

valley access

MAGAZINE

silicon valley
CONCIERGE
association



OCTOBER 2011

WWW.SILICONVALLEYCONCIERGE.COM

The 4th annual Halloween Haunt returns to California's Great America this month. Haunt is Northern California's biggest and scariest Halloween event. Open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through October 30, the Park will eerily transform itself with five spine-tingling haunted mazes, three

themed scare zones, one twisted attraction, and five head-turning live stage shows. The Park's collection of world-class thrill rides will be open as well. Halloween Haunt hours will be from 7:00 p.m. to Midnight.

UPGRADED SVCA WEBSITE HAS MORE WAYS TO CONNECT AND NETWORK

We recently upgraded our website with a refreshed look and more ways to connect with the **Silicon Valley Concierge Association** network of hospitality leaders and professionals.

You are invited to connect with us:

- "Like" us on **Facebook** to learn about events happening in Northern California and connect with other SVCA members
- Use the **SVCA web page** share buttons to share our website with a friend
- See SVCA upcoming 2011 events on our events page
- Renew your membership via our website and receive invitations to our upcoming concierge events and our annual SVCA Awards

We thank all our dedicated contributors **Kim Overholser, Armando Garza, Christine Marwell, Victor Solanoy, and Donna West** for making this possible and expanding our online marketing efforts. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

SVCA Links:

Website:

<http://www.siliconvalleyconcierge.com/>

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/svca.concierge>

-- **Mori Mandis**
SVCA President

"Fright Nights" at Winchester Mystery House

Fright Nights includes all new "Curse of Sarah Winchester Maze" and Halloween Flashlight Tours. The grounds of the Winchester Estate are transformed into a most terrifying Halloween experience, filled with haunted walk-through attractions, intense scares, roaming scare performers, and nightmare inducing tales. Open weekends: Sept. 30, Oct. 1, 7-9, 14-16, 21-23, & 28-31. For more information, call (408) 247-2000 or visit

winchestermysteryhouse.com/frightnights.cfm

Howl-o-ween Family Sleepover

Saturday, Oct 15 6:00p

[Happy Hollow Park and Zoo](#), San Jose

(Ages 5+ with an adult) Saturday Evening through Sunday Morning, October 15 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Rocky Horror Picture Show Halloween Event in San Jose! Saturday, October 29

Saturday, Oct 29 11:30p

[Camera 3](#), San Jose

Halloween wouldn't be the same without Rocky Horror. Don't get too scared - Barely Legal brings the cult classic to life on Saturday, October 29.

Halloween Fashion Show

Saturday, Oct 15 1:00p

[Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose](#), San Jose

It's the time of year when many folks like to get their costume on! Join us for Be That Kid Productions' Halloween Fashion Show and get inspired!

KIDS Corner, brought to you by:



A Program of Arts Council Silicon Valley

Tired of the piles of candy leftover from Trick-or-Treating? Enjoy the change of season with these three sugar-free options, and find even more treats at: www.artsopolis.com.

When cowardly schoolteacher Ichabod Crane comes to town, he learns to be wary of the "Headless Horseman." Read this classic story by Washington Irving, and then come see the play put on by Peninsula Youth Theatre. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* runs **10/14-10/15** at **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts** in Downtown Mountain View.

For more information call 650-903-6000 or visit <http://www.artsopolis.com/event/detail/441412443>.



The circus is coming to town! Enter the intimate 500-seat tent for a one-ring circus that honors the best history of the Old-World Italian tradition. Starring Nino the clown, *Zoppe Italian Family Circus* is propelled by a central story that features acrobatic feats, equestrian showmanship, canine capers, and plenty of clowning around. **10/14-10/23** at the **Big Top Circus Tent** in Downtown Redwood City.

For more information call 650-780-7586 or visit <http://www.artsopolis.com/event/detail/441412445>.



Scary Boo includes a Fall Scavenger Hunt, Kiddie Hay Maze and Corn Stalk Houses. Sycamore Bridge is transformed with Community Scarecrow displays brought to the park by local charities and businesses. A wonderful place to enjoy Halloween! **10/1-10/30** at **Gilroy Gardens** in Gilroy.

For more information call 408-840-7100 or visit <http://www.artsopolis.com/event/detail/441177327>.



DIALED IN WITH MARIA

An update to my last column regarding new restaurants in Los Altos:.....

I enjoyed the ambiance the food at the bar at **Opa** on Main Street. However, many have complained about the noise level and said they would not go back because of it.

