011 interview. They are defined by their language, Aramaic, which is the language of Christ.

### Moving to Baghdad, then Detroit

Shamoun says he finished his second year of high school in Telkaif and moved to Baghdad in 1955 to complete his high school education. He stayed for five years. But like many other Chaldeans in Iraq, he desperately wanted to make a new life in

a new country. He set his sights on Detroit, obtaining a student visa from the U.S. Consulate and emigrating to Detroit in 1961 to live with an aunt and uncle. He had \$35 in his pocket. According to historian Sengstock, more than 95 percent of Chaldeans in Detroit can trace their origin to a single town — Telkaif, where Shamoun grew up.

In Detroit, Shamoun attended the Wolverine School of Automotive Repair. “I stayed there for six months and learned the basics of car repair, then went to college at Dearborn for a year,” he says. “But I couldn’t make it because I was poor in language and was not strong financially to pay tuition. And I had to work and help my parents in the old country, so I had to quit.”

Because selling is part of the heritage of Chaldeans — a heritage that goes back to ancient times — it is not surprising that many of the supermarkets in Detroit are owned by Chaldeans. It was not difficult for Shamoun to get work as a cashier and stock boy at a market, working 40 hours a week and getting paid \$25 a week, a decent wage for a new worker at that time.

“After one month my boss gave me an apartment above the store to watch the store, and he saw that I was a hard worker and honest,” says Shamoun. “And he said, ‘You can live upstairs and watch the store at night in case somebody breaks in.’ I told him, ‘OK,’ and so I lived there rent-free and I worked there for a little over a year and then I found another (grocery) job that gave me \$55 a week.”

### Moving Up

For the next few years, Shamoun traded up in the grocery store business to earn bigger paychecks — enough to be able to buy a car and new clothes.

His first business venture came soon after, when he was able to purchase a small store in Detroit — the Hot Spot Market — by taking a loan from his latest boss and making deals with merchandise



Sabri and baby daughter Larissa in one of his stores. Larissa now works as a staff accountant at RJS LAW.

suppliers. Shamoun said he ended up investing \$16,000 in the business. He “cleaned it up and organized it,” resulting in a 30 percent to 40 percent increase in business and revenues of \$50,000 at the end of the first year.

Shamoun’s business success gave him the opportunity to bring many of his family members to the U.S. from Iraq — first his mother and father, then his six siblings, then cousins — a total of about 70 relatives from both sides of the family. He was, in a way, a one-man immigration agency. He purchased a two-story, five-bedroom house in Detroit to house those that came over. “Each family lived in that house for one month, two months, three months, some up to six months, until they got established, sent their kids to school and the father started working,” says Shamoun. Then they would leave and others would follow.

Shamoun says the Immigration and Naturalization Service put a stop to all of that. “I received a letter from Immigration ... they said, ‘Mr. Shamoun, you are so nice and generous and you have been having affidavits of support for so many people, but that’s it — no more. You cannot support more people. This is the last affidavit we’re going to accept.’ Then I stopped. After bringing over 70 people.”



Three generations of Shamoun men at OB Quik Stop in Ocean Beach. Robert Shamoun (back row), Drake Shamoun (blue shirt/white shorts), Dominick Shamoun (blue shirt/grey shorts), Sabri Shamoun, and Dylan Shamoun (red shirt/black shorts).

### Settling In San Diego

The Detroit riots of 1967 put an end to Shamoun's business ventures there.

Although his store was not burned—it was protected by community members living above the store — it was badly looted and he found it difficult to continue. He had come to San Diego on vacation earlier, and decided to relocate. “I saw San Diego, the nice weather, the freedom and I said, ‘That’s it, I’m going.’” Interestingly, the Detroit riots triggered a large increase in the number of Chaldean-owned grocery stores in the city. Many store owners left the area, increasing the opportunity for Chaldeans to open or acquire more stores.

In 1968, Shamoun wed his wife Mary, who is from the city of Kirkuk, Iraq, and four years later settled in San Diego after selling his house and grocery store. He said he had assets of about \$500,000 at that time, which was enough to get him started in the assembling of all the property that he now owns.

The first acquisition here was the Day & Night Market in Ocean Beach, purchased by Shamoun and his brother-in-

law. They worked at the store for five years and purchased another market until Shamoun got tired of the business's toll on his family life (he and his wife have three children). That's when he started investing in real estate.

### Real Estate Holdings

Today, Shamoun's real estate holdings include several residential rental properties and a number of commercial properties that are leased to a variety of small business tenants — restaurants, dry cleaners, hair salons — 15 properties in total. “I got my education from real estate seminars, financial seminars, management seminars and the local newspaper—I never missed one. I picked up all of my education from those free seminars,” he says.

Shamoun is most proud of the fact that his success has allowed him to support his family in many financial ways and to help others in the community. He put his daughter, Renae Arabo, 45, and son Ronsom, 38, through college, paying all of their tuition and fees at the University of San Diego, where they obtained degrees. Renae is the chief marketing officer at RJS LAW and chairwoman of the San Diego East County Chamber of Com-

merce. Another son, Robert Shamoun, 43, is the owner of the Quick Stop Market in Ocean Beach, courtesy of his father.

“We did not have any debt out of college,” says Renae. “He put me through college and Ronnie through college and was a pillar of support and encouragement for my daughter (Larissa) who just graduated from the University of San Diego — all because of this man.” Larissa now works at RJS LAW as a staff accountant.

Shamoun's seven other grandchildren, he says, also will be financially secure. “Whatever they want, I promise them, Grandpa will take care of you, just be good and go to school.”

“I have four sisters and two brothers,” says Shamoun. “I helped all of them in school, marriage and business as much as I could.”

### Contributing to the Community

Beyond that, though, is Shamoun's large role in the construction of the St. Peter Catholic Cathedral Church and the St. Peter Educational Center on five acres of land in El Cajon — his way of contributing to the community.

The establishment of the church was done through a chapter of the Knights of



Sabri Shamoun with his daughter, Renae Arabo, and son, Ronsom Shamoun.

COVER STORY

Columbus that Shamoun and three other Chaldean Americans founded (Among them, former state Sen. Wadie Deddeh.) The educational center, which came later, was built at a cost of \$1 million. It has between 600 and 800 students and teaches the Catholic religion. Funding for the projects came from a combination of loans and donations. The money not only paid for the construction, but the cost of bringing in two priests and building a home for them. The church has since grown to 10 priests serving the community, with Shamoun himself having served on the Parish Council for the past 30 years.

Shamoun has a simple explanation for his generosity: "I am a Chaldean Catholic, a Christian. I am a good Catholic. I believe in God."



One of Sabri Shamoun's properties is the building at 3377 Adams Ave. in Normal Heights.



Sabri and son Robert Shamoun behind the counter at OB Quik Stop.



Sabri Shamoun (front row, second from right) sitting on the St. Peter Catholic Parish Council 2011.



# YOUR GROUP CAN BE A PART OF HISTORY.

The inaugural Bing Crosby Season will be a whole new kind of Del Mar. From the crisp fall weather to the cool Old-Hollywood vibe, this is racing Bing-style. First-class Thoroughbred racing, beautiful people, signature drinks and dining make for an unforgettable group outing. Be among the first to book your group of 20 - 150 and take advantage of breathtaking discounts on reserved seating, Clubhouse or Il Palio restaurant tables and private suites. And be prepared to make history. To book a reservation contact our Group Events Department at (858) 792-4234 or visit our website at [www.dmtc.com/groupsales](http://www.dmtc.com/groupsales) soon.



**BING CROSBY SEASON**

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# Gender Diversity Missing in Film

## SDSU professor documents lack of women directors

**By Delle Willett** In 1938 Mary Ford of Searcy, Ark., wrote to Walt Disney Productions, expressing an interest in being trained to be on their creative team. She received this reply:

“Women do not do any of the creative work in connection with preparing the cartoons for the screen, as that work is performed entirely by young men. The only work open to women consists of tracing the characters on clear celluloid sheets with India ink and filling in the tracings on the reverse side with paint, according to directions.”

