

# SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

WWW.SDBJ.COM

JULY 31 - AUG. 6, 2006

\$2.00

## THIS WEEK

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 31



### EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Janice P. Brown, founder of Brown Law Group.

Pg. 59



### SPECIAL REPORT

Finance, Wealth & Estate Planning

Pg. 16

### THE LISTS

Private Companies

Pgs. 17, 19

Money Management

Pg. 22



### SMALL BUSINESS

Jared Bauman, owner of Bauman Photography.

Pg. 58

### SPORTS BUSINESS

Chargers official nixes possible new stadium site south of state Route 52.

Pg. 3

### TOURISM

Hotel Solamar attracts Hollywood elite.

Pg. 4

### RETAIL

Ikea releases new catalog, launches new showrooms.

Pg. 5

### HEALTH CARE

Touché President Bush, state to fund stem cell research.

Pg. 7

### INSIDE

Calendar ..... 60  
Commentary ..... 62-63  
Giving ..... 57  
San Diego People ..... 56  
San Diego Stocks ..... 55  
Week in Review ..... 61

## Regional economy prepared to weather residential sales slump, says BofA expert

BY MIKE ALLEN

While longer selling times for single-family homes are now clearly evident, the region is still far from the kind of recession that decimated the housing market in the early 1990s, says economist Lynn Reaser, speaking at UC San Diego's School of Medicine recently.



Lynn Reaser

Reaser, chief economist for Bank of America's investment strategies group, said the region's unemployment rate is still low and the economy diversified enough to weather the corrections in prices that have occurred this year.

However, Reaser also noted that if the Federal Reserve Bank board of governors increases short-term rates faster than expected, it could hurt what is still a growing economy.

Please turn to ECON on Page 53



Melissa Jacobs

Stockbroker George Mullen thinks San Diego needs a new slogan, along with his self-designed stick figures.

## Crusader wants to change 'America's Finest City' to 'City of Life'

BY CONNIE LEWIS

What's not to like about San Diego?

That depends.

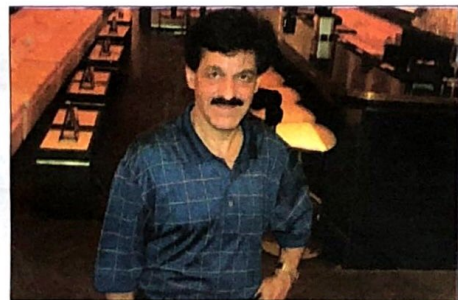
From a tourist's perspective — a heat wave notwithstanding — the county's sparkling beaches, hip Gaslamp Quarter, theme parks and attractions have vast appeal, as \$6 billion in direct annual visitor spending would attest.

But a population that declined by 8,276 people between July 2004 and July 2005, tells a different story: one of median housing prices that are out of reach by the median family income.

Against this backdrop, you have politics as usual: City Hall continues to grapple with a

Please turn to CRUSADER on Page 46

## Iranian architect draws up new career in the Gaslamp



### The B Lounge offers diners an intimate, ethnic place for drinks

BY CONNIE LEWIS

When Behrooz Farahani, a downtown restaurateur, decided to leave Tehran, Iran, in 1982 with his wife and two daughters after the revolution

Michael S. Domine

Behrooz Farahani has found a new career in the local culinary trade with two restaurants and a new lounge.



Michael S. Domine

John Buffini gives his clients an edge in the courtroom during jury selection.

## Coach skilled in the subtle art of juror profiling

Stakes are high in assessing personality types for civil trials

BY PAT BRODERICK

If you've ever had the impression that the U.S. justice system is one giant chess game, you could be right on the money — in every sense of the word. When it comes to civil trials, a wrong move can checkmate companies out of big bucks.

John Buffini, founder of Buffini Communication Systems

in downtown San Diego, knows how that game is played. For the past two years, he's been quietly building a business that offers such trial services as personality profiling of judges, potential jurors and the opposition. The Los Angeles County Bar Association a

Please turn to BUFFINI on Page 45

**INSIDE:** Looking for a business partner? Choose an opposite personality. **PAGE 15**

ended, he regretted parting with family, friends and a successful architectural practice. But he was determined that with a strong work ethic, he could make a good living anywhere.

