

# HATCH

Innovation born in San Diego Vol. 2, No. 1

**SAN DIEGO GOES GLOBAL**  
48 pages on how local people, places, things,  
and ideas make their way around the world

**THE PLACE TO BE**  
How not being Silicon Valley isn't  
all that bad

**THE NEXT BIG THING**  
3-D printing living tissues and  
human organs (in La Jolla)





### ③ Pond scum to surf gear



Algae. They're among the world's most numerous life forms and produce the vast majority of our breathable air, but till now your only experience with them has probably been when somebody forgot to clean the swimming pool. San Diegan Rob Falken is finding new use for them with Bloom Foam—the world's first plant-based alternative to petroleum-based and synthetic foams, which also tackles the problem of an overabundance of algae in freshwater sources.

Algal blooms happen when there are too many nutrients in the water, and an overgrowth of algae can snuff out other plants and animals. Bloom harvests this excess green goop from lakes, ponds, and rivers, and then solar-dries it into a flexible foam. The foam contains 15 to 60 percent algae and can replace any of the denser closed-cell foams (e.g. polyethylene, neoprene), though the company is focusing on high-performance materials like footwear soles, yoga mats, insulation, automo-

tive applications, and medical devices—oh, and surfboards.

Bloom, a joint venture between Solana Beach-based material development firm Effekt Change and Mississippi-based algae biomass harvester Algix, worked with star surfer Kelly Slater and board shaper Firewire Surfboards to produce surfboard traction pads made with 100 percent Bloom Foam. The boards can be found in surf stores around the world. Bloom is also in talks with several footwear brands.

Falken and his team aren't just applying this solution to recreation. They're working with AECOM, a global engineering firm, to make their algae-harvesting units available to places that are facing harmful algal blooms—known as "red tide"—like Florida's Gulf Coast. They're also developing a plant-based antimicrobial foam that's 99.99-percent effective at stopping the growth of bacteria, namely those found on yoga mats, shoe insoles, and deodorant. And who among us doesn't need all the odor-busting, bacteria-inhibiting help we can get?

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Illumina's new CEO, Francis deSouza, is a citizen of the world. His family is Indian and Greek, he's lived in Ethiopia and Dubai, and he was admitted to MIT when he was just 16 years old. Even though he's in charge of the world's smartest company, he finds time to share news about genomics on Twitter.

Here's three cool things we learned from his account:

Dogs underwent genomic changes when humans first started feeding them food scraps thousands of years ago.

Scientists just sequenced the genome of a 5,000-year-old cob of corn to study how the crop spread quickly around the world.

Researchers are looking at the genetic makeup of the zebrafish, which lives in streams around the Himalayas, because it has the ability to grow a new spine after being injured.



Follow him! @fdesouza

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MY BIG IDEA

### Let's Poach Bay Area Engineers

BY MIKE KRENN, PRESIDENT OF SAN DIEGO VENTURE GROUP

On February 1, representatives from 40 of San Diego's tech companies are going up to Silicon Valley to poach some of the best engineers. How? By educating them on the benefits of moving to San Diego.

It's never been done before, and to our knowledge, San Diego is the first city to do anything like it.

Our companies are taking over the Computer History Museum in Mountain View and we expect to attract 500 to 1,000 software engineers who've expressed interest in relocating. Each company is personally recruiting attendees; Hired is mining their network, and UCSD is recruiting their alumni.

People want out of Silicon Valley—the cost of living is too high and the traffic is ludicrous. We want San Diego to be the first choice, and they need to know we have companies that are doing cutting-edge work.

The investor community will take note of this, because the San Diego Venture Group and I are going to make sure they do.