Some 60 years later, San Diego State University professor Martha Lauzen became interested in women in film and television when she read article after article stating that more women than ever were working in these industries, but she didn't see that belief supported on screen or in the credits.

So she started studying women's employment patterns and on-screen representation, and about seven years ago founded the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at SDSU and is now serving as the executive director.

The Center is the most widely cited and trusted source of information on the representation of women in film and television.

Through its research and programs, it documents, explores and celebrates the accomplishments of directors, writers, producers, cinematographers, and editors — who happen to be women — and encourages more women to pursue careers in these important storytelling roles.

Scholars at the center conduct an extensive agenda of original research documenting women's under-representation and investigating the reasons for the continuing gender inequities.

Every year The Celluloid Ceiling tracks the employment of women working as directors, writers, producers, cinematographers and editors on the top-grossing films. Another annual study, *Boxed In*, follows the employment of behind-the-scenes women in prime-time

television.

A new study, *Independent Women*, regularly monitors women's behind-the-scenes employment on films appearing at high-profile film festivals in the U.S. Still other studies investigate the representation of women and men as film critics and writers (*Thumbs Down*); and compare the budgets, box-office grosses, and DVD sales of movies made by women and men filmmakers (*Women @ the Box Office*).

### Gender inequities in the big-budgeted film world

According to the Center's studies, behind the scenes, women accounted for 6 percent of directors and 10 percent of writers working on the top-grossing 250 films in 2013. These percentages are actually lower than those recorded in 1998. For all the talk about gender diversity, little has changed in more than a decade.

“The fact is, there has been a profound lack of leadership on the issue by film studio heads and union executives; a systemic failure to institute practices that would enable women directors, writers and those in other behind-the-scenes roles to work more,” says Lauzen.

In a “*Variety*” magazine article, co-written by Lauzen and Jennifer Sieble Newsom, they say, “It seems that everyone but those at the top of the Hollywood hierarchy have gotten the memo that the big-budgeted film world remains desperately behind the curve on gender diversity. In 2013, female characters comprised only 15 percent of all protagonists and just 30 percent of all speaking characters in the top-grossing 100 films. Women of color were even less visible.”

### Winning at the box office

Studies show that movies with female leads and women working behind the scenes are a win-win for all involved. Women are not a niche audience. They purchase 50 percent of all movie tickets and comprise 52 percent of

moviegoers, according to the Motion Picture Association of America.

Films featuring females in leading roles interest boys and girls, men and women. “*The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*” had the biggest November debut of all time, and grossed \$864 million worldwide.

To date, Disney's animated feature “*Frozen*,” headlined by a female protagonist and co-directed by a woman (Jennifer Lee) has seen its box office fortunes surpass \$1 billion. “*Gravity*,” starring Sandra Bullock, has earned \$703.3 million globally.

When the size of the budget is held constant, films with female protagonists or prominent females in an ensemble cast earn similar box office grosses (domestic, international, opening weekend) and DVD sales as films with male leads.

Because films featuring male protagonists have larger budgets, they earn larger box office grosses. However, the differences in box office grosses are not caused by the sex of the protagonist but by the size of the budget. Films with larger budgets generate larger grosses regardless of the sex of the leading star.

### Where are the women film directors?

While there is no shortage of women who direct, there is a lack of opportunity for women to direct large-budget studio features.

In her article, “Where Are the Film Directors (Who Happen to Be Women)?” for “*Quarterly Review*,” Lauzen writes that in 2008 women accounted for only 9 percent of directors in the top 250 grossing films.

Two theories on labor-market inequities provide possible explanations for women's continuing under-employment as film directors: human-capital theory and employment discrimination.

Human-capital theory posits that women's unwillingness to invest in resources that could advance their careers truncate the numbers of women working as directors as well as the job opportunities of women who choose directing as a career.

Whereas management representatives suggest that women self-select out of directing high-budget studio blockbusters and films in certain genres, women directors express an interest in pursuing a wide range of projects. Many would give their eye teeth to direct a genre, tentpole or blockbuster summer movie.

Employment discrimination theory suggests that employers, in this case executive producers and studio executives, prefer to hire male instead of female directors and that the attitudes of employers regarding the abilities of women serve to keep the number of women working as directors low.

Woman's temperament may also be cited as not being suited for direction, even when the director has been successful. Some think that personality differences between men and women may account for the low numbers of women who direct.

When studio chiefs and editors of major trade publications offer explanations for women's under-employment, they cite deficiencies in women's preparation, talent, and interest levels.

However, when women directors speak for themselves, they cite double standards as the culprit.



Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to win both the Academy Award for Best Director and the Directors Guild of America Award in 2010 for 'The Hurt Locker.'

### Breaking through the Celluloid Ceiling

Typically, women have worked in the drama, comedy, and documentary film genres; they've been least likely to work in the animated, sci-fi, and horror genres. An exception is Kathryn Bigelow who works in male-dominated genres like science fic-



Catherine Hardwicke directed 'Twilight' and 'Red Riding Hood.'

tion, action and horror.

She became the first woman to win both the Academy Award for Best Director and the Directors Guild of America Award in 2010 for "The Hurt Locker." In 2013, her film, "Zero Dark Thirty," was met with universal acclaim and grossed \$95 million in the United States box office.

Her work has helped dismantle stereotypes about what types of films women can and should direct, readjusting public perceptions of women's skills and abilities, and making it possible for future women who direct to present themselves not as the exception but the rule.

Another exception is Catherine Hardwicke, whose films have grossed a cumulative total of \$551.8 million. Her most successful films are "Twilight" and "Red Riding Hood."

### Big leadership and big solutions needed

Lauzen believes that an acknowledgment by management representatives that the number of women who gain employment as directors is low might open the door to discussions of the reasons for women's chronic under-representation and meaningful outreach programs to women directors.

Simultaneously, women directors may evaluate their own activities to ensure that they are investing the human capital necessary to succeed in the highly competitive arena of filmmaking.

"We need leaders working at the major studios and unions who are willing to establish clear guidelines and practices that will result in greater numbers of women working behind the scenes and on screen," said Lauzen. "The lack of women on screen and behind the scenes is a big problem requiring big leadership and big solutions."



SDSU Professor  
Martha Lauzen

### A Nationally Recognized Expert

Martha M. Lauzen is a nationally and internationally recognized expert on the employment of women on screen and behind the scenes in television and film. Findings from her studies have been published in numerous scholarly journals including *Camera Obscura*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Mass Communication and Society*, *Sex Roles*, *Communication Quarterly*, and *Journal of Communication Inquiry*.

Her studies have also received widespread coverage in entertainment trade publications such as "Variety" and "The Hollywood Reporter" as well as popular press outlets including "The New York Times," "Los Angeles Times," "MovieMaker," "Chicago Sun-Times," "TV Guide," "Creative Screenwriting," "Toronto Star" and "The Boston Globe."

Lauzen holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland and master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Iowa.

As a faculty member in the School of Theatre, Television and Film at San Diego State University, Lauzen teaches a variety of graduate and undergraduate courses including "The Women of Prime Time" and "Calling the Shots: Women Film Directors."

Lauzen's student reviews range from "A fantastic professor," "By far my favorite professor at State," to "Do not take this class!" Others say, "She is a very difficult teacher, but also very friendly and willing to help." Many think she's one of the best professors at SDSU.

# NEW CAR REVIEW: The 2014 Porsche Cayman By Eric Peters

The perfect car exists.

Well, the perfect sports car: The Porsche Cayman.

Yes, the 911 is quicker — and faster. But mere acceleration is not what a sports car is all about. The mid-engined Cayman is inherently better balanced than the rear-engined 911.

And besides, the 911 is only quicker if you buy the 911 S. The as-it-sits 911 Carrera is actually not quite as quick as the Cayman.

Well, not as quick as the Cayman S I tested. 4.5 seconds to 60 — vs. 4.8 for the Carrera. Plus about \$30,000 left in your bank account.

But this is not merely about money, either. What the Cayman offers is priceless: Perfection of line — and the capability to hold just about any line you can throw it into. It is a surgical tool, a conductor's baton with which you, the driver, perform a symphony of high-performance motoring.

