As $100,000 Club Balloons, A More Elite Circle Of City Employees Emerges: The $200,000 Club

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER Editor

In 1997, George Economides, founding publisher of the Long Beach Business Journal, coined the phrase “$100,000 Club” in an analysis he published about rising city salaries. At the time, there were 43 members of this then-limited club, each a city employee earning $100,000 or more. Today, as the group has grown to a decidedly less exclusive 1,606 members, a new elite club of 40 high-paid city earners has emerged: the $200,000 Club.

City staffers earning $200,000 or more are all management level and highly specialized positions, according to City Manager Patrick West. They include the directors of city departments, as well as some deputy directors and second-in-command positions.

Based on August 1, 2019 paychecks, the highest paid employee in the City of Long Beach is the executive director of the Port of Long Beach, with a salary of $351,201. The only other person on the city payroll earning a $100,000-plus salary is the elected city attorney, who now earns $303,537 annually, an amount dictated by the city charter.

Since the late 1990s, the Business Journal has annually published an analysis of city salaries, detailing the evolution of the $100,000 Club by analyzing city budget documents. In 2009, West offered to directly provide data to the newsmagazine, and every year since that time we have met with West and some of his staff to discuss salaries, pensions, overtime and more. West sat down with the Business Journal for this annual interview last time on August 16 – he departs the position on September 20 to pursue consulting in the private sector.

About 28%, almost one-third, of city staff are earning $100,000 or more, based on data provided by West’s office. Between August 1, 2018 and the same day in 2019, there was a 4% increase in $100,000 club members.

Geoffrey Hall, assistant to the city manager, told the Business Journal (Please Continue to Page 6)

Meet The Female Entrepreneurs Driving Sustainable Business Practices In Long Beach

By ALENA MASCHKE Senior Writer

Watching the shampoo, body wash and laundry detergent containers pile up in her recycling bin, Bring Your Own Long Beach owner Julie Darrell felt like she needed to do more to protect the environment. She saw her bathroom shelves grow with individually packaged products, thanks in part to the relentless marketing campaigns for household goods and personal care items leveled at women on a daily basis, she noted. Something needed to change, she thought.

“I felt like there was more I could do,” Darrell said. She had already made waste reduction a part of her household’s everyday routine, and wanted to help others do the same. When she realized that there were no stores focused on providing package-free products in Los Angeles, Long Beach or Orange County, she knew she had found her niche. “I can’t be the only one looking for this,” she remembered thinking to herself. Since last year, customers can now refill their laundry detergent, baking soda, shampoo and many other pantry and household items at her East Village retail location.

Darrell is one of many female entrepreneurs driving the implementation of sustainable business practices in Long Beach. Many are part of the city’s green business certification program. The program recognizes businesses from a variety of industries – from hair salons to architecture firms – that have shown a commitment to sustainability by implementing sustainable business practices in Long Beach. Many

(Please Continue to Page 20)

Stormwater Parcel Tax Begins This Fall

By DENNY CRISTALES Staff Writer

Los Angeles County residents will see a new charge on their property tax bills this fall. Measure W, which was approved by county residents last November, will implement a parcel tax that is intended to increase stormwater capture. The intent is to increase local water supply, improve water quality and invest in community projects.

Measure W, or the Safe Clean Water Program, will charge its tax based on impermeable area, as opposed to

(Please Continue to Page 11)
BUILDING A BETTER LONG BEACH

A FREE FORUM PRESENTED BY MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA AND THE LONG BEACH BUSINESS JOURNAL

The forum will provide an overview of development projects planned, underway, or recently completed throughout Long Beach. Learn about the limitless potential of Long Beach as a diverse and fast-growing urban community with unprecedented growth and development.

RVSP Required – Free Parking – Seating is Limited

For more Building a Better Long Beach information, go to: www.longbeach.gov

PortSide: Keeping Up With The Port Of Long Beach

By ALENA MASCHKE
Senior Writer

Like most desk-bound employees, Danielle Ornelas starts her day at the office by catching up on her e-mails while drinking a much-needed cup of coffee. But unlike most other office workers, Ornelas’ inbox may include an e-mail from law enforcement, asking her to help solve a murder. “Between the time I go to sleep and the time I get up, a lot of things can happen since we’re a 24-hour operation,” Ornelas explained. “Sometimes I wake up and it’s pretty normal; other times I’ll wake up in the middle of the night to a phone call with somebody letting me know of a fatality.” As the Port of Long Beach’s harbor control center supervisor, Ornelas is tasked with coordinating not only her team of local control center operators, but with assisting law enforcement by providing video footage that can help solve crimes or prevent them from occurring at one of the nation’s busiest ports. The port’s location – facing the open sea – makes it vulnerable, Ornelas said. Its great economic importance as one of the region’s largest sources of employment and as a major throughput for commerce makes protecting it an especially impactful job, she explained. “I feel like this is the closest I can get to serving my community, serving my country, ultimately, if something happens here,” Ornelas noted. “I feel privileged to be able to do this and protect the critical infrastructure down here.” (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)
Corner Pop-Up Gives Entrepreneurs A Space To Showcase Their Ideas

By DENNY CRISTALES Staff Writer

Emerald Austin had always dreamed about opening her own baking business and sharing her sweets with the community. But for years, she never took the time to act on her passion. A health scare in October 2018 changed everything. “That prompted me to say, ‘You know what, I finally have to do what I want to do,’” she said.

The Bixby Knolls resident then took efforts to make her concept come to life. After utilizing the resources of the Long Beach Small Business Development Center to expand her knowledge of being a business owner, she applied for a business license in February to introduce her dream to Long Beach: Royal Gourmet Cookies.

“Then I went to the city to use the suite. The Corner Pop-Up is a site for aspirational shop for the community to visit. Later this year, she will get a chance to run a pop-up version of her business as the first entrepreneur to utilize the Corner Pop-Up.

Introduced to the community at a ribbon-cutting ceremony August 15, the Corner Pop-Up is a site for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners to showcase their products and services on a cyclical basis. The space is a partnership between the City of Long Beach, LINC Housing and Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network.

Nestled in a corner space of the historic Palace Hotel at 2640 E. Anaheim St., the Corner Pop-Up will officially launch in October. On average, individual pop-ups within the shop will last for about two weeks each, at no cost to the entrepreneurs.

John Keisler, the city’s director of economic and property development, said the Corner Pop-Up will officially launch in October. On average, individual pop-ups within the shop will last for about two weeks each, at no cost to the entrepreneurs.

Keisler said the city’s motivation in opening the facility is to allow business owners to pilot their concepts with zero risk. “What we found in a lot of our work with entrepreneurs is that, to test out their first business, they have to sign a lease, take a huge financial commitment and then try and work out all the kinks,” he said. “And, oftentimes, they struggle and fail.”

As they operate at the site, business owners will test prices for their products, promote their services on social media and potentially partner with other businesses involved with the Corner Pop-Up during a two-week cycle, Keisler said.

Sunny Lay Chang, chief operating officer of LINC Housing, said the workforce agency’s mission is to build and preserve affordable housing to benefit the community. “Ultimately, it’s not about providing the housing; it’s about serving the individual,” she said. “And in addition to housing, an individual needs employable skills.”

Erick Serrato, deputy director at Pacific Gateway, said the workforce agency has two focuses: to help the youth living onsite and to expand workforce training for the community. “Our primary focus is finding ways to connect the entrepreneurs – the activity on the first floor – with the youth on-site,” he said. “Every time there’s a pop-up, there is a ready supply of workers upstairs who can develop their skills.”

