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Planned Parenthood Celebrates 50 Years in San Diego

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Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson



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-Ronald Judy, Co-founder Nintendo of America and Founder NES International (Nintendo in Europe)

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COVER STORY

ON THE COVER:

Planned Parenthood Celebrates a Half-Century of Service

Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest has grown from a one-room office in Balboa Park in 1963 into the second largest affiliate in the nation. Darrah Di-Giorgio Johnson (left) heads the organization as president and CEO. Page 16.



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Persuasive Courtroom Combatant

For trial lawyers like Steven Strauss, an attorney with Cooley LLP in San Diego, you have to have a theatrical side to be an effective legal advocate. And effective he has been, having never lost in handling more than 30 major cases during his career.



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Homage to a True Sailor

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New Car Review

The new Lexus ES300 — the first-ever hybrid version of the hugely popular ES350, is capable of almost-Prius fuel efficiency — 40 city, 39 highway — but it's not slow like a Prius. And if you demand some "go" with your green, the ES300 has got you covered.

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Northrop Grumman's Fire Scout helicopter

Northrop Grumman to Produce More Fire Scout Helicopters for the Navy

The U.S. Navy has awarded Northrop Grumman Corp. a contract valued at more than \$71 million to produce six additional next-generation Fire Scout unmanned helicopters. The Fire Scout endurance upgrade, designated the MQ-8C and based on Bell Helicopter's 407, will provide ship commanders with increased range, endurance and payload capacity over the current MQ-8B variant. The Navy plans to purchase a total of 30 aircraft under a rapid development effort. Northrop Grumman is currently under contract to produce 14 Fire Scouts that are scheduled to begin deploying in 2014. Manufacturing and assembly operations of the new Fire Scout variant are under way across the country.

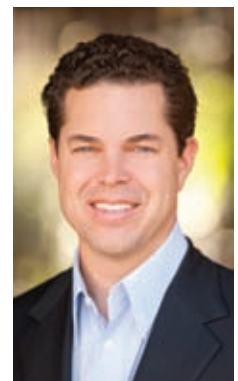
Mayor Appoints Jason Hughes as Special Assistant To Advise on Downtown Office Real Estate Needs

Mayor Bob Filner has appointed Jason Hughes as special assistant to the mayor to advise the Mayor's Office on the city's Downtown office real estate needs. Hughes, president and CEO of Hughes Marino, will focus on providing guidance on the 550,000 square feet of office space the city leases in Downtown. The position is voluntary and is expected to continue as long as necessary.

"I appreciate Jason's commitment to public service in this advisory role, which he will perform without compensation from any party," Filner said.

"Jason's extensive knowledge and background in commercial real estate dealings will provide the city with the insights of a true expert. His experience Downtown is unparalleled and will help yield positive results for San Diego as we determine how best to continue our operations."

Hughes has worked in commercial real estate for the past 25 years. Since forming Hughes Marino in 2011, he has operated the largest tenant and buyer representation company in San Diego. Prior to Hughes Marino, Hughes was president and co-owner of Irving Hughes for 18 years.



Jason Hughes

Corporate Directors Forum to Present Governance Training

Corporate Directors Forum's Governance Academy is now offering a two-day training course geared toward expanding directors' boardroom competencies, confidence and personal network. "The Essentials of Corporate Governance" training course, to be held May 16-17 at the University of San Diego, will be an interactive learning experience led by nationally respected directors and boardroom leaders drawing from real-life experiences and including relevant, recent business developments. Lead instructors will include Suzanne Hopgood, president and CEO, The Hopgood Group LLC; and Michael J. Berthelot, director, Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc. To see the full agenda and register for the event, contact Corporate Directors Forum at (858) 455-7930 or visit DirectorsForum.com/Academy.

Jill Secard Appointed Executive Director of the San Diego Diplomacy Council

Jill M. Secard has been appointed executive director of the San Diego Diplomacy Council (SDDC), a North Park-based nonprofit that works with the public and private sector to bring emerging world leaders to San Diego each year for professional and cultural exchanges. A former Foreign Service officer, Secard brings more than 10 years of experience in non-



Jill Secard

profit management, fundraising and development, public relations, and special events production. She has been associated with Project Concern International, Just Like My Child Foundation, and A Reason to Survive, Inc. (ARTS). For 12 years she served in a variety of management positions for Hewlett-Packard Co. in the United States and France. Secard has an MBA degree in international business from the University of San Diego and a bachelor's degree in business finance from California State University, Chico. She speaks French, Spanish and some Arabic.



Gov. Jerry Brown

Gov. Brown Convenes State Military Council

Gov. Jerry Brown announced the creation of a state military council, which includes several San Diego-area officials and is aimed at protecting the 29 installations around California and expanding defense-related jobs and investment, City News Service re-

ports. "California plays a crucial role in our nation's defense, and military bases and activities are vital to our state's economy," Brown said. "As federal priorities shift to cyber security and new military technology, this council will work to expand defense-industry jobs and investment in California." The governor said the council will work to protect California's military installations and operations amid ongoing Department of Defense budget cuts, and take advantage of changes in federal military strategy to position the state to continue innovation and leadership in its military mission.

San Diego elected officials and defense industry leaders lobbied hard against the automatic spending cuts to defense that were

part of sequestration, citing potential job losses and economic damage. Some of them expressed concerns that a round of base closings could be ahead.

Assemblyman Rocky Chavez, R-Oceanside, state Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Jackson, San Diego Military Advisory Council President James Jackson and University of San Diego President Mary Lyons were among those named to the panel.

Chavez is a former Marine colonel, Jackson a retired Marine major general and Johnson was a Navy rear admiral. Lyons rose to a captain during 25 years in the Naval Reserve and taught at the old Naval Training Center in Point Loma. The council will be chaired by ex-Rep. Ellen Tauscher.

CORRECTION

Christopher Garrett's name was misspelled and Frederick Muto's law firm was misidentified in the March issue of SD METRO. Muto is a partner in the business department at Cooley LLP. We regret the errors.

Scripps Ranch to Boast the County's First All-Solar Apartment Community

The first units of the county's first all-solar apartments — Solterra EcoLuxury Apartments — will be released in May in Scripps Ranch, with full completion by early summer, according to developer H.G. Fenton Co. The “smart” community, as described by the developer, will not only allow residents the benefit of “zero” electricity bills, but will give them added conveniences that include garages that are pre-wired for electric vehicle charging and in-home Virtual Net Metering displays that let them easily monitor their kilowatt usage. “We are very proud to offer San Diegans the first market rate, 100 percent photovoltaic apartment community that will provide solar generated electricity for all 114 units as well as common areas,” said Mike Neal, H.G. Fenton president and CEO.

Located at the intersection of Scripps Ranch Boulevard and Erma Road, Solterra will have a mix of one- and two-bedroom floor plans offering 741 to 1,127 square feet. Rental rates will range from \$1,495 to \$2,255 per month. The focal point of Solterra is a 3,200-square-foot Club Room for residents to socialize, work-out or entertain. The heart of the clubhouse is a restaurant-style bar and professional culinary kitchen that can be used for gatherings and events. Solterra was designed by Architects Orange of Orange County. The general contractor is Leducor Construction Group.



Solterra rendering

Schubach Aviation Adds Cessna Citation Sovereign

Schubach Aviation has added a 2005 Cessna Citation Sovereign jet to its fleet of private aircraft, bringing the number of super-midsize and heavy jets the company now offers to five. The Sovereign's 25-foot cabin seats up to eight passengers. The jet can climb to 43,000 feet and can travel 2,847 nautical miles non-stop at a cruising speed of 458 mph. “The new Citation Sovereign is ideally suited for trips coast-to-coast, to Hawaii, or Europe with one or two stops,” said Henry Schubach, company president.



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Unmanned Aircraft Industry Poised to Create 70,000 New Jobs in the U.S. in Three Years

If Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or drones, are integrated into the U.S. national airspace system by the target date of 2015, the unmanned aircraft industry would be poised to create more than 70,000 new American jobs in the first three years following integration. That's the conclusion of a new study by the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International. Beyond the first three years, the study projects that more than 100,000 new jobs will be created by 2025. In San Diego, the UAV industry includes General Atomics and Northrop Grumman Corp.

"This is an incredibly exciting time for an industry developing technology that will benefit society, as well as the economy," said Michael Toscano, president and CEO of the association. "In recent years, unmanned aircraft technology has grown remarkably and is already proving useful in a range of domestic applications. Integrating unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) into the national airspace will lead to new and expanded uses, which means the creation of quality, high-paying American jobs."

In the first three years following integration, the total economic impact is projected to surpass \$13.6 billion, growing to more than \$82 billion between 2015 and 2025, the study said. Additional economic benefit will be seen through tax revenue to the states, which will total more than \$482 million in the first decade following the integration.