## What It Is

The Cayman is Porsche's mid-engined hardtop two-seater coupe — as distinct from the mid-engined Boxster convertible and the rear-engined (and four-seater) 911. Base price is \$52,600 for the standard Cayman equipped with a 2.7 liter, 275 hp version of Porsche's famous "boxer" flat six engine, teamed up with a six-speed manual transmission. The Cayman S ups the ante to 3.4 liters and 325 hp. Base price for this one is \$63,800. At the pinnacle is the Cayman GTS — 340 hp, 12.9 seconds through the quarter mile and 177 MPH on top. It stickers for \$75,200.

Other than its own sibling, the soft-topped Boxster, there's just one other mid-engined sports car similar to the Cayman on the mar-

ket: the Lotus Evora (base price \$66,800). But the Lotus, though agile and quick, is partially (ahem!) a Toyota. Under its exotic-car skin, you'll discover a 3.5 liter V-6 that's pretty much the same V-6 you'd find in mom's Camry. Being lighter than a Camry, the 3.5 V-6 delivers exotic-car performance in the Evora. But it's still a Toyota V-6.

Not that there's anything wrong with that.

## What's New

The 2014 Cayman gets a new body (subtle changes), updated chassis (longer wheelbase, slightly widened track) and a dramatically updated interior that now rivals the 911... and across-the-board upgrades under the hood. Both engines are stronger and the car itself is lighter. And you know what that means.

## What's Good

Everything. Erotic sights. This car should be sold under glass. Erotic sounds. The race-car warble of a Porsche flat six bumping the redline at 7,800 RPM around 142 MPH at the top of fourth gear (don't ask me how I know) is as close as most of us will ever get to vertical dive-bombing a Russian tank in a Ju-87 Stuka like Hans Ulrich Rudel. Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles...

Bar-none handling. The Code of the Curve — as Porsche puts it. If word gets out about what this car is capable of, they'll make it as illegal as a catalytic converter "test pipe."

A cabin worthy of the car — at last. Surprisingly everyday viable — unlike the impossibly cramped and brutal-riding Lotus Evora. The Cayman has two trunks. Gets not-bad gas mileage. And it's comfortable in slow-pokey traffic.

## What's Not So Good

Accessing the engine. Call the man. Avoiding The Man.

## Under The Hood

Both Cayman engines are flat sixes — three cylinder on each side, "boxing" each other on a horizontal plane across a common crankshaft — as opposed to the more common upright V six and in-line six configurations. The layout gets the weight of the engine down low — just what you want in a serious sports car. It is also inherently balanced — the result of each pair of opposing pistons being fired at exactly the same moment. This makes the engine exceptionally smooth. And because heavy counterbalancing is not needed, boxer engines are also light and thus rev fast and freely. A side bennie is that they sound like nothing else, an intangible but critical ingredient when it comes to sports car design.

Standard issue is 2.7 liters and 275 hp vs. 2.9 and 265 previously. A six-speed manual transmission is standard, or go with Porsche's optional Doppelkupplung (PDK) seven-speed dual clutch automated manual. It adds \$3,200 to the car's price, but adds considerably to the car's performance.

The S ups the ante to 3.4 liters and 325 hp - vs. 320 previously. Same transmission choices: no-cost six-speed stick or seven-speed PDK (also \$3,200 extra).

The GTS rocks up to 340 hp — just 10 hp shy of the 911 Carrera (which starts at \$84,300). Same transmission choices once again. All Caymans are quick — and very fast. It's merely a question of how quick (and fast) you'd like to go. The base car is capable of pegging 60 in 5.1 seconds; the S in 4.4.



Genug? Interestingly, these times — the best times — are obtained with the PDK automated manual (in the most aggressive Sport Plus mode, which bangs the shifts off with the furious precision of Michael Schumacher on Red Bull).

It's not a small difference, either. The base Cayman with the six-speed manual gets to 60 in 5.4 seconds; the S with clutch worked by you does it in 4.7 seconds. The top-of-the-line GTS is also slightly less quick with the six-speed vs. PDK: 4.6 and 4.5 seconds, respectively. This performance gap — in favor of the automated manual — is why manuals operated by you are falling out of favor in elite sports car circles. (The 911 Turbo and GT3 come only with the PDK.) They shift perfectly, every time and they are also more fuel-efficient. The base car with PDK rates 22 city/32 highway vs. 20 city/30 highway with the shift-for-yourself six. The S with PDK carries a 21 city/30 highway tag - vs. 20/28 with the manual six-speed.

On the other hand, the manual cars are slightly faster than the PDK-equipped versions: 165 MPH all-out for the base car with six-speed . . . vs. 164 for the PDK-equipped Cayman. The six-speed S pegs 175; with the PDK, 174.

**On The Road**

Having the engine behind your head but not behind the rear axle is where it's at if what you're after is handling as neutral as Switzerland. No front-engined/rear-drive car oversteer. Or rear-engined oversteer, for that matter. It's true Porsche has dialed the ass-heavy/nose-light handling issues out of the 911 via various engineering countermeasures. But the point here is the Cayman requires no such countermeasures. It is laid out the way a high-performance sports car ought to be laid out. Porsche

seems to know this — and concedes the point, implicitly at least, by not offering a turbo Cayman. That way, the 911 can still outrun the Cayman.

**At The Curb**

There are a few cars I would put in my living room — if I had Jay Leno's bank account: The Lamborghini Miura. A 1963 Corvette split-window coupe. The Ferrari 365 GTB Daytona.

And this Cayman.

To appreciate it, you must walk around it. Slowly. Take it all in, from various angles. The rear quarter view is my personal favorite. One gains ever-growing appreciation for the subtle genius of the flow, the way one part of the car leads to the next. Also for the function, as there's nothing purposelessly showy about anything. This is both instrument and art. A four-wheeled Stradivarius, if you like. And I liked it very much indeed. Besides which, it is fairly practical despite what you may have read. That mid-engined layout? It makes possible a hatchback and two "trunks." One up front and one in back. Combined, there is 15 cubic feet of storage capacity. About the same as you'd have in a Camry sedan (15.4 cubic feet) and almost three times as much as the 911 (5.1 cubic feet). The up-front trunk is a deep-welled thing that's perfect for containing packages that might otherwise get jostled. The hatchback in back can handle a duffle bag or golf bags.

If you're creative, you'll be surprised by how much this car can carry. And yes, there are cupholders. Two of them, too. They are secreted behind a panel just above the glove box. Pop 'em open if you need 'em. They adjust to accommodate everything from a venti Starbucks bold to a Big Gulp. Though, really, the last thing you ought to be doing in a Cayman is drinking. The new interior is revolutionary, in contrast to the

mostly evolutionary changes to the bodywork. Before, the Cayman's cabin was certainly nice, but not on par with the 911's. It is now.

**The Rest**

My test car, an S model with pretty much everything Porsche offers, including the \$6,750 Infotainment package with the Burmester 12-speaker surround sound system, the \$3,465 Adaptive Sport Seats, \$2,815 Agate/Pebble Gray leather interior, \$1,500 20-inch Carrera S wheels and a few other bells and whistles stickered out at \$88,625. Not cheap. But, consider. A base 911 — not as quick and arguably not quite the 100 proof sports car the Cayman is — starts at \$84,300. The 911 S stickers for \$98,900 . . . and you're just getting started.

Again, this isn't all about dollars and cents or even secondarily about the money. But the Cayman is so damned good it's not like you're settling. I respect the 911. You'd have to be an imbecile not to. In GT3 form, it can get to 60 in under three seconds. Lawd have mercy.

The Cayman is more like what the 911 was originally. A sports car. In that role, it is essentially faultless. Absolute straight-line acceleration is not the deciding metric. If it were, the 911 wins. Or maybe the new Stingray Corvette. But the Cayman gives you something they don't and can't, no matter how much money you throw at them, no matter how savagely they rape the speed limit. To understand what I mean, you'll need to do more than read the words. You'll have to drive the car.

Eric Peters is the author of *Automotive Atrocities* and "Road Hogs" and a former editorial writer/columnist for *The Washington Times*, a contributor to *Cars.Com*, *The CarConnection.com* and *SD METRO*.

