



ViewFinder: Made Here

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(Viewfinder theme music)

Hi, I'm Pat McConahay, and welcome to *Made Here* – a celebration of innovation and artistry in and around Sacramento. You know, right here at the Discovery Museum's Gold Rush History Center in Old Sacramento, kids and families can explore the region's rich history and get a sense of just how we've grown over the years. California has always prided itself as a place where new ideas can take hold. And from the Gold Rush to the latest biotech boom, the Valley has made a lot of American dreams come true. So stay tuned. We'll meet some folks who are keeping that can-do spirit alive and ensuring the region's future is made right here.

No place embodies the pioneer spirit of the West better than the Sacramento region. In the blink of an eye, a flood plain was transformed into the state capital...while prospectors scarred the foothills with new hydraulic mining techniques in their hunger for California's gold.

But the real gold in the ground was the Valley's rich soil. The rise of the agricultural economy was a boon to the Valley's inventors. In 1858, Warren Miller of Marysville built the first steam driven tractor. Fifty years later, Benjamin Holt of Stockton revolutionized the industry by adding caterpillar tractor treads. The combine harvester was invented in Australia -- but it was up to the scientists at UC Davis to develop a tomato with a skin strong enough to withstand mechanical harvesting.

(train whistle blows)

Sacramento was home to many "firsts" in its early days – like the Sacramento Valley Railroad, the first passenger train west of the Mississippi, which made its trial run to Folsom in 1855.

The western end of the Pony Express was located here until it ceased operations in 1861. That was the year the first transcontinental telegraph message was sent...from Sacramento!

And in 1870, at a Sacramento racetrack, Eadweard Muybridge began the first of his famous efforts to photograph horses in motion – experiments that led ultimately to the development of the moving picture.

Plenty of major companies have chosen Sacramento as their home. Wells Fargo got its start here in 1852, while the Crystal Creamery has been churning since 1901. And when the state's almond growers formed their cooperative in 1910, they chose Blue Diamond as their name, and Sacramento for their headquarters.

And did you know that Sacramento once had its own airplane manufacturer? Back in the 1920s the Irwin Airplane Company was one of the country's most successful makers of do-it-yourself airplane kits. If you had a few hundred dollars and a whole lot of confidence, well, you could send away for one of these and



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take it to the skies. Sacramentans today are a bit more grounded, but those still seeking that one-of-a-kind ride can find it right here in their own hometown.

My name is Steve Rex. I make custom bicycles here in Midtown Sacramento.

In this bike shop, the one-size-fits-all philosophy just won't do. Steve Rex customizes each one of his bikes to fit one specific rider – nobody else.

Up, up... There we go.

This personal fitting is what makes a Rex bike so special. Steve starts by taking basic body measurements, and putting them all into motion on what he calls a sizing cycle.

Going in and talking to Steve, I had him fit me and so I'm thinking, "How can this guy build something when I'm sitting on this silly contraption?"

Steve Rex can spot tiny quirks in every cyclist's riding style. These quirks play a role in how he constructs the bike. In Paula Joyce's case, there's another goal: to relieve the neck pain she's been feeling while riding her old bike.

This also makes me bend my elbows a little more, whereas before it was hard to bend my elbows. I'm not sure why that works, but it feels easier now.

I do it that way because people of similar dimensions can sit on the bike completely differently because of their muscle structure and flexibility.

Having raced bicycles at Sac State, Steve's passion for cycling took over.

I took a welding and machining class and started making them out of my garage. I could recognize quality and I knew that I could make things of high quality.

More than 18 years and 1,200 bikes later, Steve and his customers are both glad he set up shop here in Sacramento.

I absolutely love my bike. That's my passion.

I think there is a certain camaraderie with Rex riders because he's a local guy and we enjoy supporting local people.

For a man so determined to keep his business small and personal, there's no better promotion than a Rex Rider.

We know we have a great bike, made just for us.



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Now who has the best Rex paint job?

I do! (laughter)

My name is Russ Pickett and I'm a bicycle painter.

If you ever have a bike made by Steve Rex, it's Russ who will likely put on the spectacular finishing touches that make your bike worth that three-month wait.

Russ works out of his rural home near Chico. And be forewarned: Russ always gives customers exactly what they ask for.

Some designs work and some designs just disappear on a bike because the tubings only have a narrow surface that you can actually see at one time. So a big design doesn't always make sense.

When decorating a bike, Russ says it's best to keep it simple. Just give him a general idea and watch your bike's personality unfold.

I asked for a combination of yellow and red and then combine them to orange in the middle I like sunset colors."