Nationally, the precision agriculture industry is expected to be the largest market for UAS technology, the study found. UAS will help farmers monitor crops and distribute pesticides, which could not only help improve efficiency, but

also reduce the total amount of pesticides sprayed, saving money and reducing environmental impact. The public safety sector is another area that will benefit from the



General Atomics' MQ-9 Reaper

tremendous potential for UAS technology, according to the association.

A study by the General Accounting Office found that much work is needed to overcome many of the obstacles to the safe integration of unmanned aircraft systems into U.S. airspace — including the inability for UAS to sense and avoid other aircraft and airborne objects in a manner similar to manned aircraft. Congress set specific guidelines for the integration when it passed the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, setting a target date of December 2015 for the Federal Aviation Administration to meet those guidelines.

Northrop Grumman's Rancho Bernardo Plant Designated as a Center for its Drone Business

Northrop Grumman has designated its Aerospace Systems Rancho Bernardo facility as its new Unmanned Systems Center of Excellence (the drone business), bringing in a number of jobs to San Diego from its facilities in Bethpage, N.Y. and Melbourne, Fla. It is one of five centers the defense firm has designated as centers of design and integration excellence. The company says that consolidating to San Diego will allow the team to grow efficiencies, performance and innovation to address the continued needs of domestic and international customers. The Rancho Bernardo site employs 2,200 people. "Consolidating these centers of excellence will improve our strategic alignment with our customers' need for increasingly innovative and affordable products, services and solutions," said Wes Bush, chairman, chief executive officer and president of Northrop Grumman. The company will close its Dominguez Hills, Calif., facility as part of its consolidation.

U.S. Bank Giving Employees Tools and Funds to Help Implement Sustainability Programs

Beginning this month, U.S. Bank employees serving on any one of the bank's 30 "Green Teams" across the country can apply for grants of up to \$250 to help implement sustainability programs that their teams develop. "Over the past few years, our Green Teams have inspired creative and unique ideas," said Lisa O'Brien, director of environment affairs for U.S. Bank. "By providing this grant opportunity, we believe the Green Teams can have an even greater influence on employee education and engagement, resulting in a direct benefit to our environmental impact."

In addition to the grants program, U.S. Bank will distribute sustainability kits to Green Team leaders. The kits are designed to educate employees and help them identify ways to optimize energy and water efficiency both in the office and at home and will include: a Kill-a-Watt meter to measure energy consumption and costs for individuals electronic devices; water usage gauges and leak indicator tablets to measure how much water is potentially being wasted by anything from a running faucet to a leaky toilet; infrared thermometer to record surface temperatures to find out where air may be escaping or entering a house; and instructions and educational materials to help employees understand and impact their results.



U.S. Bank's sustainability kit

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Elena Pacenti to Join the NewSchool of Architecture and Design

Elena Pacenti will join The NewSchool of Architecture and Design in August as director of the recently created Domus Academy School of Design. Pacenti comes from Domus Academy in Milan, Italy, one of the top-ranked design schools in the world. She will lead the development of new global design education programs, such as NSAD's Bachelor of Interior Design that prepare students for careers in international design. The interior design program launched last fall, and classes begin in October 2013. Pacenti currently directs the Design School at Domus Academy. She was director of the Domus Academy Research Center from 2002 through 2009. In 2011, she established the Master in Service and Experience Design program at Domus Academy.



Elena Pacenti

Unveiling of the New Sunroad Resort Marina

In May, The Sunroad Resort Marina will unveil many new enhanced resort aspects and features. Located on Harbor Island, the marina is currently undergoing a renovation to increase the tenant and guest resort experience.

The best feature is the new pool and spa area. Cabanas and deck chairs will soon be surrounded by landscape and a new resort-style setting. The community pavilion is to be expanded with a new kitchen, TVs, furniture and more for tenants to mingle and entertain. These are in addition to the upgraded common areas, including a renovation of the gym and the business center within the marina. "We are excited to unveil the new marina," said Jim Behun, marina manager. Other amenities include: being pet friendly, free WIFI and ample parking with walking distance to restaurants.

The marina has over 600 boat slips ranging in length from 30 feet to 65 feet and end ties up to 120-foot. And all of the slips are single slips. Boat dock services include electrical hookups, satellite television, fresh water service and a waste pump-out station. The docks are also access card controlled and security patrols the parking lots and grounds.



Sunroad Resort Marina rendering



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Tom Ham's Lighthouse rendering

Tom Ham's Lighthouse Undergoing Renovation

Tom Ham's Lighthouse, a fixture on San Diego Bay for 42 years, is undergoing a \$3.5 million makeover designed by architect Graham Downes. The restaurant closed on Jan. 2 and will reopen by May. The renovation will reposition Tom Ham's Lighthouse as a dining destination by adding an outdoor dining deck along the entire bayside of the building. A new bar and cocktail lounge will take full advantage of panoramic views of San Diego Bay and the city skyline. The design team led by Downes, who also oversaw the Bali Hai Restaurant renovation, will lower the windows to improve the scope and size of the bay view. The family-owned landmark was opened in 1971 by the late Tom Ham. Today, the restaurant is owned and operated by his daughter, Susie Baumann, and her husband Larry, along with their three sons. The family also manages and owns the Bali Hai Restaurant on Shelter Island, which underwent its own renovation in 2010.

Robert Francavilla Named A Top Attorney in San Diego

Top San Diego litigator Robert Francavilla has attained millions of dollars in settlements and verdicts for his clients over the years – most recently settling a complex premises liability case on behalf of a seriously injured client for \$7.5 million in damages. Specializing in serious personal injury and head trauma, Francavilla is a longtime partner with CaseyGerry, where he has practiced law for 25 years, specializing in the trial of serious personal injury and wrongful death cases, as well as in cases that involve major highway design and automobile products liability.




Robert Francavilla

He has received numerous awards throughout his career, honored by the Consumer Attorneys of San Diego as one of its the 2011 "Trial Stars" and with its "Outstanding Trial Lawyer Award" on five occasions. He is featured in "Best Lawyers in America" and Super Lawyers magazine has listed him as one San Diego's outstanding personal injury lawyers for the last six years, also naming him as one of the top 50 lawyers in San Diego. Francavilla was elected president of the Consumer Attorneys of San Diego in 2005, and is a member of the prestigious American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), an organization comprised of the country's leading plaintiff and defense trial counsel.

Additionally, he serves on board of directors of Head-North, a Del Mar-based nonprofit dedicated to providing help and hope for spinal cord injury survivors.

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Cuisine for a Cause Celebrity Chefs Cook Gala to benefit Cancer Center

Award-winning chefs from San Diego and across the country will gather in La Jolla for a night of “Epicurean Elegance” and philanthropy on Saturday, April 27, at the 32nd annual Celebrity Chefs Cook Gala. Benefitting the UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center, the event will feature 11 prominent chefs preparing their signature hors d’oeuvres paired with fine wine. This year, all proceeds will support the cancer center’s initiative MyAnswertoCancer, which uses DNA analysis to make personalized cancer treatment a reality.

The event has raised more than \$9 million since its inception to advance cancer research, patient care, community outreach and education programs at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. Last fall, the center launched MyAnswertoCancer with the goal of ending “one size fits all” cancer treatments.

By sequencing patient tumor DNA, MyAnswertoCancer aims to revolutionize the ability to predict who will respond to a specific treatment and to match each patient with the best drug for a particular tumor. The program brings together expert doctors, bioinformaticians, pathologists and geneticists to approach cancer analysis and treatment in a game-changing way, according to Razelle Kurzrock, senior deputy director for clinical science at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. “We have the technology and the expertise, and we have a plan,” said Kurzrock. “Funds raised from the Celebrity Chefs Cook Gala will enable us to put our plan into action.”

Chairing the event this year will be Joann and Eric Weitzen. Joann was just 8 years old when she lost her mother, who was 31 years old, to non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Today, patients with non-Hodgkin lymphoma can often be successfully treated. Eric Weitzen also lost his father to cancer — chronic lymphatic leukemia.

“The progress in fighting cancer has come such a long way. If today’s technology had been available at the time, my mother might still be alive,” said Joann Weitzen. “I believe that there will be a cure for many types of cancer in our lifetime, and the route that UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center is taking — personalized, targeted cancer therapy — is going to help us get there.”

In addition to the prominent restaurants represented at the gala, this year the Moores Cancer Center’s Healthy Foods Cooking program will join the lineup of chefs to demonstrate easy, healthy recipes that nourish the body and help fight disease.

Several wineries and distributors will provide a selection of wines for the benefit. The food and wine chairs are Marie Kelley and George Karetas. Serving as master of ceremonies at the event will be Peggy Pico, the host of KPBS Evening Edition.

