

FROM VOICES, A1

hotel, including the 11-story tower, a slightly different shade, coral pink rather than salmon pink, that is a little brighter and will give it a fresh look. We want to polish it a little bit."

A new management team has also been hired, including general manager Vikram Sood, who previously managed Four Seasons Aviara in Carlsbad and before that worked at the Grand Del Mar.

The new food and beverage manager is Bruno Roulleux, who previously was food and beverage manager at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York and briefly at the Rancho Bernardo Inn.

"We have a lot of renovation planned which is in

the process that we have architects working on," said Israni. "The high-impact items, rooms and meeting facilities, will be done first."

Hotel marketing will be tweaked in the near future to promote the hotel's fine-dining, ocean-view Sky Room.

"We're freshening things, bringing in new menus," added Israni.

■ **John May**, chair of the



John May

Unified School District's

finance committee of the La Jolla Cluster Association, has taken on the daunting task of dissecting San Diego

budget. May is skilled at looking at budgets, having spent nearly two decades managing department finances for a number of pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

He has recruited a pair of CPAs and former auditors, Amy Christensen and Laura Bertagnolli, who both have children in La Jolla public schools, to join him in the task. The three of them are tearing apart the \$1.2 billion operating budget of the 117,000-student district looking for new ways to cut spending without disrupting classroom instruction.

May will share his committee's findings with newly elected board member Scott Barnett and other district leaders.

■ English teacher **Susan Minnicks**



Susan Minnicks

is empowering Muirlands Middle students to make a difference in their community — and the world. A teacher for 17 years, she runs an after-school Social Action Club. Minnicks, who has a bachelor's degree in linguistics and philosophy and a master's of fine arts in writing, has traveled extensively in Central and South America. Her travel experiences inspired her to teach English language learners, which she did at Muirlands for 10 years.

Through her students' work, she learned about issues in their lives — and the Social Action Club was born. Each year, club members identify organizations worthy of their support and raise funds or items. In 2004, they raised \$3,000 for tsunami victims. The club also has supported the World Wild Life Foundation, Father Joe's and San Diego Food Bank.

This year the club is asking parents to donate travel-size bottles and is putting together and decorating 100 toiletry bags for Rachel's Women's Shelter. Participants are passionate about the club. One student said, "Ms. Minnicks is really aware. (She) actually cares."

■ **Sherry Nooravi** has made her mark campaigning the last couple of years for long-awaited improvements to Torrey Pines Road corridor, the Jewel's gateway from I-5.

Noting the corridor is like a "highway running through a residential com-

munity," Nooravi said her vision is to create a "green, safe and walkable San Diego," starting with Torrey Pines Corridor. "The road is so dark, there are no indicators of what the speed should be," said said of the thoroughfare she claims is getting more dangerous every day.

Torrey Pines Road corridor improvements are a decade-long effort that aims to include traffic calming, slope stabilization, pedestrian and bicycle safety measures, and median and landscaping improvements to the heavily traveled stretch of Torrey Pines Road between La Jolla Shores Drive and Prospect Place.

Efforts to move the project ahead have borne fruit, as a



Sherry Nooravi

\$500,000 federal stimulus grant to fund the design phase of the project was secured last year, and First District City Councilwoman Sherri Lightner is hosting an informational forum Jan. 19 at the La Jolla Recreation Center to discuss phasing and cost estimates for the project.

Meanwhile, Nooravi and her supporters continue to lobby. "We've spoken before SANDAG, I'm in the process of sending out a year-end update to my e-mail list and we've started a new website, www.torreypinessafety.org," she said.

■ **Listen as Terry Underwood**, who's been managing La Jolla's Grande Colonial for the past 11 years and at the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club for six years before that, continues

to be a strong voice for local lodging interests.

He is now on the board of



Terry Underwood

San Diego North and will have a say in how funds from the Tourism Marketing District are spent in the area. In its new form, San Diego North, which used to be a full-on marketing and sales organization for the tourism and hotel industry from La Jolla to the North County line, is just a board without any employees. It represents 43 hotels (with 70 or more rooms) within the San Diego city limits from La Jolla north to Del Mar-Carmel Valley and the Interstate 15 corridor. Eleven are considered to be in coastal La Jolla, or west of I-5.

Since reorganizing, the group has subcontracted its functions, from sales and marketing to website monitoring, to the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau, which has hired a staff dedicated to getting people to stay in the North region. That's allowed the board to eliminate duplication of effort and staffing and focus its budget of about \$2.5 million — from assessments paid to the TMD by hotels with more than 70 rooms.

Underwood says he's optimistic that they'll see results, and they'll still benefit from Convis efforts at marketing the region at large.

"I believe we'll have greater efficiency now that all of our money can be used more effectively in driving room occupancy," Underwood said.

SEE VOICES, A13



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