"I said to myself, 'I am a hard worker and I can make money anywhere in the world,'" he remarked.

Having ventured first to Vienna, Austria, he then visited Los Angeles and made a side trip to San Diego, where he decided to establish new roots and enter the culinary trade.

His determination and immigrant zeal paid off,

Please turn to B LOUNGE on Page 59

**Need undivided attention?** We're focused on listening to your needs, then designing solutions that fit. Contact Joe LaPlante at 619.281.7764 or visit us at [www.rsmmcgladrey.com](http://www.rsmmcgladrey.com).

**RSM! McGladrey**

ACCOUNTING • TAX • BUSINESS CONSULTING



# Crusader: Stockbroker gets creative with ideas for a new city slogan

Continued from Page 1

huge municipal pension deficit and the feds continue to investigate.

Meanwhile, at least one man, George Mullen, a stockbroker by trade who bills himself as a "recognized oil painting artist from Southern California," doesn't like San Diego's slogan, "America's Finest City." He thinks it's audacious, and he's been shopping a proposal to have it changed to "City of Life."

## A rose by any other name

Apparently, Mayor Jerry Sanders wasn't too convinced about the Finest City slogan's appropriateness either. In one of his first acts as mayor, Sanders, who inherited the pension problem, removed it from the municipal Web site. Then he restored it.

Mullen has a studio in the Gaslamp Quarter where he keeps drawings of whimsical stick figures he says could decorate the City of Life logo, which would incorporate the slogan. He envisions the theme carried out with the dancing, leaping figures emblazoned on bridges and various sites throughout the city.

On his Web site, [www.cityoflife.com](http://www.cityoflife.com), which details the proposal, Lindbergh Field's commuter terminal is pinpointed as a possible site where the stick figures would replace the existing larger-than-life mural of "Lucky Lindy."

Mullen says the idea of the City of Life slogan crystallized when he was strolling in downtown one day five years ago.

"It's a spectacular place to live," he said. "Live being the key word. You can do anything you want to do here except snow ski, but that's just an hour away. Life is really great here."

"It's San Diego's mind-set. I'm a native, and had just really stumbled on what the San Diego mind-set is."

He said the current slogan was "well inten-

tioned" when it was coined in 1972 after San Diego abruptly lost a commitment to host the Republican National Convention to Florida. Political flimflam was at the root of it.

But America's Finest City just doesn't click, he added. Not like the "Big Apple" clicks for New York City and the "City of Lights" clicks for Paris.

Mullen said he and some of the proposal's backers, including Dave Nuffer, a veteran public relations practitioner and a principal in the Nuffer, Smith, Tucker agency, met with Sanders recently to tout the plan.

## Changing slogan a low priority

Kevin Klein, the mayor's spokesman, said, "This is not the time to focus on this as an issue."

"Therefore, he (the mayor) has no opinion on it (Mullen's proposal) as of now. The mayor's working to turn the city around, so he'd not put staff on it. He does not see it as a top priority at this time."

George Mitrovich, the president of the City Club of San Diego, recalled an event not long ago when he summoned several of the city's leaders to meet with some St. Louis politicians and bigwigs who'd come to town for a visit.

On that particular occasion, some of the local luminaries' reference to San Diego as America's Finest City embarrassed Mitrovich.

"On a personal level, people take exception to that," he said. "San Diego is not America's finest city. There are a lot of great cities in America, St. Louis included."

Mitrovich, along with Nuffer and a host of others, is listed on Mullen's Web site as endorsing his idea. Yet Mitrovich said that while he prefers City of Life to America's Finest City, and he respects Mullen's sincerity, he thinks San Diego should go sloganless. At least for now.

"We don't need a slogan," he stressed.

"We don't need to make claims. We need to solve problems. We should settle our differences with the Chargers, select Miramar as a site for a new airport and create affordable housing so that our children and grandchildren can afford to stay here. Maybe then we could adopt a slogan."