After the reception and dinner, the program will music by The Heroes. Tickets are \$350 or \$500. For details and reservations, call (858) 246-1230 or visit www.celebritychefscook.org.



Celebrity chef: Jean-Michel Diot, chef and owner of Tapanade Restaurant in La Jolla.



Advertising the 32nd annual Celebrity Chefs Cook Gala.

PERSUASIVE COURTROOM COMBATANT

Trial lawyer Steven Strauss wields a combination of skills and tenacity in securing big judgments in high-profile cases

By Dave Schwab

For trial lawyers like Steven M. Strauss, the courtroom is the thing.

“You have to have a theatrical side to be an effective legal advocate,” said Strauss, an attorney with the San Diego office of Cooley LLP, a law firm with 700 attorneys throughout the U.S. and China.

Noting there’s “a lot of work that goes into a courtroom presentation,” Strauss pointed out a trial lawyer “has got to be able to command a room.”

Strauss referred to trying a case as “the ultimate challenge on multiple levels.”

“It’s about your credibility, and your ability to persuade, making sure evidence meets legal standards and that your appeal to the judge or jury is seamless and effective,” he said. “I love it.”

Being a winning trial lawyer is all about “the art of persuasion,” said Strauss, who’ll tell you the key to being persuasive in the courtroom, besides being talented, is being prepared.

“It takes the proper skills plus preparation, doing your homework, being willing to commit to really learning the facts of your case, being creative in the legal and factual arguments you make,” he said, adding, “When you go in a courtroom, whether it’s a judge or jury, it’s all about credibility. And the way you portray credibility to a judge or jury is by having command of the facts, of the evidence.”



Steven Strauss has never lost in handling more than 30 major cases during his long legal career during which he’s obtained trial verdicts and settlements in excess of \$8 billion.

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Strauss said he's never lost in handling more than 30 major cases during his long and distinguished legal career during which he's obtained trial verdicts and settlements in excess of \$8 billion.

Strauss' cases have included some of the more notable — and memorable — in San Diego County history involving some of the region's best-known personalities.

Among them:

- Strauss is currently representing the family of late NFL star linebacker Junior Seau in their wrongful death lawsuit against the NFL asserting Seau developed chronic traumatic encephalopathy after being hit repeatedly in the head over the course of his football career.
- A summary judgment in favor of Qualcomm in a \$1 billion trade secret and patent case filed by Gabriel Technologies that alleged Qualcomm and subsidiary, Snaptrack, had stolen trade secrets and patents from the plaintiff relating to Assisted GPS technology. The court found the case was "baseless" and brought in "bad faith," awarding Qualcomm all \$12.4 million in fees/costs it requested.
- A unanimous jury verdict in favor of Ernest Rady, a prominent San Diego business leader and philanthropist who faced a lawsuit filed in 2009 by several family members seeking \$272 million in damages over a purported contract to buy out their shares in American Assets Inc., a family-owned corporation.
- His representation of Kinder Morgan in a lawsuit filed against the company in 2007 by the city of San Diego alleging failure to clean up a fuel plume on property adjacent to Qualcomm Stadium, which led to the contamination of soil and groundwater beneath the sports venue. The court granted all of the summary judgment motions and dismissed the case with prejudice. The city was seeking more than \$350 million in damages.

Strauss has also represented Manchester Financial Group on the development of the Navy Broadway Complex, aka Pacific Gateway, a 3-million-square foot, \$1.3 billion redevelopment of a 14.7-acre, four-city block waterfront site on the western end of Downtown San Diego.

Strauss' law practice encompasses business, intellectual property and real estate litigation matters including representation of business entities, corporate officers and directors, owners, developers, investors, and high net worth individuals. He specializes in complex business litigation, including intellectual property, real estate, partnership and hospitality disputes.

The son of a successful real estate developer, Strauss said he knew he wanted to be an attorney early on. And, it really helped that he excelled in debate, which led to his being recruited to Georgetown University where he competed on their top-



Being a winning trial lawyer is all about 'the art of persuasion,' said Strauss, with the San Diego office of Cooley LLP. The key to being persuasive in the courtroom, besides being talented, is being prepared, he said.

ranked national debate team.

Pursuing a double major in political science and English literature at the university level, Strauss graduated from UCLA Law School. After that, he said he had a big decision to make as to where he would "land," and what direction his career would take.

"I knew I wanted to try lawsuits, so for me it was important to get that opportunity early," he said.

He got that opportunity at Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP, one of the largest business law firms in California.

"I got to try cases right away and ended up heading Procopio's trial department," Strauss said.

Strauss noted his "courtroom mentality" has remained all-important to his methodology.

Every case I take, I'm prepared to be in the courtroom and try it," he said.

Asked about his success in representing one high-profile case and client after another, Strauss said clients "either come to

me or are referred to me," adding his trial record speaks for itself.

"I try cases. I get results," he said.

Concerning his most recent involvement in the Junior Seau case, Strauss said his relationship with the former Chargers star linebacker and his family goes back more than a decade ago to money lost by Seau, and a number of other entrepreneurs, in a criminal ponzi scheme to which they all fell prey.

"I was able to help get Seau's The Restaurant out of bankruptcy and helped him put together a money management team repositioning him and putting his financial affairs in order moving forward," Strauss said, adding he was instrumental in helping Seau set up his well-known charitable foundation which has survived his death.

"We were friends," Strauss said of the relationship, though he and Seau didn't see much of each other after he moved on from the Chargers to other NFL teams.

After his tragic suicide last year, Strauss said the Seau family reached out to him to represent them in a lawsuit against the NFL.

Strauss said the crux of the case will be to prove that "the brain injury he (Seau) suffered when he played football caused him to commit suicide."

Fully recognizing that football is a violent and dangerous sport, Seau's family, and a growing number of other NFL veterans, are suing the NFL contending the professional sports league knowingly suppressed information about the true impact of concussions on players and what medical dangers the side effects of those concussions actually presented to them.

"We want the league to be truthful with them (players) and maintain a safe playing environment that is independent of their collective bargaining agreement," Strauss said of the desired outcome in the case, which, if it goes to trial, will be held in San Diego, he said.

In his spare time, the 56-year-old Strauss likes to golf and ski.

"To do both you have to be in the moment, focus on your game," he noted.

Strauss is looking forward to many more legal challenges ahead.

"When people are facing their most significant legal challenges, I want them to come to me," he said.



The 50th Anniversary Dinner

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2013

HILTON SAN DIEGO BAYFRONT

One Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92101

Reception 5:30PM
Dinner & Program 6:30PM

EVENT CO-CHAIRS

Nora Taylor Jaffe
Kathleen L. Strauss, Ph.D.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Cecile Richards

President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Sarah Weddington

Attorney, Professor, and Women's Rights Advocate, best known for successfully arguing the landmark Roe v. Wade case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973

Jessica Valenti

Feminist Author & Blogger, Founder of Feministing.com

*For special guest bios, please visit www.planned.org/dinner.

\$50,000 MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

The Strauss Family Foundation

The foundation will match donations made at the dinner

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

Dr. Katharine Sheehan

Medical Director, Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest

**TICKETS
AVAILABLE NOW!**
www.planned.org/dinner

To purchase tickets or tables online,
please visit www.planned.org/dinner.
For more information:
(619) 881-4500
development@planned.org.

Celebrating
**50 YEARS
STRONG**



Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest

Local Planned Parenthood Celebrates 50 Years of Service

Moving 'from a provider of last resort to a health care facility of first choice'

What health care organization in Southern California employs more than 400 people, has a string of 19 health centers across the region, an annual budget of \$56 million and a legion of supporters and detractors? That would be Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, an organization that has grown from a one-room office in Balboa Park in 1963 into the second largest Planned Parenthood affiliate in the nation.

By its own count, the local Planned Parenthood provided more than 300,000 patient visits to nearly 150,000 people through its 19 health centers in San Diego and Riverside counties last year. Under the leadership of President and CEO Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson, the organization also provides educational programs in these two counties, as well as Imperial County.

Though most people think of Planned Parenthood as a provider of contraception, DiGiorgio Johnson says the organization offers much more. "We provide life-saving cervical, breast and testicular cancer screenings," she says, noting that as a cancer survivor herself, she knows firsthand the importance of early detection. "Planned Parenthood also offers STD testing and treatment, Rapid HIV testing, permanent birth control like vasectomy, tubal ligation and Essure. We also offer abortion care."

According to the agency's annual report, abortions represent 6 percent of the regional Planned Parenthood services. The vast majority of its services — 95 percent — are made up of cervical cancer screenings, contraception, gynecological visits and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. In 2011, patient visits to Planned Parenthood facilities amounted to 318,707.

Do people who oppose a woman's right to choose ever discourage DiGiorgio Johnson? "Not in the least," she replies. "The vast majority of Americans believe that these highly personal and often complex decisions should be made by a woman." She says that while the primary goal of Planned Parenthood is to reduce the rate of abortion by preventing unintended pregnancy, "women know that we will be here for them no matter what."