Another restaurant I mentioned in my last column was **Plates** in Los Altos. I recently had a birthday lunch there with a party of six. Even though we had a reservation for the patio, the staff did not have a clue when I arrived. I arranged the tables and told them they need paper in the ladies room.

Even though there it was a very light Friday the service was slow. The only plus was you could bring your own wine with no corkage fee. They advertised draft beer but there was none. Granted it is only a couple months old, but off to a poor start. I am sure the others in my party will not give it a second chance.

In Mtn View, after a Sunday morning of tennis, we went to **Fum Lum** on Castro Street for Dim Sum. I always see long lines waiting to get in but we were lucky to snag a table downstairs where they were nice enough to put on the TV so we could watch the US Open Final. The food and service was wonderful. No wonder there is long lines.

East Coast and Transportation Tip:

I missed September column because I was visiting family on the New Jersey coast. While on the beach I got to experience the Virginia earthquake. It felt like someone was shaking my beach chair from behind, when I turn to find the culprit, I saw many wide eyes, it was up to me, the Californian to proclaim, "yep that was an earthquake!"



Not more than a week later we were under mandatory evacuation from our barrier island due to hurricane Irene.

Fortunately we waited until the last minute and encountered little traffic on the Atlantic City Expressway to Philadelphia. Friends who left the day before were in bumper-to-bumper traffic. The NJ shore suffered little damage; Philly actually had a worse storm. Spending time in Philadelphia was an eye opener. Not sure if the city was ablaze with life due too cabin fever or the back to college students (huge college town)... but it was jumping. It has been a great foody town and this city was full of life on a Sunday evening. I had hoped to leave Philly for NYC on Sunday but transportation was halted in both towns. Monday am all buses were sold out and the Greyhound terminal had a line around the block. I walked another block to Philly's Chinatown and bought the \$12.00 ticket for a seat on their beautiful bus going to NYC's Chinatown. I have traveled on the Chinese buses before between NYC and Boston...always a great deal and on time. When I arrived in Manhattan everything was up and running. I enjoyed a full day at the US Open and saw fabulous theater both on and off Broadway.

Maria Lange
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“Concierge services are now less about delivering “impossible” requests and more about the ultimate lifestyle edit”.

This quote by Sophy Roberts in the October 2011 “How to spend it” supplement to the Financial Times gives the meaning of Concierge services an entirely new meaning. Roberts, who, in another section of that publication is given the moniker of “Wander woman”, is described as “profiling the fixer firms that claim to make their clients’ lives perfectly simple”.

Having read her view of what Concierge Services have ‘morphed’ into she describes yet another perspective of delivering services to one’s clients that few of us have an opportunity to see.

Ms. Roberts, who resides in London, starts her article with a paragraph that probably all of us can relate to. “Every month, nine glossy magazines hit my doorstep with a daunting thud. They range from - *and she lists a group of publications – take your pick* and they all get a cursory glance before being stacked in a corner of my office. I look at them with occasional pang of guilt, refusing to give up my subscriptions while increasingly aware that I don’t have the time to attend them any more, much less eat, drink or sleep in all the places I read about whenever I do get a free minute. Nor am I alone...”

Does that sound familiar? Roberts then suggests that she, or anyone that is in that situation, may use the services of “Fixer Firms”, i.e. companies that provide services that are beyond the more sophisticated ones we are familiar with. The category of clients she mentions in her article, are among – what we would call – the “well heeled”, be they private individuals or high-profile individuals from public life or business with relatively un-restrained budgets. In this context there is also frequent mention of “PA”s – Personal Assistants, a rare hospitality industry position description, reserved for those who are clearly beyond the nine to five routine concierge crowd. Individuals who carry that acronym are typically those who work for the above-mentioned fixer firm. Roberts provides a glimpse of what distinguishes “fixer firms” from the rest of the industry. Here is what she has to say: “Like the best PA in the world, professional fixers have to make themselves indispensable to an inner circle that delivers focus, not more choice. It is their job to make sure that a fool is never made of the clients, which is the worst possible complaint that can be leveled at any concierge-style service, however basic the membership.”

As can be seen, “Fixer Firms” work, in most instances, for – what is called in the legal profession – a retainer fee or membership. Representatives from these fixer firms define the goal of the services they provide. You can rest assured that they are beyond the normal range, require savvy and experience few of us possess, and – to be sure - are billed at rates that are defined by the retainer and are truly of a “Personal Assistance” type.

Here are some quotes from representatives of fixer firms:

*Aaron Simpson, co-founder of **Quintessential**: “A bigwig in New York may not be a bigwig in London. We get them what they need.”

