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San Diego's Amazing Barnhart Family

Doug Barnhart (left) has a passion for building and philanthropy – qualities carried on by his daughter, Tami Barnhart-Reese, and son-in-law West Reese, shown outside a Barnhart project, the Makina Medical Center. **SEE PG. 8**



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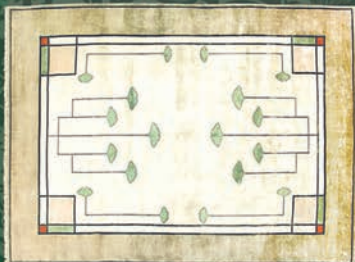
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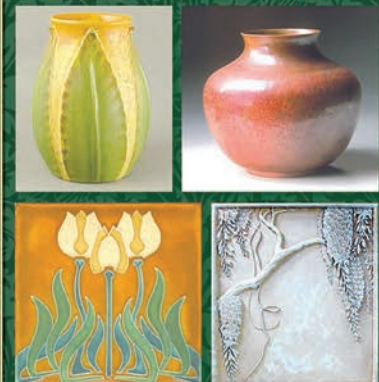
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COVER STORY: The Amazing Barnhart Family

Since 1983, Doug Barnhart – and the Barnhart family – have become synonymous with a portrait of a San Diego construction, civic and philanthropic leader. Barnhart built Douglas E. Barnhart Inc., along with his wife, Nancy – and later his daughter, Tami Barnhart-Reese, and son-in-law West Reese, into a vivid example of construction industry leadership. Photo by Pam Davis. [PAGE 8](#)

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San Diego State University researcher Jing Gu and collaborators at Princeton University have come one step closer to harnessing the power of hydrogen as a reliable and inexpensive fuel. They developed a process to recover energy and electrons from organics in wastewater and generate hydrogen simultaneously using only solar energy.

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Mesa College's new \$15.9 million Fine Arts Building

C.W. Driver Companies announced the completion of the new \$15.9 million San Diego Mesa College Fine Arts Building – a four-story, 26,500-square-foot facility that unites the program's departments into a single modernized building. The new space facilitates experiential teaching and collaboration, enhancing the department's ability to provide a comprehensive fine arts education program and hands-on experience for students, officials said.

Located at 7250 Mesa College Drive on the site of the former I-300 building, the new integrated building provides a hub for the college's photography, digital graphics, drawing, painting, ceramics and sculpting classes and studios.

The new fine arts facility was funded by the \$1.55 billion Proposition S and N construction bond program, which funds new instructional and career training facilities, major renovations and campuswide infrastructure projects at Mesa, City and Miramar colleges as well as six continuing education campuses throughout San Diego.

"We were proud to partner with Mesa College to bring to life its vision of a unified environment that inspires creative community on campus," said Brandon Silveira, project manager at C.W. Driver Companies. "The design incorporates large, open studio classrooms that allow for maximum flexibility, and provides the resources and education its fine arts students need to succeed as the college's programs continue to grow and thrive."

As one of the largest and most successful of California's 114 community colleges, and the largest in the San Diego Community College District, Mesa College serves 24,000 students.

C.W. Driver Companies partnered with architecture firm Hanna Gabriel Wells on the project. The building is designed to obtain LEED Silver certification as a result of reusing existing structures, optimizing energy performance, using low-emitting materials and other energy-efficient measures. In addition to the new fine arts center, the project involved construction of a new exterior sidewalk and walkway, curb and gutter improvements and new street access on the North and South sides.

The new integrated building provides a hub for the college's photography, digital graphics, drawing, painting, ceramics and sculpting classes and studios. (Photo courtesy of C.W. Driver Companies)

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Ronson J. Shamoun, Principal Attorney and CEO of RJS LAW, is an Adjunct Law Professor at the University of San Diego-School of Law where he teaches a Tax Practice and Penalties class. He was recently presented with the following awards:

- San Diego Metro Magazine- Best Attorney 2016
- San Diego Magazine- Top Attorney 2016
- San Diego Business Journal- Best of the Bar 2014, 2015 & 2016
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Women's Symposium speakers.



