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Valentine's Day

CLUB SUPER SPECIAL!

SEE PAGE 7



HARBOR

Clearing the Decks

Under intense pressure, Port's cargo management team steps up to handle unprecedented supply chain volume.

SEE PAGE 10



From left: Damien Young, Chief Management Analyst and Director of Wharfinger Operations, and Eric Caris, Director of Marketing, at the Port.

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Port photo for Alive! by Don Haynes, 9 years of City service



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Ship Shape

Club Members with eagle-eye vision – or even regular-person vision! – might notice that I am not in the main photo you see in this blog. You are welcome to thank (or blame) the omicron variant, which shut down the Port (and most of the City) to outsiders halfway through producing this month’s cover story.

When the *Alive!* team began work on this story in October 2021, the City was opening up. But by January 1, when it was time to complete our photographic sessions and finish our work, the Port shut down again to outsiders. (We understand



The world’s eyes were on the Port of LA and the supply chain passing through it.

and agree.) Join me in sincerely thanking Port videographer **Don Haynes**, who gracefully stepped in to capture our cover image. He saved a very important and timely story, namely, how the Port has managed to ease the supply chain crunch during this late-stage pandemic. As I write this, the eyes of the world remain fixed upon the Harbor’s Wharfingers and Cargo Marketing teams, led by **Damien Young** and **Eric Caris**, to continue to unlock the record-setting cargo through our Harbor. The situation has cleared somewhat but is not yet over, so I will let you read all about it. We also thank **Rachel Campbell** at the Harbor for her assistance in breaking our photographic logjams to bring you this story.

My Vision

Regular readers might recall that last month I began sharing my vision of the future of the Club with you. I continue this month by reiterating a promise of protecting your privacy online. I pledge, as my predecessor John Hawkins did, that the Club will never sell your data. We will also protect it to the best of our ability. Related to that, I congratulate our Director of IT, Petros Khachatryan, who is now a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP). Earning this certification is no small effort and one that is most difficult to pass. Some might

ROBERT’S BLOG

by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club



Petros Khachatryan

say it is like earning a CPA license, but for cybersecurity. This is a huge win for Club Members. Well done, Petros!

A Library Story

Speaking of technology, I present a fun question: Are more books loaned in hard copy or digitally at our amazing LA Public Library? The answer: digitally, by a factor of seven in 2021!

(Physical libraries were closed for about half the year. This year might be different. Thanks to the Library’s **Susan Lendroth** for this tidbit.) Give it a read yourself on the *Alive!* Website at the bottom of this story: <https://bit.ly/3IANoZO>

Until next month, and in expectation that our lives continue to open and ease, I say *gracias por leer*.




At a previous Mobile Team site visit in 2019.

Schedule a Mobile Team site visit:

To schedule a site visit, contact Lupe Lira, Club Store Manager: (213) 819-0350, or mobile@employeesclub.com

Follow Club social media for Mobile Team site visit dates as they are scheduled.

For your continued safety:

- The Mobile Team brings and wears safety gear.
- The Mobile Team is accepting only outdoor set-ups for now.

See you soon!



CLUB MOBILE TEAM

Site Visits Are Back!

Club Mobile Team is ready to visit City worksites safely with gear, tickets, insurance, more. Say hi to the Club ... in person again!

The Club never stopped working for its Members during the pandemic. But now that the coast is clearing, so to speak, it’s time to revisit our Members and Members-to-Be at sites and yards.

The Mobile Team is ready to visit your worksite Tuesdays through Thursdays. We can’t wait to see everybody again!





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Clearing the Decks 10-12
 Harbor's cargo management team helps ease the supply chain crunch.

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NEW THIS MONTH
ONLINE!
alive.employeesclub.com

Library Top 10

See what your fellow Angelenos are reading, watching and grooving to.



John's Picture Perfect

All the winners from this month's contest on an open theme.



Club Classifieds

Dig deep into great offers for merchandise, travel, more!



Cooking With the Club

Chef Larios prepares delicious

Super Bowl Pork Taquitos

Perfect for a Super Bowl celebration!

alive.employeesclub.com
THIS MONTH ONLINE!





The Club Is Here to Help

Club staff is dedicated to helping our members receive the maximum benefit from their membership. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions about your Club, our counselors are ready to help.

Contact the Club

if you have an event you want covered in *Alive!* or if you have questions about insurance.

help@employeesclub.com
(800) 464-0452

Physical Club Store Hours:

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9 a.m. – 4 p.m.



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Youth Council Seeks First Members

Youth Dev. Dept. forming new council.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: Club kids (and all City kids) are encouraged to apply for membership to LA Youth Development Dept.'s Olivia Mitchell LA City Youth Council, which is accepting applications for its first citywide group. This council seats 30 youths from across the City to serve a one-year term. Members learn about the inner workings of local government, drive special community projects and civic events, and make policy and budget recommendations to elected and civic leaders of the City to improve the well-being, safety and achievement of young Angelenos.

The City's Youth Development Department (YDD) and Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (EmpowerLA) oversee the LA City Youth Council, which honors the legacy of a public servant and living icon, Olivia Mitchell, whose passion for mentoring young Angelenos and love for our City has inspired countless government and community leaders over several decades. ■



INFORMATION:
<https://youthcouncil.lacity.org>,
 or @LACityYouth.

A Death in the Family

Officer II Fernando Arroyos, Club Member, slain while off-duty.



Officer II Fernando Arroyos

RIP

LAPD: Flags in LA and at the state Capitol were flown at half-staff Jan. 14

on news of the death of LAPD Officer II Fernando Arroyos, who was shot and killed while off-duty Jan. 10, officials said.

Officer II Fernando Arroyos, 3 years of City service, was killed as he took police action when three men attempted to rob him at gunpoint while he and his girlfriend were house hunting in unincorporated Los Angeles County. Officer Arroyos directed his girlfriend to safety as the men

opened fire on him. He was taken to a local hospital where he died

from his injuries.

Officer Arroyos is survived by his mother, step-father and girlfriend. He had three years of service with the LAPD, was stationed at Olympic Division, and was a Club Member.

The Club sends its deepest condolences and prayers to his family, friends and co-workers because of his senseless death. ■

Be My CLUB Valentine

CLUB MEMBERS:
 Send your loved one a special Valentine... in the February *Alive!* online.

Here's how it works:
 Send us a favorite photo (high-resolution digital preferred) of you and your loved one(s) (could be a romantic partner, a parent or child, etc.) and two or three sentences declaring your special bond. And we'll print as many as we can in *Alive!* online.

DEADLINES:
 February 10 for Web *Alive!*

To send digital photos and your message:
 Go to: alive.employeesclub.com/valentines



Club Valentines

Alive! presents one of our most popular annual features – Club Valentines. Enjoy... and happy Valentine's Day!

“Ma chère Kelley, rester à la maison ou voyager vers des destinations lointaines, la vie est toujours une aventure avec tu! Joyeuse Saint Valentin!”
– John Hawkins, Association CEO



“Happy Valentine's Day to the loves of my life.”
– Than Tiet, LADWP



“Grantson! Jesus made you such a big boy. I love you very much. You are the apple of my eye and the beat of my heart. Happy Val Day, Gramps.”
– Raymond Garcia, Retired, LADWP



“Mr. Reliford, Nothing makes me more happy than knowing I've been your Valentine for the past 10 years. Happy Valentine's Day. I love you soooo much.”
– Alysea Thompson, Public Works/Sanitation



“To my two sweethearts: Happy pre-Valentine's Day. I love you. Happy post-Valentine's Day. I love you.”
– Rodney Bernaldo, Public Works/Sanitation



“I fell in love with you the moment I met you Jan. 21, 1980, and love you more every day.”
– Michael Perez, Retired, Fire and Police Pensions



“Happy Valentine's Day to my beautiful wife, Linda. Thank you for everything you do for our family. We love you!”
– Charles Garcia, Retired, Public Works/Sanitation



“Going on ten years, can you believe it? The sky is clear and blue. Happy Valentine's Day!”
– John Burnes, Alive! editor



“My husband is not only the love of my life but my best friend. I truly cherish every moment we get to spend together. I love you, baby. Love, your wife, Elena”
– Elena Sousa, for John Sousa, Airport Police



“Happy Valentine's Day and 25th anniversary to my love and best friend!”
– Candice Arnold, LADOT



“I do believe in love at first sight. It seems like just yesterday when I first saw you and fell in love. Happy Valentine's, my dearest Armida! To my beautiful Armida: I love you like I need air to breathe, water to quench my thirst, and love that fills my heart with joy and happiness forever!”
– William Bergner, Retired, LAPD/Polygraph



“43 years strong! I love you.”
– Raul Hernandez, Retired, Public Works



“To my awesome and lovely wife, Happy Valentine's Day. I love you #nothingcanstopus”
– Teren King, LAFD



“Happy Valentine's Day! Life is so much better with you by my side. I pray that God continues to bless and nourish our relationship. Te amo, hermosa!”
– Erik Munoz, Public Works/Engineering



“Happy Valentine's. Will you be my Valentine ... XOXO.”
– Johnny Mireles, LADOT



“Happy Valentine's Day to my parents, John and Linda Kauffman. Married more than 40 years, they are the most beautiful example of true love, lifetime partners and best friends.”
– Noelle Kauffman, Club Manager of Member Services



“To Mom, my first Valentine: Thank you for teaching me what matters and how to live!”
– John Hawkins, Association CEO



“You take my breath away, every moment of every single day. Happy Valentine's Day. Love you.”
– Tim Crowder, Building and Safety



“We love you, Dad. Today, tomorrow, always. Kian and Megan.”
– For Farhad Dormani, LADWP



“Life is the very best with you beside me. With all my love, Happy Valentine's Day!”
– Robert Larios, Club CEO



“Dreams do come true! Thankful to be Oscar Casanova's wife, and mother to our Hannibal.”
– Robin Casanova, LADWP



“Ti amo tanto amore mio! Happy Valentine's Day!”
– Elizabeth Millares-Legramandi, Airports



“Happy Valentine's Day to the love of my life and my best friend. 33 years and going strong!”
– Anne Olivier, Library

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The First

Dep. Chief Donald Graham becomes first Filipino-American promoted to the position.

LAPD: In December, Commander Donald Graham was promoted to Deputy Chief, making him the first Filipino-American to achieve the rank.



Deputy Chief Donald Graham

Congratulations, Deputy Chief!

He was born in Manhattan, New York, and came to California when he was a teenager. He joined the LAPD in November 1995.