As businesses use the space to pilot their concepts, Pacific Gateway will concurrently host workforce development workshops and counseling. Serrato said the business owners who have been connected with the city through its business development programs, such as Kiva Loans, will be the primary target for the pop-up.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Like, Share and Follow @longbeachgives
Donate to your favorite nonprofit (or 3) on 9.19.19
Contact info@longbeachgives.org or 562-888-6530 for more information.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

• Become a fundraiser or Prize Sponsor!
• Host favorite nonprofit partners on-site to build employee awareness about your company’s nonprofit partners and matching gifts program.
• Encourage employee engagement!
The $200,000 Club

A decade ago, the Long Beach Business Journal reported that pay increases reflected in August 1, 2009 payroll data he provided ranged from 2-15%.

Over the past 10 years, $100,000 Club membership has increased from 579 employees to 1,606. The vast majority — 59.3% — are public safety employees in the police and fire departments. This is what it takes to attract and retain talent in public safety in nearby cities, according to city management.

City of Long Beach's payroll reflects what must be paid to remain competitive in attracting talent. “Basically all of our department heads are making over $200,000. That's a fact, and that's what it takes to get a department head to walk at one of the largest cities in America,” West said.

In the past three years, there has been noticeable turnover among department heads. The city’s technology, fire, parks, and development services departments, as well as the Long Beach Airport, have all had their top positions turn over. According to Modica, the City of Long Beach often experiences comparatively lower salaries for top department positions in contrast to some other Southern California cities; often, these are cities that tend to be smaller, other Southern California cities; often, these are cities that tend to be smaller, West said this is at City of Long Beach's advantage because when they get higher pay bumps. Club membership increased by 27% under new memoranda of understanding with labor groups in 2017. Given this trend, and the number of city employees already earning nearly $100,000, it’s likely the number of earners in this salary class will again significantly increase once new labor contracts are haggled out.

Shortly thereafter, Long Beach voters will be asked in March 2020 whether to approve the Measure A sales tax for three years, from 2020-2022, to pay down the city's commitment to the Long Beach Memorial Hospital and its seismic upgrades needed to reopen (and keep open) Community Hospital.

In the past three years, there has been noticeable turnover among department heads. The city’s technology, fire, parks, and development services departments, as well as the Long Beach Airport, have all had their top positions turn over. According to Modica, the City of Long Beach often experiences comparatively lower salaries for top department positions in contrast to some other Southern California cities; often, these are cities that tend to be smaller, other Southern California cities; often, these are cities that tend to be smaller, West said this is at City of Long Beach's advantage because when they get higher pay bumps. Club membership increased by 27% under new memoranda of understanding with labor groups in 2017. Given this trend, and the number of city employees already earning nearly $100,000, it’s likely the number of earners in this salary class will again significantly increase once new labor contracts are haggled out.

Shortly thereafter, Long Beach voters will be asked in March 2020 whether to approve the Measure A sales tax for three years, from 2020-2022, to pay down the city's commitment to the Long Beach Memorial Hospital and its seismic upgrades needed to reopen (and keep open) Community Hospital.
NEWSWATCH

8 • Long Beach Business Journal • August 27–September 9, 2019

(Continued from Page 6)

all city funds on pensions, $91.3 million of which is budgeted in the General Fund. General Fund pension costs increased by $6.8 million from FY 2019 to FY 2020, according to the budget.

Although challenges remain, the City of Long Beach has done more, and did so sooner, to tackle pension reform than many other California cities. In 2006, then-Mayor Bob Foster convinced the city council and union groups to implement changes to pension payment formulas. This included the creation of a second tier for new hires that changed the percentage used to determine an employees’ pension payment obligation and raised the age at which pension benefits would begin. According to the Fiscal Year 2020 budget, the city’s pension reform efforts are saving the city about $14 million per year.

For the first time in six years, the city’s total unfunded liabilities decreased in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget compared to the prior year. In Fiscal Year 2020, total unfunded liabilities amounted to about $1.4 billion, and in Fiscal Year 2020 they are estimated at about $1.4 billion. As outlined in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposal, the city is on track to pay off its unfunded pension liability in about 30 years, according to estimates by CalPERS, the California Public Employees’ Retirement System.

Union Membership

After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2018 that unions cannot require members to pay dues, the city’s union groups saw a sharp drop-off in paying members, but the decline now appears to have stabilized. Between July 2017 to July 2018, the percentage of members paying union dues decreased from 88.5% to 65%. Between July 2018 and August 2019, however, the percentage of dues-paying members slightly increased to about 67%.

About 53% of members of the largest city employee union, the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, pay dues. This union has the smallest share of dues-paying members compared to other employee groups, although this percentage remained about the same from 2018 to 2019.

Long Beach Unfunded Liability Comparison – Six-Year Period

(5 in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 20</th>
<th>FY 19</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>FY 18</th>
<th>FY 17</th>
<th>FY 16</th>
<th>FY 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>$1,075</td>
<td>$1,196</td>
<td>-10.9%</td>
<td>$807</td>
<td>$723</td>
<td>$614</td>
<td>$414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick Leave</td>
<td>$135</td>
<td>$135</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>$130</td>
<td>$133</td>
<td>$134</td>
<td>$117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiree Health Subsidy</td>
<td>$130</td>
<td>$130</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>$133</td>
<td>$131</td>
<td>$131</td>
<td>$114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ Compensation</td>
<td>$125</td>
<td>$132</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>$116</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unfunded Liabilities</td>
<td>$1,310</td>
<td>$1,408</td>
<td>-7.2%</td>
<td>$1,185</td>
<td>$1,176</td>
<td>$1,176</td>
<td>$1,163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Long Beach. According to the city, “Unfunded liabilities are losses for services already delivered, but the cost has not yet been paid for in-kind and not yet invested.” With the recent changes to the CalPERS investment policies, the city is not tracking the unfunded pension liability in a comparable way. Instead, it is using the CalPERS public documents.

A Note On $200,000 Club Salary Listings

• Salary amounts were derived by multiplying the employee’s hourly rate as of August 1, 2019 by 2,088 hours.
• Salary amounts for Long Beach police and Fire Department employees include skill pay but do not include overtime.
• All employees now pay the full employee share of pension costs (9% for police and fire, 8% for all others). 

$100,000-Plus Club Members by Department

Department | Full-Time Employees | Club Members | % Club Members
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Auditor</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology &amp; Innovation</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Clerk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Services</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Service</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Resources</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks, Recreation &amp; Marine</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human Services</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative (Mayor &amp; City Council)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Services</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Preparations</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4,505</td>
<td>1,606</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Long Beach. “As of August 1, 2019.”

This Business Journal article from 1997 details what was then an exclusive group of city employees earning $100,000. Now, there are 1,606 city employees in the $100,000 Club.

MUSEUM OF LATIN AMERICAN ART

GALA 2019

LEGADO: Lifetime Achievement Award

LEGADO: Philanthropy Award

Robert Graham
Sol Trujillo

Special Performance by Grammy Winning Los Lobos

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

@MuseumOfLatinAmericanArt
@molaa
@molaaart
www.molaa.org

GALA 2019

LIVE THE EXPERIENCE

Friday, October 11th

Gala Chair: Randy Gordon
VIP Cocktail Reception 5:30PM
Cocktail Reception & Silent Auction 6:00 PM
Gala Dinner & Live Auction 7:00 PM
Table purchases & sponsorship opportunities
(562) 216-4117 molaa.org/molaa-gala
gala@molaa.org

Port Staff Working To Reduce Risks Associated With On-Dock Rail Project

By Denny Cristales

The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners on July 8, 2020, approved contracts with on-Dock Rail Support Facility, a joint venture of HDR Engineering, Inc. and HOK, to serve as consultants on the Pier B expansion project. The joint venture will be responsible for program management and design. HDR Engineering, Inc. will also be responsible for construction management and project oversight.