John Gordon, founder of **Globalista**: “It’s about ruthless curation for people who don’t have the time to do it for themselves”.

* Gordon is referring here to the fact that busy people want their information reliably digested and digested again – and their city guides reduced to minimum choice. Globalista is currently developing its new G-sport Guides for Christmas that deliver just five restaurants, three hotels, six shops, all visit able in a weekend.

*Philippe Brown, founder and owner of travel outfitter **Brown + Hudson**: “We take a blank sheet of paper and dig and dig until we get the itinerary so perfectly tuned we remove all the little and annoying decisions from the client.”

- George Morgan-Greenville, former group managing director of global tour operator **Abercrombie & Kent**, who is about to launch a new travel outfitter “**Red Savannah**” in October 2011: “Our purpose is to make the world a smaller, more interesting place for people far too well traveled to have anyone waste their time.”

You get the gist of what fixer firms are aiming for and providing for their clients. Just to put this into perspective: “**Concierge London**” a company with some some 200 members serviced by offices in New York and London, which is in the process of changing its name to **Somerset White**, charged in the year 2002 £500 a quarter in addition to £24 an hour for their services. This has since been increased to an annual membership fee of £10,000 in London, £20,000 in New York and corresponding hourly rates of £40 and £80 respectively. Should you have a need to avail yourself of the services of a ‘fixer firm’ following is a list in this month’s “how to spend it” adjunct to the Financial Times under the heading “Sift Workers”: They are the ones that deliver the ultimate lifestyle edit!

Brown and Hudson: www.browinandhudson.com

Sophie March: www.sophiemarch.com

Concierge London: www.conciergelondon.co.uk

Ten Lifestyle Concierge: www.tenlifestyle.com

Get it Together: www.getit-together.com 5x15: www.5x15stories.com

Globalista: www.globalista.co.uk

Quintessentially: www.quintessentially.com

Red Savannah: www.redsavannah.com

Meet Tim Ritchie – the new President of the San Jose Tech Museum of Discovery!

Lisa M. Krieger from the San Jose Mercury News wrote a very informative article in the SJMN’s September 13 issue. With her permission – here follows a synopsis of that article:

Tim Ritchie, who follows Dr. Peter Friess as leader of San Jose’s Tech Museum, comes to his new post with an impressive history of accomplishments in his prior assignments, the latest being Director of the McWane Science Center in Birmingham, Alabama. With his background as attorney, educator, community developer and advocate for people with disabilities, he grew the center’s endowment, increased attendance by almost 50% to 367,000 visitors per year and its earnings from 55 to 70% of operating revenue.

The list goes on!

But let Tim Ritchie, who assumes the Presidency of the Tech Museum on October 3; tell us in his words what inspires him most about his new responsibilities. It is “the Tech Museum’s aspiration to help people experience the power of innovation and technology. Innovation and technology are practical expressions of imagination. That is the challenge I look forward to undertaking at the Tech Museum.”

In pursuing these goals, Ritchie, 50, says he is determined to elevate the Tech’s role as a learning resource for adults and teachers. He also intends to develop leading edge programming to inform and inspire adult visitors and continue to renew or renovate museum galleries and exhibits.

Ritchie’s credentials are impressive: a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University, a law degree from Duke University, an a longtime commitment to civics and the Rotary Club, he brings a distinctly different set of assets to the Tech than those of his predecessor, German watchmaker Friess.

His appointment was preceded by a six-month search from which he emerged as the Tech Museum board’s choice from among nearly 100 applicants – so says Ann Bowers who chairs the Tech’s board. She adds: “The Tech Museum board and staff eagerly await Tim’s arrival. He brings the entire package of skills – and a great sense of humor.”

SVCA welcomes Tim Ritchie to San Jose, is looking forward to work with him on attaining the many goals he has set for himself and the Tech Museum of Discovery, and wish him good luck!

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome!

Gus Holweger - Gusholweger@comcast.net

Board Member SVCA and Contributing Editor to VAM

A Tribute to Christine Rivera-Cesano



Maria Christine Rivera-Cesano

Co-Owner: Destino Spa of Palo Alto

Born in The Philippines on Christmas day of 1972, Maria Christine was the fourth child and second daughter to Herminigildo and Cristina Rivera. At the young age of eleven, she and her family moved to The Bay Area, California after her father accepted a new position as press attaché for the Philippine president and settled in Fremont, CA.

Christine started working in the food and beverage industry while still in junior high school. Starting out at local yogurt shops and diners to more upscale restaurants such as Trader Vic's and Café D'Orleans, both in Palo Alto and the Peninsula area.