Deputy Chief Graham has worked in all four bureaus of the Department and has taken on numerous assignments. After completing his probation in Pacific Area, he transferred to Devonshire Area, where he worked as a Patrol Officer and Sr. Lead Officer. While at Devonshire, he received numerous commendations, including recognition for Officer of the Month, Officer of the Quarter, and the Devonshire Officer of the Year for 2005 for his work at reducing crime at the Northridge Mall.

He had many more accomplishments as a Sergeant in Southeast Area, Sergeant II at Operations-Central Bureau, Office of Operations, and Lieutenant at West Valley Area. While at West Valley, he served as the area's Acting Detective Commanding Officer from October 2012 until February 2013.

On October 5, 2014, he was promoted to Captain and assumed command of the Central Patrol Division. At Central Division, he became deeply involved in the growing homeless crisis affecting Los Angeles. He was part of the architect team that revamped the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) in Skid Row to the Resources Enhancement Services and Enforcement Team (RESET), creating a template for the Citywide creation of the Homeless Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE) team. At HOPE, Commander Graham worked with numerous government and private agencies to stem the tide of violent crime against people experiencing homelessness.

In December 2016, he transferred to North Hollywood Area and was promoted to Area Commanding Officer. During his two and a half years at North Hollywood, he worked with a strong leadership and supervisory team, a supportive community, and strong volunteer corps, as well as a staff of hard-working and dedicated officers who presided over two straight years of crime reduction.

In July 2019, he became the first Filipino-American to be sworn in as a Los Angeles Police Commander. He was appointed by Chief Michel Moore to be the Department's Homeless Coordinator under the Office of Operations. ■

'Ugly' ... But Good!

LAPD: LAPD Communications held its annual "ugly sweater" contest for the holidays, and here are the winners. "You might have poor taste in sweaters, but great taste in career choices," said Capt. Alex Vargas, Commanding Officer of the unit (and the one who posted this photo online). "Thank you for all you do to keep our community safe."

Congratulations to the ... uh, winners! ■



Capt. Alex Vargas (center) and winners of the annual...

A Hand for a Paw or Two

Animal Services Officers deploy at South Lake Tahoe to help save animals during the Caldor Fire.

ANIMAL SERVICES: As the Caldor Fire devastated the South Lake Tahoe area last August, people and their homes weren't the only victims. Animals needed to be rescued, too.

That's when Officers Lois Westphal and Eddie Anaya answered the emergency call and headed north for 10 days plus two travel days. Below, Officer Westphal gives us a first-person account of what it was like.

The Club thanks Lois for her contribution, and Animal Services District Supervisor Danny Pantoja for suggesting the story.

At the Caldor Wildfire

By Animal Control Officer Lois Westphal

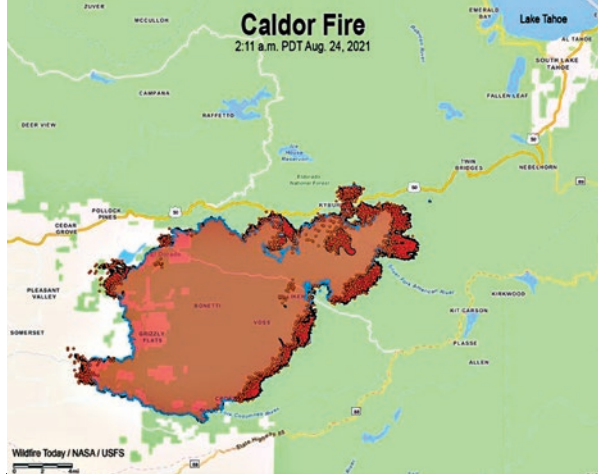
On Friday, Aug. 27, 2021, I received a text from my Lieutenant, Glen Julian. He was looking for a volunteer willing to commit to 12 days to help with the Caldor Wildfire raging out of control near South Lake Tahoe. Lt. Julian said that I would be assisting El Dorado County Animal Control and would be staying in either a tent city with fellow first responders, or possibly in a local hotel. My father had recently passed away, so with the help of my husband to watch and care for my own animals, and looking for some time to be engrossed in activity, I said yes.

The following Friday, I drove to West Valley Shelter, loaded up my animal rescue vehicle and headed North to Placerville, where thankfully El Dorado had reserved a hotel room. Shortly after arriving at the hotel after the seven-hour drive, I met up with fellow LA Animal Control Officer Eddie Anaya. He too, had accepted the call, and over the next ten days we enjoyed our adventure together.

Bright and early the next morning, we met by our trucks and followed each other to our assigned meeting place for a briefing. Smoke began to thicken as we drove 30 miles to the Emergency Operating Center. We were sent to a dispatch point where other Animal Control Officers were picking up assignments for the day; I counted approximately 30 Animal Rescue trucks from different areas of the state all coming to help. In plentiful amounts were supplies for animals and humans and a state-of-the-art motor home equipped with communications and up-to-the moment information of where the active fire was burning with lists of calls from people needing help for their animals. When we went to pick up our calls, we were told that Los Angeles Officers were being redirected to South Lake Tahoe, where assistance was desperately needed. Eddie and I packed up our things to meet El Dorado County dispatch Officers at the Hard Rock Casino and Hotel, where we would be staying for the next 11 nights while working continuous 11- to 12-hour days.

We headed north on U.S. 50. As we headed out of Placerville, we encountered a roadblock check point. The Officers checked our vehicle and waved us on through the blockade. Driving along this highway that was closed to traffic was eerie. The smoke grew denser and there was no escaping the smell of the fire as we traveled farther into the mountains. We passed firetrucks, strike teams, police and other emergency vehicles as we drove. Active fire was observed as we moved along, sometimes with no firefighters in sight as embers and wind kicked up. A beautiful stream tumbled along the edge of the road, and smoke hung thick along the ravine. Visibility was limited as

The Caldor Fire encompassed a large area south of Lake Tahoe.



Smoke from the Caldor Fire enveloped this area of South Lake Tahoe.

the smoke was thick and heavy and there was no relief from it.

A large room on the first floor at the back of the Hard Rock Casino served as El Dorado County Animal Control's dispatch center. They had been forced to leave their animal shelter when fire and flames reached the hillside at their back door. Computers, printers, radios, and daily updated fire maps on the walls showed fire containment, or lack thereof. They provided drinks and snacks for the Officers, and meals were delivered and served at dispatch; we ate very well throughout our stay. A whiteboard listed all the Officers reporting daily with their contact phone numbers, home bases and their assigned teams. Officers paired up as most calls involved entering requestors' homes to care for their animals that were left behind when the owners evacuated. This list changed daily as Officers came and left when their volunteer time ended. Eddie and I were Teams 1 and 2. During our briefing, they instructed us to look for injured and stray pets along with injured wildlife. In addition, they alerted us to watch for looters as there were reports of looting in the evacuated and closed areas of town. "Snap a photo if you can safely do so and report the location to dispatch," they instructed. We picked up our calls and set off.

Into the Cauldron

Not being familiar with the area was a challenge at first. We quickly learned the problem with using an app like Waze to find an address as it constantly kept trying to reroute us that were still open when we were in fact going into closed areas. Old-fashioned paper maps were nowhere



LA Animal Control Officers Lois Westphal and Eddie Anaya.

we drove farther north. I noticed a "for sale" sign along the highway and glanced up toward the home. All that was left was a driveway leading to a burned-out home with a stone chimney standing all alone. It was not the only one. We passed many smoldering buildings as we drove the three hours to South Lake Tahoe. As we drove into South Lake,

The story of the Caldor Wildfire continue on Web Alive!
alive.employeesclub.com

PART 23

Scenes From a Pandemic

Alive! continues its documentation of City employees as they take a multitude of measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are entries from the Club and the City Twitter feeds about City Employees and Club Members at work during this trying time.

Public Works/StreetsLA



"With all the recent rain, we know there will be new potholes. Take control, report a #pothole. You report it, we fix it! You can call 311 or @myla311 use the free app or go online. @bsslosangeles will fix it! #losangeles #ca @LACityDPW #potholerepair"

Jan. 7

City Attorney



Because the best part of Christmas and the holidays is giving back and helping out, some pics of City Attorney Mike Feuer and our team doing just that. As we say, Merry Christmas, Los Angeles!"

Dec. 25

LAPD/Central Area



"Thanking my fellow officers and detectives @LAPDCentralArea for participating in the 6th annual One Cop, One Kid toy giveaway. Every child experiencing homelessness got a toy. Thank you @URM for allowing us to share love with these incredible children. @LAPDHQ @CCA_DTLA @DTLA"

Dec. 23

LAPD/Capt. Jay Hom



"Feliz navidad a todos! Happy holidays to everyone! During this holiday season, our officers are walking footbeats and maintaining high visibility. Stay warm and be safe! @LAPDCaptMorales @LabradaAl @LAPDCentralArea @LAPDHQ @LAPDGirmala @kdeleon @Kdeleoncd14"

Dec. 22

Council/Mitch O'Farrell



"This past week in Silver Lake, my team and I partnered with @LACitySAN to pick up households' Christmas trees - which will now be recycled into mulch. It was great to meet some of my new Silver Lake constituents along the way. Welcome to the 13th District!"

Jan. 9



CLUB

College Students: Apply for Club's Mukai Scholarship

Eligibility confirmation is simplified this year. Deadline is 11:59 p.m., June 30, 2022.

Applications are now being accepted for the Joannie Mukai Memorial Club Scholarship on the *Alive!* Website.

The 2022 Mukai Club Scholarship Program, which expects to grant 20 awards and is named after the late Club Board Member Joannie Mukai, is now accepting applications. The Club expects to give each recipient a stipend of \$500.

Application and Eligibility

The scholarship program has simplified the application process into one step to include eligibility. Those eligible include Club Members; their spouses; their children, grandchildren, step-children, and foster children; and nieces/nephews who are in college or will be attending an accredited college or university in Fall 2022. There is no age limit for Member or spouse, but all others must be under 25.

Deadline

All materials must be completed on the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. June 30, 2022. Winners will be notified by July 31 before school starts.

The Club Cares

"It is a vital part of the Club that we give back to support the future success of our treasured young people," said Robert Larios, Club CEO. "We encourage all those eligible to take advantage and apply."

"The Joannie Mukai Scholarship Program is one of the most important ways we celebrate the work and lives of municipal employees," said Association CEO John Hawkins. "Joannie would be delighted at the level of scholarship and volunteerism applicants show every year."



Apply Today
on the *Alive!* Website:
alive.employeesclub.com/scholarship
DEADLINE
11:59 p.m.,
June 30, 2022

ABOUT JOANNIE MUKAI

Joannie Mukai was a pioneer as the LA Port's Director of Construction and Maintenance. A passionate supporter in the Employees Club and longtime Club Insurance Board Member, she died in March 2010. The Club's annual scholarship program was named in her honor. "She believed in education and training, and in preparing for success," CEO Robert Larios said. "That's what the Club Scholarship is all about, and we're delighted to name it after her. It's a perfect way to keep her memory alive."