**2014 Porsche Cayman S Specifications:**

**Base price:** \$63,800; as tested \$88,625 (SH-AWD & Technology Package) \$48,565.

**Engine:** 3.4 liter flat six, 325 hp.

**Transmission:** six speed manual.

**Length:** 172.4 inches

**Width:** 70.9 inches

**Wheelbase:** 15 cubic feet

**Curb weight:** 2,910 lbs.

**Luggage capacity:** 15.8 cubic feet

**EPA fuel economy:** 20 city/28 highway (manual))

**Where assembled:** Stuttgart, Germany





# { DEFENDING AGAINST CYBERCRIME }

## Local nonprofit teaches how to hack for good

BY MICHAEL CRANE

**L**ast year Vineel Adusumilli took a weeklong course on computer hacking. Cybercrime professionals taught him how to find weaknesses in online security systems and then he was given his own advanced workstation to hone his skills, all free of charge.

However, although he was discovering how criminals think, Adusumilli was actually learning how to defend against security breaches as part of the Cyber Boot Camp, hosted by Securing Our eCity Foundation (SOeF). Since 2011 the nonprofit foundation has offered free workshops to businesses, families, students, and seniors across San Diego in an effort to thwart cybercrime.

“Cyber touches everyone and we simply have to have people become more aware of their day-to-day practices — how they tend to make themselves safer,” said Liz Fraumann, executive director at SOeF. “All companies, all businesses, and all organizations should be educating their staff on the basics.”

Securing Our eCity first began in 2008 as an initiative by ESET

North America, an antivirus and Internet security company. After years of making software to protect computer users from cyber criminals, researchers at ESET found that the real problem often lies between the keyboard and the chair — with the human user.

The goal of SOeF is to raise awareness of the basic steps everyone can take to protect themselves online. In 2011 the foundation received its official 501(c)(3) status and have been spreading the word ever since. The foundation’s workshops reached more than 4,000 people in 2013 alone.

“What we’re actually doing is teaching them how do you find vulnerabilities; how do you find places that could be exploited?” said Fraumann. “Sometimes it’s just a lack of common sense. People still today don’t change their username and password when it comes out of the box. If people do things like that, it would prevent a lot from what’s going on already.”

A wary digital citizen in her personal life, Fraumann is the ideal

captain for the foundation. She only accepts contacts on LinkedIn if she has personally met the person for coffee. She opts out of websites like Spokeo that collect personal information, and she prefers to use gift cards for online purchases, rather than a credit card.

"I very rarely use credit cards," she said. "If I use a credit card I go with my credit card unless I can see the person swiping it in the register with my own eyes."

Fraumann has actually followed servers into the back of restaurants in the past because she is so conscientious of cyber crimes.

Although not all will go to the same lengths as Fraumann, she does have some simple tips everyone should follow.

If you have a wi-fi network in your home or business, don't broadcast your network and make sure to require a password for access.

Many people forget about smart phones when it comes to Internet security, but they can be just as vulnerable. If you have an Android phone, be sure and install an anti-malware product and read the fine print in all applications. Seemingly harmless apps such as a flashlight may actually be collecting personal information from your phone.

With passwords, any single word in the dictionary can be breached in 11 seconds, so long, unusual phrases or passwords with numbers and symbols are best. To make it easy to remember, keep a similar passphrase for all of your accounts but change a single word in each.

"That really makes it very complex and it certainly can't be breached as easily as the other passwords," said Fraumann.

Every business, organization, and family should follow these basics, as well as know what to do if there is a security breach. Many times being safe online isn't a matter of spending more money on better technology or IT personnel, but simply reviewing these fundamentals with every family member or employee. At no cost, SOeF will provide a one-hour workshop to any sized group in San Diego.

Securing Our eCity is also working to encourage local students to consider cyber-security as a profession. 2014 marked the fifth year of the San Diego Mayor's Cyber Cup, a competition of



ESET's Cameron Camp holds a device that can be used to break into wireless networks. (Photo/Chris Jennewein)

technological prowess between more than 50 teams of middle and high school teams. SOeF sponsors the cup and invites the top three winners to attend a weeklong Cyber Boot Camp.

Last year Vineel Adusumilli was on the winning team at the Mayor's Cyber Cup and earned a place at the Boot Camp.

"I think I got a lot of hands-on experience in actually breaking into computer networks," said Adusumilli. "It's good for people to be aware of the different ways they can potentially be exploited or attacked so that they're able to protect themselves."

During the boot camp, aspiring cyber defenders hear from professionals in a variety of tech fields and get an opportunity to practice finding vulnerabilities at an ESET facility. Law enforcement

officials also explain the strict penalties for cyber crimes and boot camp participants pledge to use their new skills to make the Internet safer.

Adusumilli plans to continue studying computer security after graduating from the Cyber Boot Camp and he has already been offered an internship for a company involved in Internet security.

"I think that my experience with cyber security and my experience with the boot camp helped me get that job," he said.

To download resources on cyber security, schedule a workshop, or learn more about Securing Our eCity Foundation, visit [www.securingoureocity.org](http://www.securingoureocity.org).



Liz Fraumann is executive director of Securing Our eCity Foundation.

## THE BOOT CAMP EXPERIENCE

Some of San Diego's most computer-savvy high school students are learning how to hack a network in order to prepare themselves for a career in cyber security.

Two dozen students from three local high schools spent a recent week at Cyber Boot Camp in the San Diego offices of ESET, an international computer security company. "We are learning how to hack, but hacking in a good way," said Chloe Crisostomo, a junior at Mira Mesa High. "In order to learn how to secure, we have to learn how to hack."

In one session, students heard such terms as "decoys," "replay attack," "cloning," and "USB port attack" as Cameron Camp, a security researcher at ESET, held up examples of devices used to attack networks.

"You have to understand the network in order to know how to break it," Camp told the students, adding a warning that, "All your targets are not what they seem."

The students participating are from Canyon Crest Academy, Westview High School and Mira Mesa High School, the top three teams in the Mayor's Cyber Cup earlier this year.

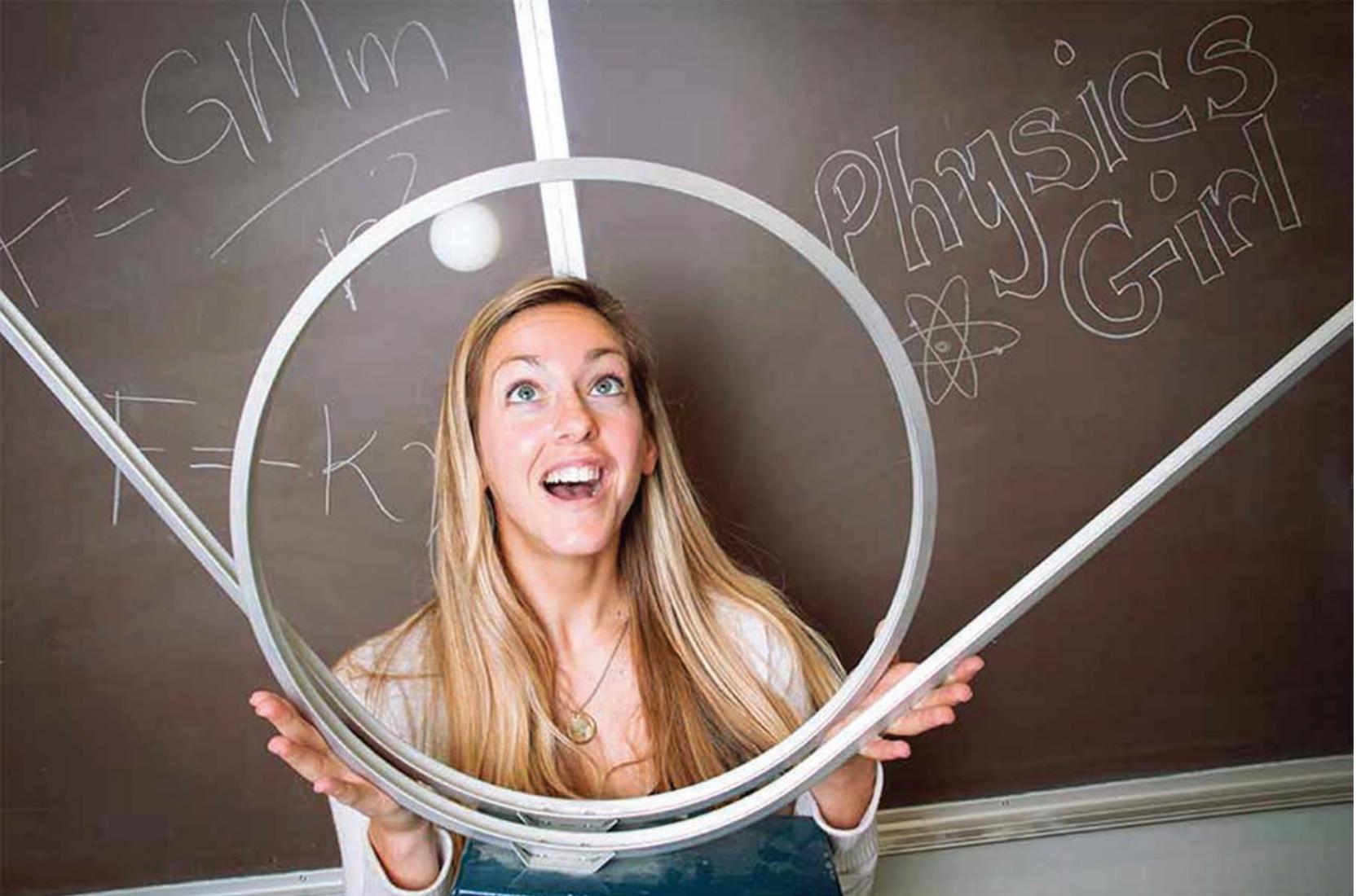
The boot camp is sponsored by the Securing Our eCity Foundation, which funds cyber-security programs to raise awareness among businesses, families, youth and seniors.

