

# Ruby,

# Ruby, Baby!

*Six Chamber Members Celebrate  
40 Years in Encinitas*

By Louise Julig and  
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On February 5, the Encinitas Chamber of Commerce will honor six businesses with a ruby anniversary plaque honoring their 40 years of membership.

The businesses bear the names of families that have long histories with the city, such as Hansen, Ecke, and Dalager.

SCT sat down with the managers and owners of the six businesses to gain some insight into their success and get a glimpse of Surf City's past.

## Paul Ecke Ranch

It's no surprise that the 68-acre Paul Ecke Ranch tops this list of ruby anniversary businesses since its history with the city began in 1923.

Today there is a school (Paul Ecke Central) and a YMCA (Magdalena Ecke Family YMCA) that bears the family name.

Other landmarks, most notably the Encinitas Ranch Golf Course and the Encinitas Town Centre—may not bear the Ecke name, but they sit on land that was part of the ranch's original 900 acres.

Paul Ecke III assumed management of the company from his father in 1991. What he remembers most about the Encinitas of 40 years ago are his family's trips to Moonlight Beach and eating mushroom burgers at a vegetarian restaurant near Swami's with his dad.

"Even though Encinitas is much different today than it was, in my opinion it's still a great little town. That's why I am still here and raising my family here," said Ecke, who has an 11-year-old son, Max, and three-year-old daughter, Polly.

Most small businesspeople want to have a hand in their own destiny, Dalager said.

"Small businesspeople in general I think are cowboys," he said. "They value their freedom and think its worth more than the security and the big paycheck that they could get working for somebody else."

## Hansen's

Don Hansen started Hansen's Surfboards in 1962 a few years after he first moved to North County.

"I knew more about surfing than anything else, and I enjoyed it and thought it would be fun. So that's what I did and here I am 40 years later," he said.

Hansen's has seen many changes during those years, both in surfing and in the city itself. "Forty years ago they used to roll up the sidewalks at 5 in the afternoon," Hansen said. "It was a slower time. It really was a different time."

He originally started the business as a surfboard manufacturer with a small retail operation. They made surfboards, as many as 7,000 a year at one time, and wholesaled them all over the world.

As the surfing trend changed from longboards to short boards, it changed the whole industry. Surfing went from more of a cult phenomenon in the '60s, "where you actually knew most of the surfers on the whole California coast in those days," Hansen said, to surfers in the tens of thousands.

Hansen's rolled with the times, converting to a mainly retail operation, and branching out into other sporting goods such as skateboards, snowboards, kayaks, and the associated clothing and gear. They still sell boards under the Hansen's name, but now the actual manufacturing is sub-contracted out.



### Dalager's Sharpening Service

Dan Dalager's father, Hans, originally started Dalager's Sharpening Service in 1947 in a chicken coop on Hygeia Street. Hans Dalager worked in the Civil Service at Camp Pendleton and ran the business in the evenings, after work, and on weekends.

Later, when the family moved to Cardiff, the business operated out of their basement. In 1960, Hans quit the Civil Service and bought Donaldson's Fix-It shop across the street from the shop's current location.

Dan Dalager remembers "sitting in the front of the shop and listening to guys like (Chamber of Commerce president) Tak Muto," talking with his dad and other business owners from the community. One of the main topics of conversation was the effect Interstate 5 would have on the town.

"When the freeway first went through they thought this place would dry up and blow away," Dalager said. "There was a pretty bad recession at the time, and a lot of the county was in pretty dire condition. As a kid I'd sit and listen to Tak Muto and the guys saying 'What the heck are we gonna do to keep this town alive.'"

Their dustbowl fears were unrealized, however, and the town and business went on to prosper, with Dalager eventually taking over from his father.

When asked about the business's longevity, Dan Dalager credited the strong work ethic passed on from his father.

"He passed away in '92 and he was down here talking to people up until the very end. What I learned from him was that the world doesn't owe you anything—you've got to go out and be productive and not have your hand out," said Dalager, who, despite his schedule, never missed one of his kids baseball or soccer games or school plays.

contracted out.