Eligibility requirements:

- All Club Members and their spouses of any age; and children, grandchildren, step-children, foster children and nieces and nephews of Club Members under the age of 25; are eligible to apply. Club Members must be in good standing.
- The successful candidate must attend an accredited four-year college or university full time in the fall semester 2022. Current high school seniors matriculating to a four-year school in Fall 2022 are eligible.
- Candidates will be judged for academic excellence, community service and financial need.
- Scholarships are expected to be awarded in equal amounts of \$500 (each).
- Deadline: Applications must be completed online at the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. June 30, 2022. All applications must be completed in their entirety and submitted at that time to be eligible. Sorry, but the Club is not responsible for delays in delivery.
- Decisions will be made by Club personnel and will be considered final.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Send questions to the Club Scholarship Committee:
scholarship@employeesclub.com
or call: (213) 873-1843

Cynthia Ozuna, daughter of Correctional Officer Marcos Ozuna, Retired, State of California, received a stipend last year as part of the Mukai Scholarship Program.



Pretty in Pink Goes International

Innovative program shares its story at international parks conference.

REC AND PARKS: Pretty in Pink, the innovative and fast-growing program that empowers young teen women toward respect, dignity and self-realization, presented at the World Urban Parks Congress in December.

It was another milestone for the program, created ten years ago by Reneshia White, Facility Director, Club Member, and managed by Reneshia and Yessica Famoso, Facility Director, Club Member. The event started 10 young participants and grew to nearly 600 in 2020 before pausing for the pandemic.



From left: Reneshia White and Yessica Famoso presented its programs to the World Urban Parks Congress virtually in December.

Pretty in Pink is a youth conference with a goal of empowering young girls in the urban community. Pretty in Pink provides a safe space for them to be open and discuss daily life challenges among women who truly care for them. The girls get opportunities to socialize with young girls from other parks/communities. The conference is designed to encourage and empower the girls to achieve their goals and aspirations. They leave the conference knowing that they are not alone with issues that may be occurring in their lives and that they have people that care about them.

Congratulations to Reneshia and Yessica! ■



From left: Reneshia White and Yessica Famoso.

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More story and pics
on Web *Alive!*
Go to: alive.employeesclub.com

Clearing the Decks

The Port of LA made global headlines as the international supply chain surged. Read how one of the Harbor's oldest jobs, the Wharfingers, are making progress on easing the crunch.

HARBOR Late last year, as the supply chain surged in record freight tonnage and ships backed up trying to get into the Port, Executive Director Gene Seroka was on television and in the papers more than just about anybody. He was busy explaining what was going on.

Behind the scenes and under enormous pressure and scrutiny, the Port's Wharfingers – possibly its oldest job title – and the team from Cargo Marketing were working long hours remotely and ramping up their capabilities to ease the crunch.

Progress was palpable. The supply chain crisis is not yet over, as Gene Seroka told the LA Times in early January. "No one is taking a victory lap," he told the paper. "No one is high-fiving each other." But progress was made in many critical data metrics. The number of ships waiting to dock has stabilized. The number of loaded import containers sitting on the docks has decreased by more than 50 percent (aided by a new container dwell fee not yet imposed on the shipping lines). And there is a big push to reduce empty containers on the docks. Data modeling from the Port helped shipping companies to prepare for what was coming and to distribute what had already arrived. It was an all-hands-on-deck effort to ease the crunch.

In this feature story, read about the efforts – still ongoing – made by the Port's Wharfingers and the heavy data management from Cargo Marketing to help clear the decks.

The Club thanks Harbor's Rachel Campbell for her assistance. ●



From left: Damien Young, Chief Management Analyst and Director of Wharfinger Operations, and Eric Caris, Director of Marketing, at the Port.

INTERVIEW

'It's Been Very Busy'

On Dec. 10, Club CEO Robert Larios and *Alive!* editor John Burnes interviewed Damien Young, Chief Management Analyst and Director of Wharfinger Operations, via Zoom due to pandemic protocols. Damien has 23 years of City service.



Damien Young

Alive!: Damien, thank you for giving your time to our readers today.

Damien Young: Sure.

It's been a heck of an eight or nine months for the Port and the Wharfingers. But before we get to the supply chain, tell us what path you took to get to your current position.

Damien: I tell people I've moved about 12 feet in 28 years because I started as a student worker in the Wharfinger division back in 1993. That was my first taste of the City a long, long time ago now, and time goes very fast. I had a great time and learned all about the City, and then I came back a few years later full time with the City at Aging, Building and Safety, Public Works, Water and Power, LAWA and back to Harbor. I can't hold a job I guess!

How long have you been back at the Harbor?

Damien: Since 2007, so about 14 years now.

Supply Chain Status Check

For at least a month now [the interview was conducted in early December – Ed.] we've been hearing on the national news about supply chain constraints before the holidays. Can you give us a status check on where things are generally? Are things alleviating a little bit?

Damien: As a port we've been very busy obviously, and the volumes are still at record high levels. They've been that way since July of last year, so we've had about 16 or 17 months like that. We've averaged about 900,000 of what are called TEUs, which are 20-foot equivalent units – the industry version of a container, basically. It has not stopped for a long time. I'm reporting numbers this month that are a touch lower than last year, so we might finally be seeing a bit of a slowing there. But it's been very hectic and very busy for that period of time.

Basically what happened was this: The pandemic started, and in Asia and China the factories all shut down. It was very quiet here, we had almost no business for a couple of months. And then as the country was trying to reopen, the people in the United States started ordering everything. The factories reopened in China and then the surge started at that point, and it has been going gangbusters ever since.

And there was a really big surge once the factories started opening up. When that happened it really hit hard because ...

Damien: People here were locked down. They were ordering things, and that's when that whole thing started. Our Executive

Director Gene Seroka has been going over this a lot with the media for the last few months.

Absolutely. We've seen it.

Damien: Right.

Wharfingers

The Port's Wharfingers [pronounced WHARF-injers] have played a huge role in the management of the supply chain surge. Can you give us a basic definition of a wharfinger?

Damien: Well, a wharfinger does a lot of things, especially these days. Each freight company has a different Port terminal where their ships come in and out. Each Wharfinger is assigned a terminal, and they process all the billing for that terminal. It could be a container terminal, where you see all the containers coming in, or a cruise terminal, a fruit terminal, an auto terminal, a steel terminal ... we have different oil terminals, a scrap metal terminal and then commercial fishing slips. We are assigned to all of those parts of the Port, and we handle the billing.

But it's more than just billing. We also act as liaisons to that terminal, and we work with the operations folks to ensure that the infrastructure is repaired and maintained. We work with C&M, our construction and maintenance group, and engineering to make that happen. The only difference today is that we used to go out to the terminals on a regular basis, but with people working from home and COVID protocols, it's a more telephonic- or email-based connection with the terminals.

We also process a lot of film permits for productions that want to film here at the Port. It's been very busy; we process about 10 to 20 permits a month.



The Port in the News

Port Executive Director Gene Seroka was almost omnipresent on national and international media during the supply chain crunch last fall. Some of his appearances:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| CBS/60 Minutes | CNBC |
| Fox 11 LA | Yahoo News |
| Bloomberg | Spectrum 1 News |

‘We’ve gone from under the radar to right in front of everybody’s screen every night.’

— Damien Young

INTERVIEW

Optimizing the Data

On Jan. 11, Club CEO Robert Larios and *Alive!* editor John Burnes interviewed Eric Caris, Director of Marketing, 20 years of City service, and Melissa Knight, Management Aide, 18 years, both of the Cargo Marketing Division. The division manages cargo data, which plays a critical role in predicting and handling the cargo on its way to the Port of LA, and within it. The interview took place via Zoom due to pandemic protocols.



Eric Caris

Alive!: Thank you, Eric and Melissa, for explaining the data side of managing the supply chain at the Port of LA. First, Eric, can you tell us a little about your career up to this point?

Eric Caris: My career started in 1982 in Europe working for a shipping line. As you can probably detect from my accent, I was

born and raised in Belgium in the port city of Antwerp. In a round-about way, I landed in California a couple of years later working for a subsidiary of that same shipping line in their Long Beach office. We handled both break-bulk and containerized cargo. I became regional director for the California region, a position I held for about 13 years. An opportunity presented itself here at the Port of Los Angeles in the Marketing Division and was hired on an emergency appointment basis. Prior to being hired, I was active within the indus-

try. I served on the board of the Steamship Association of Southern California and as a result had many connections with other shipping lines and marine terminal operators. I joined as Assistant Director of Marketing and remained in that position until about five years ago when I was promoted to Director of Marketing.

When I joined the Port there were many more shipping lines compared to today. We had about 30 decent size container shipping lines calling at this Port complex. Today, through mergers and acquisitions, that number has come down to 10 major global shipping lines, and some smaller independent operators. Our day-to-day activity is really on the sales end of things. The Marketing Division at the Port is best compared to the sales department within an organization. We are always in front of importers, shipping lines, the marine terminals, and other ports within the United States, and around the globe to promote Port facilities and initiatives.

Thanks. Melissa?



Melissa Knight

Melissa Knight: I started for the City as a student worker in 2004, and I think it was 2007 when I was hired full time as a Clerk Typist. Then I made my way to Sr. Admin Clerk, and then in 2017 I transferred to the Marketing Division as a Management Aide.

I started in the secretary position in the Real Estate Division for the Port. I just liked the whole aspect of helping everybody. Then I learned about the terminals, and then marketing. When they had an opening in Marketing it was an easy transition for me, and it was a promotion as well. I started working in Marketing a couple years ago.

My role here is collecting, distributing, and posting all the information into one area that’s easily accessible for everybody. That’s my

contribution to help manage the supply chain. Data is collected from the Port Optimizer and is also provided by marine terminal staff. It’s a much appreciated group effort for everyone involved to get the daily information out.

And you’re working from home?

Melissa: Yes, working from home strictly. Pretty much everyone is. During the pandemic I had my first child as well.

Congratulations!

Melissa: Thank you. It’s been a really interesting couple of months.

Data Is Key

What’s been the Cargo Marketing involvement as it relates to the easing of the supply chain?