In addition to hands-on training, students hear from law-enforcement officials and top researchers about this growing challenge. As a result, says Liz Fraumann, executive director of the foundation, students learn "you don't just have to sit behind a keyboard to be a cyber professional."

Cyber crime is on the rise nationally, and has led to a surge in demand for skilled professionals. The number of jobs in San Diego is expected to grow by 13 percent this year.

Fraumann said the foundation hopes the boot camp will lead to internships for the participating students in coming years.

— Times of San Diego report



## UC SAN DIEGO'S PHYSICS GIRL

Dianna Cowern uses her upbeat personality to communicate physics to the public

Videos featuring Rihanna, One Direction and Bruno Mars are, not surprisingly, among YouTube's most viewed channels. Videos on physics? While some videos on physics have gained a cult-like following and hundreds of thousands of views, the subject that makes most people's eyes glaze over still can't compete with entertainers like Katy Perry in the YouTube world.

That could change, however, thanks to an energetic young physicist who works as an outreach coordinator at UC San Diego's Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences and who uses her upbeat and sometimes wacky personality to communicate physics to the public on YouTube with videos that are not only informative, but also fun and cool.

Dianna Cowern was awarded the top video prize in a national science communications competition by the Alan Alda Center

for Communicating Science at SUNY Stonybrook for her entertaining YouTube production explaining the physics of color. The award, given annually for the past three years as part of a contest called the "Flame Challenge," was presented to her at the World Science Festival in New York City by the actor himself.

"Alan Alda started this competition a couple of years ago because he wondered what a flame was when he was a kid, and he got the standard answer from his teachers that didn't go into any real depth or explain it," explained Cowern, adding that the "Flame Challenge" is different from other science communications contests because it's specifically designed to reach an audience of 5th graders. "Every year, he's posed a new question that kids have submitted to him for the contest. Last year, the question was 'What is Time?'

And this year, it was 'What is Color?'"

Cowern's prize-winning video, which was voted for by 27,000 students from around the world, is the most recent post to her YouTube channel called "Physics Girl," which she started on her own two years ago because of her passion to get more girls interested in science.

As part of her day job, Cowern works with Adam Burgasser, an associate professor of physics, on developing "Beach Physics," an innovative new program designed to get middle school and high school students interested in physics by teaching them about physics that happens at the beach (it's a perfect fit for her, since she grew up near the beach on the island of Kauai). Cowern also sets up exhibits and demonstrations at science fairs and festivals, volunteers for UC San Diego's Young Physicists Program and works



at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in Balboa Park doing science education outreach.

Cowern's Physics Girl videos run the gamut from demonstrating the physics of standing waves with a rope and vibrating plates sprinkled with sand, to explaining the Hubble Space Telescope's Deep Field Survey, to finding out on a stovetop whether dissolved solids in boiled water escape with steam (if you're wondering, they sometimes do). Her high-energy productions, sometimes illustrated with her own drawings and set to background music and sound effects, are inspired by Bill Nye the Science Guy, astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson and two of her high school science teachers on Kauai (at a school so small it had only 80 students). "I had two teachers for physics who were so fantastic," she recalls, pausing to add extra emphasis in her engaging and exuberant style of speech, one of the reasons that makes her videos so fun to watch. "They were entertaining, but very educational and they answered every question."

Cowern's youth (she just celebrated her 25th birthday on what she calls "Star Wars Day" or "May the 4th be with you"), sometimes quirky humor and enthusiasm provide her with an obvious edge over most professors in connecting with younger audiences. But she's no lightweight when it comes to science. She graduated from MIT with a degree in physics, participated in a research project there on dark matter (the invisible stuff that makes up most of the mass in the universe), did research on low-metallicity stars at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics after graduation, then spent time as a software engineer at General Electric in Foxboro, Mass, before making the move to San Diego to work with Burgasser, one of her former professors at MIT.

Cowern started making the videos in her off hours while she was working at GE because she was interested in getting more girls into science and interested in science communication. "I didn't have much time to work on the videos when I was at GE, and I didn't think the first ones were very good," she confesses. "But I'm definitely learning a lot, reading about new techniques and learning how to make the videos more visually appealing, as well as grabbing the audience's attention

with some type of video at the beginning instead of talking about physics for three minutes and then showing something cool."

Burgasser, who received his undergraduate degree in physics at UC San Diego in 1996 and was lured back to here from MIT in 2009, saw her first videos two years ago and was impressed. That's when he offered her the job here.

"It's clear she has an innate talent in communicating science," says Burgasser. "Many physics videos online are either rigorous or entertaining, or more likely neither. Her videos are both. They're also deeply researched. She has a dogged persistence for uncovering real facts and not just taking hand-waving arguments or ascribing something to physics principles or effects."

"I got to see Dianna's intelligence and persistence very early on, since I taught her very first physics class at MIT," he adds. "This is one of the hardest classes that MIT freshmen take, and she initially struggled up to the first quiz. But she came to my office hours and put in the study time, and by the end of the semester she was helping other students learn the concepts and work with the equations. That is true grit. That and the fact that she never doubts that she can do, or at least try, something new, were both strong personality traits that led me to her."

Burgasser saw a notice about the Flame Challenge competition earlier this year and suggested Cowern enter. She was hesitant at first because the notice was specifically looking for "scientists" to submit videos and "she didn't think she was a scientist," recalls Burgasser. "So I challenged her on that. Was she investigating physical phenomena? Yes! In a quantitative and qualitative way? Yes! And identifying research-validating methods of conveying scientific information? Yes! And, of course, she did have a physics degree from MIT and worked on dark matter searches. Once I convinced her that what she was doing was actually science, she went all in, but it definitely opened this little door of inquiry into who gets to 'be' a scientist."

There were a few other obstacles. "I was in Ireland at the time and I had five days to do the video when I got back, so I spent the entire week working on it," remembers Cowern. "But it paid off."

In a Big Way. Not many researchers her

age have been invited to lunch with Alan Alda or been feted by famous scientists at the World Science Festival. So how does she feel now about not continuing as a research scientist?

"Every once in a while I'll kick myself for leaving physics and going into physics education," she says. "And I always wonder whether I'll go back because I really do love physics. But what I'm doing now is almost better because I get to learn about a lot of different topics instead of having to do research for 10 years on the same project."