It's enough to bring out... Well, remember that feeling when you got your first bike?

My best friend and my wife did it as a surprise for my 60th birthday.

There's nothing like a brand spanking new bicycle with a shiny paint job.

Do you think that's what's tweaking me back here?

With each customer's physique and riding style in mind, Steve builds each bike in a way that maximizes comfort and control.

The bike flies. It's soft it's fast it's zippy and it climbs like a mountain lion. Not me, though – the bike! (laughs)

I really like the handling. It was built for me I have a long torso and so it just fits very well, like a glove.

Rex bikes aren't cheap, in materials or in price. They're made mostly from steel, that classic, traditional bike material that has endured for decades.

Working with steel is pretty dirty. There's chips, really sharp chips, and dust that's probably not very healthy.



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But at a good sculptor's hand, steel lends itself to graceful, elegant lines. Combine this with Steve's almost surgical technique, and many riders are willing to pay several thousand dollars for a Rex – even going so far as to buy them sight unseen.

The furthest away was to a fellow in Guam. He didn't come here for a fitting.

As Steve's business has grown, he too has evolved – into a socially conscious business owner. He donates much of his earning to charities in the Sacramento area.

Being in my mid 40s I'm finally at a stage in life where I am able to share.

And to that end, Steve has developed a signature fundraiser: an annual "Rex Ride" where cyclists gather to help fund upkeep for one of Sacramento's greatest resources: the American River Parkway.

I feel better if I ride my bike. It's the right thing to do, it's one less car on the road, one less gallon of gas being burnt each way.

That motivation has Sacramento's only professional bike maker convinced: it's the smile on customer's faces that's most important.

It's just friendly and a lot of people will notice the bike and say, "Nice bike." You know and I say, "Oh, that's a Rex."

And for them, part of the reward is joining a growing subculture of cyclists whose bikes sport the name "Rex."

It's like an old friend.

Over the years Sacramento has had its fair share of great restaurants, but one of the most famous was the Dunlap Dining Room. It's recreated right here at the Discovery Museum. For decades it was a favorite haunt for local politicians, offering home-style meals in a place that really felt like home. In today's fast-paced world, sit-down meals are becoming more and more of a luxury. Many of us even just grab that cup of Joe and go...so finding that perfect brew has taken on a whole new importance. You might think that a certain chain out of Seattle has cornered the market, but one Sacramento company wasn't afraid to go head to head with the big boys.

I probably had my first cup of coffee when I was five or six years old, and it tasted terrible to me.



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Tom Weborg is the co-founder of Java City, and coffee has always been part of his life. For years his parents owned a local coffee distribution company.

Actually my family has been in the coffee business since the 1940's, we sold Maxwell House and Yuban coffee...

And after years of selling the big brands with his family, Tom met his future wife Sandra, who dropped a bit of bad news about his brew.

When we first got together she said, "I know you're in the coffee business, but I hate your coffee. It tastes terrible!" And she brought me my first pound of specialty coffee from San Francisco, and after we got together, she said you know it would be really fun for us to start our own coffee business here in Sacramento.

And that led to the opening of Java City on 18th & Capitol, back in 1985... but just months after opening, the store's fate looked pretty bleak.

We had operating losses for about six months. And this hobby got very serious all of a sudden, because we had pretty close to \$200,000 invested in it, and we weren't going anywhere at that point in time.

And that's where a poetry marathon saved the day.

We were approached by a gentleman by the name of Bari Kennedy who is a poet, and a guy who used to hang out here at Java City at 18th and Capitol. And he asked us one day, "Would you guys would be interested in hosting a marathon poetry reading?" So we thought, well, why not try it? It would be kind of an interesting novel idea, and who knows what can happen?

The idea was to get into the Guinness Book of World Records. So for a whole week... or 168 straight hours, both the coffee and poetry, flowed.

I think it was on the 3rd day we finally started getting some television coverage. And by the Wednesday or Thursday of the following week there were 6 or 7 TV cameras out here and that was really what put Java City on the map. We got all this wonderful publicity that all of a sudden our sales, I think they quadrupled after that poetry reading and we were kind of on our way.

After the poetry success Java City grew by leaps and bounds, easily becoming the most recognizable coffeehouse in town...that was until 1994, when Starbucks opened the first of many, many stores in the region.

We didn't know what impact Starbucks would have. We knew it would have an impact, and it has had an impact. I mean in Sacramento they have more store than we have in our whole company. But we made a conscious decision to fear Starbucks.