Eric: If you go back to 2014 and 2015, we had supply chain disruption issues as well. The lack of advanced cargo visibility was a big hindrance in ensuring cargo could move through the Port efficiently. Our Executive Director, Gene Seroka, wanted to change that and embarked on a digital strategy. We contracted with a company then called GE Transportation, today called Wabtec, to develop a digital cargo visibility tool called the Port Optimizer. Essentially, it is a central depository of high level shipping line volume data as their vessels depart foreign ports on their way to the Port of Los Angeles. With Port Optimizer, we can see the volume of cargo coming towards the Port three and four weeks in advance. Early on in the pandemic, we started providing advance cargo volume data to chassis providers, railroads and other supply-chain stakeholders, essentially telling them to get their ducks in a row and make sure that they are in the best possible position to handle the volume coming their way. This digital tool has evolved since then and today offers more features compared to when it was first launched.

Alive! Feature

Cargo Marketing

The Cargo Marketing Division activities include the promoting and use of the Port's digital cargo visibility tool, the Port Optimizer, which helps supply chain stakeholders in the planning of their freight several weeks ahead of the event. Like most City employees during the pandemic, they are working remotely. (Some photos were taken pre-pandemic.)



From left: Chris Chase, Port Marketing Manager, 20 years of City service; Laura Leon, Civil Engineering Associate IV, 31 years; and Octavio Sanchez with Ports America in front of a Royal Caribbean cruise ship.



Irlanda Ramirez, Student Worker and communications major at California State University, Long Beach.



Melissa Knight, Management Aide, 18 years of City service, works from home.



Marcel van Dijk, Port Marketing Manager, 21 years of City service, at Everport Container Terminal.

INTERVIEW

'It's Been Very Busy'

— continued from page 11

We read water and electric meters to bill back tenants. We handle layberths – vessels that dock at the Port on a onetime basis for repairs or special events like Fleet Week ships. We process space assignments to tenants so they can find extra space in supplemental areas for their chassis or containers, especially right now. I address a lot of CPRA requests with community and media relations, and we implement tariff changes.

It's a busy operation, but that's basically what we do.

Basically that's tons of responsibilities.

Damien: You see a lot of what's going on at those terminals, how operations are going, and how volumes are increasing or decreasing.

Are the Wharfingers responsible for predicting problems or issues or bottlenecks?

Damien: One of my jobs is to forecast volumes going forward in the short- to intermediate-term. Historically we'd use actual data to do that, and I gauge how many ships are going to come during certain periods of time and monthly estimates. I talk to senior managers about what we see on the horizon, literally and figuratively. We have a tool called the Port Optimizer that we use to help educate us on how we can see what those numbers are going

to be going forward. It's not always 100 percent accurate because it's a tough business to guess on, but we have container data that helps inform us about that.

Are Wharfingers sort of independent to see and solve any problems on their own, or is it pretty structured?

Damien: It's less structured than other positions in that we're kind of an independent operator – you go out to a terminal, you're driving around, you're avoiding getting hit by trucks and you're making sure what's going on. You talk to the operations folks and say, "Hey, this light pole is out. This electrical vault needs to be fixed." We report back the C&M to get that fixed.

Tons of responsibility, it sounds like.

Damien: It can be. It's a lot of multitasking, that's for sure.

How long have Wharfingers been around?

Damien: A long, long time. It's probably one of the oldest positions here at the Port. Back in the early, early days, you went down to the docks and counted the tons that were coming in. Today it's high tech and automated to a point where we do less on the ground than we

– Interviews continued on page 21 and *Web Alive!*
alive.employeesclub.com

INTERVIEW

Optimizing the Data

— continued from page 12

Many more tools are available now within Port Optimizer, notably the track and trace feature that tells any interested party of the status of one or multiple containers. The role of Marketing has changed since COVID – we are spending a good amount of time tracking and tracing containers and communicating with the marine terminals on specific containers. They of course have their own internal processes on how to manage the flow of cargo. What we are trying to do is assist small and large importers in moving their cargo through the supply chain when they've not been successful in doing so using the traditional lines of communication.

How important was it that the Port already had systems in place to know the surge that was coming your way?

Eric: It was critical. We are really still the only port in the nation that has what we call a digital port community system that gives you the visibility to see volume of cargo coming our way in the way that we can. Much of the data Melissa pushes out every day to the various constituents using our Website is a product of Port Optimizer. It makes data available in one place, allows one to load up a whole series of container data into Port Optimizer, and see right away which terminal their containers are at. We can then communicate with the specific terminal to help expedite that cargo. Port Optimizer also led to the development of the medical optimizer to support the activities of the Logistics Victory LA project – aimed at connecting hospitals and

medical facilities with the necessary supplies of PPE during the pandemic.

We did a story on that actually.

Eric: Yes, you did. We are continuing to work with our partner Wabtec to capture PPE shipment data from purchase order in Asia all the way through the supply chain until delivery. That project is ongoing.

Large importers have their own systems as well. With Port Optimizer, importers can ingest data using APIs directly into their own operating systems.

What's the current status of the supply chain from a data standpoint?

Eric: If I had to gauge it by the number of inquiries that we're getting via email or via phone, today or even the during last couple of weeks compared to what it was beforehand, I would say things are improving but more work is necessary. We are continuing to fill a gap for those folks who were in most need.

Tense Time

Tell us about your life over the last eight months. Did it get really stressful?

– Interviews continued on page 21 and *Web Alive!*
alive.employeesclub.com

The Wharfingers

Like most City personnel during the pandemic, the Port's Wharfingers have been working remotely. Here are some of them: (Some photos were taken pre-pandemic.)



From left: Vanessa Taylor, Wharfinger I, 17 years of City service; Trina Moreno, Wharfinger I, 16 years of City service; Mark Martinez, Wharfinger I, 16 years of City service; and Phyllis Ninofranco, Wharfinger I, 16 years of City service, join a Port Pilot to escort a container ship.



Gabrielle Earl, Wharfinger I, 15 years of City service, at Phillips 66 Terminal.



From left: Vanessa Taylor, Wharfinger I, 17 years of City service; and Phyllis Ninofranco, Wharfinger I, 16 years of City service, at APM Terminal.



Crystal Gonzalez, Wharfinger II, 18 years of City service, at Fenix Marine Terminal.



From left: Alima Brown, Wharfinger I, six years of City service; and Tiana Maulupe, Wharfinger I, five years of City service, at APM Terminal.



Mark Martinez, Wharfinger I, 16 years City service, works from home.

Restoration in Progress

Project Restore is working on City Hall murals to bring them back to life.

GENERAL SERVICES/PROJECT RESTORE: Those who work in (or visit) City Hall and are not working remotely might have noticed that the building's beautiful murals are coming back to life. That's because of an ongoing project managed by General Services' Project Restore – it's cleaning up the murals to their original condition.

"The murals in City Hall require constant attention," Kevin Jew, Project Restore's head, told *Alive!* "We are conserving/restoring different ceiling murals on a continuous basis. About four or five years ago, we restored the ceiling murals in the North Hallway and the East Rotunda. Last year (2020) we had to repaint the mural in the south ceiling of the Board of Public Works Session Room.

"Currently we are in the midst of restoring murals in two areas – the lobby to Mayor's Office (95 percent complete as of this writing), and we have started restoring the ceiling mural in the Spring Street vestibule."

Project Restore is implementing the first stages of a long-term plan for the conservation of more than 50,000 square feet of decorative paint and murals. Following a year of research, paint analysis and a complete survey of the building's environmental readings, Project Restore developed its current in-depth conservation and restoration plan.

Alive! hopes to have much more on this important project as soon as access to City buildings is expanded as the pandemic eases. Stay tuned! ■



Four Rise, One Retires

911 Dispatchers see four promotions and one retirement.

LAPD: On Dec. 16, four personnel of LAPD/Communications were promoted. They are Sr. PSR Stephanie Estrada, Sr. PSR Kristina Kennedy, Sr. PSR Lidia Marcial and PSR Jonathan Valera. Congratulations!

On Jan. 15, PSR II Carla Dunlap retired as a 911 Dispatcher. She retires with 23 years of City service.

Congratulations from the Club to all! ■



PSR II Carla Dunlap retires after 23 years of City service.



With Chief Michel Moore (left) are PSR Jonathan Valera and his family.



With Capt. Al Vargas are (from left) Sr. Stephanie Estrada, Sr. PSR Kristina Kennedy and Sr. PSR Lidia Marcial.

INSURANCE FROM THE CLUB



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To learn more about your insurance options, schedule a visit with the Club's insurance experts:



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cmartin@employeesclub.com
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Celebrate With Cheryl!

Popular Club Counselor Cheryl Martin is turning 63 next year and celebrating in Greece. Sign up now to join the fun!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Travel dates: Oct. 13-21, 2022 (nine days)
- Starting price: \$4,069, double occupancy, including air and hotel
- Deposit: \$99 down with monthly payment arrangement, or \$500 down per person at the time of reservation.
- Final payment date: Aug. 4, 2022
- Important notes: Travelers must have their passport information at time of booking. First-come, first-served basis. Seats are limited.

Mykonos ... Santorini ... and mainland Greece! Head with Cheryl Martin for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Aegean in October 2022.

"Celebrate my 63rd with me in Greece!"

EMAIL: cmartin@employeesclub.com
PHONE: (213) 819-0794



To register and for more information, go to:
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Reservation tour number 70295428



MYKONOS SANTORINI GREECE

WIN
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Deadline
For submission:

March 11, 2022

Look for winners on
Web Alive! in April:

alive.employeesclub.com

Coloring Contest for Grown-Ups!



HEY CLUB MEMBERS,

It's time for another Grown-Up Coloring Contest, so get out your crayons, sparkles and whatnot. Get coloring and have fun!

The prize: a \$50 Amazon gift card.

PLEASE PROVIDE →

Club Membership Number:

PLEASE COMPLETE:

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Job title and department with the City: _____

Address _____

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Send Entries to:

Club Grown-Up Coloring Contest
Employees Club of California
120 West 2nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Rules of the Club's Grown-up Coloring Contest:

- Winning contestants must be Club Members in good standing. Everyone is welcome to submit responses, however. (Responses without Club Membership numbers will be accepted but not eligible for the winning prize.)
- All responses must be completed by the person indicated: no ringers (including your children!).
- Winning responses will be determined by official Club personnel. All decisions will be final.
- The contest is all in good fun: The Club cannot be responsible for delays in delivering *Alive!*, or for delays in the transmission of responses.

**Download Coloring Art
From the Web**

You can download and print art from *Web Alive!* :
alive.employeesclub.com/coloring-contest-for-adults



Carol Is New GM

Carol Parks, Club Member, promoted to lead EMD.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Carol Parks, formerly Assistant General Manager, Emergency Management Dept. and #ReadyLA, was promoted to General Manager last September. She has 23 years of City service and is a Club Member.

She succeeds Aram Sahakian, who retired last year, as General Manager. *Alive!* featured Aram, Carol and the Emergency Management team for our cover story in January 2021.