The project that she and Burgasser are focusing on right now, Beach Physics, stems from their love of the beach and their belief that it would be a cool way to get kids interested in physics without realizing they're actually learning physics.

Burgasser grew up in Buffalo, NY, and during his first week as an undergraduate at UC San Diego, bought a surfboard and proceeded to teach himself to surf at nearby Black's Beach. "Eventually, I also learned I needed a wetsuit," remembers Burgasser, who still keeps a board in his third-floor office of the appropriately named SERF building (it actually stands for Science and Engineering Research Facility).

"If you ask the average middle school student or the average person on the street, they would probably only say they liked the beach and would either have no idea about physics or have fear about it," Burgasser says about his Beach Physics project. "So how do we tackle fear? We tie it to something we enjoy. The beach is also a physics-rich environment with fluids, granular phenomena, waves, buoyancy, friction, radiation, heat, ballistic motion, states of matter, the night sky and the elements. These are literally laid out in front of you when you walk on the beach, so why not tap into that rich resource? So what I hope to achieve is that when a student or a parent or anyone walks on the beach they start to think about these physics ideas, and more importantly play with the idea a little."

Burgasser, Cowern and their colleagues in the project had hoped to launch their online resource with videos and lessons that teachers can use, soon, but have been delayed because of lack of funding. Anyone interested in contributing to the project can contact Burgasser at [aburgasser@ucsd.edu](mailto:aburgasser@ucsd.edu).

# Home-Grown Banking Torrey Pines Bank has a 'personalized' focus

By Dave Schwab

The slogan "Think globally, act locally" could have been written about Torrey Pines Bank.

"If someone is looking for a bank and bankers that know and understand San Diego and San Diego business and want to get business done — this is the place to do it," said Francesca Castagnola, vice president, regional manager and one of Torrey Pines Bank's founding officers.

Castagnola's colleague, Robert B Horsman, Torrey Pines' market executive for the San Diego region, agreed the bank has a personalized focus and a home-grown approach.

"So many business customers want to see their banker," he said noting that's exactly what Torrey Pines Bank does.

"You can see the banker, meet with him or her," Horsman said. "They are available and can help customers. We are a really good partner for customers here in San Diego."



Robert Horsman, market executive

Both Torrey Pines Bank executives Castagnola and Horsman are based in its branch in the Symphony Towers Downtown.

Founded in 2003, Torrey Pines Bank is focused on providing customers with direct access to local experts who can help advance their businesses and the local economy. The bank has 11 offices throughout San Diego, Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

"We have seven branches in San Diego," said Castagnola, adding "the majority of our business is down here in San Diego."

Castagnola said Torrey Pines "is not your traditional, consumer bank."

"We don't have a lot of foot traffic," she said. "Our banks are more hubs and business centers."

"We're organic," noted Horsman. "We've grown the bank pretty much by hiring local

bankers. That says a lot. Whatever the customers' needs are, we have people who can engage with them who've got their feet on the ground."

Horsman said that being local-oriented, Torrey Pines is unlike other San Diego banks that are "controlled outside of the area."

"It's nice to be able to deal with your neighbors," he said.

"We manage our business geographically," noted Castagnola adding Torrey Pines doesn't "compartmentalize" its business like a lot of other banks do.

"There are no rules here that say, 'If you're in this kind of business, then you have to go to that kind of department to underwrite your loan,'" she said. "There's more of a personal touch than that."

Torrey Pines Bank does a lot of business lending.

"We're very engaged there," said Horsman. "We do a lot of 504 Small Business Administration (SBA) lending. Our bank has been the No. 1 lender in the San Diego County area for the past eight years."

Horsman said the banking industry is rebounding and it's a good time for customers to be seeking out bank services.

"Interest rates are really low," he said. "There are some good opportunities for customers that want to borrow for equipment, refinancing, recapitalization, buying out their partners. There's all sorts of deals out there so times are good."

Torrey Pines Bank, the California division of Western Alliance Bank, an affiliate of Western Alliance Bancorporation, is also noted for its philanthropy. Recently, the bank launched an internal campaign developed to encourage employees to give back.

The campaign, "Advancing the Cause," raises funds for The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, The Alzheimer's Association and The American Heart Association.

Each Friday through Sept. 26, Torrey Pines Bank employees throughout its 11 offices have the opportunity to donate \$5 each week to wear brightly colored T-shirts displaying the logo of their nonprofit of choice. The goal is to increase awareness for those worthy or-

ganizations, while encouraging employees to get involved. At the end of the campaign, the money collected will be donated to each nonprofit.

Consolidation in the banking industry has created a niche for players like Torrey Pines.

"What's missing now is what we are — a strong, independent bank with community bankers that know their community and represent the customers," said Horsman.

Castagnola talked about Torrey Pines Bank's niche in the market.

"People always want to have personal relationships with their bank," she said. "They want to talk with seasoned bankers who have



Francesca Castagnola, vp and regional manager

the ability to make decisions. The trend is moving away from the big regional banks that really don't offer that."

Horsman concurred. "Torrey Pines Bank is very responsive," he said. "Our goal is to be engaged in what the customer is looking for."

"We have the ability to roll up our sleeves and pay attention to all the intricacies of local deals that bigger, regional banks aren't willing to spend their time on," said Castagnola.

"Torrey Pines is positioned to continue to be the premiere bank in San Diego because of its responsiveness, the caliber of its leadership and their attitude and commitment," said Horsman.

"In San Diego, there is a (banking) niche where businessowners and high-net-worth individuals want bankers they can rely on to get things done," said Castagnola. "They want a high level of attention. They want to be able to pick up the phone and get what they need. We've got that going for us."

For more information visit [www.torrey-pinesbank.com](http://www.torrey-pinesbank.com).

# OLP Breaks Century-Old Habit

## The first non-nun leads the Catholic girls school **By Cecilia Buckner**

In an office on a hill overlooking Mission Valley sits the first non-nun to ever lead the oldest high school in San Diego.

“There’s opportunity for these girls right here in our backyard,” said Lauren Lek. As head of the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, the only all-girl, more than a century-old high school, Lek’s excited about the opportunity to not only show young women what leadership looks like, but to show them what leadership looks like in career paths not traditionally occupied by women. Sixty percent of the best jobs opening up within the next 10 years have not even been invented yet, according to Thomas Frey, executive director of research firm DaVinci Institute. Lek’s goal is to provide the girls at OLP with the tools and education to compete in this quickly changing job market.

During her short, one-year history at the private Catholic college prep school, Lek has made major strides to ensure students are as prepared as she was for college and the workforce.

At 19, Lek was the youngest director of the Redwood Christian summer day camp program, where she designed curriculum for counselors, coordinated student trips and managed budgets. She received tremendous training from the teachers around her and had mentors who pushed her to amazing levels, she said. Now Lek’s eager to do the same for her girls.

Introducing the students to robotics, implementing engineering programs and enhancing the school’s STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) class offerings are just some of Lek’s accomplishments this past year. Even though women fill close to half of all jobs in the U.S. economy, they hold less than 25 percent of jobs in these fields, according to a recent report by the Department of Commerce. Lek

wants to change that.

It had always been a desire of mine to work in an “all-girl” school, said Lek. “I’m amazed by our society today — you get women together and they can be catlike — beating each other up. But when you take the boys out of the equation, that drama suddenly goes away. Women push each other — to have a voice — empower each other to be change makers.. It’s the most beautiful culture I ever could have experienced.”



Lauren Lek, head of the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

“For 132 years, the school has been run by sisters. This is a big change,” said OLP’s Board of Directors Chairman Mike Coughlin, adding that the change was “seamless.” “Not only did the transition go smoothly, but the parents are excited for the future of the school.”

Lek, who grew up in Christian schools, told her parents one day, out of the blue, that she wanted to go to Moreau Catholic High School. They were surprised to say the least. Lek wasn’t Catholic at the time. “Looking back, it’s hard to say (what motivated me),” Lek said, “but from the minute I was there, I knew I was where I belonged.”