From left, Dr. Ann Scarborough-Bull, chief of environmental sciences, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; Holly Smithson, CEO of Athena; Lorena Slomanson, development director, Legal Aid Society of San Diego; Mary Jean Anderson, owner, Anderson Plumbing, Heating, and Air; Michelle Flores-Gonzalez, VP, Flores Financial Services Inc.



San Diego District Attorney Summer Stephan shared keynote address.

Academy of Our Lady of Peace fifth annual Women's Symposium

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP), the oldest high school in San Diego and the only all-girls' school in the county, hosted its fifth annual Women's Symposium, "Piloting Your Life," on March 15, on its historic campus in Normal Heights. More than 300 community guests attended the event in addition to the school's 750 students and 150 faculty and staff members.

The event brought together top women leaders to share their insights and pathways to success with OLP students and the larger community. Through dialogue and conversations, these female leaders shared their personal experiences of standing up for themselves and fearlessly chasing their dreams. OLP is committed to serving as a hub for thought leadership and welcomed the larger community to join for a day of learning.

"For 136 years, the Academy of Our Lady of Peace has empowered young women to become academic scholars and community leaders. Our annual Women's Symposium highlighted that legacy by connecting attendees with incredible women leaders," said Dr. Lauren Lek, Head of School. "This year, we were blessed with truly exceptional panels of women leaders from various backgrounds. Their professions spanned from doctors to television celebrities, CEOs, inventors and everything in-between."

New this year, the panel topics tackled the biggest concerns of women in the workplace. Topics included Overcoming Adversity; Changemakers in Action; The Power of Your Voice; and Creating Your Own Story.

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan kicked off the annual

Women's Symposium with a keynote address followed by a series of dynamic panels. Speakers included Consul General of USA in Tijuana, Sue Saarnio; Director, Community Relations Ambassador, Southern California and San Diego Divisions of Union Bank Rana Sampson; Fashion Designer, Winner of Project Runway 14, Ashley Nell Tipton; Chief of Environmental Sciences, Bureau of Ocean Energy and OLP alumna, Dr. Ann Scarborough-Bull; Athena CEO, Holly Smithson; Manager of Inclusion and Diversity at Qualcomm Carrie Sawyer and many more.

"Founded in 1882, the Academy of Our Lady of Peace holds a rich history of empowering and educating young women. Our annual Women's Symposium not only showcases that legacy, but it also inspires it to continue on," said Dr. Lek.

AIDS Healthcare Foundation purchases Hillcrest building to transform into retail thrift store and upstairs medical clinic

AIDS Healthcare Foundation has purchased a two-story office building in Hillcrest that it will convert into a retail thrift store on the bottom floor and a medical clinic on the second floor. LuxView Properties sold the building at 3850 Fifth Ave. for \$4.8 million.

“With walkable amenities and its proximity to Downtown, buildings in Hillcrest command a premium, particularly if they have on-site parking, like this building,” said Marc Posthumus, vice president at Colliers International, which represented the seller. “This property will prove a worthwhile investment for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation to introduce its retail thrift store and medical clinic concept.”

Recently, Posthumus represented LuxView in the sale of properties at 3855 Wabash Ave. in North Park and 3338-3348 Kettner Blvd. in Downtown San Diego.

Office building at 3850 Fifth Ave. in Hillcrest.



Large real estate conference returns to San Diego Convention Center

The largest real estate trade show in San Diego comes to the San Diego Convention Center on Friday, May 10. The Elevate Real Estate Conference and Expo brings together more than 3,000 agents, brokers and other industry professionals for a day of networking, education, and inspiration for their business.

The event will look at real estate in 2020 and beyond. Topics will focus on what the industry is doing to embrace the future of real estate as it applies to new technology, industry disruptors, buying habits, and customer expectations. The industry is changing, and you don't want

to be left behind!

The Greater San Diego Association of Realtors announced that the General Session will feature real estate visionary Stefan Swanepoel. The internationally respected business executive has been president/CEO of a real estate brokerage, a global real estate franchise, a national Realtor association, an MLS organization, and a technology startup.

