

PEOPLEWATCHING

MEET... RONEE NASSI



Photograph by Mandy Major

Occupation: Executive director of the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce

Born: New York City, in Queens.

Resides: Los Gatos, for about 15 years.

Reason for moving to Los Gatos: My husband was working for Apple [and the company had us move], and the timing was right. **What you're known for:** Through the Chamber, that's where I've gotten most known from—things we've done like the China trip and just regular business.

Latest project: We're looking into running some other trips. We'll probably do another China trip, and then we're looking into some other places—I'm looking at Ireland as a possibility. That was one that was requested quite frequently. And now we're moving on to The Big Deal on May 2, and everything else we normally do. We'll start directory sales again, the annual dinner, and before you know it, it's time for the carriage rides. There's always

something going on.

Favorite color: I generally wear black; occasionally a little red. I'm not a very colorful person.

Favorite sound: When my Skype rings and my little grandson [Zachary] goes, "It's Bubs!" He calls me Bubs.

Book you last read: I do my best reading on airplanes, and I certainly had the opportunity to do it in China [on a community-wide trip organized by the Chamber last month]. I read two on the trip: one was *The Glass Window* and then *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult.

Newspaper or magazine you read regularly: I do read the Weekly Times and I read the Mercury News; I'm a Newsweek person, and one of my favorite [magazines] now is *Real Simple*.

Movie you could watch again and again: I love *The Godfather* and any blow-'em-up, shoot-'em-ups—I do not like chick flicks. So [I like] the *Lethal Weapon* [series] and *Die Hard*

1, 2 and 3. And I love *Silverado* and *High Noon*.

Best memory: A major memory was when my grandson was born. He was two months premature. I happened to be going to Colorado for a surprise baby shower for my son's wife, but the surprise was that the baby was born instead. So I saw Zachary in the incubator, and watching my son diaper this child—and the baby was tiny—and deal with the wires and the whole thing, was just one of the most amazing things I had ever experienced. You never know what your children are going to be like when they're in that situation, and he was just so amazing with the baby.

Most gratifying accomplishment: I know other people say this, but I think I have three of the most terrific sons that ever walked the Earth. I not only love them but I like them. They're truly terrific people. I think that's a tremendous accomplishment. And I think this job has been a tremendous boost and something that I think I've grown with a lot.

Favorite age: I think every age has its ups and downs. I don't remember a lot of them at this point. ... It's just numbers. I don't think there was a favorite age, but I was really surprised when I found out I was going to be a grandmother. It was hard to adjust to it until I saw the baby.

Ultimate happiness: Good health. Seeing everyone else happy. At this point just being healthy and being content. I don't ask for much. I'm not an "I want" person most of the time. If everyone's happy and my kids are doing well and everybody's healthy, then I'm happy.

Greatest indulgence: Just being with people who make me laugh, people who I have fun with. ... That's an indulgence I don't feel I get enough of. The indulgence of spending time with things I want to be doing, which I don't get to do much.

Simple joy: Again, it's just really spending time with people who I want to spend time with. Having a little extra time is a joy. It's no longer cooking, I'll tell you that! Been there, done that. Actually, I love going to the spa, and having a facial. ... That is a simple joy. That's a joy I don't do enough.

Greatest fear: As you get older, you see how modern medicine is making people able to live longer, but the quality of life is just not making you a happy person. That is a big fear. I look at my mother and I know she's very unhappy and miserable, and she's basically healthy. That really is a fear—getting to the point where life isn't fun but you're still chugging along, and you make other people around you unhappy. I don't want to do that to my children.

One of your most memorable vacations: I kind of have two. One is this China trip. I think that will stick with me for a very long time. China was just so different from any place I had ever been. The other one was a cruise we did in July of 2001 with nine of my husband's cousins, who he grew up with, but we hadn't spent any time with them as adults, so it could have been heaven or hell. We did a Mediterranean cruise, and then we spent four extra days in Rome. I think there are probably nail marks in the [Leonardo] da Vinci Airport because they had to drag me out of there. My husband actually held on to my passport for six months because he thought I'd turn around and go back.

Biggest pet peeve: I don't like rude people, and I don't like people who are so self-centered they really can't see other people's needs and wants. Narcissistic people tick me off.

Qualities you like most in a person: I like people who are real and genuine, who can laugh at themselves, who are fun to be with and enjoy laughing. People who are interested in having a good time and having some fun; life's too short not to.

Qualities you like least: People who just don't look beyond themselves. Again, it's that self-centered, "look at me first" and "I matter most." And people who have no patience. Occasionally, I have to say, I'm one of those, but I think patience is one of those things that most of us just don't have enough of.

The person you'd most like to have dinner with: I could be sappy and say my father. He's been gone for almost 30 years. Actually, I like when I have dinner with my whole family: my husband, the kids, the grandkids, my daughter-in-law—it's just nice. They're fun.

Goal you're chasing after: I'm too old to chase anything. As long as I can do what I do and make people happy when I do it, I'm not looking for fame and fortune. I'm looking to just keep going and make myself happy, make the people around me happy and keep the Chamber going and stay where I am. I'm really content. I'm not one of those "I want" or "I need" people. I kind of go with the flow. If you say you need or want and then you don't get it, you're miserable. So I'd rather not be any more miserable than I actually have to be.

Where you see yourself in five years: I'd love to continue to work, I really like working. It keeps me occupied and keeps me sane in many ways. I'd like to do more traveling I guess, and spend more time with the kids. Five years from now, 10 years from now—hopefully happy and healthy and doing what makes me happy.

—Mandy Major