After receiving her bachelor’s degree in literature from UC San Diego and master’s degree from Saint Mary’s College of California in educational leadership, Lek went back to Moreau to complete some unfinished business. After all, the school paper had voted her as the student most likely to return, she said. After slipping a casual note to the then-principal, asking if there were any teacher openings, she soon found herself teaching journalism and English at Moreau. After four years of teaching, she realized her heart was in administration and a short time later, led the school — first, as its assistant principal, later, its principal.

Her plan was to never leave Moreau, but when her husband, John, got an amazing job

offer to be an integral part of the launching of a new development, Green Dragon Tavern & Museum in Carlsbad, and Lek had heard OLP’s leadership was in a transitional state, and she knew she was a good fit — she soon made the move, albeit a scary one.

She packed up her two boys, Willem, now soon to be 2 and Lucas 5, and moved to the Carmel Valley area of San Diego, leaving her parents, her sister and father-in-law behind.

“It was a tough day for Moreau when she left,” said Dennis Mastrantonio, chairman of Moreau’s board of directors. “She brought us into the 21st century. She is the most organized person I’ve ever seen.”

July marks a year at OLP for Lek and she’s excited about what next year will bring.

Next year OLP will be launching a College Board program, with advanced placement computer science principles. “The only place in our schedule for this program is at 6:45 in the morning,” she said, “and we have 27 girls lined up to take it next year. They’re hungry to experience these subjects.”

OLP is not just for Catholic students who can afford a private education, Lek said, and tuition assistance is available. Girls can be growing up in an environment that focuses on moral compass, she said. “We can talk about our faith, sense of values . . . this creates a different level of community.”

OLP was founded in 1882 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, an order of nuns dating back to France in 1650. The sisters lived off income from making ribbon and lace and were involved in the instruction of young girls, the direction of orphanages and care of the sick — transforming their community.

“Even today, in San Diego, their legacy continues,” Lek said, “ensuring that these women not just have skills, but values, to use their knowledge and put their faith in action to make a difference.”

For more information on the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, visit [aolp.org](http://aolp.org) or call (619) 297-2266.

# HARRAH'S RESORT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## CALIFORNIA COMFORT WITH LAS VEGAS PIZZAZZ

BY BOB PAGE

If you're looking for an interesting combination of California sunshine and the pizzazz of Las Vegas, jump in your jitney and motor on out to Harrah's Resort Southern California.

The folks at Harrah's call it "Palm Vegas." There's a little bit of relaxation, sunshine, the California-comfortable vibe of Palm Springs (and San Diego!) and the high energy of being in Las Vegas, without being in Las Vegas.

How do you beat that? Harrah's is close in, a hop, skip and a jump from Escondido and a stone's throw from Valley Center.

What separates Harrah's from the other nine casinos in San Diego County is its "Player's Club which is Total Rewards," says Janet Beronio, regional president and general manager of Harrah's.

"We are part of Caesar's Entertainment Brand. Players can use their Total Rewards card in any machine in any of Caesar's 40 properties nationwide and get credits, which give them complimentary offers and all sorts of things which they can use

throughout the entire Caesar's network," Beronio said.

Beronio believes that gives Harrah's a unique advantage against its competition.

"We're a branded property with benefits in a lot of other places and being so close to Las Vegas — we have eight properties in Las Vegas — makes it beneficial for people to go to Las Vegas. That is an offer that other casinos can't offer because they are more localized and don't have that affiliation with a national brand."

Harrah's began managing the resort for the Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians in August 2002 with Beronio coming on board in 2003.

The tribe initially hired Harrah's on a consulting basis in 2000 when the operation was run out of a tent. At first, there was a bingo hall, then a hotel with 200 rooms, the casino and a restaurant or two.

Looking back over the past 14 years, it is easy to see how far the tribe along with its Harrah's partnership has come. Today, Harrah's is a first class, AAA Four-Dia-

mond, award winning resort.

It has earned its spurs.

The restaurants are many and varied. There is everything from casual, on-the-go or "how fast can I get back to the blackjack table" spots such as Pink's, the ultimate Mom and Pop hot dog stand made famous as a Hollywood love story. Paul and Betty Pink started selling hot dogs from a cart at the corner of La Brea and Melrose in 1939.

Then there is the Earl of Sandwich, whose history is equally fascinating. In 1762, the 4th Earl of Sandwich came up with the ingenious idea (some say at a card table) of putting meat between two slices of bread. Now, 250 years later, the current 11th Earl of Sandwich remains passionate about the company's popular quick food that carries the family name.

If a sandwich's history isn't your thing, you can pop into the Café for hearty portions of American comfort food.

My favorites at Harrah's are Rita's Cantina, which offers Baja-inspired Mexican dishes and margaritas, which other than El



Callejon in Encinitas, just may be the best Mexican restaurant in San Diego.

For the crème de la crème, however, you'll owe it to yourself to dine at Fiore's, Harrah's upscale, award-winning fine dining establishment. Its selection of quality aged steaks and fresh Pacific seafood is not to be missed. Fiore's wine list has earned Wine Spectator's Award for Excellence for seven consecutive years.

Dining in Fiore's makes for the end of a perfect evening. That is, unless you'll be heading back to the blackjack table.

The dining scene at Harrah's, like casinos everywhere, has evolved over the years, said Beronio.

"Back in the days, everyone had a buffet and other low end restaurants. Now it is a whole different experience, everything from something quick to Fiore's."

Harrah's, with the tribe's blessing, has turned the resort into a premier destination for gaming. The casino floor is spread out over 59,000 square feet and offers the most nonsmoking space per-square-foot in the San Diego region.

Harrah's completed a \$160 million expansion in April when it opened its second high-rise tower, new swimming pools, an event center and the new restaurants. The new events center is a 23,000 square foot entertainment and convention facility.

"We're now the fourth largest hotel in San Diego County with 1,065 rooms. The demand for additional rooms drives other decisions as well. People will stay longer with a better night life experience. We have Corked, a bar with its own kind of jazz environment, and Spiked, a new bar with a vibe of its own," Beronio said.

No resort or casino would be complete without a spa and Harrah's has designed one of the best. The Spa's motto is rest, relax and rejuvenate. There is a wide array of treatments, everything from massages, facials, body treatments, nails and waxing. And if you become a regular aficionado of Harrah's, the Spa offers a very affordable and appealing membership program.

Beronio almost got into the hotel/casino business by accident. After her undergraduate years at the University of Maryland, she motored west and found a job in human relations with Marriott in Los Angeles.

She then decided to go to law school and enrolled at the University of San Diego. She joined Harrah's in San Diego as an employment manager, recruiting college kids as blackjack dealers for their casinos in Lake Tahoe and Reno because their summer business was so strong.

"I actually went up to Tahoe the next summer and learned to deal blackjack myself and then I'd go up on holidays and summers until I finished law school," after which she joined Harrah's as an attorney.

"Dealing blackjack helped pay my tuition to finish at USD Law. And you know, you can make pretty good money dealing cards."

And 32 years later, Beronio is at the top of her game as one of Harrah's most valuable and trusted executives.



Janet Beronio is regional president and general manager of Harrah's.



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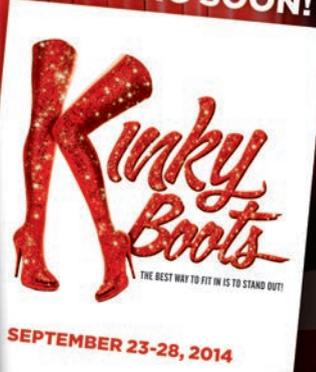
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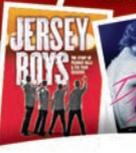
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# FIRST LOVE

## VISITING HONG KONG

*By David Rottenberg*

Most people remember their “firsts” — first impression of their significant other, first job, first home, first car, first love. I had a very significant “first,” one I’ll never forget.

I had just received my “first” assignment as a travel writer. I had planned for years to try to enter this new career. Finally, after submitting writing samples to many publications, I received my “green light.” “Fly to Hong Kong,” I was instructed, “stay at the InterContinental Hotel in Kowloon, explore the city, send us your stories.”

