

**Cityside Saga,  
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- It was almost one year ago, Dec. 31, 2001, when a four-year-old boy fell 15 feet into San Diego Bay beside the North Embarcadero. Thankfully, a hero was both alert and nearby. Michael North Jacklin, an Australian tourist visiting San Diego, selflessly jumped into the water when he spotted the boy's father unsuccessfully trying to save him. Jacklin grabbed ahold of the boy and swam to a dock where others helped pull them from the bay. Earlier this fall a lifesaving award and a proclamation from the Port of San Diego were presented to Australian Federal Police from the Consulate-General in Los Angeles for delivery to Jacklin. The awards were placed in a diplomatic pouch so they could be delivered to Queensland, Australia. Mark Ney, Australian Federal Police General Manager for Queensland and the Northern Territories of Australia presented them to the hero in Queensland.
- As readers can see from the article in this issue, the expanded San Diego Convention Center has been in use for more than a year and center PR staffers are stressing its economic impact. Fred Sainz, Convention Center vice president of public affairs, graciously visited our offices last week armed with a bound presentation overflowing with enough statistics to make any marketing pro drool. It seems obvious that the presence of the Convention Center greatly contributes to San Diego's economy. It doesn't seem all these numbers are necessary – not to mention they can be tweaked any way which way. There are, however, detractors who believe that tax dollars should not be used to help build such a structure with the purpose being economic impact; and having it being rented mostly by the private sector. Perhaps they feel tax dollars should only be utilized for structures and projects directly serving or being used by the general public. A democratic society and a capitalist society usually go hand in hand, but the ideology of the two sometimes collide.

So, Convention Center officials found it necessary to arm themselves with an arsenal of studies. Here are some of the

highlights of the presentation: Citizens approved Convention Center expansion by voting for Prop A in 1998 with 62 percent of the vote. The San Diego Convention center generates 18 percent of all San Diego transient occupancy taxes which, in turn, are used to fund projects throughout the city. Taxes generated by the Convention Center more than pay for the city's investment in it, and the expansion has been even more successful than promised. The average convention lasts between two to five days; conventioners' average stay is four to five nights. Then there is the conventioners' direct spending versus the indirect spending. Dollars spent in San Diego by conventioners have a ripple effect on the local economy. For instance, a conventioner chooses to dine at a restaurant in the Gaslamp Quarter. He pays for a meal and tips the waiter. The waiter, in turn, stays employed and is able to pay his rent and go to the local Ralphs to purchase groceries. Meanwhile, the restaurant owner is able to purchase ingredients, such as tomatoes, from local suppliers. Those local suppliers are then able to buy supplies and merchandise themselves, not to mention clothes, food, HBO, cars, college education, etc.

Of course, if any link in this economic chain were to spend money with out of state suppliers, however, the chain would be broken. Please note: this was not part of the presentation.

Perhaps the most important part of the presentation was that a new formula to calculate the center's economic impact was being used. Instead of using peak hotel rooms blocked for convention use, the new formula uses actual attendance at a convention. Naturally, the new methodology, although still on the "conservative" side, shows the Convention Center's economic impact is much greater at all levels, no matter how you "slice the pie."

Figures conclude that the Convention Center generated \$883 million in regional economic impact for fiscal year 2002 and is projected to deliver \$981 million in 2003.

The point: Convention Center good.

- I'm not a Scrooge, but the holiday season always makes me cringe. I believe it has something to do with the overcommercialization, the hustle and bustle Ü that sort of

thing. I usually settle down by the time Christmas day arrives, but this year a recent downtown event managed to slice through my early season anxiety and filled me with a solid dose of holiday cheer. It was most impressive: The Westgate Hotel hosted its traditional holiday tree lighting on Dec. 2 which featured a caroling choir, a nutcracker tree and outstanding young dancers from The California Ballet. Children in attendance suddenly became very still as the ballet dancers twirled in front of them. The ballerinas were so well-trained that not a single thump was heard as they leapt and landed.

- Speaking of dance once again, Eveoke Dance Theatre announced that it will stage "Women Rebels," a dance theater production celebrating a host of local, national and international heroines. A creation of Eveoke Dance Theatre artistic director Gina Angelique, "Women Rebels" features the wisdom of 34 San Diego women who Angelique interviewed for the work. Among some of the notable San Diegans included are District 3 City Councilwoman Toni Atkins; Gina Champion Cain, president and CEO of American National Investments Inc., and 2002 chairwoman of the Downtown San Diego Partnership; Carolyn Chase, environmental organizer and Earth Day Founder; District 53 Congresswoman Susan Davis; District 6 City Councilwoman Donna Frye; Jean Isaacs, artistic director, San Diego Dance Theatre; District 76 California Assemblywoman Christine Kehoe; and District 3 County Supervisor Pam Slater. The concept of combining the thoughts of local leaders with dance is quite intriguing. It should be entertaining, educational and inspiring. Performance dates are Jan. 31 through Feb. 9 in the Lyceum Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza. For tickets call (619) 544-1000.
- It seems astounding that while a new ballpark promises to draw thousands more to downtown, little has been made public regarding how all these fans will arrive without clogging an already congested freeway system. Well, apparently a team has already been studying the situation. A Freeway Congestion Strike Team is looking into a traffic flow study of I-5 that is being conducted by the San Diego Association of Governments. The group's focus is on the so-called Downtown "S" Curve and ideas for accommodating the mad rush anticipated by the ballpark, as well as future development along I-5.