The joint venture will work on the program level design phase. Hill International, Inc. will work on the design and construction phase. The project is expected to be completed in 2024.

Gamette said port staff will work to communicate the critical path to all businesses and stakeholders and to keep them up to date on the project's progress. The project is expected to be completed in 2024.

City Manager West Departing Sept. 20

By Denny Cristales

City Manager Patrick West, who has worked for the City of Long Beach for 14 years and in his current position since 2007, recently announced that he is retiring from municipal government on September 20 to pursue work in the private sector. As a national search for a replacements gets underway, Assistant City Manager Tom Modica will take West’s place on an interim basis. West told the Long Beach City Manager that his decision was bittersweet. “I’m happy and sad at the same time. But it’s just a real good time for me to make an exit and allow for new leadership in the city,” he said. “I am going to hang my shingle up as a management consultant, and if it works, it works. And if it doesn’t, it doesn’t. I am going to give it a try.” West said that he and his wife plan to do some traveling. In the meantime, he said he is excited to continue his work at the City of Long Beach.

Stormwater Tax

The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners approved a stormwater management fee on July 8, 2020. The fee will be charged to all port-related projects and will be used to fund stormwater infrastructure improvements at the port.

The fee is expected to generate between $50 million and $70 million per year. The revenue will be used to fund stormwater infrastructure improvements at the port. The fee will be charged to all port-related projects and will be used to fund stormwater infrastructure improvements at the port.
End To ‘Constant Negotiations’ With City Union

By Ralph Royds, the city's representative, Dana Anderson, and an impaired relations expert, the parties have been negotiating without ever reaching an agreement, resulting in the imposition of a one-year agreement.

1. The panel recognizes that ALBE has established a fund for workers in this classification, which, according to the fact-finding report, would receive an additional 2% wage increase across the board, effective October 1, 2019. For the following years, Miller recommended a 4% wage increase across the board, effective October 1, 2020. For 2021, he recommended an across-the-board wage increase of 5%. In 2022, he recommended an increase across the board, effective April 2022. Utility mechanics, whose wages have been front-and-center throughout the previous negotiations and the subsequent fact-finding process, would receive additional wage increases of 10% each in October 2019 and October 2020. Miller wrote in his report. He also noted that in previous negotiations with ALBE, the city had offered a 10% increase for workers in this classification across a contract period of two years, which was rejected and led to a one-year agreement.

2. The panel recognizes that ALBE has established a fund for workers in this classification, which, according to the fact-finding report, would receive an additional 2% wage increase across the board, effective October 1, 2019. For the following years, Miller recommended an across-the-board wage increase of 5%. In 2022, he recommended an increase across the board, effective April 2022. Utility mechanics, whose wages have been front-and-center throughout the previous negotiations and the subsequent fact-finding process, would receive additional wage increases of 10% each in October 2019 and October 2020. Miller wrote in his report. He also noted that in previous negotiations with ALBE, the city had offered a 10% increase for workers in this classification across a contract period of two years, which was rejected and led to a one-year agreement.

While the permit was eventually approved, the process resulted in a heightened focus on automation at the San Pedro Bay ports, which has been met with political and industry opposition. The case-by-case approval process, which was expected to take several months. At the Port of Los Angeles, a permit for the Port of L.A. and the Port of Long Beach each currently feature one terminal that has undergone large-scale automation, the TraPac terminal in Los Angeles and the Long Beach Container Terminal. The bill has been approved by the state assembly and is scheduled for a hearing in front of the senate appropriations committee on August 30. Mike Gipson, the Compton-based state assemblymember representing the 34th District, proposed a bill that - in its initial form – would have given the State Lands Commission the authority to approve or deny applications for automation projects at California ports. The bill has since been gutted and the delegation of authority to the commission was replaced by a directive to conduct a series of meetings “at near California ports that operate in granted public trust lands to consider the impacts of automated technology at California ports.” The bill has been approved by the state assembly and is scheduled for a hearing in front of the senate appropriations committee on August 30. Mike Gipson, the Compton-based state assemblymember representing the 34th District, proposed a bill that – in its initial form – would have given the State Lands Commission the authority to approve or deny applications for automation projects at California ports. The bill has since been gutted and the delegation of authority to the commission was replaced by a directive to conduct a series of meetings “at near California ports that operate in granted public trust lands to consider the impacts of automated technology at California ports.” The bill has been approved by the state assembly and is scheduled for a hearing in front of the senate appropriations committee on August 30. Mike Gipson, the Compton-based state assemblymember representing the 34th District, proposed a bill that – in its initial form – would have given the State Lands Commission the authority to approve or deny applications for automation projects at California ports. The bill has since been gutted and the delegation of authority to the commission was replaced by a directive to conduct a series of meetings “at near California ports that operate in granted public trust lands to consider the impacts of automated technology at California ports.” The bill has been approved by the state assembly and is scheduled for a hearing in front of the senate appropriations committee on August 30. Mike Gipson, the Compton-based state assemblymember representing the 34th District, proposed a bill that – in its initial form – would have given the State Lands Commission the authority to approve or deny applications for automation projects at California ports. The bill has since been gutted and the delegation of authority to the commission was replaced by a directive to conduct a series of meetings “at near California ports that operate in granted public trust lands to consider the impacts of automated technology at California ports.”
Port Staff Mulling Two Options For Gerald Desmond Bridge Demolition

While the Port of Long Beach is moving full steam ahead with the Gerald Desmond Bridge replacement project, some within the local community are calling for hesitation in planning the new bridge. Duane Kenagy, capital program executive with the port and the two options are to demolish the old bridge in the reverse sequence in which it was built or, to lower segments of the bridge into a large debris disposal offsite. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

The U.S. Coast Guard’s intent in removing a two-year demolition window is to limit navigational problems. Kenagy explained that before new bridge is opened, there needs to be a two-year window to complete the demolition of the old desert bridge and allow the new bridge to open to the public. At this point, the new bridge will be delivered to the city on a barge to be disassembled offsite. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

Duane Kenagy, capital program executive with the Port of Long Beach, told the Business Journal that the demolition of the old Gerald Desmond Bridge must be completed two years after the opening of the new bridge, per a U.S. Coast Guard Permit. The new bridge is projected to open to traffic in April 2020. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)
Real Estate & Development

**New Affordable Housing Approved For Central Long Beach**

The Long Beach City Council unanimously (7-0) approved a mixed-use development effort known as The Boulevard, located at 1500 E. Anaheim Ave. in Central Long Beach. (Rendering courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

**Planning Commission Approves Condo Development**

During its August 22 meeting, the Long Beach Planning Commission unanimously approved a proposal to develop a 29,667 square feet of building area at the Long Beach Towne Center to construct a 110,400-square-foot Dave & Buster’s and restaurant. The restaurant and arcade would replace the food court and several existing retail spaces, as well as much of the mid-rise office structure so that it does not sink as future structure so that it does not sink as

**West Long Beach Marijuana Operation Approved By Commission**

The Long Beach Planning Commission approved the development of a 54,000-square-foot cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, distribution facility during its August 1 meeting. Located at 4122 E. Mendez St., the facility will be used for the cultivation, manufacturing, distribution and testing of marijuana for medicinal and recreational use.

