



They make the scene

Five workers who help Las Vegas keep its title as the Entertainment Capital of the World

By John Przybys • Las Vegas Review-Journal

WE all have to work for a living. But where other than Las Vegas can “going to work” mean swimming like a mermaid, laundering a fireproof theatrical costume or vacuuming a room that

might just be haunted?

Even in a city packed with offbeat jobs, some Las Vegas’ workdays are like no others. As we celebrate Labor Day, meet a few Southern Nevadans who hold jobs with a definite Las Vegas vibe.



Chase Stevens Las Vegas Review-Journal@csstevensphoto

McKenzie Kawano, who has been a mermaid at the Silverton for about a year and a half, entertains guests during a show.

Silverton mermaid

THERE’S no Olympic event for mermaids, but if there were, McKenzie Kawano would take home the gold.

As she floats and glides in the Silverton’s aquarium, powered only by the undulations of the single fin on her feet and accompanied by a rainbow array of fish, Kawano blows bubble kisses and bubble hearts to kids on the other side of the glass who look like they’re ready to jump in and join her.



McKenzie Kawano

Kawano, 21, has been one of Silverton’s eight mermaids for about a year and a half. During a single shift, she’ll perform in six 15-minute shows. The mermaids also take part in weekend “Meals With a Mermaid” events and mermaid classes for kids. While Kawano has no background in competitive



Learning how to swim in a monofin was part of Silverton mermaid McKenzie Kawano’s job training.

swimming, “I always loved the ocean,” says Kawano, who, as a kid, even wanted to be a marine biologist. Kawano’s audition required getting used to

the breathing tube that mermaids use while underwater, getting comfortable with the fish and the aquarium environment, and

swimming with a monofin.

The biggest challenge, Kawano adds, was learning how to be “mermaidesque in the water.”

“I think that was the toughest part of this job, learning the gracefulness and not look like you’re drowning,” she says with a laugh.

Her favorite fish: “I love the puffers. They’re so sweet.”

She’s also fond of the aquarium’s rays. “They’re so friendly. If you put your hand on the bottom underneath them, they’ll swim up to you.”

See **VEGAS JOBS** 2E

Video More from workers whose jobs have a certain Las Vegas twist ► reviewjournal.com/lasvegasjobs

LVCS is a proud supporter of

BEST
LAS VEGAS
Las Vegas Review-Journal
bestoflasvegas.com 2018

CRAFT ZONE

Sat, Sep 7 • 10am to 5pm
Sun, Sep 8 • 10am to 4pm

4500 W Tropicana Ave. Las Vegas, NV 89103

\$5 ADMISSION - OR - FREE ADMISSION WITH THIS AD!

MANY CREATIVE ARTISTS AND CRAFTERS

FREE Samples & Demos
FREE Fun • Drawings
FREE Parking
FREE Pop-up Games
FREE Swag Bags
while supplies last

LVCraftShows.com
info@LVCraftShows.com | 702.339.6689

LVCraftShows

VEGAS JOBS

Continued from Page 1E

'O' crafts technician

TYLER Cecchini has no interest in the footlights. But footwear? That's different.

Cecchini, 28, is a crafts technician for Cirque du Soleil's "O" at Bellagio. It's her job to maintain performers' footwear and wigs, laundering them, repairing them as necessary and doing alterations, all to allow cast members to perform at their best.

Cecchini has been at "O" for almost six years, starting as a wardrobe attendant, tending to costumes created from materials as diverse as the Kevlar used in a fire act to the show's numerous pieces subjected to the effects of water.

Some materials are "things you wouldn't quite expect," she says. "Some of our swimmers' costumes are shower curtain-type material. You find some creative uses for

things, for sure."

Cecchini entered college as a chemistry major. Then she saw a Cirque show in Orlando, Florida.

"We were watching the show and the lights and the costumes and it just caught my eye and I decided, 'OK, I'm going to change my major,'" she says. "And slowly through the years I made my way into the crafts world."

Cecchini earned a degree in theater design and technology from the University of Central Florida, worked for two years at SeaWorld Orlando, and came to Las Vegas to intern with "Ka." She enjoys the creativity of helping a creator's vision become real.

"I'm not one who enjoys designing. I enjoy keeping the designs of others true to what they wanted," she says. "But there's still so much creativity in looking at 'How do you patch a certain shoe



Chase Stevens Las Vegas Review-Journal @csstevensphoto

Tyler Cecchini, a crafts technician with Cirque du Soleil's "O," maintains and repairs footwear, wigs and costumes worn by performers in the show.

for repair, how do you find the right sole for a performer for something that doesn't fit right, what is the

alteration or change that has to happen to make them feel OK?"



K.M. Cannon Las Vegas Review-Journal @KMCannonPhoto

Clean Tastic co-owner Justin Duran works in the Oddities Room at Zak Bagans' Haunted Museum. The company handles custodial duties at Bagans' museum.

