

## FRIDAY » PEOPLE

## NEW ACHIEVEMENTS

## Monterey aquarium exec joins Hornblower Cruises

**Claire Sherwood** was hired as VP and general manager of Hornblower Cruises & Events in San Francisco. She was VP of marketing and guest services at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

## SERVICES

» Foodservice supply-chain firm Instill Corp. of Redwood City hired **Michael Moon** as a member of its sales force. Moon was a founder and general manager of USA Deli.

## LAW

» Associates **Timothy Goodson** and **Susan Wang** have joined the San Francisco office of Knobbe Martens Olson & Bear, an intellectual property law firm. Goodson graduated with his law degree in 2006 from the North Carolina School of Law; Wang graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School in 2006.

## EDUCATION

» San Francisco firm Kelly Financial Resources awarded Canadian intern **Wah Ching "Kitty" Yip** an educational scholarship. She is a math/sciences student at the University of British Columbia.

## TECHNOLOGY

» Electronic Arts, the Redwood City video game giant, hired **Hubert Larenaudie** as president online for Asia. He was president of the Asia-Pacific region of Vivendi Universal Games.

» SupportSoft Inc. of Redwood City hired **Royce Bunag** as VP of sales in the Asia-Pacific region. He was president of Aspect Communications Japan.

» Redwood City's Oxford Semiconductor hired **David Schwartz** as VP of sales. He was COO at Renesas.

» San Mateo software firm Sigaba hired **Troy Hartless** as senior VP of sales. He was VP of enterprise solutions and product management at GTSI Corp.

» Arxan Technologies Inc. hired **Kevin Morgan** as VP of engineering. He was VP of engineering at MontaVista Software before joining the San Francisco firm.

## TRANSPORTATION

» UPS drivers **James Murphy** of San Mateo and **John Webb** and **James Welch** of San Bruno were honored by their employer for 38 years of accident-free driving.

## FINANCE

» SVB Financial Group of Menlo Park hired **Jon Norris** as a managing director. He was a founder and senior VP of Square 1 Bank.

» Investment bank Pacific Growth Equities hired **Kari Hall** as a senior research analyst. She was at Thomas Weisel Partners.

» Moody's KMV, risk management and measurement firm, promoted **Jing Zhang** to managing director and head of research. He joined the firm in 1998.

— Staff reports

# Brad Oberwager

Aiming for big slice of the watermelon market



Brad Oberwager swigs from his "watini," a concoction made from one of his Sundia watermelons.

— Jason Steinberg/  
Special to The Examiner

By **Kate Williamson**  
Staff Writer

## BRAD OBERWAGER

## BUSINESS

**New project:** Sundia: the largest watermelon brand in the world and fastest growing produce brand in the U.S.

**Number of e-mails a day:** I tend to respond with one word answers, so people don't send me long emails ... fewer than 100

**Number of voice mails a day:** Fewer than 30

**Essential Web site:** seatguru.com; gizmodo.com

**Best perk:** I run all of my companies from my basement office.

**Gadgets:** All of them  
**Education:** Wharton MBA; Georgetown; starting six companies  
**Last conference:** Produce Marketing Association

**First job:** Removing poison ivy from a neighbor's house for \$5; ended up in the hospital

**Original aspiration:** Same as today, leave the world a better place than when I got here

**Career objective:** Make money while achieving my original aspiration and enjoy the process

## PERSONAL

**Details:** 36, 5'10" I envision everything I do.

**Hometown:** Philadelphia  
**Sports/hobbies:** The older I get, the better I was at lacrosse (played for Georgetown); now I run as far as I can as fast as I can as many days as I can

**Transportation:** I am the only person I know that can get carsick while driving

**Favorite restaurant:** Isa's  
**Computer:** A Samsung that is not available in the U.S., imported from Korea, weighs less than 2 lbs.; of course some of the keys are in Korean

**Vacation spot:** Jamaica  
**Favorite clothier:** Dung Custom Tailors, Saigon

**Role model:** Father, who taught me that the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

**Reading:** Jonathan Livingston Seagull (to my daughter)

**Worst fear:** That I won't get "there"; and if I do, I won't enjoy the journey  
**Motivation:** My worst fear

Coming out of the dot-com boom and bust with several companies started and sold, Bradford Oberwager took a travel break in 2003 from his back-to-back startup efforts. He went to Asia. There, the San Francisco resident saw the fruit of his future.

"I realized that watermelon is an international powerhouse of a fruit," he said. "You cannot be in a restaurant in the Philippines or Thailand and not see watermelon juice on the menu. To us, it's a summer fruit. To the rest of the world, it's a staple."

Populations from the "rest of the world," of course, are growing much more prevalent in the U.S. People from Latin American and parts of Asia are accustomed to eating watermelon year-round, Oberwager said. Combine those culinary traditions with the American tradition of big-branding, hot-weather fruits such as Sunkist oranges and Dole pineapple, and Oberwager is sure pink and green will be his gold.

His company, the privately held Sundia Corp., now accounts for some 35 percent of the watermelons sold on the market, each with a little "Sundia" sticker designed to make customers recognize and seek out his branded fruit. To start his firm in 2004, he partnered with Tim Colin of California produce-distribution company Timco Worldwide Inc., a

major source of many supermarket watermelons. Sundia also brands other melons and produce.

"He agreed to convert all of his [melon] stock into Sundia, and we gave him a lot of stock in the company," Oberwager said. "All of these

shippers out there have a brand, but the brand is mostly to the [store] buyer. Safeway knows it. Albertsons knows it."

Customers generally didn't know it, and that's the niche Oberwager hopes to fill with Sundia. He said his

brand stands for predictably good fruit, with high sweetness levels, no sun-bleaching and no hollow heart. A small personal-sized melon, the Sundia Mini, has sold particularly well, Oberwager said.

Even with planned sales of some 88 million pieces of fruit in 2007 and a plan to launch an organic line within six months, straight produce is not a huge money-maker. Therefore, Sundia has already begun sales of four watermelon-blend juices — straight, blackberry, pomegranate and limeade — and launches a prepackaged cut-fruit line today.

The juices are a product his executives are very familiar with: COO Dan Hoskins and VP of Manufacturing James Kairos both came from Odwalla Inc. Oberwager holds a formula and patent for watermelon juice, according to industry trade magazine BevNet.com. The firm has attracted attention, sparking talks with cut-fruit leader Del Monte, Oberwager said.

Oberwager started his business with "friends and family" loans, which is perhaps unsurprising. His entrepreneurial father Washburn Oberwager "never worked for anybody," Oberwager said. His own first business was a personalized-vitamin manufacturer, Acumins, which he created in 1996 because his sister had cancer and couldn't take regular iodinated vitamins. He also was a co-founder of online pharmacy more.com, and was CEO of the defunct OpenWebs.

## ON THE WAY UP

## FINANCIAL



officer of the holding company and the bank. He remains CFO.

Bridge Capital Holdings in San Jose promoted **Tom Sa** to executive VP and chief administrative

## EDUCATION



was a senior IT and business systems analyst.

**Wendy Jones** was hired as operations manager at the Presidio School of Management. She

## GOVERNMENT



District Attorney. She was first hired as a prosecutor in 2003.

San Mateo County Deputy District Attorney **Karen Guidotti** was promoted to Assistant

## ASSOCIATIONS



nate of the Presidents' Circle of the National Academies.

Redwood Shores consulting firm Cheskin's principal **Davis Masten** was selected as a chair-design

## RETAIL



and chief merchandising officer of Federated Direct.

**Dawn Robertson** was hired by Gap Inc. as the president of Old Navy. She was president