The Elevate Real Estate Conference and Expo also includes a trade show in the Sail Pavilion of the Convention Center with more than 200 industry exhibitors, education breakout sessions on

timely topics such as lead generation and real estate technology, plus raffles, giveaways, and a happy hour for attendees and exhibitors to close out the conference.

What: San Diego's Elevate Real Estate Conference & Expo

When: Friday, May 10, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: San Diego Convention Center, 111 W. Harbor Dr., San Diego, CA 92101

Cost: \$40 All Access: General Session, Expo Trade Show & Breakout Sessions

For more information and registration: www.sdarexpo.com



Photo by Pam Davis

San Diego's Amazing Barnhart Family

The construction company Doug Barnhart grew into a national leader while becoming a philanthropic benefactor has relaunched as Barnhart-Reese Construction

Since 1983, Doug Barnhart – and the Barnhart family – have become synonymous with a portrait of a San Diego construction, civic and philanthropic leader. Barnhart built Douglas E. Barnhart Inc., along with his wife, Nancy – and later his daughter, Tami Barnhart-Reese, and son-in-law West Reese, into a vivid example of construction industry leadership.

During Barnhart's ownership of the construction company that bore his name, he oversaw large, iconic San Diego projects including Petco Park; the Terminal 2 expansion at Lindbergh Field; the then San Diego Chargers Training Facility; SDSU's Tony Gwynn Stadium; SDSU's College of Arts & Letters; the USD Shiley Theater Renovation; Poway City Hall; Coronado Country Club; Viejas Casino, and the San Diego Supercomputer Center.

The Early Years

Barnhart's passion for building was borne from his academics and his service in the U.S. Navy. Doug and Nancy came from families in the oil and ranching business in West Texas where Barnhart's graduating high school class consisted of just 32 students in Merkel, Texas. After high school, Barnhart joined the ROTC Navy Program at Texas Tech University while earning a degree in civil engineering. Upon graduating,



The family donated funding and built the Douglas and Nancy Barnhart Sharp Chula Vista Cancer Center.
(Photo courtesy of Barnhart-Reese Construction)

Barnhart was sent on his first tour of duty in Vietnam where he would stay for an entire year serving as damage control officer and as engineering officer on the USS Luzern County. Upon returning from the war zone, Barnhart was assigned duties as enlisted programs officer at Naval Recruiting Command San Francisco. From there he was assigned to the Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme, and finally as assistant resident officer in Charge of Construction San Diego where he oversaw construction of Naval facilities at NAS North Island, NAB Coronado and Naval Outlying Landing Field Imperial Beach. It was during the tours at Port Hueneme and San Diego where he gained in-depth experience in building construction and contracting.

Early on in the development of Douglas E. Barnhart Inc., Doug and Nancy had two young daughters, Tara and Tami, who were often with their parents in their Rancho Bernardo office between school and sports activities.

“Even with a busy schedule building the business, my parents rarely missed, if ever, an important school or track event during all the years throughout my elementary, high school or college activities,” said Tami Barnhart-Reese.

After graduating from the University of San Diego, and working at two local public relations firms, Tami began working full time for Douglas E. Barnhart, Inc., while Tara earned her teaching degree from Whittier College and began a teaching career in the Los Angeles area.

The company grew quickly, establishing numerous branch offices in California and Texas, enabling continuous growth. From its Rancho Bernardo headquarters, Barnhart continued to expand upon its portfolio of building educational facilities throughout the Southwestern United States, including many locally: colleges and faculty/staff buildings for San Diego State University; University of San Diego’s Colachis Plaza; Lincoln High School, and Westview High School.

A privately-held company, Barnhart Inc. was governed by a seven-member board of directors, three of whom were women. Glynna Hoekstra, a former Barnhart vice president and project manager, reflected on her nearly 15-year career at Douglas E. Barnhart Inc.: “Doug and Nancy focused on creating a work environment that embraced family values and work ethic,” said Hoekstra. “It also was not common that women were given leadership opportunities in the construction industry, which is something that the Barnhart’s gave to me. They took a chance on me, allowing me to have a long and meaningful career as a woman in a typically male-dominated industry.”