Haunted Museum custodians

WHEN dust settles on the devilish delights at Zak Bagans' Haunted Museum, somebody has to break out the vacuums and dusters. And since the museum's opening two years ago, cleaning the more than 30 rooms that house Bagans' collection of creepy oddities has been the job of Clean Tastic.

Justin Duran, co-owner of the Las Vegas-based company, says his crews usually clean the museum twice a week from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. While they at least don't have to work in the dark of night, "even in the day crazy stuff happens," Duran says.

During his first visit, "I was in the building by myself and the lights shut off in the entire building," Duran says. "I thought someone was messing around."

An employee once "heard someone call her name," Duran continues, "and there was nobody in sight."

Several employees say they have experienced somebody watching them when nobody was there, and Duran says he and other workers have left with scratches that they didn't have when they entered.

Duran says the museum is one of only two customer locations — the other is a jeweler — where he or co-owner Corey Smith accompanies staff. Some, he adds, "will not come back here."

Several employees say they have experienced somebody watching them when nobody was there, and other employees even have left with scratches on their bodies that they didn't have when they entered.

Kids Quest children's caregiver

WHEN she was a kid, Kasey Wong enjoyed playing at Kids Quest, a child care facility at Texas Station, while her parents enjoyed the adult-themed entertainment in the casino.

A few years ago, Wong, 24, discovered while going to a movie at Red Rock Resort that it, too, had a Kids Quest. She always had enjoyed interacting with children and figured she'd apply for a job there.

She's now been a team member at Kids Quest at Red Rock Resort for three years, caring for children

whose parents are visiting the casino for an evening of fun, hotel guests' kids, employees' children or even neighborhood kids whose parents need child care while running errands.

She brings to the job memories of the fun she used to have. "Every weekend I remember coming," she says. "I loved it growing up."

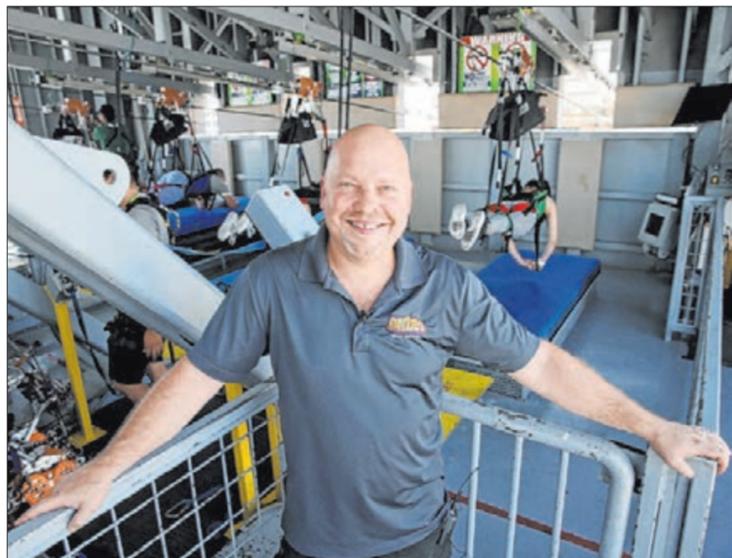
Working at Kids Quest brings back "all those memories I had as a child," of meeting and playing with other kids. The big difference today: "It's more high-tech now. They play more video games. We didn't have that as kids."

But the objective remains the same. "Keep them engaged and entertained," Wong says.



Chase Stevens Las Vegas Review-Journal @csstevensphoto

Kasey Wong cares for children at Kids Quest at Red Rock Resort.



K.M. Cannon Las Vegas Review-Journal @KMCannon

Vic Haase, SlotZilla's supervisor of ride operations and guest services, helps guests have a fun — and safe — ride on the zip line attraction.

SlotZilla supervisor

ZIP lines aren't unique to Las Vegas, but only SlotZilla takes thrill-seekers high above Fremont Street. And when riders complete their rides with body and digestive system none the worse for the wear, thank Vic Haase, SlotZilla's supervisor of ride operations and guest services.

The first part of Haase's title refers to ensuring that riders have a safe trip along the canopy. He sometimes has to dissuade riders from doing potentially dangerous things.

"They want to see pictures, so

they like to have their cellphones out. They really want to record and take pictures. We don't allow that, obviously."

The second part of Haase's title refers to ensuring that riders will enjoy their SlotZilla experience. So he'll keep riders engaged before they're let loose, chatting and joking — and maybe cajoling a bit — during what on weekends and key days can be a noticeable wait.

The goal, he says, is to "make it seem like they're not waiting as long."

And, Haase says, "I tell the jokes," although, he quips, "just because I said I tell jokes doesn't mean they're funny jokes."