**300-Unit Luxury Complex Breaks Ground In Carson**

Evolve South Bay, a 300-unit luxury apartment complex by BRIDGE Housing and CBG Architects. The project site is owned by The Charles Group, but is being managed by CBG Architects. The $100 million project, which will break ground this year, is expected to be completed by 2022.

**Evolve South Bay to demo Long Beach Towne Center food court**

Evolve South Bay, a 300-unit luxury apartment complex by BRIDGE Housing and CBG Architects. The project site is owned by The Charles Group, but is being managed by CBG Architects. The $100 million project, which will break ground this year, is expected to be completed by 2022.

**New Affordable Housing Approved For Central Long Beach**

The Long Beach City Council unanimously (7-0) approved a mixed-use development effort known as The Boulevard, located at 1500 E. Anaheim Ave. in Central Long Beach. (Rendering courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

**Planning Commission Approves Condo Development**

During its August 22 meeting, the Long Beach Planning Commission unanimously approved a proposal to develop a 29,667 square feet of building area at the Long Beach Towne Center to construct a 110,400-square-foot Dave & Buster’s and restaurant. The restaurant and arcade would replace the food court and several existing retail spaces, as well as much of the mid-rise office structure so that it does not sink as future structure so that it does not sink as

**West Long Beach Marijuana Operation Approved By Commission**

The Long Beach Planning Commission approved the development of a 54,000-square-foot cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, distribution facility during its August 1 meeting. Located at 4122 E. Mendez St., the facility will be used for the cultivation, manufacturing, distribution and testing of marijuana for medicinal and recreational use.

**300-Unit Luxury Complex Breaks Ground In Carson**

Evolve South Bay, a 300-unit luxury apartment complex by BRIDGE Housing and CBG Architects. The project site is owned by The Charles Group, but is being managed by CBG Architects. The $100 million project, which will break ground this year, is expected to be completed by 2022.

**Evolve South Bay to demo Long Beach Towne Center food court**

Evolve South Bay, a 300-unit luxury apartment complex by BRIDGE Housing and CBG Architects. The project site is owned by The Charles Group, but is being managed by CBG Architects. The $100 million project, which will break ground this year, is expected to be completed by 2022.
Building A Better Long Beach: Creating A Downtown Live-Work-Play Campus

The first phase of the campus was the 2015 interior redesign and exterior rebranding of the office building at 444 W. Ocean Blvd., which is owned by Ensemble. The second phase, the 442 Residences, is a 94-unit, market-rate apartment building that began leasing in March and received its first residents in May. While the project is 55% leased, not all residents have moved into their units, according to Kevin Nemandoust, an associate for Ensemble.

Inspiration for the mid-century modern design of the 442 Residences evolved from Long Beach’s architectural heritage, as well as the adjacent office buildings, Henry Yong, design partner at Studio T-Square 2’s Long Beach office, explained. The five-story residential building is composed of studio, one- and two-bedroom units ranging in size from 514 to 1,260 square feet. Monthly rents range from about $2,000 to nearly $3,700.

The primary amenity within the building is its roof deck, which overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Long Beach landmarks such as the Queen Mary. The floor of the deck is made to resemble and pay homage to the decks aboard the iconic ship, according to Yong. The space includes an outdoor movie screening area, a pizza oven and seating. Other amenities include a club room and fitness center adjacent to the roof deck, as well as a terrace on the ground floor.

“One amenity are not the biggest or the largest, but we’ve put a lot of effort into designing them thoughtfully and in a way that we could program (them) to really serve our residents,” Nemandoust said.

“There is also lots of staff going on around the development site, and that encourages people to walk around.” Yong added. Residents have a short walk from 442 Residences to entertainment options and shopping at The Pike Outlets and Pine Avenue, as well as the Aquarium of the Pacific and Shoreline Drive restaurants. Nemandoust said work has already begun to create an “urban” feel outside of the building, including new outdoor spaces and improvements to the coffeehouse and cafe across from the building, which is located on the ground floor of the 444 office building.

This is another amenity for residents in the 442 Residences, he said, noting the shopping will soon have extended hours for people to enjoy coffee, beer and wine into the evening.

Ensemble has three other projects in Long Beach, including The Crest at 207 Stearns Way, a 112-unit mixed-use development designed by Studio T-Square 2 and slated to open late this year. Construction has not begun.

With the opening of the 55% leased 442 Residences, Ensemble Real Estate Solutions & Investments is one step closer to completing its live-work-play urban campus in Downtown Long Beach. The housing development is an extension of the 15-story E3 Ocean Blvd. office building, John Waldon, managing partner at architecture firm Studio T-Square 2’s Long Beach office, told the Business Journal.

“The last component of this campus will be the commercial building out front,” Waldon said of the campus’s third building, which fronts Ocean Boulevard. “When the construction office moves out and the current tenant moves in, it’ll become more of a retail and restaurant space.”

Realty Views: Foreign Demand Impacting Housing Market

The influence of foreign buyers in the United States real estate markets – both commercial and residential – is nothing new and has been well documented over the years. Here in Southern California, because of our geographic location and many other attributes, we have been a magnet for buyers from outside our borders.

Now, with the home sales market becoming more challenging for sellers as buyers become more cautious – even with historically low levels of inventory – not much attention has been given to the impact that foreign buyers are having on our markets across the country.

According to recent statistics by the National Association of Realtors (NAR), participation by foreign buyers in our residential market dropped by a whopping 36% from April 2018 through March of this year. This was based on the number of purchases and the average price during that period. NAR said that foreigners spent about $200,000 less valued at $121 billion from March 2017 to March 2018, compared to only $183,100 properties purchased at a value of $277.4 billion from April 2018 to March 2019. The median price paid by foreigners also dropped from $280,400 to $259,600 from April 2018 to March 2019.

For the seventh year in a row, the Chinese were the top purchasers of U.S. homes, followed by buyers from Canada, India, South Korea and Mexico. The number of homes bought by Chinese and Canadian nationals was very close, but the price per home purchased by Chinese buyers increased their total dollar volume by more than $5 billion over the Canadians. Before 2015, Canadians had the lead in sales volume, but the Chinese extended the lead in 2018 before pulling back between April 2018 and March 2019.

“A confluence of many factors – slower economic growth abroad, tighter capital controls in China, a stronger U.S. dollar and a low inventory of homes for sale – contributed to the pullback of foreign buyers,” noted Lawrence Yun, NAR’s chief economist, in an interview with CNBC. “However, the magnitude of the decline is quite striking, implying less confidence in owning a property in the U.S.”

The reasons for the pullback are several, and are up for debate. Many blame the current political climate, the trade wars and rising tariffs that have scared off Chinese buyers. Others point to a loss of confidence in the U.S. market and laws regarding immigration. Inquiries about U.S. homes on a leading Chinese website, Juwai.com, were down over 27% from last year.

Chinese government policy is also likely to be one of the reasons for the reduced activity, since that government has tightened regulations on cash moving out of the country for foreign purchases. Also, economic growth in China slid from 6.9% in 2017 to 6.3% this year, and is being cited as another factor in this trend. Chinese buyers had the highest percentage drop in foreign U.S. home purchases in this latest survey.

NAR also believes that both the lack of inventory and the escalation of prices over the past few years have influenced foreign home buying in this country, perhaps scaring off buyers.