As Carol told *Alive!* last year, she's from Atlanta and was in the Emergency Management profession prior to moving to LA in 1995. She majored in industrial management as well as adult education and "I fell into the profession. I started out in a clerical position, and then when I left I was working for Georgia Emergency Management. We were prepping for the 1996 Olympics there, and I had a major role with hazmat planning." After moving to LA, she joined the City in 1998. I became the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator I at the time. I stayed in that capacity until about 2000 when I became an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator II overseeing community preparedness activities." She was promoted to Assistant General Manager in April 2020.

"Our role is a very important one because we serve four million people." No doubt her vast experience managing emergency operations during Atlanta's hosting of the Olympics will prove valuable as LA prepares to do the same in 2028.

Congratulations, Carol! ■



Carol Parks



Carol Parks in the City's Emergency Preparedness Center with Aram Sahakian, then EMD's General Manager, as pictured in the January 2021 *Alive!*

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John's Picture Perfect Contest

The Club's online photo contest, organized by Association CEO, John Hawkins

This month's contest theme:

Open (your choice)

Club Members only.
Good luck!

The Club's online photo contest, organized by Association CEO, John Hawkins, has a monthly theme. Because we received soooo many excellent photos for the January contest, we are leaving the theme open again for February – send in your best photos, with any theme you like (or no theme).

We'd love to see your favorite shots.

DEADLINE: Feb. 15

Submit your photos online here:
alive.employeesclub.com/pictureperfect



LOS ANGELES CITY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS:

Tax Information for City Retirees

LACERS is sharing information related to taxes for City Retirees. That information is below.

LACERS 1099-R Forms Have Been Mailed

LACERS has completed its mailing of 1099-R tax documents to retirees and beneficiaries for the 2021 tax year. Please note that 1099-Rs are sent only to the address on file with LACERS. Therefore, if you have recently moved or changed your address, update it with LACERS as soon as possible by submitting a 'Change of Address' form that is accessible at [lacers.org/forms](https://mylacers.org/forms)

If you did not receive your 1099-R, the earliest you may request a duplicate 1099-R to be mailed to you is the second week of February. Don't want to wait for the mail? Save time by viewing and printing your 1099-R via your MyLACERS online account at <https://mylacers.org/forms>

Reminder: Tax Form 1095-B and Form 1095-C Tax season is here, and as you prepare to file this year, please be aware that you may receive one or more forms providing information

about the healthcare coverage that you had or were offered in the previous year.

Although proof of health insurance is not required for 2021, most retirees will receive a Form 1095-B, which is sent to them directly from either the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or their health plan carrier through LACERS (i.e., Kaiser Permanente or Anthem Blue Cross). Some retirees may receive both a Form 1095-B and Form 1095-C if they retired within the last year; one will reflect their LACERS coverage and one will reflect their City of Los Angeles coverage while working.

Please do not contact LACERS if you do not receive your form(s) as LACERS does not generate or have access to them. You may request a duplicate directly from your health insurance carrier.

For questions about using Forms 1095-B and 1095-C to file your taxes, please consult with your tax adviser or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS:

LACERS Well Events Coming Up

Register for these virtual events below through your MyLACERS account or by calling LACERS. If you need assistance, email LacersWell@lacers.org Space is limited for each event so be sure to sign up early. To view additional dates and information, visit: lacers.org/lacers-well-events

Mom's Computer Technology Class

Mom's Computer will be hosting monthly technology classes throughout 2022 starting at 3 p.m. Wed., Feb. 9. These classes help members navigate the changing technology landscape and offer tips on using computer, smart phones/tablets, internet, and more.

Fitness Made Simple: Exercise Class

Why just talk or dream about exercise when we can "Make Fitness Simple?" Join Coach Sean Foy at 9:30 a.m. Wed., Feb. 16 he helps you train in the comfort and convenience of your own home to realize your personal health and fitness goals!

Brain Health Class

Alzheimer's Los Angeles (ALZLA) is hosting monthly brain health classes, the next being held at 2 p.m. Wed., Feb. 23. The mission is to improve the lives of local families affected by Alzheimer's and dementia by increasing awareness, delivering effective programs and services, providing compassionate support, and advocating for quality care and a cure. Both Active and Retired Members are welcome at this event.

Kaiser Permanente Healthy Eating

Give yourself a healthy boost and attend the well-being series on healthy eating hosted by Kaiser Permanente. You are not required to be a Kaiser member to attend. The first class is "Eat Well Live Well" and is scheduled to take place at 10 a.m. Thurs., Feb. 17. The second class is "Managing Your Weight" and is set for 10 a.m. Thurs., Feb. 24. Both Active and Retired Members are welcome at these events.

Aging Mastery Program

LACERS's five-week, twice weekly Aging Mastery Program is scheduled three times this year: at 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in March, June and September. This fun, innovative program empowers you to take key steps to improve your well-being. You will learn about healthy eating and hydration, sleep, financial fitness, advance planning, and more.

FOR ACTIVE EMPLOYEES:

Are You Ready for Retirement?

Here are some current programs to help with your planning.

Webinars: Learn about your retirement options and benefits at an upcoming Planning for Retirement webinar, hosted by the LACERS Member Engagement team. Register via your MyLACERS account. Upcoming dates include:

- Thurs., Feb. 3 (9 a.m.)
- Tues., Feb. 8 (4:30 p.m.)
- Wed., Feb. 16 (Tier 3)
- Thurs., March 10 (9 a.m.)
- Tues., March 15 (4:30 p.m.)
- Sat., March 19 (9 a.m.)

Application Portal Demonstration: Take time to learn about LACERS' exciting new Retirement Application Portal (RAP)! Visit lacers.org/applying-retirement for more details and sign up for an upcoming RAP Demonstration webinar at noon Wed., Dec. 15 via your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.org>.

Applying for Retirement Online: Members are encouraged to submit their retirement application 60 days before their retirement date when using LACERS' new Retirement Application Portal (RAP). The RAP is a great asset to LACERS Members that helps to streamline the retirement process. While the filing period is within 30 to 60 days of your retirement date, starting your application early and submitting it on the first day you can at the 60-day-prior mark, will allow for a couple of benefits. These include having ample time to discover any complications and address them without having to move your retirement date, as well as ensuring LACERS staff has time to meet your retirement date request.

For example, if your desired retirement date is Dec. 30, 2021, you would aim to submit your retirement application in the portal on Oct. 31, 2021. For more information, please visit lacers.org/applying-retirement.

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.



RLACEI

For Retired Club Members

CONTACT INFORMATION

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)



Ruth B. Perry

Ruth B. Perry, President
Terminal Annex
P.O. Box 86264
Los Angeles, CA 90086
PHONE: (800) 678-4145, ext. 717
EMAIL: Ruth.Perry@RLACEI.org
ON THE WEB: www.RLACEI.org

2022 Executive Board of

Directors

- Ruth B. Perry, *President*
- Beverly J. Clark, *First Vice President*
- Mark Blunk, *Second Vice President*
- Loucin (Lucy) Artinian, *Treasurer*
- Verkin (Vicki) Keoseian, *Secretary*

RLACEI DIRECTORS

Dial (800) 678-4145 plus extension

Beverly Anderson, Director	Ext. 702
Loucin (Lucy) Artinian, Treasurer	Ext. 718
Mark Blunk, Audit Chair	Ext. 704
Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director	Ext. 716
Dennis Harding, Entertainment Director	Ext. 706
Verkin (Vicki) Keoseian, Secretary	Ext. 719
Tom Moutes, Health & Legislative Director	Ext. 710
Mike Perez, Golf Director	Ext. 705
Ruth B. Perry, Membership Director	Ext. 717
Elizabeth Torres, Director	Ext. 703

**RLACEI RETIREE HELPLINE:
(800) 678-4145, Ext. 0**

For retirement assistance, call the Retiree Hotline and leave a message. A Director of RLACEI will return your call and assist you with your concerns.

RLACEI WEBSITE

Visit the RLACEI website www.RLACEI.org to find the latest retirement news. Call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 0 to make suggestions.
EMAIL: Contact@RLACEI.org

MAILING ADDRESS:

Retired Los Angeles City Employees Inc.
Terminal Annex
P.O. Box 86264
Los Angeles, CA 90086

Change of Address?

Please notify Ruth B. Perry, Membership Chair, at (800) 678-4145 ext. 717 or Ruth.Perry@RLACEI.org for a change of address or to add or change your email address. Also notify LACERS, ACEBSA, LAPCU, and LAFUCU as applicable.



Beverly J. Clark

Send in your
Interesting
News
Contributions!

Contact: **Beverly J. Clark**, Publicity Director
Email: Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org or
Phone: (800) 678-4145 ext 716

RETIREE EVENTS

- April 14, 2022 Spring Fling**
Grace E. Simons Lodge
1025 Elysian Park Dr.
- June 2, 2022 Tom Stemnock Annual Golf Tournament**
Alhambra Golf Course
630 S. Almansor St.
Alhambra
- Aug. 11, 2022 Annual Picnic**
Grace E. Simons Lodge
1025 Elysian Park Dr.
- Dec. 15, 2022 Annual Holiday Party**
Friendship Auditorium
3201 Riverside Dr.

RETIREES UPDATE

Make Audits of LACERS Meaningful

by Tom Moutes, RLACEI Legislative Director
Email: Tom.Moutes@RLACEI.org



Tom Moutes

Charter Section 1112, added as part of the Charter revisions in 2000, requires the Mayor, Council and Controller to perform a management audit of LACERS "at least once in every five years". That Charter provision goes on to state, "Each audit shall examine whether the pension or retirement system is operating in the most efficient and economical manner and shall evaluate the asset allocation of the system."

Three things have been true about the audits that have been produced to date:

- They have not come out on time – although mandated every five years, only two audits have been produced in 21 years.
- No earth-shattering recommendations have been proposed; and
- The City has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on each of these audits.

The audit recommendations produced to date have included:

- Unhelpful political recommendations (which should not be part of a management audit), including studying consolidation of the City's pension funds (this will never happen).
- Helpful political recommendations that the City has chosen to ignore, like giving the LACERS Board full authority to administer the System, subject to the Board's fiduciary responsibility; and
- Relatively minor operational recommendations that, while nice to have, certainly are not worth hundreds of thousands of dollars every five years.