Hansen credits the store's longevity to a true enjoyment of the work and the people he works with, ability to change with the times, and an attitude of true customer service.

"We've always put what the customer wants ahead of what's even best for us at times. I've always tried to instill the feeling that if you walk in our front door we'll try to make sure that you will leave happy no matter what we have to do."

Hansen credits his father, who owned a car agency in a small town in South Dakota for many years, as the one who really instilled in him the importance of customer service. When asked about his association with the Chamber of Commerce, Hansen said, "I think they're doing a great job supporting the local businesses—I'm just amazed that 40 years has passed so quickly."

### Hubbard Contracting Co.

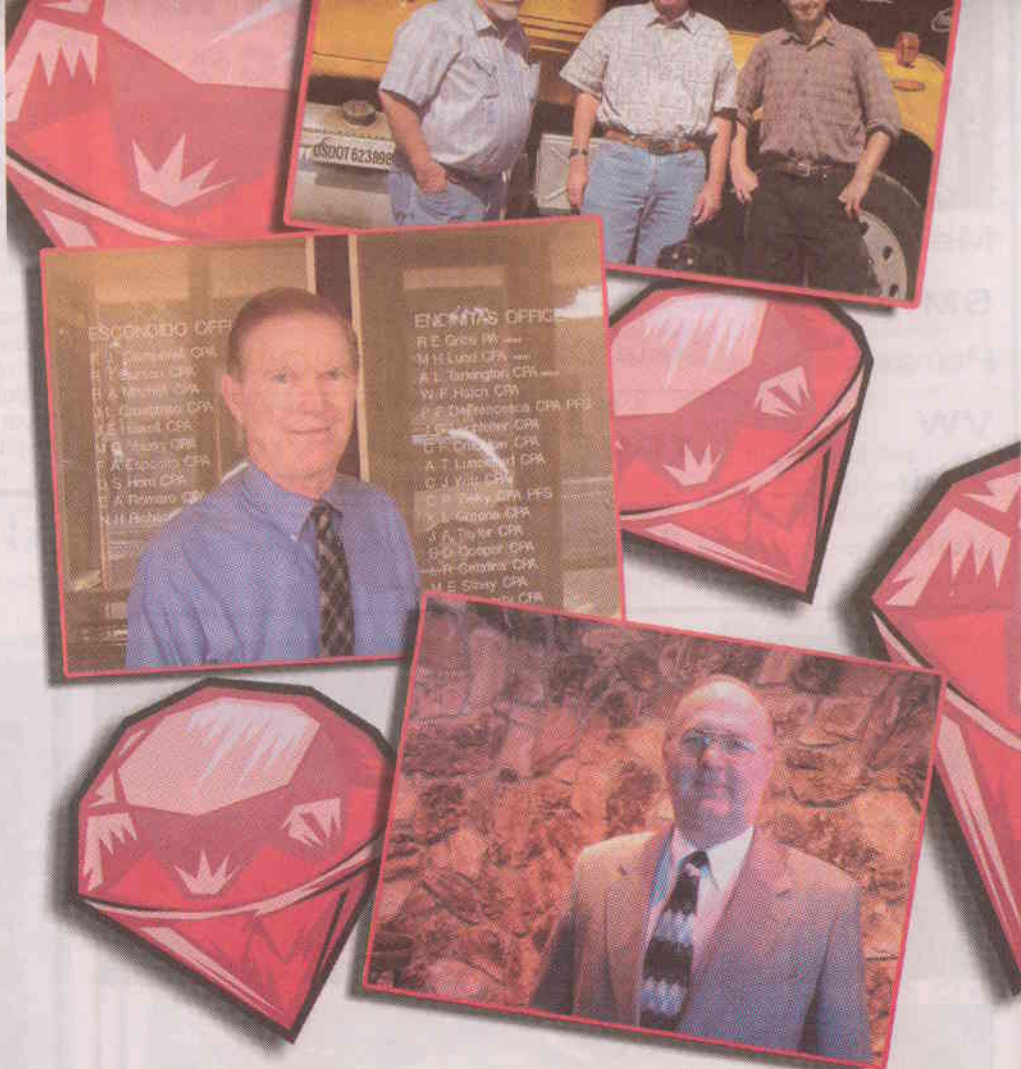
Hubbard Contracting Co. is a general engineering contracting company that specializes in underground construction.