Planned Parenthood reports that last year, its contraception programs prevented 486,000 unintended pregnancies, thereby averting 204,000 abortions nationwide. It states that, "Education and prevention are our primary goals."

Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest was founded in San Diego in 1963, 47 years after Margaret Sanger, her sister and a friend opened America's first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, the genesis of the modern Planned Parenthood organization.

The local Planned Parenthood is celebrating its half-century of



Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, has been affiliated with the organization for the past 18 years.

work this year, an organization that most supporters believe is a comprehensive health care provider for both women and men. A May 9 gala is planned (See sidebar).

DiGiorgio Johnson has spent the last 18 years in the Planned Parenthood family.

"As a recent college graduate in the mid-90s, I taught elementary school for a short time but quickly realized that I wanted a career in the social services field because of my passion to help others in need," she says. "I was thrilled to come across a position as a community educator at a Planned Parenthood affiliate in New Jersey and it clicked. I was very passionate about the mission of providing reproductive education and health services to women, men and youth."

DiGiorgio Johnson, who holds a master's degree in counseling, ultimately moved into administrative roles and became CEO in New Jersey five years after joining that affiliate. She was in her fifth year in that role when Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest recruited

her for the San Diego post.

The local organization traces its roots to a visit that an Episcopalian minister made to a female parishioner in a hospital in 1963. The woman had recently delivered her fourth child and asked the minister for family planning guidance. The minister, the Rev. Arthur Elcombe, discussed birth control with the woman, but she informed him that nurses at the county hospital were barred from dispensing contraceptives. This was the case at most medical facilities.

The lack of access to birth control alarmed Elcombe, who knew that several women were injured or killed in illegal abortions each year. Determined to help women prevent unintended pregnancy, Elcombe began researching family planning resources in San Diego and found that, while there was a great demand for services, there were few places for women to turn for birth control. The one-room office in Balboa Park was the result of that discovery.

Planned Parenthood is one of the nation's leading advocates for reproductive and sexual health, says DiGiorgio Johnson. "We are tireless defenders of

access to contraceptive care and a woman's right to choose, and we do this through a multifaceted, highly sophisticated public affairs program that works with elected officials, and engages and develops young leaders."

As an example, she cites programs like Teen Capitol Day, the Youth Leadership Academy and Healthy Neighborhoods Outreach. "The Healthy Neighborhoods Outreach program is a program where we send highly trained volunteers door-to-door to discuss

reproductive and sexual health with residents in areas that traditionally have had limited access to services," she says. "This is modeled after our Promotoras Program, which is something we learned about through our sister organization MEXFAM,

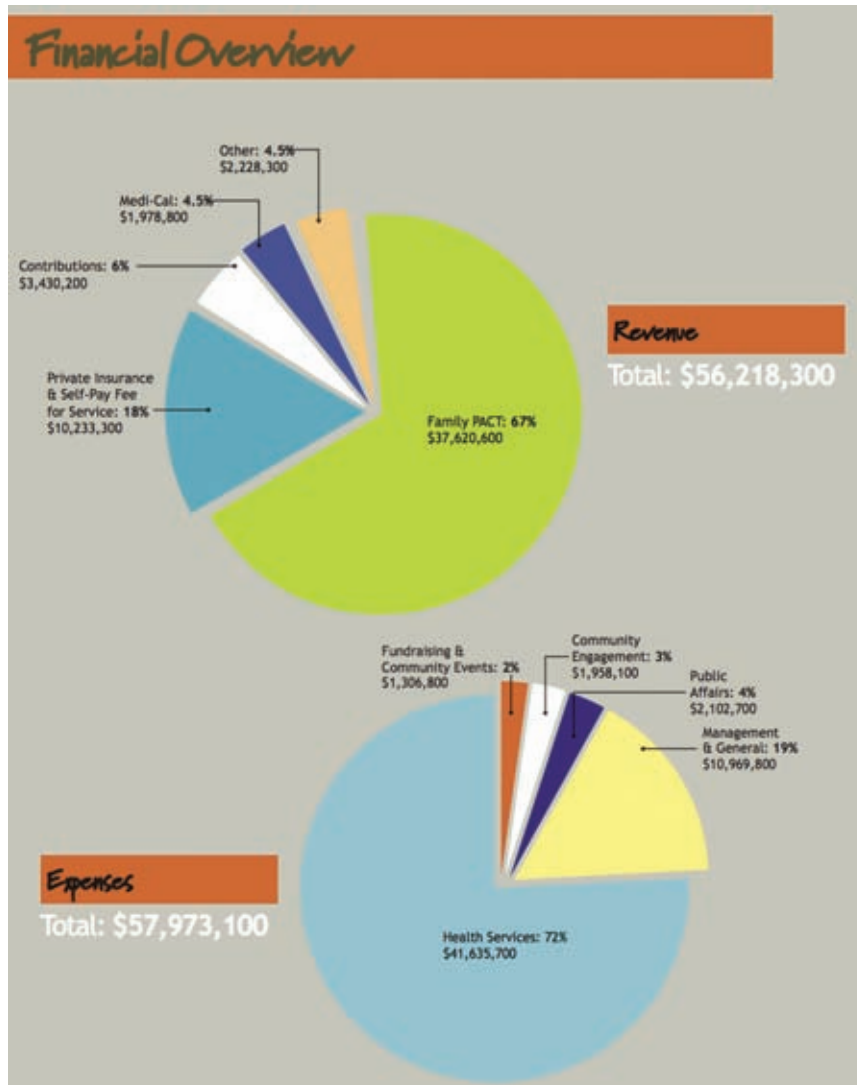
we recently began offering anatomy and physiology classes to residents at Juvenile Hall."

What might surprise some is the number of male patients who visit Planned Parenthood. In 2011, men represented 11 percent of the agency's patient base. Between 2008 and 2011, the number of male patients increased by 35 percent. "Many of our male patients discover Planned Parenthood through their girlfriends and wives, and a significant number find out about us through the LGBT community," says the CEO. "Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender patients come to Planned Parenthood because we offer sexual health services that are caring, non-judgmental and culturally appropriate."

Asked to explain why the local Planned Parenthood affiliate has been successful over the past 50 years, DiGiorgio Johnson offers a couple of reasons: "First, our communities are extremely supportive in terms of volunteerism and financial support. They know we care — no matter what. In fact, one in every three San

Diego households has a current or former Planned Parenthood patient. Second, the state of California has the most successful family planning program in the nation, offering residents low and no-cost services. This program, the Family Planning Access to Care and Treatment (FPACT) and the state understand that for every dollar invested in family planning, more than nine dollars are saved in future medical and social service costs."

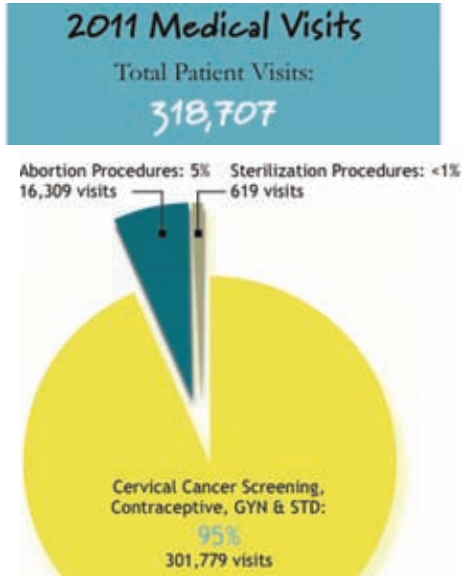
DiGiorgio Johnson says the impact of this



in Mexico."

DiGiorgio Johnson says Planned Parenthood has a strong tradition of innovative programs aimed at reaching people who typically have the least access to care. "We reach out to farm workers at their work sites," DiGiorgio says, explaining that the voluntary program is extremely popular. "Planned Parenthood also has programs that provide life skills and support for teen mothers who wish to delay a second pregnancy until their education is complete. And

program has been that the teen birth rate dropped to a record low in 2010, according



to the California Department of Public Health. Health experts credit this record decline to the state's comprehensive sex education, evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention efforts, and to increased access to contraception through the Family PACT program.

The CEO says that many Planned Parenthood patients do not have health insurance, but more and more, there are those who do. "Women and men may have discovered Planned Parenthood in their 20s before they had a job with health benefits, but they continue to come to our centers because of the high level of expertise and care we provide," she says. "In our 50 years in the community, our reputation has transformed Planned Parenthood from a provider of last resort to a health care facility of first choice. We are very proud of the trust the community places in us."

Planned Parenthood Gala
May 9, Hilton San Diego Bayfront,
One Park Blvd., Downtown San Diego.