The foreign buyers in the study are classified as those living both abroad and outside the U.S. 64% of which are recent immigrants and foreigners who live here for work, school, etc.

California is second in foreign homeowners with 12% of the total, followed by Texas, Arizona and New York. A look at the foreign real estate buying in this country are in California. The Inland Empire, where prices are more moderate than along the coast, has become a popular area for many foreign purchasers.

Most of the speculation concerning the fall-off of foreign homebuyers centers around the pure investment side of purchasing homes. The changing view may be that residential homes are not as rewarding a money-making vehicle as they were just a couple of years ago. Terry Ross, the broker-owner of TR Properties, will answer any questions about today’s real estate market. E-mail questions to Realty Views at terrylm@att.net or call (949) 457-4922.
Female Entrepreneurs Driving Sustainability

By Julieta Chatterton

Women entrepreneurs have been besting the competition recently, complying with a number of requirements set forth by the California Green Business Network. Of the 32 green businesses currently certified in Long Beach, 15 are led by women and three have a female-majority at their helm.

Fine Feathers Kombucha, a kombucha brewery in Central Long Beach, is on the city’s list of green certified businesses, but Penev West said their commitment goes beyond the requirements set forth by the program. “It’s something that we’re constantly thinking about,” she noted. From their level of production to their distribution network, everything is designed to leave the smallest environmental footprint possible, Penev West explained.

“We don’t overproduce, that’s one [way]. So we just meet our demands, but Penev West said their commitment goes beyond the requirements set forth by the program. “It’s something that we’re constantly thinking about,” she noted. From their level of production to their distribution network, everything is designed to leave the smallest environmental footprint possible, Penev West explained.

“We don’t overproduce, that’s one [way]. So we just meet our demands, our company can become ambassadors of sustainable practices spearheading the awareness among their customers and fellow entrepreneurs, Chatterton explained. “Each business that we certify becomes a sustainability champion,” she said. “I think the business community has a lot to contribute, especially small and medium-sized businesses, who make up a huge part of our economy.”

Most of the women leading sustainable businesses in Long Beach said the changes they had to make to reduce their impact on the environment were minor. “It really wasn’t that much more of an effort. It was just a little bit more documentation and being intentional about the choices you’re making,” said Celia Brennan, owner of the green-certified Seven Hair Studio in Carroll Park, where she began working years ago under the city’s salon ordinance. After being certified in 2012, it’s getting easier, because more companies are realizing there’s a need for things like that,” she said.

Brennan said that women and those who identify as female are also prominent drivers of sustainability in their role as consumers. “It’s important to them when they buy their food from [and] how to prepare it, and some of them are even learning how to grow things,” Osmer said about her majority-female customer base. Reducing the amount of packaging they use is important to her clientele as well. “Most people bring their own bags, most people won’t accept anything packaged,” she noted.

But there’s still plenty of work to be done, Chatterton noted. “There’s a lot of education that needs to happen, because people might be aware of certain aspects of sustainability and their environmental impact and not others,” she said. “Further promote sustainable practices, and the city can help business owners and private citizens to engage with their local leaders and advocate for sustainability-minded policies.”

“I think it’s really important to get involved in policy change, to get involved in your local government somehow,” Darrell said and added, she noted. “I think that even the small things you can do to make those changes, if we can put forward some of the advantages in having a sustainable business model,” Chatterton said. “I think that just having those tools available can really make a big difference.”

Celia Brennan’s Seven Hair Studio on 4th Street became certified through the city’s green business program in May 2016. (Photograph by Brandi Richardson)

Driving Sustainability

Danielle Carter, founder and principal of the architecture and design studio Pretty Smart Design, said her company now offers bike locks and reinforces to employers to encourage emissions-free commute. (Photograph by Brendan Richardson)

Women Entrepreneurs

20 • Long Beach Business Journal • August 27—September 9, 2019

Sponsoring this Job Fair is free and open to the public.

This Job Fair is free and open to the public.

Questions? Contact Lucius Martin (562) 570-3678 or lucius.martin@pacific-gateway.org

To apply to be an employer at event visit: pacific-gateway.org/LBCJobFair

SPONSORED BY:

VETERANS STADIUM
4901 E. CONANT STREET
LONG BEACH, CA 90808

Accepting Registration Applications for Direct Hire Employers

Tuesday, September 10, 10am - 2pm

EVENT COMMUNITY JOB FAIR 2019

LONG BEACH, CA 90808

This Job Fair is free and open to the public.

WAVA title financially supported program or activity is not tax-exempt opportunity employer/beneficiary, auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. To request a reasonable accommodation, please call 562.570.3678 or TTY 866.878.4629 at least 72 business hours prior to event.

LONG BEACH COMMUNITY JOB FAIR 2019

4901 E. CONANT STREET
LONG BEACH, CA 90808
Women Entrepreneurs Gain Traction In Coworking Spaces

By DENNY CRISTALES Staff Writer

Starting a business can be a difficult endeavor, but a group of local women entrepreneurs are leveraging the support from coworking spaces to expand their companies and get them off the ground. Coworking facilities provide shared office spaces, at a cost, for freelancers and entrepreneurs. These spaces often provide amenities, such as Wi-Fi or general office resources.

Long Beach women entrepreneurs, some of whom have used coworking spaces for years, told the Business Journal that these office settings have played a critical role in promoting their brands. Some examples include having access to a network of professionals, operating inside an affordable office space and collaborating with fellow coworkers.

Work Evolution Laboratories, 235 E. Broadway

As a licensed independent agent of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veronica Lira founded the nonprofit Alternatives for Vets in November 2015 to deliver legal and mental health services to local veterans. “Our nonprofit specializes in providing education and information,” she said. “We created a model by which we assist the veterans, or their family members, applying for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.” Lira said the nonprofit provides free legal services for veterans, as well as free talk therapy for clients experiencing anxiety or depression. The seminars are supervised by a licensed social worker.

Previously operating at a public facility in Lakewood, Alternatives for Vets, relocated to Work Evolution Laboratories in June 2017. Lira said the main benefit of the coworking space is being able to network and benefit from other professionals who are operating their businesses at the same facility. For instance, a business at Work Evolution Laboratories specializes in online design assisted in developing the website for Alternatives for Vets. “Having accessibility to other professionals saved us,” she said.

Megan Papageorge is owner of Sweet Peach Planning, a wedding and event planning business. She has used Work Evolution Laboratories’ coworking spaces since 2015. Living blocks away from the site, Papageorge works in her living room with a group of five independent, said the organization first started in June 2017. Lira said the main benefit of the coworking space is being able to network and benefit from other professionals who are operating their businesses at the same facility. For instance, a business at Work Evolution Laboratories specializes in online design assisted in developing the website for Alternatives for Vets. “Having accessibility to other professionals saved us,” she said.

Lisa Mae Brunson founded Wonder Women Tech in 2015. Located at WeWork in Downtown Long Beach, Wonder Women Tech is a nonprofit organization that seeks to educate, network and inspire women to pursue the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM). Wonder Women Tech hosts workshops and events on a global scale, including Mannas, Brazil, Washington, D.C. and London. The organization hosts an annual convention at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, which takes place this year from November 7 to November 9.

Brunson, who is a Long Beach resident, said the organization first started in her living room with a group of five individuals. After two years of working from home, Brunson said she learned about WeWork Long Beach in 2017. WeWork has multiple coworking locations in the world, including New York, Melbourne and Tokyo. Eventually, Wonder Women Tech leased a coworking space at WeWork.