Victoria Hamilton, the executive director for the city's Commission for Arts and Culture, agrees that it's not a good time — when the city's finances are in jeopardy — to concentrate on a new slogan.

She's heard Mullen's pitch, and she admires his zeal. However, she thinks that if the current slogan is ultimately scrapped, the method for selecting a new one should be a "competitive and open process."

Veteran adman Tom DiZinno, who formerly spearheaded advertising for the San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau, and who now runs Brainweave, an ideation company, disagrees.

"I think now when the city is getting tarred and feathered, and our reputation is damaged, is a good time to look for a more apt descriptor," he said.

But DiZinno listed five key elements he says are essential in order to make any branding campaign, including a slogan and logo, work.

"It must be true, believable, desirable,

unique and expendable enough to be able to use it in a lot of applications," he said. "So given those tenets, America's Finest City is off because the bar was set too high on believability. And furthermore, it's completely tired."

"But I don't see how Mullen's slogan builds on truth or believability. City of Life is more like a goal or aspiration."

Regardless, he doesn't think that a public process would be the right way to change the slogan.

"God created the world in seven days," he said. "If it had been done by committee, he'd still be working on it."

## Getting down to marketing basics

In Marketing 101, students are taught that a branding campaign is all about selling something, or more of something.

While sources are divided on whether a slogan change versus improvement in the city's overall financial picture and affordable housing would better buoy the emotions of San Diegans, Pam Richardson, the general manager of downtown's Hotel Solamar, probably summed up the hospitality industry's point of view.

"Personally, I like America's Finest City, and I don't think there's any reason to change it," she said. "I don't think it's going to stop a tourist from coming."

In other words, if it isn't broken ...

# Buffini: Peace of mind for sale

Continued from Page 45

Yes, race played a role during the days of Jim Crow, when all-white juries routinely refused to convict white defendants of crimes against blacks, he said.

"But it's extremely rare," said Klein.

For some lawyers, said Klein, it's a type of insurance.

"Jury consultants are selling the same

thing that home security is selling you — peace of mind," he said.

But while he is skeptical about the services provided by jury consultants, Klein said he's not dead set against them either.

"On the whole, Americans believe that courts are fair, and anything that can bolster their belief in the system is money well spent."

SAN DIEGO  
BUSINESS  
JOURNAL

FOLEY  
FOLEY & LARDNER LLP

present

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Women Who  
Mean Business  
Awards

WW  
MB

Call for  
Nominations

October 19, 2006

Town and Country Hotel & Convention Center

This event recognizes dynamic women business leaders and role models, selected for their achievements and contributions to San Diego.

Deadline: August 7, 2006

Send Your Nominations Today!

By Mail: Women Who Mean Business Nominations • San Diego Business Journal  
4909 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 200 • San Diego, CA 92123

By Email: [tpeterson@sdbj.com](mailto:tpeterson@sdbj.com) • By Fax: (858) 277-2149

Co-sponsors:

accountemps.  
Specialized Financial Staffing™

A Robert Half International Company

Comerica

We listen. We understand. We make it work.™



KAISER PERMANENTE.

VISTAGE™

Senior leaders • executives • results  
The World's Largest CEO Membership Organization

Please Use The Criteria Below And  
Nominate A Woman Who Makes A  
Difference In San Diego!

## Criteria For Selection:

The nominator should use a minimum of one paragraph to address each of the following (except items 1 & 2):

1. Name, title, company, address, telephone number, e-mail address and fax number of nominator.
2. Name, title, company, address, telephone number, e-mail address and fax number of nominee.
3. Indicate field of accomplishment and explain why you wish to nominate this individual.
4. How has she made a difference within her workplace/company?
5. How has she made a difference within her profession?
6. What are her contributions to her community?
7. What has she done to empower or inspire others?

A color headshot must also be sent with nomination

For more information contact Taylor Peterson at (858) 277-6359 x3143, or email: [tpeterson@sdbj.com](mailto:tpeterson@sdbj.com)