Time: 5:30 reception; dinner and program at 6:30 p.m.

Theme: Celebrating 50 Years Strong
Special Guests: Cecile Richards, president, Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Sarah Weddington, attorney, professor and women's rights advocate who successfully argued the landmark Roe v. Wade case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973; Jessica Valenti, feminist and author, founder of Feministing.com.

Event Chairs: Nora Taylor Jaffe and Kathleen L. Strauss.

Tickets: 150. Visit www.plannedparenthood.org/pacific-southwest.

Group of Lawmakers Seek Government Report on Tax Dollars Going to Planned Parenthood

A group of 72 lawmakers have revived an effort to ask the government's watchdog agency to scrutinize taxpayer dollars going to Planned Parenthood and five other organizations who provide family-planning services, according to the Washington Times.

The request for a Government Accountability Office (GAO) probe — which drew a sharp response from Planned Parenthood — focuses on Planned Parenthood Federation of America, International Planned Parenthood Federation, the Population Council, the Guttmacher Institute, Advocates for Youth and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States.

Pro-life groups have long pushed Congress to investigate Planned Parenthood, noting that although by law federal funds may not be used directly to pay for abortions, Planned Parenthood receives about \$1 million a day in federal funding for its other services.

"Planned Parenthood and other organizations who provide abortions are dependent on Uncle Sam, but there is no accounting with what they are actually using the money

for. This GAO report would shine a light on how tax dollars are being spent," said Sen. David Vitter, Louisiana Republican, and one of the coauthors of a recent letter to the GAO, according to the Washington Times. Last year, Planned Parenthood performed a record 333,964 abortions and received a record \$542 million in federal funding — up 11 percent since 2011, Vitter said.

"My hope is that through greater transparency and accountability, we can successfully mobilize the support needed to de-fund abortion providers, once and for all," said Rep. Diane L. Black, Tennessee Republican, one of 66 House members who signed the letter. Other senators who signed

the letter are Republican Sens. Roy Blunt of Missouri, James Risch of Idaho, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Mike Enzi of Wyoming and Mike Johanns of Nebraska.

The Washington Times reported that Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Action Fund, rejected what she called "political attacks" from "out-of-touch politicians." "At a time when the American people want Congress to focus on creating jobs and preventing the looming budget cuts, it is ridiculous that some members of Congress are instead focused on launching baseless political attacks aimed at restricting women's access to preventive health care," Richards said. According to Richards, Planned Parenthood health centers, like other health care providers, "are reimbursed by the government for providing specific preventive health services," such as cervical-cancer screenings, breast exams, testing for disease and birth control for low-income patients. Richards stated that her organization would continue to provide health care to 3 million people a year at more than 750 Planned Parenthood health centers, "even while fending off political attacks."



Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

LITTLE AGENCY WITH A **BIG APPETITE**

c3 Communications upstages the big PR firms with a lot of hard work and moxie

By Delle Willett

“Public relations is the best job in the entire world,” says Joice Truban Curry, long-time public relations practitioner and founder of c3 Communications Inc. “What I like most is being able to help people, to affect change.”

When gas prices soared, it had a big effect on her client, Meals-on-Wheels of Greater San Diego, which relies on cars to bring meals to home-bound seniors. So with a well-placed story, a casino stepped up and donated a tank of gas, along with another generous donor. “Our nonprofit work is some of the most rewarding that we do,” says Curry.

For over a decade, c3, a three-time national Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil Award winner — the Oscars of the PR industry — has also become known as THE event agency for the West Coast, promoting trade shows, special events and national touring shows such as Cirque du Soleil, Cavalia, Ringling Bros., the San Diego Yacht & Boat Show and Disney on Ice, to name a few. Promoting 15 shows a year, the agency has grown its event PR nationally as they were recently hired to be the agency promoting the 2013 Miami International Boat Show, one of the largest boat shows in the world, and the largest event to be held in Miami annually.

But of c3’s current 25 clients, “The media is my No.1 client, because everything is dependent on those media relationships for all our clients and everything we do coverage-wise for them,” says Curry.

“Since I founded c3, it’s been part of the fabric of our agency to implement true media relations — which means, beyond pitching, being a resource to the media, even though it may or may not have an impact in a client’s coverage.”

Curry says media relations is her passion and the San Diego media is simply wonderful to

work with. “We are blessed to get some excellent coverage again and again for our clients. I have to think that practicing true media relations is the foundation for that.” The agency’s name doesn’t come from having three principals nor is it an acronym for anything. It has come to stand for the agency’s three disciplines: media relations, corporate positioning and promoting special events.

The core c3 team is Joice Truban Curry, president and CEO; husband Sean Curry, partner and COO; and Sara E. Wacker, senior vice president of account services. The rest of the team is composed of freelancers and agencies, which are brought in on a per-project basis.

When c3 needs help outside San Diego it relies on the Public Relations Society of America as a resource to find the talented practitioners that work behind the scenes of c3. In all cases, the core partners always represent the company to their clients.

“One of c3’s strong suits has always been the promotion of special events and shows, and our new Street Team division is a natural extension of that expertise,” says Curry. “It’s true grassroots, community relations at its best.”

As brand ambassadors for their clients, c3 develops, coordinates and manages all aspects of the street teamers, including researching and identifying the event venue, making recommendations on the size of the team, as well as hiring and training the work force.

Since its inception, c3’s Street Team has hit the streets for such brands as Planned Parenthood, Healthy Living Festival, Monster Jam, Massage Envy, Disney on Ice, San Diego Sunroad Boat Show, Head to Toe Women’s Expo, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, San Diego Holiday Art Festival and, IMAX & AMC movie pre-



Joice Truban Curry is the founder of c3 Communications, a public relations agency with 25 large clients.

miers and theater openings, to name a few. The agency is entrenched in the San Diego community, having dedicated more than 20 years of volunteer service and leadership to the public relations profession and the San Diego community by way of PRSA, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, among many.

How does an agency with just three people keep up with 25 very large clients, as well as its volunteer commitments? “We have a very good formula that includes setting priorities; seeing what needs to be done and how to do it; setting a timeline; working ahead and surrounding ourselves with great people,” says Curry.

Curry says the c3 successful business model includes all of their clients being equally important; all of the principals working together on the same accounts; everyone striving to achieve the same results.

“Our model is seamless. It gives a certain comfort level and allows for consistency with our clients. And with it being just the three of us, with outside help when we

PUBLIC RELATIONS

need it, we have scalability — we can flex up or down,” she says.

Joice Curry moved to San Diego from Orange County to go to San Diego State, graduating with a degree in communications in 1996. Before founding c3, she worked at Berkman Communications on its executive team and also served as media relations director and national spokesperson for Children’s Hospital and Health Center San Diego. She also worked as a press secretary for the state Legislature.

Curry is active in the public relations industry and community: She is a two-time past president of the San Diego chapter of PRSA, past chair of the national PRSA Honors and Awards Committee, and former director on the Starlight Theatre San Diego’s Civic Light Opera’s executive board. She has won a number of awards including the 2009–2010 Public Relations Professional of the Year by the San Diego chapter

of the PRSA, three national Silver Anvil awards and being named one of San Diego METRO Magazine’s top 40 Under 40 Award winners.

Joice and Sean, married for 17 years, met in a grocery store some 23 years ago. “It was my first time living on my own and I was a horrible grocery shopper,” says Joice. I would go to the store nightly after performing at the Lawrence Welk Resort Theater and buy dinner. Sean was a checker and I just kept seeing him day after day.”

When not working at the profession she loves, Joice teaches fitness classes part time (kickboxing, spin and aerobics), and travels with her husband.

Sean Curry handles the finances and management of c3. He also works with many of the agency’s clients, managing the 15 tours, shows and engagements c3 promotes. A business veteran, Sean was COO for Certified Software Solutions, where he also man-

aged the company’s operations, marketing and public relations efforts. He has also taught at National University, where he earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in software engineering, and served as faculty at UCSD Extension.

When not at c3, Sean runs the couple’s two Massage Envy franchise locations in Carmel Valley and Solana Beach.

Sara E. Wacker directs all aspects of client programs including media relations, community relations, corporation positioning, and special-events management. She recently returned to c3, where she started her career and worked for several years, after a stint at Allison & Partners San Diego.

Wacker was the 2010 president of the San Diego chapter of the PRSA, after serving as a board director for eight years. She graduated from San Diego State’s School of Communication with a bachelor of arts degree in communication.



Sean and Joice Truban Curry spend lots of volunteer hours with the Salvation Army.



Joice Truban Curry laughs it up KUSI camera-man.



With the media while the Cavalia tent is being erected.



The c3 team poses with the Globetrotters, one of many big clients: Sean Curry, second from left; and Joice Truban Curry and Sara Wacker, far right.