“Being . . . in a coworking environment has really helped us to expand our network to collaborate and to have better . . . and partnership opportunities with other companies that have been inside the WeWork ecosystem locally, nationally and globally,” she said. “That’s been one of the greatest benefits for us here in Long Beach.”

Boasting a master’s degree in public health and 20 years of consulting experience, Lisa Vu launched Alfabet Soup Consulting with her husband, Brett Dickstein, in April 2017. After working with entities like WebMD and UNICEF, Vu said she had a desire to start her own consulting firm. With the advent of Alfabet Soup Consulting, Vu and Dickstein offer various clients advisory services, which includes helping potential entrepreneurs start a small business and providing organizational development to nonprofit organizations.

After running the day-to-day operations of Alfabet Soup Consulting from home for three months, Vu said she quickly decided to find an office space. “I drove me crazy [working from home] mostly because I was very much used to having one on one meetings and impacts energy policies have on the business community. It is partners like CRC that allow our organization to continue to educate and engage local business owners and policymakers.”

“The Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce appreciates CRC’s support to host our annual Energy Forum. Energy is a critical issue in California and residents should understand the costs and impacts energy policies have on the business community. It is partners like CRC that allow our organization to continue to educate and engage local business owners and policymakers.”

- Sandy Cajas, President, Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
mom, said a prototype device is expected – there is not enough out there to make there’s probably no liquid more important “If you look in the market, there are a zil- device for on-the-go, breastfeeding moms device that keeps breastmilk cold in a the Mila’s Keeper concept in March 2018 (Continued from Page 22)

Woo uses the shared office spaces at coworking facility Ironfire, 4195 N. Viking Wy., to meet with clients. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

Lara Vu operates two businesses, Alfabet Soup Consulting and Mila’s Keeper, at the WeWork coworking offices at 100 W. Broadway. After three months of working from home, Vu said she relocated to WeWork in 2017 to manage her consulting firm more efficiently. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

career, organizational development and marketing consulting.

Woo said Ironfire’s private meeting spaces help her connect with clients. She uses a general, shared office space at the facility to handle work for her business. “I definitely have an artistic and crea-sells vegan apparel. When Terromez and her partner, Patrick, met in college, they both bonded over their love of animals. Committed to doing their part in treating animals ethically, the couple made the de-cision to go vegan in 2004. “We all collectively have enormous power to make positive changes in the world,” she said. “And it all starts with compassion and the idea that we should be aware of the effect we are having on all other living beings. That is what is behind Cow Hugger.”

The concept of Cow Hugger began in 2014, but the website did not launch until 2016. Terromez began working at Ironfire in late 2018. She said she needed a location to manage her website, as opposed to doing work from home. Terromez said Ironfire is a comfortable and welcoming space that allows her to concentrate on her job. “Everybody is open and ready to answer questions for fellow coworkers,” she said.

CommonGrounds Workplace, 145 W. Broadway
Carrie Dolman said her passion for architecture began when she was eight years old. As a child, she told her fam-i-ly she wanted to build and create things when she was older. “I actually really like the hands-on side of architecture,” she said. “I like that it’s very artistic, but it’s also very technical. Every project brings new challenges to keep you on your toes.” She founded Dolman Architecture in 2015. As a licensed architect in the state, Dolman said that she and her team have assisted in crafting interior designs in places like Santa Ana, Northridge, West-minister and Long Beach.

Dolman said she chose to operate her architecture firm at CommonGrounds over other coworking spaces in the area because of the “more personalized” feel of the facility. “I didn’t want it to be too corporate, and I felt like CommonGrounds reflected my personal design taste,” she said. Dolman said the site allowed her to have a professional office space, as op-posed to running her business from home.

Working in a field primarily domi-nated by men, she advises other women pursuing similar career paths to main-tain discipline and a competitive spirit. “As long as you have the dedication and drive, you can get anything done,” she said. “I think it’s funny, because my hus-band is actually a teacher, which is a very female-dominated role. . . . We can’t let another person’s personal ideals prevent us from doing what we love.”

Hannah Peaslee, who also operates out of CommonGrounds, founded her business management firm, H&P & Co., LLC, earlier this year. Peaslee said her firm focuses on strategic financial plan-n ing for clients. “I am kind of the pap- pet master behind the scenes,” she said. “Whether our clients are making a life deci-sion, or they want to invest or grow their wealth, we want to make sure they’re making the best and most well-informed decisions. We want to make sure they have professionals on their team who are helping them achieve their goals.”

(Continued from Page 22)

the Mila’s Keeper concept in March 2018 and is outsourcing work for a prototype device that keeps breastmilk cold in a portable apparatus. Vu said she wanted to create a simple device for on-the-go breastfeeding moms to keep their milk cold for their children. “If you look in the market, there are a zil-len little devices to help keep your breast- milk cold,” she said. “And yet, for breast milk – there’s probably no liquid more important – there is not enough out there to make sure the milk stays cool.” Vu, who is a mom, said a prototype device is expected to launch later this year.

Ironfire, 4195 N. Viking Wy.
Nancy Woo has been a freelance writer for the past eight years. She cre-ated Imaginaria Visionary Services last November to provide what she calls “vi-sor. oluminary consulting” for those seeking to bring their creative ideas to life. Ironfire provides a coworking space for Woo to offer Imaginaria’s services, which include coaching, organizational development and marketing consulting.

Woo said Ironfire’s private meeting spaces help her connect with clients. She uses a general, shared office space at the facility to handle work for her business. “I definitely have an artistic and crea-tive motivation to help people in our Long Beach community,” Woo said. “Ironfire has been so completely transfor-mative for me. As a writer, I have been working from home, and it has been hit or miss. . . . This has allowed me to see myself more as a business instead of just an individual working here and there on different projects.”

Josh Bender, CEO and founder of Ironfire, said the coworking facility has unreserved seating and common spaces for all of its members. Bender said Iron- fire’s facility is 2,000 square feet in size. Stephanie Terromez is co-founder of Cow Hugger, an online boutique that

Wells FargoWorks for Small Business

Helping you turn your plans into reality

You have exciting plans for your business — and we can help you turn them into reality. Whether you want to expand or renovate, buy new equipment or a vehicle, or better manage cash flow, you’ll find financing that fits at Wells Fargo.

Let’s get started. Visit your local branch or find a time that works for you at wellsfargo.com/appointments.
Brandon Richardson, after months of searching for an accommodating environment for her work. (Photograph by Hannah Peaslee)

founded her business management firm, HP & Co. LLC, earlier this year. A month after launching her business, she moved into CommonGrounds coworking space, 145 W. Broadway, after months of searching for an accommodating environment for her work. (Continued from Page 24)

If I had chosen to go with a free-standing office space, I would not have had any of these things,” Peaslee said. “This space actually allowed me to develop my brand even further.”

Peaslee said CommonGrounds’ resources, such as reception services, mail sorting and distribution and office equipment, have provided many cost benefits in starting her business. “If I had chosen to go with a free-standing office space, I would not have had any of these things,” she said. “By joining a coworking space, I was able to launch my business as an efficient, well-functioning office from day one.”

“In terms of the aesthetics of how my head is put out there, I actually feel like CommonGrounds helped me achieve that professionalism,” she said. “If I had a client come to CommonGrounds, we could have the board room. We have somebody providing coffee. It’s a certain level of service that my clientele are used to. This space actually allowed me to develop my brand even further.”