Building Inclusion and Community

It was a common site to see Tami and Tara Barnhart in the office, and later working summer school sessions as interns in the office. A theme that also permeated throughout the workplace was a philosophy of, “It’s not the person or



The Bayside Fire Station in San Diego is another Barnhart-Reese Construction project. (Photo courtesy of Barnhart-Reese Construction)

company, it's about the project and what it does for the community," according to Doug Barnhart. In that spirit, Barnhart contributed time, labor and materials to build many projects for nonprofit organizations throughout the region, including The Ronald McDonald House, Becky's House, and the San Diego Center for Children. Most recently, the family donated funding and built the Douglas and Nancy Barnhart Sharp Chula Vista Cancer Center; provided the basic funding for the Scripps Mercy Robotic Surgery Suites; and donated funds to establish the Douglas Barnhart Athletic Rehabilitation Center at the University of California San Diego. "These projects are what we are most proud of in our portfolio because they provide food for the soul and shelter for the spirit," Barnhart said. "I get a lot of credit for the nonprofit charitable projects but deserve very little of it. I had a lot of help from business partners, Barnhart employees and others in the community."

Change, Transition and Legacy

In 2008, after 25 years of building Douglas E. Barnhart Inc., the company

was sold to Balfour Beatty Construction Company, with a five-year agreement that included the Barnhart name in Barnhart Balfour Beatty. After the sale of Barnhart Inc., Tami and West Reese founded J. Reese Construction, named after their first-born son, Jake. "My father built a work ethic within our family values that both West and I wanted to emulate," said Tami Barnhart-Reese. Over the next five years, Tami and West began building on that legacy as J. Reese Construction, with controlled growth and a family-oriented environment. After the expiration of the limitations of use of the Barnhart name in the construction industry, J. Reese Construction was re-named Barnhart-Reese Construction Inc., (BRC) with Doug Barnhart serving as chairman of the board. Running the day-to-day operations of BRC are West Reese as CEO, and Tami Barnhart-Reese as president.

Tami and West say that their boys, 15 and 10, are present in the office during the summer and between numerous academic and sports activities, but that it's too early to say whether or not they will someday join the family business, preferring to leave

that decision to them after their individual academic paths are completed.

West Reese, a University of California San Diego graduate, previously worked as vice president for fixed equipment assets for Barnhart Inc. before founding J. Reese Construction with his wife. "I grew up in a tight-knit family as well, and after working for Barnhart Inc. prior to the sale, it seemed a natural fit for Tami and me to begin our own style of the Barnhart legacy," Reese said. "It's an understatement to say that I've learned so much from my father-in-law; he's shown us the ropes and is a beacon for BRC from which to measure our path forward and success."

For decades, the Barnhart family has been active in civic and philanthropic activities in San Diego. Today, Doug Barnhart serves as a commissioner on the county of San Diego's Planning Commission and was a governor's appointee and past chairman of the California Contractors State License Board, a former commissioner of the California Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Commission, chairman of the Qualcomm Stadium Board,

president of the Associated General Contractors Association at the local and national levels, and board member of the 22nd Agricultural District which oversees the Del Mar Fairgrounds.

“Doug and his family have been a positive contributing factor to so many important San Diego public endeavors as leaders not only on the job, but behind the scenes,” said Abdur Rahim Hameed, national president of the Black Contractors Association. “Barnhart has given our members so many contracting opportunities throughout the years with symbols of success such as Petco Park, and the (San Diego Convention Center) Sails Pavilion. The business and economic impacts to the African-American community have been immeasurable.”

While West and Tami saw the success of Barnhart Inc. built over many years, they are committed to balancing family and work, while steadily growing Barnhart-Reese Construction over the next generation in a “thoughtful, meaningful way.”

“We intend to grow BRC organically and systematically, with core values that focus on the benefits of a San Diego-based firm providing construction services that can’t be matched by large firms from

outside our region,” said West Reese.

In 2018, Barnhart-Reese completed approximately \$36.5 million in projects, including UC San Diego’s new warehouse facility; Naval Base San Diego’s renovation of two buildings; a 10,027-square-foot Social Hall; and a 944-square-foot extension to the exterior of St. Demiana Christian Church of San Diego’s Del Sur campus; a project for Homeland Security; and improvements to Grossmont Union High School District’s Mt. Miguel High School. The company also has an additional \$120 million under contract for 2019, including projects for Naval Base Point Loma, barrack renovations for NAS North Island and work at Marine Corps Base Barstow.