BIG PIPE MUSIC

World class performers star at the International Organ Festival

The Spreckels Organ Society's International Organ Festival has been a summer tradition since 1987, a free musical treat that features the largest outdoor pipe organ in America. World class organists will perform at the 26th annual festival happening June 24 through Aug. 26. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion.

"Everyone is welcome at the Summer International Organ Festival," asserts new Spreckels Organ Society President George Hardy. "These free concerts are a gift to San Diego first envisioned by John D. Spreckels and continued today through the commitment of the city of San Diego, the Park and Recreation Department and the many dedicated volunteers of the Spreckels Organ Society."

Children are invited as well as music-loving pets on leash. Light snacks, beverages and unique gifts are available on the pavilion grounds with proceeds from donations benefiting the nonprofit Spreckels Organ Society.

Celebrate the festival's opening night on Monday, June 24, with a festive Bach's Supper. Share a catered dinner with family and friends and other fans of the Spreckels Organ before the first concert of the season. The event is open to the public and tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information or to RSVP, contact Jack Lasher at john.lasher5@gmail.com.

Ring in the organ concert season on Monday, June 24, is America's foremost Baroque interpreter Anthony Newman. Newman has

maintained a 40-year career as a leading American organist, harpsichordist and Bach specialist. His prodigious recording output includes more than 170 CDs on such labels as CBS, SONY, Deutsche Grammophon and Vox Masterworks.

Monday, July 1: The high-energy team of Cheryl and Wayne Sepala perform an All-American Musical Tribute in honor of Independence Day. Both Cheryl and Wayne were organists at the former Organ Power Pizza Restaurants established in San Diego in the early 80s. Married since 1977, they have owned Organ Stop Music Centers in San Diego since 1978.

Monday, July 8: Richard Hills comes from England to take the Spreckels Organ Pavilion stage. Hills is one of the UK's finest examples of an organist who is equally happy at the classical or theatre organ console. He won the ATOS Young Organist Competition in 1995 at the age of 14 and became organ scholar at Exeter College at Oxford University before being appointed to the Organ Scholarship of London's Westminster Abbey where he remained until 2004.

Monday, July 15: "Rising Stars Night." The Spreckels Organ Society presents two young musicians, organist Daryl Robinson and violinist Annelle K. Gregory. Robinson is already a seasoned performer having performed in venues throughout the United States as well as in Austria,



BALBOA PARK

Czech Republic, France, Hungary and Wales. Gregory is a gold medalist of the 2012 National NAACP ACT-SO competition and a laureate of the 2013 National Sphinx Competition. She has performed at Carnegie Hall as a member of the Sphinx Virtuosi, a 20-piece string ensemble.

Monday, July 22: Jane Watts, from England, is regarded as one of Britain's leading concert organists. She made her Royal Festival Hall recital debut in 1986, a season during which she also became the Royal College of Organists' first Performer of the Year. Her debut in the world-famous BBC Promenade Concerts in London's Royal Albert Hall took place in 1988.

Monday, July 29: German jazz and crossover organist Barbara Dennerlein takes the console. Dennerlein belongs to the small circle of German artists of international reputation. As the most important and most successful German jazz export, her concerts make her stand out in a new generation of jazz musicians.

Monday, August 3: August kicks off with the always-popular San Diego Civic Organist Emeritus Robert Plimpton. Plimpton is resident organist of the First United Methodist Church of San Diego and an internationally lauded pipe organist who has performed in major venues throughout the United States as well as in Israel, Jordan, Europe and Taiwan.

Monday, Aug. 12: English International Concert Organist Keith Hearnshaw performs. Originally from West Bromwich in the West Midlands, Hearnshaw has performed at venues across the UK including the Liverpool, Hereford and Westminster cathedrals, West-



minster Abbey, London's Alexandra Palace, Rochdale Town Hall, Hanley's Victoria Hall and Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Monday, Aug. 19: Silent movie master Dennis James returns for the popular Spreckels Organ Silent Movie Night. This season's movie selection is "The Eagle" (1925) starring Rudolph Valentino at the top of his game, blending romance, action and suspense. For more than thirty years, Dennis James has played a pivotal role in the international revival of silent films presented with live music.

Monday, Aug. 26: Closing night will feature San Diego Civic Organist Carol Williams. British-born Williams was appointed civic organist in 2001, making her the first woman in the United States to hold a civic organists' title. She is also artistic director of the Spreckels Organ Society and organist in residence at St. Paul's Cathedral. She is known for giving a new spin to classical organ concerts with her charismatic humor and has been received by international audiences with "rock star" enthusiasm.

Dedicated Women and Women in Blue By Margo Schwab



Honoree Kathryn Stephens and her husband John Stephens



Coronado Chief of Police Lou Scanlon with 2012 Women in Blue honorees Natalie Gore and Pam Scanlon.



Charles Lara with 2013 Honoree Lori Luhnnow and her twin sister Lisa Schmith.



Karen and Craig Edwards of Rancho Santa Fe Insurance.



Assistant Chief Shelley Zimmerman with 'Red Carpet Kima.'

It seemed to be women's month as the Salvation Army's Dedicated Women were honored, followed by Women in Blue hosted by the San Police Foundation. The 2013 Dedicated Women included Sherry Ahern, Renette Levine, Kathryn Stephens, Andrea Naverson, Maggie Watkins, and Catherine Blair. The Women in Blue Honorees were: Lori Luhnnow, first woman motorcycle cop and presently Office of Special Operations for SDPD; Karen Goodman, SDPD supervising crime analyst; and Donna Pence for her former investigative work and present consulting.

For more photos of these and other events, visit sandiegosocialdiary.com. To contact Margo Schwab, email her at socialdiarymagazine@gmail.com.

Adconion Direct Takes Part in Habitat for Humanity Program to Build Homes for Disabled Veterans

San Diego digital advertising company Adconion Direct participated in San Diego Habitat for Humanity's first project in its "Building For The Brave" program on April 4. The program provides four townhomes for affordable homeownership to disabled veterans and their families. The homes will be outfitted with finishings adapted to the special needs of the veteran. The project is made possible by the support of the county of San Diego, The Home Depot Foundation, TD Ameritrade, SAIC and Cox Communications. Adconion Direct donated \$60,000 to Habitat for Humanity to support the project and over 250 employees of the company dedicated their day to building homes as part of their annual employee Summit held in San Diego. The project was chosen because of its impact to local veterans and their families, and supports the company's core value of creating a positive impact on the community.

"Individually, we can each hammer a nail or saw a piece of wood. Together, we can build a home that will last a lifetime and change a family's life", said CEO Kim Reed Perell. "We positively changed the lives of four families, who will go on to change the lives of other families through San Diego Habitat for Humanity's program. It is an incredible honor to be a part of this effort, and our entire team is so thankful and grateful to the men and women who have served in the military."

Facilitated by the construction team at San Diego Habitat for Humanity, over 250 Adconion Direct employees hammered and sawed together to construct the framework for 61 external walls.



The Adconion Direct team

In one year, those walls will be homes that are ADA-equipped with ramps, wider doors and sound-proofing. "Together, with partners like Adconion Direct, San Diego Habitat for Humanity is building homes and hope in our community", said Elizabeth Berg, director of development for Habitat for Humanity. In addition to this most recent effort with Habitat for Humanity, Adconion Direct supports a local charity each quarter. To date, the company has partnered with the Ronald McDonald House, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, Feeding America, Milestone House, Goodwill, New Life Headstart and Father Joe's Villages. Additionally, each employee receives a paid day per quarter to volunteer. For more information about the company, visit www.adconiondirec.com.

The Signs Align for V Group

Company creates unique combination of signage and printing services

V Group is a single-source advertising solution for commercial branding needs, including signage, trade show displays, printing and promotional products. Since its inception in 2007, CEO and founder Ron Morabito has stayed true to his vision of creating a unique combination of signage and printing services that saves customer valuable time, while also producing eye-catching results using the latest state-of-the-art equipment and technology. V Group has grown in size and reach since 2007, employs 26 San Diegans and has had revenue growth of 75 percent since its founding.

V Group's clients include the U.S. Army, the San Diego Padres, San Diego State University, Donovan's restaurants, Barona Resort and Casino, MTS, the NCAA, Marriott hotels and the University of San Diego. It provided all of the signage for the new Fowler Baseball park at USD. V Group has been honored with an Excellence in Customer Service at the Small Business Awards.

Donovan's is one of V Group's clients which uses the firm to its full potential. From signs in front of the restaurant, to the wrapped vans, to the flashlight pens bearing their logo.

Morabito, a native New Yorker, launched his business career as a stockbroker at 19, established his first signage company in New York three years later, successfully sold it and moved to San Diego in 2007. He has been one of SD METRO Magazine's 40 Under 40 award winners as well as one of the magazine's 20 Men Who Impact San Diego. He is a trustee of the San Diego Sports Commission and volunteered and donated signage for the All About Kids Foundation, Home Start, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation and the Boys and Girls Club of San Diego.