Peaslee said CommonGrounds’ resources, such as reception services, mail sorting and distribution and office equipment, have provided many cost benefits in starting her business. “If I had chosen to go with a free-standing office space, I would not have had any of these things,” she said. “By joining a coworking space, I was able to launch my business as an efficient, well-functioning office from day one.”

“We were able to increase our brand awareness,” said Richardson. “Instead of just having old-fashioned, ham-handed sales, we were actually able to grow our brand awareness because of the resources we were able to access through CommonGrounds.”

HD ORTHODONTICS
Embrace Yourself™

Dr. Heather Desh, DMD, MS

Personalized & State-of-the-Art Orthodontic Treatment for Adults, Adolescents & Children

562.283.6590
4714 E. Los Coyotes Diagonal
Long Beach 90815
www.HDOrthodontics.com

Treating skin cancer without surgery.

(Basal Cell and Squamous Cell Cancers)

A new cutting-edge treatment for skin cancer offered by Dr. Susan Sleep, Dr. Douglas Ullmer and Dr. James Wu — SRT Technology

SRT (Superficial Radiation Therapy) is a non-surgical option for treating skin cancers. It uses hyperfractionated treatment, which leaves no scar or deformity. SRT is ideal for cosmetically sensitive areas such as the face, earlobes, neck, legs and chest.

Dr. Sleep, Dr. Ullmer and Dr. Wu are three of only a few doctors in Southern California offering SRT Technology. Call today and they can recommend a personalized treatment covered by Medicare and most insurances.

From Stargazing To Disney Tunes: Personalized Entertainment Is Trending At Weddings

A Long Beach resident with more than a decade of experience in business functions and management, Peaslee said she began searching for office spaces around the same time she started her business. When she found CommonGrounds and settled on an agreement for a space, she said the employees were accommodating. She also said the interior design of CommonGrounds facility also helped her achieve a level of professionalism that she was looking for.

“In terms of the aesthetics of how my head is put out there, I actually feel like CommonGrounds helped me achieve that professionalism,” she said. “If I had a client come to CommonGrounds, we could have the board room. We have somebody providing coffee. It’s a certain level of service that my clientele are used to. This space actually allowed me to develop my brand even further.”

Peaslee said CommonGrounds’ resources, such as reception services, mail sorting and distribution and office equipment, have provided many cost benefits in starting her business. “If I had chosen to go with a free-standing office space, I would not have had any of these things,” she said. “By joining a coworking space, I was able to launch my business as an efficient, well-functioning office from day one.”

Imagine a street filled with the smell of cotton candy, the melodious sound of a carousel organ floating by, as a sparkling Ferris wheel slowly spins against a pastel-colored California sunset. This scene, complete with other familiar elements of a traditional street carnival, was among the most extravagant weddings Marni Farmer, owner of Long Beach-based So Smitten Special Events, has had the opportunity to plan so far. “The sky’s the limit,” Farmer said, with a laugh. “If someone wants a 40-foot Ferris wheel at their wedding, we can definitely make it happen.”

While not every couple has the resources necessary to pull off this level of elegance for their special day, specialized entertainment has become a common feature of many wedding celebrations. The ideal entertainment, Farmer explained, completes the celebration, rather than interrupts it, and offers a “unique, memorable, one-of-a-kind experience that we might not get somewhere else.”

To create this one-of-a-kind experience, couples are drawing inspiration from movies, social media and the internet, most broadly. Growing up in Tennessee, Brit- any Chandler, owner and lead performer of The Dancing Fire Entertainment, said it was uncommon to see special entertainment or performances at weddings, but times have changed. “The internet has really helped people realize that they can now have anything they want as entertainment at their wedding,” Chandler told the Business Jour-

In California, she noted, there’s a long-standing tradition of entertainment as part of a couple’s special day. Especially among Mexican and Mexican American families, musical and dance performances are a cherished custom. “Mariachi are a standard at Mexican American weddings, and that got everything started,” Chandler said. Today, companies like The Dancing Fire Entertainment have performers with expertise in a variety of cultural and modern dances, as well as acrobats and even dancing robots ready to go.

“The cool thing about having dancers is that usually, at the end of the show, we get people on the dance floor. That interactive element is really important,” Chandler explained. “The dancers help facilitate the party. It’s their day and we’re just there to add a memorable moment.”

As for mariachi, things have mostly remained traditional, said Rodrigo Rodriguez Diaz, who represents the Long Beach-based Mariachi Romanza. But, he noted, as cross-cultural couples become more common, his group has made an effort to corporate them as much as possible, because...
Many couples draw inspiration for their wedding entertainment from movies or TV shows, The Dancing Fire Entertainment's Brittany Chandler told the Business Journal. "That sparks the idea," Chandler said. (Photograph courtesy of The Dancing Fire Entertainment)

With the help of technology, Marathi Romans even made an appearance at a wedding hallway around the globe. The bride, originally from California, requested a performance for her wedding in Poland. Using video conferencing software, the band was able to fulfill her request and bring a little bit of California to Eastern Europe, something that would have been unthinkable just a few decades ago. "Things like that happen and they're fun," Diaz said.

"I think people know the ceremony, they may not remember what kind of flowers were used, but they'll definitely remember seeing the harp up at the front, with the couple," said Brian Noel, who has worked as a harpist for over 30 years. "Just seeing a harp at an event makes it memorable and the sound of it is just so beautiful and charming that I think it really sets the event apart," Noel explained. "When people know the ceremony, they may not remember what kind of flowers were used, but they'll definitely remember seeing the harp up at the front, with the couple." Classical music is still the most common choice for ceremonies, while some couples request Disney tunes and pop songs for the reception, Noel noted.

Classical music is still the most common choice for ceremonies, while some couples request Disney tunes and pop songs for the reception, Noel noted. "I think a lot of couples are just trying to be different and non-traditional," said Sofia Riley, president of Peachy Catering, located at 19 39th Pl., which referred to this trend as "experiential dining." She said most couples have caught on that traditional wedding receptions aren't as engaging. When guests instead are required to be on the move or share their food, it forces interaction. "Today's couples want their guests to have fun with food and incorporate the wedding into the experience of the wedding reception," she said. "They want to 'play' with food and desserts or appetizers."

"It's a popular option for both ceremonies and receptions, said Brian Noel, who has worked as a harpist for over 30 years. "Just seeing a harp at an event makes it memorable and the sound of it is just so beautiful and charming that I think it really sets the event apart," Noel explained. "When people know the ceremony, they may not remember what kind of flowers were used, but they'll definitely remember seeing the harp up at the front, with the couple," said Brian Noel, who has worked as a harpist for over 30 years. "Just seeing a harp at an event makes it memorable and the sound of it is just so beautiful and charming that I think it really sets the event apart," Noel explained. "When people know the ceremony, they may not remember what kind of flowers were used, but they'll definitely remember seeing the harp up at the front, with the couple." Classical music is still the most common choice for ceremonies, while some couples request Disney tunes and pop songs for the reception, Noel noted.

"I think a lot of couples are just trying to be different and non-traditional," said Sofia Riley, president of Peachy Catering, located at 19 39th Pl., which referred to this trend as "experiential dining." She said most couples have caught on that traditional wedding receptions aren't as engaging. When guests instead are required to be on the move or share their food, it forces interaction. "Today's couples want their guests to have fun with food and incorporate the wedding into the experience of the wedding reception," she said. "They want to 'play' with food and desserts or appetizers."
This is a day you’ve been dreaming about — the dress, the vows, and the celebration. While you’re getting swept off your feet, we’ll carry out every thoughtful detail of your wedding. Imagine an ambiance inspired by you in a space customized for you — created by our team of design experts devoted to you.