So, how could the City get more bang for its audit buck going forward? Here are three suggestions:

- Revise the City Charter so that a full management audit does not have to be conducted every five years. While this may have been well intended, the audit results have shown that not much changes in a relatively short period of time. This could save the City hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Conduct a cursory review of the LACERS investment program unless a deep dive is warranted. It would be relatively easy to assess whether the LACERS investment program is in the bounds of reasonableness when compared with other public pension plans. That review should be conducted first, with a deeper dive being paid for only if any anomalies are found in the cursory review.
- Focus the audits on what really matters – the City's ability to make its ongoing annual contributions to LACERS. This could be accomplished through stochastic modeling of the somewhat random variables – such as investment return – into the future. The modeling would involve hundreds of potential outcomes for LACERS over the next ten years – including outcomes that would require the City's contributions to LACERS to increase and decrease. By seeing the likelihood of the potential outcomes, the City could better plan its spending on payroll and payroll-related costs like pension contributions.

While it is important for the City to help ensure its pension systems are well run, one hopes it will conduct its audits of LACERS in a more thoughtful and economically prudent manner in the future. ■

LACERS BOARD UPDATE

LACERS Investment Report Shows Strong Performance

by Michael R. Wilkinson,
LACERS Commissioner
Email: MikeWilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com



Michael R. Wilkinson

LACERS recently received a quarterly investment performance report from its consultant NEPC, showing strong performance across all time periods.

We all know that LACERS is a long-term investor, and our retirement plan's investment program is designed to weather the ups and downs of the markets, while never taking our eyes off our long-term goals. The quarterly investment report for the period ending Sept. 30, 2021 showed a one-year rate of return of 11.8 percent; three years at 11 percent, five years at 10.7 percent; 10 years at 10.5 percent; and 20 years at 8.1 percent on an annualized basis, after investment management fees had been paid.

In the past year, LACERS' highest performing asset class was Private Equity, earning 56.8 percent for the year. We should not expect this kind of return every year. Private Equity returns for other time periods were three years at 21.7 percent; five years at 19.3 percent; 10 years at 14.8 percent; and 20 years at 12.1 percent.

Note that LACERS' total fund investment portfolio has outperformed our actuarial assumed rate (earnings projection) handily over every time-period listed above. What does that mean?

The assumed rate of return is a projection of LACERS' investment earnings, currently estimated to be seven percent for the next 30 years. This number serves as a reference point, providing context to understand that our fund's growth comes from a combination of contributions from active employees' member contributions, plus contributions from the City, plus investment returns from investments. These dollars will continue to be required to pay for the current and future costs and benefits of the plan.

Importantly, LACERS recognizes that there is no single "all weather" investment that will produce high investment returns in every market environment, nor does LACERS make market timing bets by gambling on short-term market calls. While market timing seems appealing in concept, it has repeatedly been shown to underperform a disciplined long-term strategic asset allocation plan in practice.

These investment performance numbers should be viewed as a screenshot of historical investment performance, and certainly evidence that our fund has moved in the right direction. We are committed to remaining steadfast on our path toward achieving our long-term goal of keeping our plan strong, enabling payment of our pension and health benefits long into the future. ■

Refer a Friend, Get a \$25 Target Gift Card

Let your fellow City Retiree friends know about the great benefits of being an RLACEI member. Encourage them to call (800) 678-4145, ext. 717, or visit the Website at RLACEI.org, to join today! Once they join RLACEI and mention you, the gift card is yours!

- 100 gift cards are available for this promotion.
- Begins Jan. 1, 2022.
- Friend must join RLACEI for member to be eligible for receiving a gift card.

What are you waiting for? Refer a friend today!

Become an RLACEI Member

RLACEI is dedicated to advocating for retiree interests. We are over 5,500 strong! Members of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. enjoy all RLACEI events such as the golf tournament, member picnic and holiday party with FREE membership to the Employees Club with access to all group benefits (insurance, discounts, etc.).

Call (800) 678-4145 x717,
or visit our website
at RLACEI.ORG and join today!

RETIREES ON THE MOVE

She's a Retiree on the Move.

(Pt. 2)

Meet Carrie Adelia Gabriel

By Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director



Carrie Adelia Gabriel

Meet Carrie Adelia Gabriel, an amazing Retiree on the move and an L.A. historical figure! She's celebrating 100 years!

Ms. Carrie Gabriel was featured in last month's edition of *Alive!*, and we continue her story this month as we look back on her past accomplishment and celebrate her 100th birthday Jan. 28.

(You can read the first part of her profile here: <https://bit.ly/3fGTCuX>)

Ms. Gabriel enjoyed the holidays without a lot of fanfare due to COVID-19 restrictions and the weather. Although she lives independently, she says, "People always check up on me."

It is astonishing to talk with Ms. Gabriel, age 99, as she can hold a conversation with astuteness and clarity. Ms. Gabriel keeps up with daily events and enjoys talking about current events and politics. She says she loves to talk. She's talked about politics and about days gone by. One of her fondest memories is experiencing her first meal after arriving in Los Angeles at the Dunbar Hotel on Central Avenue, now a historic landmark.

She recalls in detail, events in her life and speculates on the world as it is today. Carrie grew up in the South during challenging times, however, she says she has never seen people so adamant, angry and hateful as they are these days.

Although she grew up poor, she didn't know it. "We grew up with much love, kindness and an attitude of helpfulness. We were taught never to hate.

"During the Depression my mom always had a pot of beans and a pan of cornbread on the stove for those who were less fortunate. People would ask if they could mow the lawn or help in any way just to get something to eat."

Childhood social activities involved home, church and school. "We did not have to lock our doors back then because people didn't break in but also because we didn't have much for anyone to take. There was one incident when the family had gone to church and my mom had made a pie and left it in the kitchen to cool. When we returned, the only thing left was the pie pan and a spoon. We knew Otis, our next-door neighbor, had eaten the pie. This was the biggest crime we experienced."

Life After City Retirement

After retiring with 32 years of City service, Carrie began phase two of her career in private industry. She worked for several Fortune 500 companies and made great achievements. She worked for Glendale Federal Savings and Loan as a teller and account processor; Southern California Savings and Loan as a data processing techni-

cian; Dart Industries as an employee benefits and retirement coordinator; and Martin E. Segal Actuarial Company as a retirement plan administrator.

In 1983, when Carrie's mother, whom she had taken care of financially, passed away, Carrie decided to retire. Although she no longer had a job to go to every day, that didn't stop her from keeping busy. She joined three senior centers and worked as a volunteer at the Oasis Senior Center in Westwood. She also joined and volunteered at the senior group that was organized where she lives until she was 90, when she then became a caregiver for her ailing brother.

Just when it seemed Carrie was about to recover from the loss of her brother and be able to get back to doing things she enjoyed and being active again, COVID came along and shut things down.

Ms. Gabriel has not let technology intimidate her. She has a computer and printer on her desk and uses both.

I'm sure you are asked quite often, what is the secret to your longevity?

"I don't get involved with negative people. When I was working, my co-workers would come to me with gossip, and I asked them not to bring that around me. I don't like a lot of drama. I try to help people whenever I can and keep a positive attitude. My mother was always helping others, and I live my life that way as well.

"I was at the doctor's office for a small procedure and my name was called. I said, I'm Gabriel. The doctor replied, 'I was looking for someone with a walker or in a wheelchair. What is your secret?' I told him, 'God loves me, and I don't allow drama in my life.' He replied, 'I'm going to go home and tell my wife, no more drama!'"



Words of Wisdom

"Try to be positive. Don't have drama in your space. Keep busy."

Ms. Gabriel says she is thankful for God's love and for the longevity He has given her. She is so very thankful for all the time she has been given to love and enjoy her family, her son, grandsons, granddaughter and her friends.

As I write this, we are looking forward to wishing and celebrating with Ms. Gabriel as she reaches a milestone that not many have achieved. By the time this article is published, we would have celebrated this monumental event.

Happy 100th to a very impressive retiree on the move!

Correction

In the January article, it was mis-stated that Ms. Gabriel was in charge of two computer centers. It should have read: "Ms. Gabriel was in charge of two units in the computer center."



A New 2022
RLACEI Event!

Spring Fling

WIN PRIZES!
only RLACEI members will be eligible to win prizes

Come join the fun!

Thurs., April 14, 2022
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Grace E. Simons Lodge
1025 Elysian Park Dr.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90012




Open to all Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. members.



RSVP: (800) 675-4145 Ext. 701 – no later than April 1, 2022
Limit one (1) RLACEI member plus one (1) guest at no cost.

RLACEI 2022 SPRING FLING EVENT RESERVATION

NAME _____

PHONE (____) _____

EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES: 1 or 2 (check one box)



Email this information by April 1 to: contact@RLACEI.org or
Mail to: RLACEI, P.O. Box 86264, Los Angeles, CA 90086



Follow RLACEI on Facebook



YOU COULD WIN!

Connect to RLACEI on Facebook, and you'll be eligible to win a \$5 gift card for See's Candies or Starbucks. The gift card prize will go to the first 150 to like the RLACEI Facebook page.

How to enter:

CURRENT RLACEI MEMBERS: Follow us on Facebook
OTHER CITY RETIREES: Join RLACEI and like us on Facebook

January Winners:

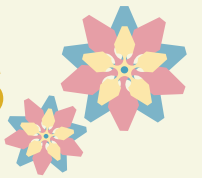
New RLACEI Members – Welcome!
Linda DelaRosa

Following RLACEI Facebook Page
Augusto Parcero Michael Smith

Congratulations for joining RLACEI and our Facebook page!
Follow RLACEI here: www.facebook.com, and search for "RLACEI"



Life's Important Moments



Share your news... and send in a photo!

Have you gotten married? Had a baby? Graduated? Is a family member in the military? Send in a photo and a paragraph, telling us the details. We love to share your good news.

- Births**
- Weddings**
- Graduations**
- Special Achievements**
- Military Service**
- Tell Their Story**

Send your photos and text online:
alive.employeesclub.com/lifemoments



Retirements

View retirements online at: alive.employeesclub.com/retirements-202202

Here's a listing of all those who retired from the City in Jan. 2022. To all we say, welcome to the Best Years!

NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS
Abeyta, Edith L.	Sr. Admin Clerk	Finance	5	Hi Galvez, Juan Noe	Dup. Mach. Operator	Gen. Services	14	Poelvoorde, Robert S.	Power C&M	LADWP	N/D
Bui, Tam Thi Minh	Accounting Clerk	Harbor	35	Huck, Patricia Ann	Criminalist	LAPD	16	Reyes, Thomas R.	Custodian Supv.	Airports	23
Castillo, Helen E.	Admin. Clerk	Rec and Parks	12	Johnson, Cleveland	Maintenance Laborer	Harbor	41	Rivera, Vincent	Water Operations	LADWP	N/D
Chavez, Susan Garcia	Comm. Info Rep	Housing	13	Kemper, Jeff	Sr. Const. Inspector	Public Works	20	Rodriguez, JC	Security Officer	Airports	29
Cooke, Lisa S.	City Planning Assoc.	Planning	13	Kotak, Sonal Naresh	Sr. Accountant	Library	17	Rodriguez, Humberto G.	Fleet Services	LADWP	N/D
Cortez, Gustavo	Fleet Services	LADWP	N/D	Kramer, Albert G.	Heavy Duty Equip. Mech.	Airports	49	Rosborough, Vincent R.	.Ref. Coll. Truck Op.	Public Works	16
De Guzman, Reynaldo Gadi	Sr. Custodian	Gen. Services	36	Locke, Steve C.	Sr. Gardener	Rec and Parks	35	Sachez, Ruben T.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	N/D
Dehemmer, Richard D.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D	Lympany, Richard A.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D	Sandoval, Trisha Ann	Asst. Park Svcs. Attend.	Rec and Parks	10
Dones, Raymond L.	Power C&M	LADWP	N/D	Martin, Booker T.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	N/D	Schindler, Richard D.	Sr. Electrical Inspector	Bldg. & Safety	15
Elce, David James	Sr. Admin. Clerk	Fire Comm.	23	Mata, Araceli	Admin. Clerk	Library	18	Sepulveda, Alan D.	Municipal Police Officer	LAPD	8
Engineer, Saba	Civil Eng. Associate	Public Works	18	McMillan, Raoul L.	Supply Chain	LADWP	N/D	Shinagawa, Bruce M.	Garage Attendant	Airports	20
Engl, Sara	Museum Guide	Rec and Parks	5	Menzel, Scott D.	Water Operations	LADWP	N/D	Smith, James M.	Admin. Clerk	Library	19
Estrada, Frank	Fleet Services	LADWP	N/D	Metzenbaum, Barbara J.	Sr. Librarian	Library	15	Solomon, William E.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D
Gabourel, Glenford Ivan	Maintenance Laborer	Harbor	13	Munguia, Rosa	Custodian	Gen. Services	20	Tinio, Virgilio A.	Sr. Custodian	Airports	13
Gilbert, Mona F.	Librarian	Library	16	Muramoto, Sachio	Equipment Mechanic	Airports	17	Valleie, Javad	Matl. Test Engineer	Gen. Services	41
Gonzalez, Dionicio P.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	N/D	Murillo, David	Ref. Coll. Truck Driver	Public Works	14	Vazagov, Joseph J.	Power C&M	LADWP	N/D
Habibi, Joseph Steven	Garage Attendant	LAPD	16	Musgrave, Roxana	Sr. Legal Clerk	City Attorney	30	Villanueva, Eleanor Cruz	Sr. Mgmt. Analyst	Public Works	16
Hall, Mario E.	ITS	LADWP	N/D	Neal Jr, Robert L.	Power Safety	LADWP	N/D	Vogel, Barry J.	Security Services	LADWP	N/D
Hernandez, Raul	Special Prog. Asst.	Rec and Parks	1	Pasillas, Carlos V.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D	Weber, Jan M.	Power Supply	LADWP	N/D
Hever, Richard J.	Ref. Coll. Truck Oper.	Public Works	34	Pineda, Mike	Security Officer	Rec and Parks	4				

N/D = not disclosed

In Memoriam

Our thoughts and condolences are with the family and friends of the following current and retired City employees who have passed away.

DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE			
ACTIVE								
Amaro, Alfredo J.	LADWP	21	Cole, Grant W.	LADWP	37	McConnell, Jon S.	Personnel	7
Chang, Jack T.	LADWP	30	Darrow, Stephen J.	Rec & Parks	38	Meza, Richard A.	Airports	22
Cornejo, Ana Ruth	Cultural Affairs	2	Delgado, Paul	Airports	24	Miller, Whalen	Rec & Parks	8
Evans, Wyatt L.	LADWP	36	Douglas, Walter C.	N/D	N/D	Nishi, Nobel E.	N/D	N/D
Gusman, Paul J.	LADWP	6	Elliott, Martha K.	N/D	N/D	Ono, Allen N.	N/D	N/D
Lee, Mike	Public Works	36	Engel, Deborah	LADWP	31	Poulos, Cathy J.	LAPD	30
MacInnis, Tor I.	LADWP	20	Evans, John L.	LADWP	26	Presby, Mary Mills	Council	29
Magallon Trejo, Wendoline	Public Works	2	Gonzales, Miriam R.	N/D	N/D	Reichardt, Dwayne	Public Works	36
Wynia, Jimmy P.	LADWP	21	Gonzalez, Hector	Housing	18	Richard, Lualla	N/D	N/D
RETIRED								
Ainscough, Bruce A.	LADWP	32	Gray, Larry A.	LADWP	33	Rose, Michele Ruth	Econ./Wrkfr. Dev.	30
Andrews, Willie	Housing	20	Grinner, Michael D.	LADWP	39	Sharp, Takako A.	LAFD	33
Anthony, Carlee	Public Works	24	Gutierrez, Richard J.	Rec & Parks	32	Sheeler, Carmella	LADWP	34
Argueta, Jose A.	LADWP	31	Hamilton, Thomas W.	LADWP	34	Sims Lewis, Rhonda L.	LAPD	31
Atkinson, Joseph D.	Library	21	Harrington, John P.	LADWP	39	Stohlmann, Grace M.	N/D	N/D
Banks, Anthony C.	Transportation	29	Harris, Russell T.	Public Works	33	Sugimoto, Katsumi E.	N/D	N/D
Bailey, Lance C.	Econ./Wrkfr. Dev.	22	Haywood, Terrell M.	Airports	21	Swets, Terrence W.	N/D	N/D
Boyrington, Walter	Harbor	18	Hemming, Timothy B.	LADWP	35	Thigpen, Nettie B.	N/D	N/D
Brooks, L. Gordon	Library	36	Henderson, James C.	LADWP	34	Thombs, Lola W.	LADWP	20
Brunengo, Gino P.	LADWP	38	Hohman, Robert L.	N/D	N/D	Travers, Cecilia A.	N/D	N/D
Burbridge, William J.	LADWP	31	Holtz, Derrick E.	Airports	19	Welch, William S.	LADWP	38
Cain, Brian E.	LADWP	25	Ingham, Barbara J.	LADWP	27	Wendling, Thomas M.	Convention Center	24
Castruita, Joe N.	LADWP	36	Kopchinsky Jr, George N.	LADWP	38	Williams, Elzela J.	LADWP	36
			Kramer, Albert G.	Airports	49	Williams, Leroy	LADWP	38
			Kuwahara, Buddy H.	N/D	N/D	Wilson, Keith A.	General Services	34
			Lee, Ki Chang	Public Works	30	Wilson, Vincent	Public Works	24
			McBride, James	ITA	17	Youhouse, Joseph E.	Bldg. & Safety	14

N/D = not disclosed

Help Us Tell Their Story



Every month, *Alive!* publishes the names of those current or retired City Employees who have died. But who were they?

Did you know them? If you worked with any of these people, knew a story or two about them or were related to them, consider writing to *Alive!* and letting us know. Tell their story!

- Write a few sentences or paragraphs
- Send in a photo, if you have one
- Let us know your name and connection to the deceased
- Send your memories to: talkback@employeesclub.com
Subject line: *Tell Their Story*

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Letter From England, Pt. 3

Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor, traveled to the land of his birth, England, post-vaccination.



Sally Lunn's Bakery, Bath

Bath is located 97 miles west of London, 11 miles southeast of Bristol.

More than 5,000 years ago – when the Druids were moving between the Preseli Hills stone quarry in Wales to the Salisbury Plain – the shrine dedicated to the goddess Sulis at the natural hot spring in the present-day city of Bath was where they would stop to rest and bathe, before continuing to haul the Bluestone monoliths on wooden sledges to Stonehenge 35 miles away.

The Roman invasion under Emperor Claudius in AD 43 led to the springs being enclosed, creating hot, warm and cold stone bathing pools, and was dedicated to their goddess Minerva. Some 400 years later, when Rome was under attack by barbarian hordes, Roman soldiers stationed in Britain were all recalled to Rome, leaving England in a dark and troubled age. During this period, the baths fell into disrepair and eventually slipped away as a result of the rising water levels and silting.

It has been said that King Arthur led the Britons to victory in AD 500 over the invading Anglo-Saxon siege of the city of Bath, arriving in time for his knights to smash the Anglo-Saxon foot soldiers. During this time, Bath

became known as Acemannesceastre ("Akemanchester"), or "aching men's city," cementing the reputation that the springs had for healing the sick.

Later, in 675, Benedictine monks built a monastery atop the pagan temple on the strength of the healing power of the waters. The monastery has been rebuilt over the centuries, and today it is the largest standing Gothic building in the West Country. Along with being a place of worship, the tall vaulted nave serves as a perfect site for civic ceremonies, concerts and lectures. A small museum in the crypt is worth a visit.

During the city's Georgian and Regency period, Bath attracted fashionable society to the thriving spa. People traveled from near and far to bathe in the healing spring waters, and to see some of the outrageous fashions promoted by the dandy "Beau" Brummell. Brummell's ideas for sharp-dressed male fashion included introducing the tie – still an integral part of men's wardrobes today.

The Grand Pump Room built in 1799 overlooking the Roman Baths became a great social center for visitors arriving to take the water pumped in from next door, and to gossip and see all the latest fashion. Novelist Mary Shelley spent many hours there writing her classic, *Frankenstein*. Ironically, under a plaque in her honor, outside the restaurant, in a vault, sits an underground electrical substation that delivers thousands of volts of power to central Bath! Jane Austen is another renowned author who also found the Grand Pump Room a perfect observation spot, collecting



Pulteney Bridge, Bath

The adventures of Michael Barnes continue on *Web Alive!*



Take *Alive!* with you, wherever you go!

- Snap a high resolution photo of you holding *Alive!*
- Go to: alive.employeesclub.com and click "SEND TO ALIVE!" in the menu. You'll find a convenient online form to send your text and pics for publication.

Give to a Food Drive

Sanitation's Recycling Program hosting a Citywide food drive.

Times: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. through March 4
Locations will be closed Mon., Feb. 21 (President's Day)

PUBLIC WORKS: Sanitation's Recycling Program is hosting a Citywide food drive.

Public Works/Sanitation and Environment's City Facilities Recycling Program (CFRP) is collecting non-perishable foods (including canned food, food in jars, packaged food and shelf-stable beverages and foods) in a charity effort.

Donated food will be provided to the St. Francis Center and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, local agencies that provide support to our unhoused neighbors and low-income individuals.

The drive runs through March 4. Donated items can be dropped off at all Sanitation yards. Please be generous!