Gulp! My first assignment was a major one. Scary, but it was wonderful. And, when someone now asks, as is often the case, what is my favorite hotel in the world (I’ve visited so many properties in so many countries), my answer comes quickly —the InterContinental Hotel in Kowloon.

Hotel exterior, nighttime





Presidential Suite-Rooftop Terrace with panoramic view of Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. The terrace can host 60 persons for cocktails and 36 persons for a seated dinner.

Sometimes one cannot “go back.” Sometimes things change with time and are not as good as they are remembered. And sometimes they get even better. That’s how it was for me. Once again, the hotel epitomized to me the top bar of class and elegance

I received a new assignment to the Orient to visit eight cities in five countries. Happily, my first stop was to be in Hong Kong, again at my favorite hotel. I was really looking forward to the trip.

The flight from Vancouver was a long one, overnight to Narita Airport in Japan, then a brief layover before taking a five-hour flight to Hong Kong. Getting through customs was quick. I found the Chinese border officials throughout the places I visited to be amazingly efficient.

The airport terminal was new to me. The earlier airport had been replaced by a huge new terminal on reclaimed land (more about that later). Exiting customs, I entered the terminal hall, one of the largest rooms under roof that I’ve ever experienced. In fact, it was the largest airport terminal in the world when built and, to this day, is one of the world’s busiest airports.

Feeling a bit overwhelmed, I was glad to see someone standing at the end of the walkway wearing an InterContinental uniform and holding a sign with my name on it. He was the “greeter,” assigned to meet ar-

riving guests of the hotel. He led me down to the parking lot, where a shiny new Mercedes waited, complete with uniformed chauffeur.

When the Mercedes approached the hotel, two men emerged from behind the huge glass doors. They wore white uniforms and pillbox hats, just like the character so long ago in the “call for Phillip Morris” cigarette ads. They opened the car’s doors, gave the luggage over to a bellman and ushered me inside, where the second platoon took over. All very classy, just like it had been years ago.

Entering the lobby, two lovely ladies took me to the elevators and up to my room. Once there, tea was served and I registered and gave them my credit card information. I didn’t have to stand in line in the lobby until some clerk found my room key. The whole process was very slick, very VIP.

The drapes were drawn back and, once again after many years, I was treated to the sparkling diamondlike lights of the skyline of Hong Kong Island, across the waters of Victoria Harbour. The skyline was different from what I recalled. Huge buildings now occupied what was once empty space. Now, the lights were even dynamic, spelling out advertising messages in large type.

To clarify, Hong Kong has many “sections,” including Hong Kong Island,

Kowloon, New Territories and Aberdeen. Most of the business, office and government buildings are on the Island. Kowloon, across Victoria Harbour, has many hotels, large shopping malls with exclusive designer shops, and a cultural center where plays and concerts are performed,

The land area of Kowloon was increased with “reclaimed land.” To create it, materials were dredged up from the seabed and packed higher and higher to create surface area above the water. At one time, waves of Victoria Harbour lapped onto shore several hundred yards from where they now hit dry land. At one time, the world famous Hong Kong Peninsula Hotel stood at the edge of the water. Now it is across the street, with views partially blocked.

The InterContinental, by contrast, has an amazing unobstructed view of the hypnotic traffic of ships and junks that traverse Victoria Harbour continually, against the backdrop of the Island’s striking skyline. Even after so many years, the view was breathtaking.

There is a causeway beneath the hotel’s windows, where pedestrians can stroll to enjoy the views and the weather. Looking down, I saw young and old, short and tall, fat and skinny — all sorts of people — happily strolling and stopping occasionally in the mornings to do tai chi. It was an engag-



The lobby lounge.

ing kaleidoscope of humanity.

The hotel room itself was extraordinary, large, comfortable and with up-to date electronics including a bedside console that controls drapes, lights and television. The bathroom was huge, with double sinks, huge walk in shower and even a TV, so I wouldn't miss a show while showering. The soaps, shampoos and amenities were all custom, first class. Every room and suite has 24-hour butler service.

The InterContinental Hong Kong is considered one of the finest hotels in the world, deservedly so. Its lobby and Lobby Lounge are large, full of comfortable seating. High glass windows open to the view. At night, entertainment is always playing. Food and drinks are served at all times. In the afternoon, a formal tea is served that includes a selection of mini-sandwiches, freshly baked French-inspired pastries and warm scones with clotted cream and jam.

In addition, the hotel features four major restaurants, of which three have been awarded Michelin stars. They are — Spoon by Alain Ducasse (2-stars), Yan Toh Heen (1-star), The Steak House winebar + grill (1-star), plus Nobu InterContinental Hong Kong. I can't think of any other hotel in the world that can make such a claim.

Spoon offers French cuisine created by world famous Alain Ducasse. It is so named because of 550 Murano glass spoons that decorate the ceiling. Nobu features the in-

novative new-style Japanese cuisine of internationally acclaimed chef Nobu Matsuhisa. The Steak House prepares the finest meats from around the world on a charcoal grill. Servers offer a choice of knives featuring different blade designs. Diners can choose the one that makes cutting most interesting.



Master Bedroom

Yan Toh Heen was one of my favorite experiences on this visit. The entrance to the restaurant and its private dining areas are colorful, tasteful and elegant. Place settings are made of jade and are said to cost \$8,000 each. The Wine Room has selections from the hotel's award-winning wine cellar. The private small dining rooms are richly appointed and simply breathe elegance.

I was accompanied to lunch by Carol Klein, the hotel's public relations executive, a warm and personable lady who actually remembered me from my prior visit. She ordered from the restaurant's amazing menu.

I had a hard time pronouncing the names. The food was amazing. The dumplings were the best I had on my entire trip. The dim sum was simply outstanding.

The coup de grace' to the meal was in the choice of deserts. The friendly server brought a column of shaved ice, about two feet high, with a selection of fruits embedded in it, an amazing presentation. This was followed by a second dessert whose steaming vapors created a wonderful aromatic cloud above out table. The last, perhaps the best, was a compote of local fruits that were totally unfamiliar to me but amazingly delicious.

There is so much more to experience at InterContinental Hong Kong — the amazing spa treatments, the beautiful infinity edge pool that looks out onto the view, the comfortable concierge lounge where the menu changes continually and the food is delicious. For the very wealthy, try the incredible 7,000-square-foot, two-story Presidential Suite. It runs about \$13,000 per night. For the very romantic, try the honeymoon suite, with its own private patio. The hotel offers an endless array of pleasures.

For me, it was returning to my "first love" — the first truly amazing property that I would write about. It hasn't changed with time, only gotten better.



# Summer Pops 2014



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**STAR SPANGLED POPS  
with Bill Conti**  
FRI & SAT, JULY 4 & 5, 7:30pm U E F  
SUN, JULY 6, 7:30pm F



**BOZ SCAGGS**  
FRI & SAT, JULY 11 & 12, 7:30pm U G F

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AND BEYOND** presented  
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FRI & SAT, AUGUST 1 & 2, 7:30pm



**NATHAN PACHECO** U E  
SUN, AUGUST 3, 7:30pm



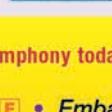
**BROADWAY TONIGHT!**  
Featuring **CHICAGO  
the Musical** U E F  
FRI & SAT, AUGUST 8 & 9, 7:30pm



**DISNEY'S FANTASIA**  
SUN, AUGUST 10, 8pm



**CIRQUE DE LA  
SYMPHONIE** U G F  
FRI & SAT, AUGUST 15 & 16, 7:30pm



**BURT BACHARACH**  
SUN, AUGUST 17, 7:30pm



**CASH'D OUT: A TRIBUTE  
TO JOHNNY CASH**  
THUR, AUGUST 21, 7:30pm



**VANESSA WILLIAMS** U E F  
FRI & SAT, AUGUST 22 & 23, 7:30pm



**OZOMATLI**  
SUN, AUGUST 24, 7:30pm



**1812 TCHAIKOVSKY  
SPECTACULAR**  
FRI, AUGUST 29 U E F  
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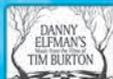
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FRI, JULY 25, 8pm



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