So in the midst of a huge amount of competition, Java City has survived by simply focusing on what they do best: making good coffee. And to see it firsthand, we took a trip to their roasting facility...



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Yeah, that's about a three-week supply of coffee for us.

...and met Shawn Hamilton, Java City's master roaster.

Where does it all come from?

All over the world: Columbia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Mexico...

Hey, Shawn, this is quite a place. But I guess this is the secret here to good Java City coffee.

Yeah, this is our coffee roasting process right here. The first thing you have to do is start with great high quality coffee, which we only buy Arabica coffee, which is the highest grade of coffee you can buy. The second thing is the roasting process. We roast coffee a little bit longer than most people do, because it allows the flavors to develop in the coffee. So it takes a little bit longer, but it's well worth it in the end.

It's those subtleties in the craft of making coffee that has kept the company a success. But it's also worth mentioning an effort they've made to remain part of the community... supporting the next generation of craftspeople.

We hand roast our coffee, and we feel that what we do is really an art. It isn't just a process. And so we're involved in outreach in a variety of different ways.

We had a young art student design some packaging..., and the proceeds from the sale from this particular project will go to benefit both the Mondavi and the Crocker Art Museum. We think it's great for Java City to be able to provide a product and a program where some of the benefit will come back into the community.

It's this approach to business that has led Java City to become bigger than the founders would ever have believed.

This little business that we started in 1985 today does in excess of \$45 million a year in revenue. We are roasting almost 5 million pounds of coffee a year. It's really unbelievable.

Today, Tom still serves on Java City's board of directors, but mainly he's enjoying a life of semi-retirement, on the other side of the coffee counter.

I can honestly say that I have never, gone to work wishing that I didn't have to go – ever! I love doing what I do. You know, I love my job. I really – I still love it.



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The Central Valley earned the nickname “The Breadbasket of the World” thanks to its fertile landscape and those who farmed the land. Technology played a major role. Well today we’re combining the organic and the man made and coming up with some cutting-edge technology.

Tucked away in a small, non-descript, lab at UC Davis you’ll find Professor Sanjay Joshi and his students crafting some of the world’s most exciting robots.

We’re currently working with NASA to build robots that will be flying around on other moons and possibly other places in the solar system.

And then there’s the Robo Pups: robotic rats essentially designed to perform a very important task. And on first glance, that’s running into walls.

It is pretty boring, because what they tend to do is end up in corners.

But these robots represent some amazing possibilities. And if it seems they’re bouncing around randomly, it’s because that’s exactly what they’re designed to do, mimicking the actions of real week-old rat pups. To understand why that’s important, we meet Jeff Shank. He’s studying the behavior of real rat pups.

We don’t really understand even the simplest of things: how do organisms move about? How to they interact and aggregate together? This should give us insight into how we do these things as well, because what we do is we use animals like this to also study humans.

So how do robots fit in? Well, the idea is if you build a robot to act like, say, a rat, you can analyze the data and form theories about how behavior happens in the real thing. And for the roboticist, studying simple behavior in rats aids them in building better robots. This cross-field research is a huge step in the scientific world.

There are insights from engineering into behavior that you don’t get from the psychology side, and psychologists and biologists have insights into behavior that engineers don’t have.

So far several discoveries have been made, but probably the most exciting discovery came by mistake.

When Chris, my graduate student, actually programmed in these rules for just moving towards objects, what ended up happening is that we saw that the robots moved along the walls. But they sort of circled the arenas over and over again. Well, this is very characteristic of what you would see with autistic children. So we think that in accidentally trying to model the robots to do what the pups do in a particular way, we may have created autistic robots, which might in the future provide us with some insights into this disease that we have almost no understanding about.

So while they may not be as glamorous as their Mars exploring counterparts, these robots, and the collaboration behind them, could lead to historic scientific breakthroughs.



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The *Sacramento Bee* first rolled off the presses in 1857. Well, 150 years later, it's still the way that many Northern Californians wake up and get their news in the morning. Of course a century and a half has brought a whole new range of sources for information and entertainment. It's especially true for children; the Katzenjammer Kids just couldn't compete with television. But for parents who are worried about what their kids are watching, it's good to know there are a few shows that entertain and educate. And one of them is the brainchild of Nevada City resident Ron Rodecker.

Maya, time to wake up...

(*Dragon Tales* theme plays)

The names Ord, Wheezie, and Quetzal may not mean much to you...but chances are if you've got young children, they've fallen under the spell of *Dragon Tales*.

We wanted to create a program where there is no bad character; that everything develops through children's play.

A teacher for more than twenty years, Ron Rodecker often used his talents as an artist to connect with kids...