Local architectural firm Delawie has partnered on numerous projects with Barnhart over many years. “It is great to see that, after the sale of their original company, Barnhart – and now Barnhart-Reese – will remain a mainstay for the construction industry in San Diego,” said Delawie principal Mike Asaro. “Their design-build experience and expertise has led us to partner with them in a way that ultimately maximizes design features with cost savings for our clients.”

Other notable projects built by Barnhart-Reese include: Bayside Fire Station #2 for the city of San Diego; Hawthorne Cat Dynamometer Test Center; UCSD Spanos Athletic Performance Center; Olivenhain Municipal Water District Operations Maintenance Facility; Donovan Correctional Facility Health Care Administration Building; and Skyline Hills Branch Library for the city of San Diego, which won a National Design-Build Institute of America Award, as well as an AGC Build America Award. Among the medical facilities BRC has constructed are the Makena Medical Center – Escondido; Sharp Cancer Center at Chula Vista; Sharp Parking Structure at Chula Vista; Sharp Flower Hill Medical Offices in Del Mar; Neurology Center of Southern California Medical Offices; and Makena Medical Center –Temecula.

While it took two decades to build the original Barnhart Construction into a \$700 million company, it appears that with Barnhart-Reese Construction well underway, it will prove that the Barnhart family will once again be an important part of building a San Diego-based, family-owned business.



The John D. Spreckels Center and Bowling Green, built by Barnhart-Reese Construction.
(Photo courtesy of Barnhart-Reese Construction)



Carissa Moore won the 2018 Supergirl Pro Title at an all-women surf contest in Oceanside. (Photo courtesy of Supergirl Pro)

Women Surfers Push Beyond Equal Pay

By Laurel Rosenhall | Special to CALmatters

Even if it means letting men into the water, too

Women surfers scored a big win in California last year when an obscure government commission decided it would only lease a public beach to the Mavericks global surf competition if men and women were awarded the same amount of prize money. Experts said the precedent could compel equal pay at marathons, bike races, skateboard contests—any athletic events on public land.

A lawmaker put the idea into a bill that, if approved, would require equal prize money for men and women at any sporting event on state-owned property. It all seemed to be good news in the long fight for gender equality for women athletes, whose male peers have long been paid far more.

Now a push to go further is opening a broader debate over how to advance equality for women in male-dominated sports—and whether all-female

competitions should be open to men.

Arguing that the bill inspired by their victory doesn't go far enough, some of the same women who fought for equal prize money at the Mavericks surfing competition want the bill also to require that all sporting events on public land include categories for both men and women.

"Long term, that will be best for women athletes and encourage girls to stick with the sport and become pro athletes and get the money they need to do that," said Sabrina Brennan, co-founder of the Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing—the group that pressured state regulators first into including women at the Mavericks surf challenge, and then into requiring equal prize money.

The group advocates for separate divisions for men and women, not co-ed competitions.

Still, including both genders at all sporting events on public land would not only mean adding women's divisions to all-male competitions. It also would do

away with all-female sporting events that were created to provide unique opportunities for women and girls.

That threat is raising a debate between those who, like Brennan, argue that single-sex athletic events perpetuate inequality—and others who say they empower women in sports dominated by men.

"Our event makes it a safe space for women and girls to participate," said Amelia Brodka, co-founder of Exposure Skate, which puts on an all-female skateboarding competition at a public park in Encinitas.

Brodka said she started the event after several skateboarding contests canceled their women's divisions.

"It creates something that is needed to build these girls and women up... The men have a million events they can participate in."

Encinitas Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner Horvath wants to preserve events like that, which is why she's resisting pressure to expand her bill focused on

prize money to also require inclusion of both genders.

“My strong feeling is that when we compensate women equally, that will translate into greater equality and inclusion across the board. We don’t have to legislate inclusion at this point,” said Boerner Horvath, a Democrat.

