

# FRIDAY » PEOPLE

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Pottery Barn exec named Williams-Sonoma president

San Francisco kitchenware company Williams-Sonoma Inc. promoted **Laura Alber** to company president. She was previously president of the Pottery Barn brands.

## TECHNOLOGY

» SPL Worldgroup of San Francisco hired **Jeffrey Bowne** and **George Love III** as senior director of product management and VP of professional services, respectively. Both are formerly of Accenture, where Bowne was an associate partner in the company's government practice and Love was a senior manager with the government market unit.

» **Peter Salerno** is the new VP of strategic alliances for teleSys Software Inc., a San Mateo company. He has held jobs at Ulticom, Sun Microsystems and Nothrop-Grumman.

» San Mateo database firm db4objects has gained Wind River CEO **Jerry Fiddler** as a member of its board of directors.

» San Francisco data security firm GuardianEdge Technologies Inc. hired **Joseph Hoban** as its VP of worldwide channel sales. Hoban was director of business development at netForensics.

## CONSULTING

» Global Risk Advisors in Redwood City hired **Jeanette Smith** and **Eli Dabich Jr.** as business continuity and human-resources risk management practice leaders, respectively. Dabich will work in the Washington, D.C., area and Smith will work in the Los Angeles area.

» Mercer Management Consulting, a New York firm, has hired seven senior partners to its global communications, information and entertainment practice. In San Francisco, the firm hired **Rav Suri** to specialize in the technology and software industry. He was a principal at A.T. Kearney.

» **Jorge Septien** has been hired as senior regional VP for the Central America and Caribbean regions and Mexico for ASIS International. He was previously the Mexico City managing director for San Francisco risk management firm The Steele Foundation.

## HEALTH CARE

» Synarc Inc., a San Francisco maker of imaging and molecular marker services for clinical trials, promoted **Lidia Fonseca** to executive VP of global operations and technology. She has been with Synarc since 2005.

» Chiropractic consulting firm The Masters Circle hired **Jason Deitch** as chief wellness officer. Deitch was the founder and CEO of the Discover Wellness Center in Oakland, as well as a backstage chiropractor for rock musicians.

## AVIATION

» TAG Aviation USA of Burlingame hired **Doug Schwartz** as VP of flight operations and standards. He was previously aviation director for AT&T. — *Staff reports*

# Beth Gerstein

## Searching for the sparkle in a shadowy industry



Beth Gerstein of Brilliant Earth sells diamonds consistent with her environmentally and socially conscious views. — Jason Steinberg/Special to The Examiner

By **Kate Williamson**  
Staff Writer

Socially-responsible product sourcing, once the purview of high-end coffee retailers and sweatshop-free clothing manufacturers, has come to the diamond industry. And a San Franciscan is one of the young entrepreneurs leading the way.

When Beth Gerstein and her husband, Alex Sutton, were discussing their impending engagement 2½ years ago, they started shopping for diamonds that played no part in the ongoing armed conflicts in several African nations, where the diamond trade has funded warring parties in Angola and Sierra Leone, among other countries.

"We were looking for a ring and ended up going to a number of retailers," but no one seemed to know about the issue or provided assurances with no back-up documentation, she said. "We'd ask them where the diamond comes from and they said there's no way to trace where a diamond comes from. We basically founded Brilliant Earth to provide that alternative."

The couple eventually found a retailer who knew the difference, and Gerstein came home one day

**BETH GERSTEIN**  
**BUSINESS**  
**Essential Web site:** brilliantearth.com  
**Number of e-mails daily:** 60  
**Number of voice mails daily:** 15  
**Best perk:** Sharing excitement of customer's engagements  
**Gadgets:** iPod  
**Education/experience:** B.S. Duke, M.S. MIT, M.B.A. Stanford, wireless engineer, business development in technology  
**Last conference:** Net Impact  
**First job:** Worked in a child day care  
**Original aspiration:** Teacher  
**Career objective:** To run a successful socially responsible enterprise

to a proposal, a ring and rose petals. To make life easier for other couples, Gerstein and her business partner Eric Grossberg founded, Brilliant Earth, dealing exclusively in conflict-free diamonds. It was a new career turn for her.

"I realized I really needed to do something I felt passionate about," Gerstein said.

Brilliant Earth, headquartered in The City, sells diamonds at prices ranging from \$400 to \$30,000 direct to consumers, along with rings and

**PERSONAL**  
**Details:** 30 years old, 5'8," graduated from college at 19, likes to tell the same joke over and over, loves to travel and has visited more than 30 countries.  
**Hometown:** Silver Spring, Md.  
**Sports/hobbies:** Snowboarding, traveling, reading, exploring The City  
**Transportation:** 38 Geary  
**Favorite restaurant:** Limon  
**Computer:** Compaq Presario Laptop  
**Vacation spot:** Costa Rica  
**Favorite clothier:** Arvin (www.arvinusa.com — cool T-shirts)  
**Worst fear:** Regretting actions I didn't take  
**Motivation:** Giving back

other jewelry manufactured from recycled gold — a move that sidesteps the environmental and social problems associated with gold mining.

Gerstein believes the Kimberly Process, an accord designed to ensure conflict-free diamonds from Africa, is a flawed self-policing system. So her company sources its diamonds exclusively from the two working Canadian diamond mines, the Ekati and Diavik mines.

Those mines, in Canada's

Northwest Territories, are not without concerns from local aboriginal groups and environmentalists concerned about water quality and declines in caribou herds. But Canada has stringent environmental review and public-process laws in place to work on these issues, according to Al MacDonald, an environmental assessment officer for the MacKenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, which is made up of aboriginal and government officials.

At the same time as she founded the company, Gerstein and dismayed engagement-ring buyer Corey Frayer also founded the Diamonds for Africa Fund, a nonprofit organization that takes donations of cash and diamonds and uses the funds to aid African communities affected by gem-financed wars. They have an initial fundraising goal of \$300,000, and are planning a benefit concert with performer George Clinton for October.

The firm hopes to branch out into other fair-trade gemstones, Gerstein said. Her firm has been noted by online bloggers, and may see further interest with the upcoming release of a new Leonardo DiCaprio movie, "The Blood Diamond."

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## ON THE WAY UP

### TECHNOLOGY



Marvell Technology Group Ltd. President **Sehat Sutardja** was named Inventor of the Year by

the Silicon Valley Intellectual Property Law Association.

### REAL ESTATE



**David Churton** has been named an international director for real estate money

management firm Jones Lang LaSalle.

### FINANCIAL



**Scott Jenner** is the new president/CEO of Addison Avenue Financial Partners,

a division of Addison Avenue Federal Credit Union.

### SOFTWARE



AmberPoint, an Oakland management software firm, hired **Willie Kirkpatrick** as VP

of Europe, Middle East and Africa.

### BANKING



Wells Fargo's Public Finance Group hired **Matthew Hobbs** as a public finance investment

banker for San Francisco and Northern California.