Don Hubbard Jr., 57, a longtime Encinitas resident who attended Central Elementary, Oak Crest Junior High and San Dieguito High School, has worked for the company his entire life. His father started the business in 1947.

Hubbard isn't sure how much pipe the company has laid down in Encinitas, "but it's a lot," he said.

Hubbard's son, Jason, also works for the company, making it a third-generation contracting firm. Hubbard credits his father's leadership and the commitment given by all the employees for the company's success. "We work really hard," he said.

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**Encinitas' Hometown Gems:**  
From top to bottom: Paul Ecke III of Paul Ecke Ranch....Dan Dalager and Family of Dalager's Sharpening Service....Don Hansen and Family, of Hansen's Surfboards.... Don Hubbard and Family, of Hubbard Contracting Co....Bill Hatch of Grice, Lund and Tarkington....Joe Reynolds of Encinitas Mortuary. All photos by SCT except Paul Ecke (courtesy photo) and Don Hansen (SurfShot.com).

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The Hubbard family have been longtime supporters of the Magdalena Ecke Family YMCA.

Hubbard is on the board and calls the organization his "pet project." Hubbard is proud of what the Ecke YMCA has accomplished.

"We like to say we are the King Kong of YMCAs in San Diego county. We are the biggest Y by far," he said.

From 1965 to 1999, the business stood at the corner of Vulcan and Encinitas Boulevard, on the site where Cottonwood Creek Park now stands.

The company headed to San Marcos when the city, which owned the land, decided to build the park. Recalling the time Hubbard said, jokingly, "The city of Encinitas booted our rear-end out of town, said they didn't want sewer contractors in Encinitas—no that's not true."

Prior to the company's relocation, Hubbard had never worked in another city. The transition to land-locked San Marcos was not easy.

"I kind of get a little woozy when I can't see the ocean," said Hubbard who lives in Leucadia.

## Grice, Lund & Tarkington, LLP

Bob Grice opened his accounting practice in 1949 in a small, two-room building on 2nd and D that was previously used for selling cars. The firm was later joined by Morry Lund in 1956 and by Al Tarkington in 1971, creating the current firm name Grice, Lund & Tarkington.

The firm has stayed at the same location since 1949 and is recognized as one of the oldest and largest CPA firms in San Diego.

They have stayed close to their business base over the years, providing accounting and tax services for small businesses and individuals. The practice has grown to include offices in Escondido and Carlsbad and serves clients throughout the North

County area.

Bob Grice retired almost 20 years ago from the practice, as did Morry Lund and Al Tarkington, but Lund and Tarkington still remain active in the business, coming into the office weekly and also working during tax season.

Bill Hatch, a current partner of 32 years, said he has been pleased with the firm's association with the Chamber of Commerce and also the improvements made by the city to downtown Encinitas.

"All the improvements the city has made have made a significant improvement in property values and also made it a good place to work," he said.

Regarding the Chamber, Hatch said the firm has always been a supporter. "We've found that they do a good job supporting local businesses here. We're very happy to have supported the Chamber for 40 years and look forward to continuing to do that."

## Encinitas Mortuary

Encinitas Mortuary has buried many prominent city residents, from Weigands to Eckes, and even some Hollywood stars.

The celebrity list may only pique the interest of a cinema scholar, as most names date back to the silent era, but a few, such as Desi Arnaz and Victor Mature, are more well known.

Joe Reynolds, the current manager of Encinitas Mortuary, has done his best during his 13 years tenure to piece together the company's history.

Here's what he knows for certain: the business got its license from the city in 1936 and it has been in its current location—on Melrose around the corner from Juanita's Taco Shop—since 1949.

Beyond that, what Reynolds knows about the place amounts to a few bits and pieces of anecdotal stories culled from the faded memories of folks who pass through his doors.

"One guy walked up to me one day and said he was the first embalmer we had here, back in 1949," Reynolds said. *SCOT*