“If we see in a few years that women are shut out of large events then we will address that. We will be tracking to make sure we have the maximum amount of gender equality and equity on our public lands.”

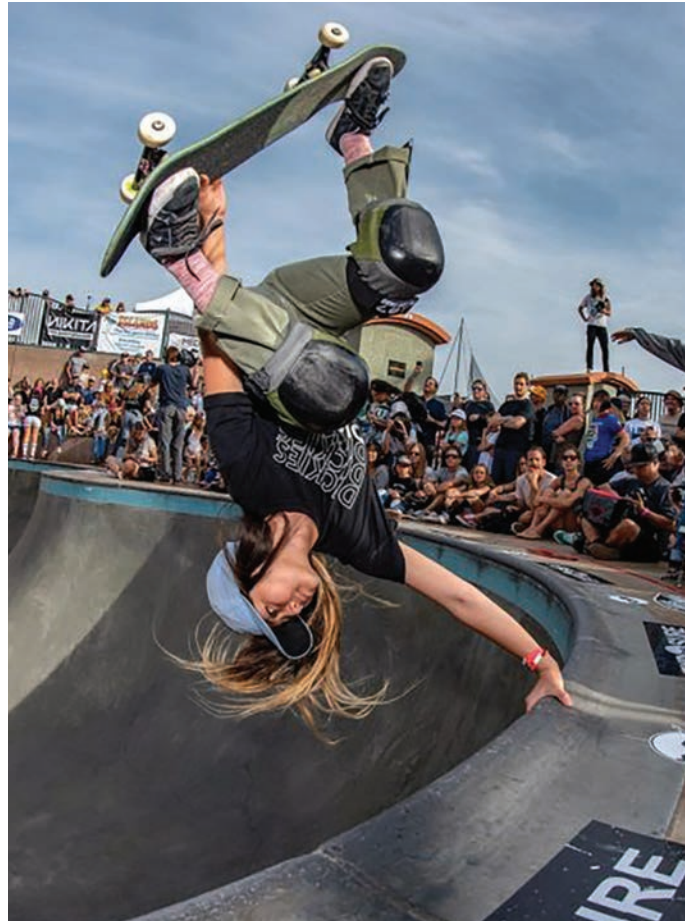
San Francisco surfer Bianca Valenti acknowledged the camaraderie of all-female events but said requiring inclusion of both genders is the only way to give women more opportunities to compete. She pointed to an all-men’s surf competition this month in Huntington Beach.

“If you look at the number of events available to boys and men there are many more than are available to women,” she said. “If you want to preserve those women-only events you would be losing out on being able to participate in so many more.”

Brennan, a San Mateo harbor commissioner whose advocacy for women surfers has earned her national attention, now finds herself arguing that men should be included at events that have long been exclusively for women, such as a surf contest in Oceanside that launched 12 years ago to showcase women in action sports.

“You have a Civil Rights Act for a reason and it’s important that we enforce it however that works out. Sometimes it doesn’t work out to your group’s advantage and that’s just part of the deal,” she said.

“For society overall I see it as the best thing for the collective good of all.”



Allysha Le competes at Exposure Skate, a women's skateboarding contest in Encinitas. (Photo by Lauren Muller courtesy of Exposure Skate)



WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

IN SAN DIEGO

COMING IN THE MAY 2019 ISSUE

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For the privilege of helping others, I will be paying off student loans for 20 years

By Anna Shoopman
Special to CALmatters

On the single day that I wrote this commentary, the net cost of my post-graduate studies increased from \$22,960 to \$23,258.

I am a first-semester masters of social work student at the University of Southern California, taking classes online, at a time when college tuition rates are higher than ever.

As my student loans rise, I ask myself, who is able to afford tuition?

One look into recent national news will make this clear. The college admissions scam, much of which involves parents of USC students, serves as a blaring signal that college is not about education. It is about status.

The majority of us do not have anyone to help buy our admission, let alone our education. I am one of the millions of Americans who will graduate with massive debt. By the time I earn my master's degree in a year and a half, my student loans will amount to about \$80,000. I fully expect to be working for 10 or 20 years to pay this off. This is the cost for me to become a social worker and help others.

There are innumerable others in this country who couldn't afford to even think about higher education.

