

# The San Diego Union-Tribune

Column: Surfside surprises: A lost license, a flying shark and a fine-china picnic



This shark blimp was photographed above San Francisco but is expected to appear in San Diego starting Thursday. (Courtesy of Discovery's Shark Week)

A potpourri of San Diego people and items all share a coastal connection

BY [DIANE BELL](#) COLUMNIST  
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La Jolla physician Richard Greenfield got an unexpected call while he and his wife, Jennifer, were vacationing recently in France.

The caller — an acquaintance from the big island of Hawaii, where the Greenfields maintain a vacation home — had rescued a driver's license he spotted in the water when he was surfing.

It belonged to a Daniel Greenfield of Chicago. Did the couple know him?

Well, yes, Richard replied, somewhat astonished. Daniel was his son, who had previously lived in Chicago but since moved to Northern California.

The mystery soon was solved.

While vacationing at the family's retreat on the Big Island, Daniel had gone snorkeling with his driver's license in the pocket of his bathing suit. The only problem was the lining of the pocket was ripped.

His ID popped out offshore, and the rest is history.

When he realized his license was missing, Daniel, his wife and their friends searched the beach and notified the beach patrol crew to be on the lookout.

But he never expected to see his driver's license again, let alone get a call from his father in France informing him it was being delivered to him at the Mauna Kea Resort.

It is, indeed, a small world.

**Speaking of the ocean:** "It's a bird. It's a plane. No, it's a shark!"

Someone could, indeed, spot a flying shark over San Diego someday soon. But better in the sky than in our coastal waters.

No, it's not another "Sharknado" sequel in which a waterspout launches sharks into Southern California. Rather, it's a blimp shaped like a mammoth shark that will soon visit our region to promote "Shark Week" on TV.

The 128-foot-long, 44-foot-tall blimp has taken to the skies for the month of July to promote a week-long shark documentary fest by Discovery and discovery+ premiering Sunday.

There actually are two mechanical flying sharks, one patrolling the East Coast and the other the West Coast. Sightings can be shared and tracked on [SharkWeek.com/Blimp](http://SharkWeek.com/Blimp) via #WestShark and #EastShark.

Just don't expect to see the airborne shark, which can travel more than 50 mph, in San Diego until Comic-Con gets underway. It is expected to be visible here from Thursday through Monday.

**Seaside soirée:** Fine china and sterling silver are out of fashion with the grown-up kids these days, so several longtime San Diego couples have found a novel use for it: picnicking in style.

Couples including Ann Parode and former UC President Bob Dynes, as well as Armi and Al Williams, Debbie and George Adams, and Leslie and former Ambassador Reno Harnish, unpacked their picnic baskets with a view of the ocean the other evening.

Out came their Lenox, Wedgwood, Spode and other fine china, their Stieff, Wallace and Tiffany sterling and their crystal candle sticks.

The fine china and flowers adorned a table spread with a white tablecloth, with folding chairs overlooking the surf.

“Nobody really wants the china and the crystal anymore,” says Parode, referring to the younger generation. “What a difference 50 years makes.”

Most of the formal dinnerware from wedding gifts of decades ago has been languishing in dining room cupboards, coming out only on special occasions and holidays.

“We decided just to use it,” adds Parode, who founded the San Diego Parks Foundation. She reports that everyone made it home from the outdoor soirée with their dinnerware intact.

**Women of the century:** Health spa pioneer Deborah Szekely turned 100 in May, so it is only fitting that she receive the “Woman of the Century” award from the San Diego-based nonprofit Charter 100 International.

The group was formed as Charter 100 in San Diego in 1978 by a who’s-who of prominent professional women seeking to create a base for networking and education and a forum for exchanging ideas. They soon initiated scholarships supporting young women who have aged out of the foster care system.

Szekely attended the recent luncheon event at La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. She was one of Charter 100’s founding members, along with Audrey Geisel, cookbook creator Jeanne Jones, author Doris Lee McCoy, artist Françoise Gilot and several others.

The centenarian still gives weekly talks at her Rancho La Puerta fitness spa in Tecate, Mexico, just named No. 1 best international destination spa by Travel + Leisure magazine readers for the third consecutive year.

Szekely also authored a book of quotations, "100 Lessons from a Grasshopper," published on her 100th birthday in May.

Gilot, who turned 100 in November, was married to Dr. Jonas Salk for 25 years until he died in 1995 in La Jolla. She received the previous Woman of the Century award from the group in April.

An exhibit of her art, "Gilot 100," was coordinated at the La Jolla Athenaeum Music & Arts Library by her daughter Aurelia Engel and son-in-law Colas Engel with Charter 100 founder Diana Pickett and Cynthia Burleson.

Gilot lives in New York City, where Pickett plans to videotape an interview with both honorees this fall.