NEW CAR REVIEW: 2013 Lexus ES300 hybrid

By Eric Peters



Hybrids are becoming hot rods. Well, some hybrids. Luxury hybrids. They kind of have to, when you stop to think about it. After all, what person with, say \$40k to spend on a car, wants to spend that on a slow car? Being “green” only goes so far . . . after a certain price point.

Thus the new Lexus ES300 — the first-ever hybrid version of the hugely popular ES350. It is capable of almost-Prius fuel efficiency — 40 city, 39 highway — but it’s not slow like a Prius. Or, and perhaps more importantly, the new Lincoln MKZ hybrid.

What It Is

The ES300 is the hybridized (gas-electric) version of the Lexus ES350 — a mid-sized, entry-luxury sedan based on the Toyota Camry. It differs chiefly in being propelled by a four-cylinder gas engine/CVT/electric motor and battery powertrain vs. the V-6/six-speed conventional automatic that propels the non-hybrid ES350. The ES300 also has hybrid-specific instrumentation, such as a charge-meter that converts to a conventional tachometer and back to a charge-meter again.

Like the ES350, the ES300 comes in one well-equipped trim, with a base price of \$38,850 (vs. \$36,100 for the ES350). Although there are lots of hybrids on the market, the number of luxury brand hybrids is relatively small. The number of entry-luxury hybrids is even smaller. The ES300’s main price (and status) and otherwise similar

competition is the Lincoln MKZ hybrid, which starts at \$35,925.

What’s New

Like the ES350 it’s based on, the ES300 hybrid is all-new for 2013.

What’s Good

Gas mileage (40 city, 39 highway) almost as good as first-gen. Prius. Much quicker than a current Prius. Quicker than the Lincoln MKZ hybrid. CVT transmission is almost noiseless. Relatively small price premium vs. non-hybrid ES350.

What’s Not So Good

Also-new 2013 Lincoln MKZ hybrid costs \$3k less — and gets 45 MPG (city and highway). Traction/stability control is over-eager to step in and can’t be turned off unless you stop the car first.

Under The Hood

The ES300’s hybrid powertrain consists of a high-efficiency 2.5 liter gas engine, electric motor and onboard battery pack — all of them driving the front wheels through a Continuously Variable (CVT) automatic transmission. Combined output is 200 hp. This is more juice than the Lincoln MKZ hybrid’s 188 hp, so it’s not surprising that the Lexus is almost half a second quicker to 60: about 8 seconds flat vs. 8.4 for the Lincoln. What is a little surprising is that the hybrid ES300, a mid-sized car, is also nearly

as quick as its non-hybrid sport-sedan sibling, the IS250, a compact car, which gets to 60 in 7.9 seconds (8.3 when equipped with AWD).

On The Road

Like the first gen. Prius, the ES300 can be driven for short distances and at speeds of up to about 30 MPH on electric power only. To engage EV (electric vehicle) mode, you depress a button on the center console. If the batteries are fully charged up (it’s closed loop; you can’t plug this one in — for now) and you are verry gentle on the pedal, you can creep along on volts alone for a mile or so. The system will automatically override and turn the gas assist engine back on when speed exceeds 30 MPH — or your right foot demands more rapid acceleration. Or the batteries are depleted beyond a certain threshold.

But unlike the first gen. (or current) Prius or the Lincoln MKZ, this one also goes when you need it to. It’s easily 2-3 seconds quicker to 60 than a Prius and also handles with plausible sportiness (not much body lean, fairly precise steering and a decently high lateral grip threshold) with one caveat: The traction/stability control is a more aggressive nanny than Mrs. Doubtfire. It also cannot be turned off if the car is moving. This can be annoying if you’re like me and the urge to power slide the car through a decreasing radius curve occasionally wells up. The system will literally almost kill the engine in mid-corner. Fuel and spark are sum-

marily turned off (or dialed back to next to nothing) while the ABS pumps furiously to negate the controlled drift you were attempting. Your speed drops and so does the fun. The good news is you can shut the bugger off — the traction/stability control — and have it stay off.

The ES300 has three selectable drive modes: ECO, Normal and Sport, which you engage by rotating (or pushing in) a knob on the forward part of the center console. It's a set-up very much like that used in the GS350 sport sedan I tested. Sport mode increases steering effort and sharpens throttle response, to make the car feel quicker by causing it to respond more quickly to driver inputs. Normal is normal. In ECO, the AC and some other accessories go on low - in order to reduce the load on the drivetrain and thus maximize economy. An interesting touch is the chaneling tachometer/battery charge meter. In Normal and ECO mode, there is no tach to the left of the speedometer. The big dial indicates Charge or Power and states in between. But when you select Sport mode, the charge-meter disappears and is replaced electrol-umenescintly by a traditional rev counter. Backlighting also switches over to red.

My test car had both heated seats and a heated steering wheel, all of which heat rather than merely warm. If you like the idea of heated seats (and steering wheels) be certain to try them out before you buy a given make/model of car because all seat heaters are

not created equal. Some barely rise to the tepid. The ES300's are roasty toasty.

At The Curb

There are haters who for years have mocked the ES as a tarted-up Camry. Which it is. But it's an exceptionally nice Camry. With the appeal of the Lexus brand and the Lexus dealer experience. The haters can say what they like; Lexus sells these things hand over fist, and at full MSRP, too.

Here's what I say: The ES, ither version, is one of the most comfortable, quiet, pleasant-to-drive cars on the market. It may not be as sporty looking or driving as say a BMW 3 or Caddy CTS, but it's much more comfortable than they are and, for everyday driving, apparently just sporty enough.

Styling-wise, the 2013 ES has the new Lexus "face" that's shared with other Lexus models like the new GS and also the top-of-the-line LS. It's a kind of wasp-waisted, two-piece deal that pinches toward the middle, where a body-colored bar separates the upper and lower sections. Off to either side are narrow-slit headlights with the LED lower brows that are becoming a popular thing.

The Rest

I averaged (according to the car's onboard computer) 32.7 MPG in mixed-use driving during the week I had the car. That's about 7 MPG off the EPA's projected average (city

and highway) number of 40 MPG. To be fair to the car (and to Lexus) I must point out that I tend to drive faster the average bear. And also that my "mixed-use" driving is mostly open-road/steady high-speed, which is exactly the sort of driving hybrid's aren't optimized for. So, almost 33 MPG average given all that is pretty solid. I don't doubt for a moment that, driven more reasonably — especially with more "city" driving thrown into the mix — the ES300's numbers will meet or even exceed the EPA's stated numbers. Also keep in mind: The non-hybrid ES350's best-case number is 31 MPG on the highway and (having driven it) in mixed-use conditions as above, can vouch that the V-6 ES350 averages closer to 23 MPG. So you can expect a 10 MPG uptick, ES300 vs. the ES350. Math-wise, this means the ES300 makes sense.

The Bottom Line

If you demand some Go with your Green, the ES300 has got you covered.

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.

2013 Lexus ES300 hybrid specifications:

- Base price:** \$38,850
- Engine:** 2.5 liter gas engine/ electric motor/ battery pack; 200 hp total combined output.
- Transmission:** Continuously Variable (CVT) automatic
- Length:** 192.7 inches
- Width:** 71.7 inches
- Wheelbase:** 111 inches
- Curb weight:** 3,660 lbs.
- Luggage capacity:** 12.1 cubic feet
- EPA fuel economy:** 40 city/39 highway
- Where assembled:** Miyawaka, Japan



Racing for The Finish Line By Colette Mauzeralle

Disabilities can't keep Alex Montoya from the Rock "n" Roll Marathon

For starters, Alex Montoya is the manager of Latino affairs for the San Diego Padres, a marathon participant, book author, blogger and motivational speaker. But what people first notice about Montoya is that he is a triple amputee, born with only his left leg. His disability is believed to have been a side effect of Thalidomide, a teratogen his mother took for morning sickness during a time when prescription drugs were not as highly monitored as they are today.

Disabilities aside, Montoya's friendly character is unmissable and overrides any qualms about his appearance. His enthusiasm for living fully is reflected in his latest book, "The Finish Line," a memoir of the trials Montoya faced after deciding to participate in the 2010 Rock 'n' Roll Marathon. "The Finish Line" underscores the message that people are able to triumph far beyond what they believe is possible. Montoya's unusual life makes him a perfect raconteur for such a tale.

Montoya was born in the 1970s in Medellin, the second largest city in Colombia. At age 2, he traveled to the United States to be fitted for prosthetics. At 4, he was provided with a visa based on his medical needs and moved to San Diego to live with an aunt and uncle. As a young boy in the states, he learned English watching baseball games, and simultaneously developed a passion for the sport that would lead him toward his long-running career with the Padres.