In 2016 a single mom with one child was considered to be in poverty if she earned less than \$16,543 annually. Compare that to the average yearly tuition for a four-year public college, \$20,967. Clearly, higher education is not geared toward anyone living in poverty. So I ask, again, who can afford higher education?

In 2015-2016, 72.3 percent of undergraduate students received some



Anna Shoopman

form of financial assistance. The remaining 28 percent are able to afford the full cost of tuition without assistance, and won't be burdened with student loans that they will be paying off for years. These people become the elite.

As evidenced by the enormous cost of tuition today, education is not available to everyone, but rather specifically to the elite. The most expensive schools, the private schools, specifically serve this group.

They claim notoriety by charging astronomical tuition. Of course, they educate their students. But they also teach students how to gain and maintain social and economic status.

Too often, tuition serves to exclude less affluent students, and confine them to the middle class or less as they tirelessly work to escape student debt. This market drives the cost of education up, and simultaneously devalues the education of other students.

In an age in which money can and does buy the "best" education, we must take back the value of higher education by

drastically reducing the cost, and making it affordable to people who aren't the children of the rich and famous.

In order to reinstate the value of higher education, we must drop the ruse that college must be expensive to be worthwhile. We must create and support policies that provide incentives to lower the cost of tuition and increase institutional aid for students.

A start would be to increase admission rates by even slim margins to generate more revenue and drop the cost for each student.

Better yet would be to evaluate spending habits of unaffordable schools to better understand where costs can be reduced and tuition lowered. We have an obligation to understand how and where tuition is spent, so we can improve the system for the coming generation of students, no matter their parents income.

As a student who wants to enter a field where I have the privilege of helping others, I am on a specific path to a lifetime of hard but fulfilling work. I am taking on the cost of tuition in order to help those who bear the cost of a life without it. Although the cost of education is at an all time high, the cost of not addressing this issue is even higher.

Anna Shoopman is graduate student at the University of Southern California, shoopman@usc.edu, living in Tucson. She wrote this commentary for CALmatters, a public interest journalism venture committed to explaining how California's Capitol works and why it matters.

Harnessing the Power of Hydrogen

By Coleen L. Geraghty
SDSU NewsCenter

For use as a reliable and inexpensive fuel for 'clean' vehicles

Hydrogen as a potential fuel source could revolutionize global energy consumption. Not only is hydrogen abundant and renewable, it is also a clean energy source with no harmful emission byproducts.

A San Diego State University researcher has come one step closer to harnessing the power of hydrogen as a reliable and inexpensive fuel. Inorganic chemist Jing Gu and collaborators at Princeton University developed a process to recover energy and electrons from organics in wastewater and generate hydrogen simultaneously using only solar energy.

Until now, hydrogen production from water relied on costly platinum catalysts. The SDSU team developed a more inexpensive catalyst with lower-cost metal sulfide containing molybdenum and nickel. Research by Gu and others in the



SDSU biochemist Jing Gu (Photo courtesy of SDSU)

field is aimed at lowering the cost of hydrogen fuel for potential use in "clean" consumer vehicles.

Additionally, Gu's team identified the position of specific atoms within the catalytic framework, enabling them to better control the process and make it easier for others to replicate.

"This is an exciting discovery for our group," Gu said, whose research is supported by the National Science Foundation. "We recovered hydrogen from water using a low-temperature, low-pressure method with small-scale equipment in the lab. And we are among

a very few in the field that is able to precisely control the position of metal atoms in the catalyst."

The framework developed by Gu's team will allow researchers to determine how certain atoms interact during the hydrogen production process and why some work more effectively than others.

This is Gu's third year as an assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. After earning a Ph.D. at Tulane University, she served as a postdoctoral research associate at Princeton University and a postdoctoral fellow at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado.

Gu's co-authors on the Nature Communications paper are Lijun Zhang, a professor at Jilin University and Yongge Wei, a professor at Tsinghua University. Yichao Huang a former international student at SDSU, is the primary author.

A second paper, published in Energy & Environmental Science, includes SDSU undergraduate student Walteri Vakki as primary author and Michael Fairchild as a contributor.

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