The Grand Ballroom

To book your event, please contact:
Kathy Pape | 562.499.7507 | kpape@longbeachcc.com

Tamera Schulz, senior catering manager with the Aquarium of the Pacific, said wedding couples are using their cultural backgrounds as a way to influence their reception menus. For instance, one dish may be inspired by a couple’s Hispanic or Hawaiian background. (Photograph by Brandon Richardson)

(Continued from Page 29)

During a recent wedding reception in Palm Springs, Primal Alchemy Catering provided family-style dishes, according to Dana Buchanan, founder of the company. (Photo courtesy of Primal Alchemy Catering)
An important aspect of weddings is photography—engagement photos are used to announce a couple’s elopement and convey a sense of their identity as a couple to future wedding guests, while onsite ceremony and reception photos capture memories to last a lifetime—which is why local wedding photographers stressed the importance of selecting the right location and photographer for photo shoots.

Molly Ann is the owner of Huntington Beach-based Luminaire Images. She photographs weddings in Long Beach a few times a year, often at venues such as the Long Beach Museum of Art and The Loft at 230 Pine Ave.

In 2015, Ann photographed a wedding at The Loft. The couple, Samantha and Michelle, traveled inside a party bus hours before the ceremony with their bridesmaids to take pictures at various Long Beach sites, including Harvey Milk Promenade Park.

Ann said the distinction between an indoor venue like The Loft and an outdoor one like the lawn at the Long Beach Museum of Art is the lighting. The Loft is more of an urban, rustic venue in comparison to the museum’s coastal, outdoor aesthetic, according to Ann. While a darker room like The Loft may be more difficult to work in, Ann said the mark of a professional photographer is to excel in any setting.

“I know that one of the features of a really good wedding photographer is being experienced and knowledgeable and versatile enough to be able to work with extreme differing environments for weddings and lighting situations,” she said.

Ron Nelson, executive director of the Long Beach Museum of Art, said that the museum books through September 2020 show this trend will continue in the future. “When you look down the beach from here, then you look up toward downtown, and then you look south from here—it’s a really long beach,” he said. “And that’s who we are—Long Beach. People see that, and I think people are just sort of mesmerized by how beautiful it is.” Nelson was married at the museum in 2015.

Located right on the coast, the Hotel Maya is a popular venue for couples looking for a unique location, said Lisa Duncan, director of catering and convention services at the hotel. Spread out over 10 acres, hotel guests have access to a private dock, fire pits, a hookah lounge and a manmade beach—the longest in the city, according to Duncan.

“We hear all the time from photographers that they love that you can move 10 feet in either direction and you have a completely different backdrop,” she said.

Dan D’Sa, vice president of The Grand Long Beach Event Center, said the site is hosting a wedding “about every weekend.” He said the venue has updated its aesthetic to create a tropical atmosphere, including banana plants, bamboo and a waterfall fountain. Many couples have taken pictures in front of the fountain, which was specifically created to serve as backdrop for ceremony photos.

When it comes to engagement shoots, D’Sa noted that couples are staying away from the typical beachy backdrop setting. “People are getting edgier,” he said. “They’re doing things in more industrial areas. . . . There have been some grittier shots behind chain-link fences and using black and white filters to get more of a vintage feel. It’s really neat.”

Jeanette Schelin is director of the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, located on Earl Warren Drive at California State University, Long Beach. She noted that weddings are popular at the site, but she said wedding proposal shoots are now quite common, too. “People call us and say they want to do a proposal in the garden,” she said. “A guy can walk in with his girl and make it seem like he’s just showing her this pretty little garden. But then he gets in and pops the question, she accepts and then all the friends run out and they get surrounded.”

Erick Dell’apilla, owner of Wedding Photography LA & OC, said there are a number of places in Downtown Long Beach, specifically where the ocean is visible, that are popular for couples. Dell’apilla specified areas such as the Rainbow Lagoon Park, the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center and the Queen Mary. “You want to capture the beauty of Long Beach, but you have to know your stuff,” he said. Michael Farmer, owner of 1/8 Studios, said it is definitely more of a catered touch in California Heights, said the key to capturing excellent photos, whether it be in an engagement shoot or during a ceremony, is to reflect the personality of the couple.

Last August, a Long Beach couple, Aux and Kady, requested an engagement shoot from 1/8 Studios. The couple told Farmer their favorite pastime was visiting pubs throughout the city. “So, we decid-
MILLENNIAL PULSE

He alleges that his firing amounts to religious discrimination, because as a devout Christian, he practices the Billy Graham Rule.

When this rule, and the anxieties that lead to it, take hold in the workplace, women lose out.

Despite advancements in economic circumstances for women, there is still far more men in senior-level positions in many industries, meaning that there are already far fewer options for senior level women to mentor junior women or those starting their own ventures.

“Looking at the levels of women in executive leadership positions, unfortunately the percentage is lower than male executives,” Nina Roque, executive director of the National Women’s Business Council (NWBC), told the Business Journal. “While we have seen that increase in recent years, women entrepreneurs are relying on mentorship at the executive level from both men and women.”

The NWBC is a nonpartisan federal advisory body to the president, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Roque said she read the Lean in/Savvy Monkey survey. “I think it is very unfortunate that male managers feel that way. I can understand why, but I think these male managers taking the opportunity and the time to meet with mentors — whether it’s in the government or the private sector — really helps to be able to start your own business,” she reflected.

Tan pointed out that her mentors have seen that increase in recent years, women entrepreneurs are relying on mentorship at the executive level from both men and women. “They don’t need help,” Motter said. “They don’t have to overcome any hesitation.”

One of the things that’s really key to that specific woman’s journey is managers taking the opportunity and the time to meet with mentors — whether it’s in the government or the private sector — really helps to be able to start your own business, she said.

Mentorship is an important stepping stone in advancing one’s career. It is crucial that we do not let fear prevent a talented pool of the more than 1.3 million Millennial women entrepreneurs (that’s NWBC’s estimate in America from accessing equal opportunities.

As we see so many famous men come under scrutiny for misconduct and abuses of power thanks to the #MeToo movement, it makes sense that men might be feeling nervous.

But shutting women out and not granting them the same opportunities as their male colleagues is sexist, period. It is unacceptable, it is wrong, and it prevents our society from evolving in a positive direction.

If you feel you need to protect yourself from the risk of unjust accusations of impropriety, you can certainly change how you deal with your employees — but you must make the same changes in dealing with your male colleagues.

Keep your door open during solo meetings or meet in a public place. Travel in groups of three or more. Implement reasonable policies that make your workplace safer for everyone, not just yourself — and be sure you do it, in fact, apply them to everyone.

And for young women out there looking to start a business or advance their careers, both Tan and Robbie Motter, global coordinates for the National Association of Female Executives, emphasized that women should try to overcome any hesitation. “One of the barriers is they don’t want to let people know they need help,” Motter said. “They don’t realize that having the right mentor… can help them achieve their mission or goals so much faster.”

Mentor noted that her organization holds monthly meetings in cities across the U.S. to help women entrepreneurs connect.

Women are just as talented and capable as men. They deserve to be lifted up.
Working for Long Beach

Port revenue helps pay for Long Beach waterfront projects, like the restored Colorado Lagoon – one of the many ways we work to improve our community.