After meeting her future husband William James Cesano while working at AvantGard, the seed to open her own day spa grew stronger and knew that building her own company was a dream to be fulfilled. Driven and ambitious, with her husband Bill as partner and general contractor, they developed Destino Spa, located in the heart of Palo Alto, CA, 9 years ago.

To this day her vision and legacy for Destino Spa as a top destination for quality skin care continues even at her early passing this past September of 2011. Her husband and business partner Bill has focused his full attention to ensure that Destino Spa lives on to provide the best customer service serving the entire Bay Area. Christine's high standard of hiring and retaining only the best estheticians and massage therapists is of high importance as it is a testament to her valuable life experience she earned

Combined with her tenacity and ambition to establish a woman-owned business and the unwavering support of her husband and family, she and Bill have built Destino Spa to have the ability to give back to the community it serves. **Under her leadership, Destino Spa will continue to support and give back to the community which counts the Stanford Blood Drive, GLAAD, AA and the Human Rights Campaign Fund which are among a few to mention.**

Everyone her at Destino is still trying to get a better understanding of just what happened. However I can assure you that Destino is still moving forward with the same power that Christine instilled in all of us, and especially me. I was/ am very proud to be leading our team through this time and am very confident that Christine is sitting on my shoulder, in my heart and pushing be from behind, forward to ensure that Destino Spa will continue in her image.

For a person w/ size 7 shoes I guarantee that those shoes can never be filled. However I will continue her mission to making Destino Spa that shining star that she made.

Written by: Billy Cesano
Destino Spa
650.947.0203

O'Flaherty's Irish Pub

SAVE THE DATE

**Tuesday,
October 25**

**INVITATION
TO FOLLOW**

SAVE THE DATE

**MORGAN HILL
Outdoor
Sports Center**

**Thursday
November 3**

**INVITATION
TO FOLLOW**

Happy Howloween at Roaring Camp

Take a stream train ride to Roaring Campy Railroad's dog-friendly Happy Howloween & Harvest Fair on Bear Mountain, which includes crafts for kids, a contest for dogs and a pumpkin to take home. 831-335-4484
www.roaringcampy.org

The world-famous **Half Moon Pumpkin Festival Bay Art &** is the season's signature event, drawing hordes of visitors to the "World Pumpkin Capital" for an epic festival on historic Main Street. This year's 41st anniversary festival will be held on **October 15-16** from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

Festiv'ALL 2011 Invitation

Here is the link to send out to **SVCA** members that invites their participation for free of charge as a benefit to them because they are your members:

<http://festivall-concierge.eventbrite.com/>



2011 continues the tradition of one of Silicon Valley's most celebrated diverse small business events, **Festiv'ALL**, to be held on Wednesday October 12, 2011, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, at the San Jose Convention Center. This multi-cultural networking event is a collaboration of the region's leading diverse business and professional organizations.

We look forward to your participation to make this event an exciting networking experience for all.

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www.28in24.com

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www.jdvhotels.com

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www.CinnabarWine.com

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www.jomarlabs.com

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www.LnStarLimo.com

Royal Coach Tours
www.Royal-Coach.com

Santa Clara CVB & Chamber of Commerce
www.santaclara.org

Santa Clara Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.santaclara.org

Silicon Valley Tour Guides Association
408-978-9543

The Tabard Theatre Company
www.tabardtheatre.org

Toll House Hotel Los Gatos
www.tollhousehotel.com

The Wax Museum at Fisherman's Wharf
San Francisco
www.waxmuseum.com

West Valley Charter Lines
www.westvalleycharter.com

NON-PROFIT SPONSORS

California Theatre Center
www.ctcinc.org

Friends of Guadalupe River Park & Gardens
www.grpg.org

Gilroy Visitors Bureau
www.gilroyvisitor.org

International Russian Music Piano
Competition
www.russianmusiccompetition.com

Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum &
Planetarium
www.egyptianmuseum.org

San Jose Downtown Association
www.sjdowntown.com

The Tech Museum of Innovation
www.thetech.org

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DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR E-
MAGAZINE, IS THE **LAST FRIDAY** OF THE MONTH
NOTE: ARTICLES AND SPECIAL DATES
APPEARING IN THE VAM
ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

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SVCA Membership

SVCA Member \$50.00

- FAM event invitations
- Valley Access E-Magazine

Non-Profit Groups \$50.00

- FAM event invitations
- Valley Access E-Magazine

Sponsors \$150.00

- FAM events invitation
(Up to 5 attendees)
- Listing on Website
& Valley Access Recognition

Associates Complimentary

- Valley Access E-Magazine

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