LOCATIONS:

PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING
 1149 S. Broadway - Lobby
 Los Angeles, CA 90015

EAST VALLEY DISTRICT YARD
 11050 Pendleton St.
 Sun Valley, CA 91352

WEST VALLEY DISTRICT YARD
 8840 Vanalden Ave.
 Northridge, CA 91234

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT YARD
 452 San Fernando Rd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90031

WEST LA DISTRICT YARD
 2027 Stoner Ave.
 Los Angeles, CA 90025

SOUTH LA DISTRICT YARD
 786 S. Mission Rd.
 Los Angeles, CA 90023

HARBOR DISTRICT YARD
 1400 N. Gaffey St.
 San Pedro, CA 90731

WASHINGTON YARD
 2649 E. Washington Blvd.
 Building B
 Los Angeles, CA 90023



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INTERVIEW

'It's Been Very Busy'

used to. But we still have to interact and deal with all of the people at the terminals. It's a mix of the old and the new. With all that we've done with this pandemic, we couldn't have done this 30 years ago. We can continue our operations wherever we are in the world. We can get things done.

How many Wharfingers and support staff do you have?

Damien: We have ten Wharfingers between twos and ones. We have three clerical positions; only one is filled right now because two of our clerical were promoted to Wharfingers very recently. I have a Management Analyst, and we have two student worker positions, and then myself. It's not an enormous group, and we're very busy.

In the Middle of It

The Port has been in the news all around the world in the last six months. Are Wharfingers right in the middle of it?

Damien: You could say that. We're the ones who receive all the reports of the container levels for all these ships, so we know how full they are. I take that data and distill it and create reports for management so they're aware of what's going on. A lot of the source data that Gene Seroka and the other managers use comes from my operation; a lot of it is Wharfinger data that we provide, and they use that for ship counts and volume counts and things like that. We're not on the screen, but we're providing all of the information for those people who are.

What's your firsthand observation of the backlog? Is it easing up?

Damien: The Port passed the tariff change to establish a fee to charge a shipping line if they don't remove a loaded container once it gets off a ship. The Port postponed it because the threat of the fee has forced action, and now we've seen about a 50 percent reduction in the number of these containers that have been sitting there for more than nine days, which is the cutoff they used. *[The fee delay is continuing at press time. —Ed.]*

Fifty percent – that's huge.

Damien: We haven't collected a dollar yet, but the companies have been moving those containers, which is great. I think we'll probably delay that fee until a certain point, but it's up to Gene and the managers. We've seen some great progress on that front.

That was the goal.

Damien: Clearing those containers allows more space on the dock. When ships come in, we can work those faster and move things. The fluidity levels can increase and then you have more ships coming in, fewer waiting at anchor, and the whole chain works that way – you can get them in faster,

so it would alleviate those problems. Little things like that mean big changes.

How are the Wharfingers contributing to this easing of the backlog? Is that part of their responsibility?

Damien: The Wharfingers process space assignments which help to free up necessary space for container terminals. We have issued about 50 space assignments so far this year, which is far more than usual. It's to establish space for containers and truck chassis and move them off the terminals. My group works with [Port] real estate on that. It's been a constant this year.

My group processed \$400 million worth of invoices in the last fiscal year ending June 30th. It's record volumes, record revenues. It's been very busy.

Talk about the signs of success that you're slowly clearing the backlog.

Damien: Sure. I mentioned the 50 percent reduction in the loaded containers on dock for more than nine days; that's a huge help. It keeps things moving. The wait time for rail is down to about two days where it was a 13-day delay a few months ago. The delays are coming down. We still have a lot of ships coming in – a few fewer than we had at the peak, but that will help alleviate that problem. We've had ships here that have come to berth, and sometimes they just sit there because there's no space to put containers on those docks and it kind of jams up the system; when they don't pick up the containers or the warehouses are too full, it blocks the system from working. The shipping lines have reduced those volumes; that helps the ships come in, get worked and so that help things move faster. And the reduction of empty containers at the terminals is a big help, too.

Media Glare

How does it feel to have the world looking upon you? Have you ever been in that position?

Damien: It's kind of remarkable, I was watching the news with my kids the other day and Gene came up and I said, "Oh yeah, there's Gene again." My kids are almost used to it now. Gene met with President Biden a few months ago and he has many weekly meetings with the White House staff on how they're looking at things. Gene was on *60 Minutes*. It's remarkable, but it's good and bad. It's good because we're showing how much we actually do. A lot of stories are negative, but people miss the fact that we're processing more than ten million container units a year at this rate, almost 11 million. That's a lot of freight; that's more than we've ever done by a factor of about 13 percent. So yes the eyes are on us. Maybe it makes us work better, work faster and work smarter.

About Damien Young



Damien Young

Damien Young is the Director of Wharfinger Operations for the Port of Los Angeles, the nation's leading container port and economic generator.

Wharfinger (*pronounced war-fin-jer*) is an industry term for the keeper or owner of a wharf, similar to a harbormaster. The Wharfinger team at the Port of Los Angeles is responsible for the day-to-day activities at cargo terminals and serve as agents for Port customers.

Young manages the billing of more than \$400 million in annual shipping service fees, including wharfage, dockage and pilotage, as well as space assignment charges, commercial fishing charges and film permit fees. He estimates, plans and reports on shipping container and other commodity volume statistics and trends, and works closely with senior management and the Port's Cargo Marketing and Media Relations divisions on forecasting container volume levels.

Young joined the Port in 2007 as the Manager of Administration for the Port's Construction and Maintenance Division, where he oversaw budget, contracts, payroll and accounts payable and managed \$5 million in capital projects. He then served as Assistant Director in the Port's Contracts

and Purchasing Division until joining Wharfingers in 2017.

Before joining the Port, Young worked in several other City of Los Angeles departments, including Aging, Building and Safety, Public Works, the LADWP, and Los Angeles World Airports.

Young has a bachelor's degree in political science from UCLA and master's degree in public administration from Cal State, Long Beach.

How stressful have your days been? Are you getting any sleep?

Damien: I don't get sleep because I have a two-year-old; that's a different story. It's stressful, but I think it's a good stress. We're working very hard to fix the problem, to get things moving and keep things going. The managers are feeling the same way. It's a lot of work, but we're glad to see it happening.

The Cargo Crew

Talk about the professionalism and dedication of your team.

Damien: They've been great. They've been very busy and they've been doing it all from home – \$400 million of invoicing was all done on their computers at home because we've been out of the office since March of 2020. It's been a lot of emails and a lot of communication that way, but it's managed to get done and they've done it well. One of our goals is good customer service, and we've continued that. I couldn't be more proud of them. They're a fantastic group.

What do you wish people knew about what your department does?

Damien: We've been around for 114 years now, and I think everyone knows what we do now! I'm not worried about people wondering what the Port of LA does anymore; I think people know us more than LAWA now even at this point. We've gone from under the radar to right in front of everybody's screen every night.

A Passion

What do you love about what you do? To be operating at such high level, you must have a passion for what you do.

Damien: I've always been a numbers guy, so this is the ultimate numbers game. We have numbers of containers and ships and tonnage of steel. Last year my son was learning about counting collections at school and I said, "That's what I do, we count collections of things at the Port. So do well in math and you'll be just like your papa, you can come and work here." It's a lot of numbers, and I've always been strong in numbers. This is right up my alley.

Did you train to be a numbers guy?

Damien: No, of course, no, why would I do that! No, I was a political science major at UCLA and I came to the City and worked up the analyst ladder basically from a Management Assistant all the way to chief MA. You learn so many things at every level and at every department. I'm so glad I've worked at all the departments I worked at because you gain so much knowledge. It's been a great path and I recommend it to anybody. If you move around a little bit, learn new things and meet new people, it's a good path even if you come back to where you started like I did.

Thank you so much for your time and for all you're doing for the Port and the City of LA.

Damien: Thank you. We're trying, we're trying.

INTERVIEW

Optimizing the Data

Eric: With all of us working remotely, and not being physically in front of customers, it's been very busy in a different way. We have a whole team here in the Marketing Division – Marketing Managers Chris Chase and Marcel van Dijk, and recently retired Assistant Director of Marketing Masa Morimoto. Our support team includes of course Melissa, Mary Saucedo, who just took a position outside the Port, as well our student professional Irlanda Ramirez. The entire team works very hard every day in making sure that we responded to the inquiries in the appropriate way. It has been very, very busy from morning until evening, sometimes even as late as nine o'clock at night. It was a busy time, but exciting in a certain way. For me, one of the greater satisfactions is helping the smallest of small importers; the folks who move one or two containers per year that were really lost in the big piles; helping the "onesie twosie" importers is very, very satisfying. Of course, we value the big importers that are moving thousands upon thousands of containers as well, but for a smaller importer it is often their entire livelihood tied up in a container.

The other satisfying part is the reaction you often get from a caller when they dial the office or cellphone and can talk to a live person! I say hat's off to the entire team here at the Port. Customer service is definitely one of our strengths.

Melissa, how about you the last eight months, and pushing data at an unprecedented time?

Melissa: It started off stressful just trying to get everything together

and presented well to all the people who needed the data. And then I was juggling the home life too at the same time, working at home. Since I was pregnant I was more at risk of getting sick, so I stayed home since the beginning of the pandemic.

Eric: We never saw Melissa pregnant.

Melissa: I know! We're working in really special times right now.

Signs of Success

With all your hard work and technology to ease the supply crunch, what signs of success are you seeing?

Eric: The number of inquiries we are getting is down; that is a good sign. Judging by Port metrics, we are seeing success in the significant efforts made by a number of folks here at the Harbor Dept. as well as by the supply chain stakeholders. If you look at the statistics that Melissa is producing – the boxes sitting on terminal more than nine days are down. The number of boxes that are leaving the Port and how long they are sitting outside before they're being returned empty is improving as well. We are seeing improvements in the dwell time of containers that need to be railed out to destinations across the country. We are not out of the woods yet, but the successes really are shown in the numbers.

A Good Crew

You mentioned your crew a minute ago.

Eric: They're excellent of course. I'm very lucky. All the folks in our division are very like-minded and focused on the commercial side of the house – understanding what it takes to provide excellent customer service and go the extra mile all the time. Melissa is involved in reports that probably she's never been involved in before. Our student professional is doing customer service-type of activities, things that a student professional ordinarily wouldn't be involved in. Everybody is really stepping up to the plate and doing multiple tasks within the team to make sure that we perform. I can't speak highly enough of the team that we have from Chris Chase to Marcel Van Dijk, who are facing customers directly, and all the support staff -- Nora Garcia, who moved to the executive offices, and Melissa Knight and Irlanda Ramirez. The Marketing Division is an exciting division because you engage with customers on a different level, obtain an appreciation and understanding of their business, and function in the total supply chain.

Thank you both for your time on a busy day.

Eric: Thank you very much.

Melissa: Thank you.