With a cartoon, you can say all sorts of things very forcefully, and not hurt anybody's feelings because the drawing should be a little funny. And I used that in counseling with kids.

Now as creator and co-producer of a beloved PBS series, Ron is helping to educate an entire generation through his art.

Did somebody call for an artiste?!

The through-line for *Dragon Tales* is the through-line I had for teaching: helping children meet new situations with confidence.

And Ron knows that confidence is key. Though he'd been drawing since he was a young boy, he always felt his talents had their limits.

My wife had been telling me to get into color; I was doing only pen and ink. And I'd say, "I can't do color; I'm a black and white artist. I need to do what I'm secure in."

But in 1985, while browsing at a bargain book sale, the illustrations for a tome called *Legendary Creatures* caught Ron's eye.

And I was so impressed that I spent \$2.50, bought the book, and then went out and got some watercolors.

Ron's bright, whimsical paintings – featuring dragons as playmates rather than predators – were an instant success.



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I had three dragon pictures and poof! They went. And I did more. I ended up selling about 35 originals.

A decade later, his creations took on a life of their own.

Columbia-TriStar representatives came into my booth in 1995 and were very impressed with my artwork. So from there came the idea of having a show about my dragons.

The studio hired a team of artists to reinterpret Ron's dragons for television. But something was lost in the translation...

None of them had that personal sweetness that we finally ended up with.

So the production team turned back to the man who knew them best. Ron found his inspiration for the dragons lying right at his feet.

Well, it helps a lot to have two golden retrievers as inspirations and models. Tessa's the model for Cassie and Remington's is for Ord.

And the idyllic realm of Dragonland is reflected in the landscape that surrounds the Nevada City home he shares with his wife Katherine.

We love the woods. As my wife says here, 'Everything wants to be alive and to grow.' We have a nice property here. But we don't feel we own it; we're caretakers.

It's that same nurturing spirit that made Ron such an effective teacher, and makes his characters – dragons and human alike – so popular with kids. And how do youngsters react when they meet the man behind *Dragon Tales*?

I find that the kids aren't that impressed with a person. They love the characters, and they don't equate me with the characters.

But Ron's happy just knowing his work is having such a positive impact on so many young minds. Since the program came out, we've been the number one children's show from two to six-years old in the country, and my goodness, that's a very, very humbling experience to be part of that!

The stories on *Dragon Tales* are designed to inspire and empower kids – but Ron hopes his own personal story is inspirational to people later in life.

I started *Dragon Tales* at the tender age of 65. The dragons in my life symbolize risk, and things that are too big to control. But you can either fear them, try to run away from them, or you can treat them as opportunity, change, and growth – and I prefer to do the latter and it's worked very well.



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Bike riding, playing video games, and shooting baskets, are all normal, day-to-day, activities for 12-year-old Kyler Spears, but when he sits back and lets his mind wonder, anything is possible. Kids may fantasize about creating a character for their favorite cartoon, but for Kyler this has been a dream come true.

I created a character named Yoke for the cable channel Cartoon Network for a show called Miguzi. Miguzi is kind of a hosting period from like a certain period of time where they show cartoons and in between commercials they have little cartoons doing funny gags.

So how did he go from riding his bike to creating a cartoon character? It's as simple as this: he saw the advertisement for The Cartoon Network's Miguzi, filled out the entry form – complete with the drawing of his full color character – mailed it off, and as the saying goes...well, the rest is history.

My character looks like an egg with a character inside and has a glass dome on top and it has a little thing that goes around it that shows words or whatever he is doing. He has telekinetic powers, which he can move stuff around and he has three fans on the bottom so he can float and move around without having to touch the ground. He's the character that's like the joker; he plays around with all the other characters.

Kyler's been interested in cartoon characters since he was born, but it goes much deeper than just watching them on TV.

What mostly interests me about cartoon characters is just imagining things that totally don't exist, but it's just fun. When I grow up I want to be a 3D artist working at Pixar or one of those places where they develop 3D interactions.

So for all the artistic people out there who would like to see your creations on TV some day, here's some advice from the young man himself.

Just imagine anything that you want, it doesn't have to be perfect just create whatever and then send ideas to TV stations and maybe they'll like your idea and want to talk to you about it.

That wraps it up for this edition of *Made Here*. Thanks to the Discovery Museum for sharing its wonderful collection with us, and thanks to you for watching. We hope you join us in the future when we bring you more innovations that are keeping our region vibrant and competitive. For *ViewFinder*, I'm Pat McConahay.

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