In 2010, supporters of the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, an annual race that raises money for leukemia, presented information about the event while visiting Montoya's workplace. Though he had never participated in a marathon, he knew immediately that he wanted to be part of the event and found three like-minded and similarly inexperienced colleagues to join him in the four-person relay option.

Training began immediately, and the race took on a special meaning: it would become a powerful character and team-building experience for all four participants — particularly Montoya, given his disabilities.

"I knew that I hadn't run in a long time, and I didn't want to take any risks on my leg, so I thought walking would be safer," said Montoya, who took up walking around the perimeter of Petco Park every day for six months. His prosthetics added nearly 30 pounds to his total weight. "It's like a catcher wearing catcher's gear. I had to learn how to wear my prosthetics and be able to work out."

On race day, Montoya took the position of fourth runner. From the start, his teammates had been set on giving him the experience of crossing the finish line. Though an exciting opportunity, the last leg of the marathon was grueling.

"It was exhausting. I was spent. I had moments when I didn't know if I would make it, and being part of a relay team, you really don't want to be the person who can't complete the marathon," said Montoya. "But when I did finally cross the finish line, I was on such a high that all the tiredness I'd felt for the previous six miles dissipated.

I was just happy."

Montoya had documented the experience on his blog, "Adventures Being Alex." His personal moments, both funny and touching, became so many that he ultimately decided to turn them into "The Finish Line," released in November 2012.

"I started 'The Finish Line' in the off-season of 2011. When you work in baseball you view life as either in-season or off-season, so I wrote it in 2011 and spent 2012 doing the editing and publishing," he said.

Montoya hopes his story of determined victory will resonate with readers.

"I hope readers ask themselves, 'What is it that I'd like to accomplish that I have prohibited myself from doing?' I want people to appreciate the opportunities they have in life; to try more, to do more, and to be more. You don't have to be a triple amputee to overcome anything. I want people to realize that they have this ability to achieve within them, too."

To purchase Montoya's book, visit Tate Publishing at www.tatepublishing.com or Amazon at www.amazon.com. Montoya is also the author of "Swinging for the Fences," a story of his life and philosophies.



Alex Montoya carries a copy of his latest book, 'The Finish Line.'



The bar

HOMAGE TO A TRUE SAILOR

Spike Africa's Fresh Fish Grill & Bar offers ultra-fresh coastal California and global seafood

By David Rottenberg

One of my 2013 New Year's Resolutions is to enjoy more of the fresh seafood that San Diego is known for. Luckily for me (and for any other Gaslamp-goers) the city is adding another seafood venue: Spike Africa's Fresh Fish Grill & Bar. Located on Fourth and Broadway, the restaurant opened in January.

Spike Africa's is named after the free-spirited captain, Spike Africa. Known as the "President of the Pacific Ocean," Spike was revered throughout the West Coast. Stories are said to be told of him from Seattle to San Diego.

Spike is best known for his adventurous voyage with the actor Sterling Hayden and their families, which ended in Tahiti in 1958 and was chronicled in Hayden's classic sea novel "The Wanderer."

As a "Seabee" lieutenant in World War II, Spike fought in the bloody battle of Peleliu Island as depicted in the HBO mini-series "Pacific." The restaurant Spike Africa's pays homage to the memory of a true sailor, the mystique surrounding his adventurous life and the love he had for the ocean.

Executive Chef Paul Rinaudo's focus is to source the best, ultra-fresh coastal California and global seafood while utilizing the support of local fishermen and farmers to ensure the highest quality and commitment to sustainability.

Spike Africa's straightforward menu features honest dishes, which include fresh Pan Seared Sea Scallops with Italian sausage, navy beans, fennel and citrus sauce; and the Port Townsend Seafood


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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Simmer, a mix of scallops, mussels, shrimp and fish in a tomato broth.

In addition to the set menu, guests will have the option of a “daily catch.” Accompaniments change periodically to reflect the availability of the most seasonal ingredients.

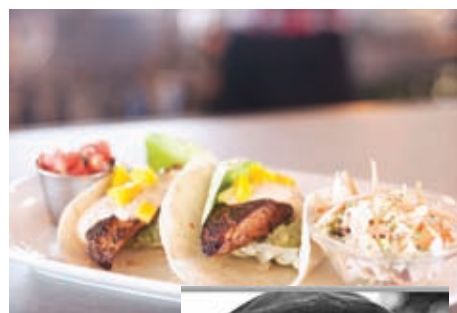
Guests looking for the perfect alcoholic complement to their seafood dishes will have premium spirits, craft beers and local wines to choose from. In addition, Spike Africa’s also offers a variety of signature staples like the Sand Dancer Margarita, a mix of El Jidador Blanco, apricot, chipotle syrup and lime juice.

The approachable and tasty bar menu is also far from average. It features notable favorites like beer steamed peel and eat shrimp, Ahi Poke, Oysters Rockefeller, and Fresh Fish Ceviche.

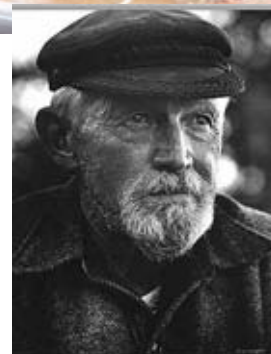
Conceptualized by the collaboration of

Coastline Designs and Margee Drew Designs, Spike Africa’s is a warm space with hints of seafaring nostalgia — which proved to be easier than expected after some “treasure” was found during demolition. Sixteen layers of flooring were exposed during the renovation and a large, 100-year-old safe was discovered in the walls. It will be used to house wine and liquor.

The 100-year-old wood planks and timber were repurposed to create eclectic tabletops and exposed ceiling rafters. While the reclaimed wood floors and brick walls all add a slight timeworn touch, “urbanautical” accents and marine hardware integrated into the overall appearance create a sense of balance between Spike’s time and today. The design is finished with family archived articles of Spike’s travels that allow guests to be a part of the captain’s adventures.



Fish tacos



Spike Africa

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ELEGANT FESTIVITIES IN YOSEMITE

THE FABLED AHWAHNEE RESORT OFFERS ELEGANT EVENTS TO SHOWCASE THE HOLIDAYS

By Bob Page

The idea of spending a few days in Yosemite in the middle of an ice-cold winter would most likely appeal only to the hardy few, but the fabled Ahwahnee resort might convince you otherwise.

As autumn turns to winter, the Ahwahnee presents three incredibly elegant events to showcase the holidays.

We chose to attend the 28th annual Yosemite's Chef's Holidays, an annual event which runs throughout January. There are eight sessions from which to choose, each one running over three days and featuring some of California's most noted chefs.

The Ahwahnee's winter festivities begin in November by celebrating winemakers' fall harvests. Winemakers from throughout Napa, Sonoma and the Central Coast attend, conduct wine tastings and seminars and wrap it up with a divine five-course gala dinner.

In December, the Bracebridge Dinner transforms the Ahwahnee into a 17th century English manor for a feast of food, song and

mirth. The inspiration for this yuletide ceremony was Washington Irving's Sketch Book that described Squire Bracebridge and English Christmas traditions of the period.

The Bracebridge Dinner is an elegant and artistic four-hour pageant of classic carols, Renaissance rituals and entertainment of the Middle Ages. More than 100 players create the roles of the Squire and his family, their servants, the Lord of Misrule, minstrels and other performers. The centerpiece of this revered event is a seven-course banquet of rich and wondrous dishes prepared by the Ahwahnee's world-class culinary staff.

The first of the eight Bracebridge Dinners scheduled for this December start on Friday, the 13th, concluding with the last dinner on Christmas evening. Five Christmas concerts are also scheduled over the same dates.

But as the new year descends, the Ahwahnee turns January into the chef's holidays.

We were treated to watching three of Northern California's top chefs, Douglas

Keane of Cyrus in Healdsburg, Victor Scargle of Lucy in Yountville and Peter Armellino of Plumed Horse in Saratoga work their culinary wonders in the temporary kitchen workshop with the Ahwahnee had set up for them in the hotel's lobby.

Keane, who closed the award-winning Cyrus last fall, recently turned guest chef at Jardiniere in San Francisco, which is where he launched his career. In the meantime, he says he is spending more time with family and the dog rescue mission which he founded.

At the Ahwahnee, Keane's creation was a lobster salad with daikon and ponzu.

Scargle has been an integral player in the kitchens of Go Fish, Julia's Kitchen at Copia, Jardiniere and Aqua, all in San Francisco with the exception of Copia, the wine, food and art museum in Napa which sadly didn't pencil out for its owners.

Scargle's Lucy restaurant and bar, which is at the Bardessono Hotel & Spa in Yountville, prepared bagels for those in attendance.

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