



Alive!



AIRPORTS

FLORA, CLEARED FOR DEPARTURE

Flora Margheritis, Director of Airport Operations, Van Nuys Airport, retires after piloting the facility into clear skies ahead.

— PAGE 10



Flora Margheritis (center), Director of Airport Operations, Van Nuys Airport, 32 years of City service, with her leadership team Christian Moreno, Chief of Airport Operations, 18 years, Club Member (left), and Paul Herrera, Airport Manager, 23 years, Club Member.

Alive! photo by Summy Lam

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Employees Club of California
120 West 2nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

#ClubMobile Arrives!

SEE PAGE 5





Clear Skies Ahead

ROBERT'S BLOG

by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club



The email came clearly but gently one morning – asking if *Alive!* would consider producing a story on the Van Nuys Airport staff.

We replied to him – **Paul Herrera**, Club Member – immediately. Of course we would. You are holding in your hand the product of that inquiry.

Van Nuys Airport has been flying under our radar for some time now. The editorial team speculated about our last *Alive!* visit to the San Fernando Valley mainstay, and concluded it might have been the better part of a decade since we stopped for a story there. Of course our Club Counselors visit regularly, delivering Club benefits and insurance consultations.

We were delighted to develop a story on **Flora Margheritis**, the retiring Director of Airport Operations, to honor her for her excellent and pioneering service and bid her farewell. Flora has managed many projects – and a pandemic – at Van Nuys, bringing the critically important general aviation facility up to state-of-the-art standards for decades to come. She hands the navigation now



Robert Larios (second from left) with the leadership team at Van Nuys Airport, from left: Paul Herrera, Airport Manager, Club Member; Flora Margheritis, Director of Airport Operations, and Christian Moreno, Chief of Airport Operations, Club Member.

to Paul to continue taking the airport into a great future.

Paul told us the idea for writing to us originally was his colleague's, **Christian Moreno**, another longtime Club Member. Christian, your instincts were right on the money.

That reminds me to ask you, our Club Members, to reach out to us with your story ideas. We like to think we are on top of everything at the City, but sending in your

ideas really helps keep *Alive!* at the forefront of knowing what City employees are accomplishing. Help us honor you!

On the Move: Club staff has been working hard to finalize the details, and now we are very excited to share the big Club news called **#ClubMobile** – a plan to serve you better in a *major* way. We're hitting the road and coming directly to your worksites with two separate teams, delivering most every service we perform. We are closing the store and expanding our services to make our Club services the ultimate in Member convenience. It comes from our total commitment to serve you. Supervisors: Remember to book your #ClubMobile visit!

See the story in this month's paper and Website entry.

A Toast: I wish Club Members a very Happy New Year. I honor you, I thank you for your service, and I pledge to express my gratitude for you. I wish you prosperity, fun and purpose in the year to come.

¡Gracias por leer!

Robert Larios

#ClubMobile Schedule*



We're bringing Club benefits and authentic Los Angeles City gear to you!

Harbor Boys and Girls Club

100 W. Fifth St., San Pedro
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Mobile Team sets up in the Harbor area the first Wednesday of every month:

Wednesday, Jan. 4

Wednesday, Feb. 1

Wednesday, Mar. 1

Van Nuys Animal Services

14409 Vanowen St., Van Nuys
10 a.m. 1 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 10

General Services Sun Valley

11050 Pendleton St., Sun Valley
3 – 5 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 11

Follow Club social media for other days, times and locations as they are scheduled.



@employeesclubofca



Employees Club of California



@theClubofCA

Schedule a Site Visit

Contact Lupe Lira, Club Store Manager:
(213) 819-0350, or mobile@employeesclub.com



At a recent Mobile Team site visit.

Supervisors: Raise employee morale! Bring the Club to your worksite!

The Club Mobile Team will bring Club benefits and authentic Los Angeles City apparel for purchase at Club prices (hats custom-made on site). It's one of the best ways for staff to feel appreciated. Your employees will be grateful!

For your continued safety: The Mobile Team is accepting only outdoor set-ups for now.

* Mobile Team site visit dates are subject to change due to the pandemic. Make sure to check with your supervisor to confirm dates and times, up to and including on the scheduled day itself.



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AIRPORTS
**FLORA,
CLEARED
FOR DEPARTURE**

COVER STORY:

Flora, Cleared for Departure 10-11

Flora Margheritis reflects on her 32-year City career as she retires from Van Nuys Airport.

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Get more Alive! content at alive.employeesclub.com

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NEW THIS MONTH
ONLINE!

alive.employeesclub.com

John's Picture Perfect

All the winners from this month's contest on the theme "gatherings."



Rest Insured

See the Club's claims paid this month and feel confident in your Club insurance purchase.



Cooking With the Club

Start the New Year with a hearty Continental delight from Chef Larios: Lemony spaghetti with Brussels sprouts, sprinkled with toasted panko and chives.



Save Big on Snow Fun!

Save 27% on Mountain High – \$94 for 8-hour lift tickets!

www.employeesclub.com



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:

Monday–Friday • 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

NOTE: The walk-in Club Store is closed every Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. for staff meetings.

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 TELEPHONE: (800) 464-0452

CONTACT US: admin@aliveemployeesclub.com

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Alive! Staff

John Hawkins and Robert Larios,
Managing Editors
 John Burnes, *Editor*
 David Jamgotchian,
 JJLA Associates,
Design and Production

LACEA Board

Phillip Chou, *LADWP*
 Andrew Virzi III

Manager of Accounts Payable and Taxes, LADWP
 Capt. Danny C. Wu, *LAFD*

Employees Club Board

Terry Carter, *Commanding Officer, Property Division, LAPD*
 Marilyn Holley

Public Works: Bureau of Sanitation, Retired
 Rose Hyland, *Office of the Controller, Retired*

David Muraoka, *LAPD, Retired*

Rita Robinson, *County of LA, Retired*

Andrew Virzi Jr., *DWP, Retired*

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In addition, the Club strives to publish only those elements that are produced by the Club itself, are in the public domain, or whose rights have been negotiated.

Club Members who have questions on these points may write to: alive@employeesclub.com

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*When using a Network Attorney for a covered legal matter



THE CLUB

The Club Truck
Coming Spring 2023

#ClubMobile



(Artist's Rendering)

#ClubMobile Arrives

NEW INITIATIVE BRINGS BENEFITS RIGHT TO YOUR WORKSITE. RETAIL CLUB STORE IN DOWNTOWN IS CLOSING.

This month, in a major expansion of its outreach to Members, the Club introduces #ClubMobile, an initiative to bring its services, benefits and retail right to its Members' offices and worksites.

"We're taking our show on the road," said Robert Larios, President and CEO of the Club. "ClubMobile is all about Member convenience and value, as we transition to reflect the way you live your life."

As part of #ClubMobile, the Club is introducing the Club Truck, which will allow the Club to bring many more of its services directly and nearby to Members' offices and worksites. The Club Truck will work in tandem with the ongoing Mobile Team – the famous red tent – to deliver enhanced services and benefits. The Club Truck is expected to enter service this spring. "It's an exciting time to be a Club Member," Robert Larios said.

With this transition, the Club will be closing its physical store downtown at the close of business Jan. 31. The Club Store is offering discounts of 40 percent on select items at the physical store through the end of January.

The online Club Store remains in operation 24/7 for retail delivery.
Photoscan this QR code for more information:



Watch the Club's latest video.



This year's Club video features a day in the life of the Club's Mobile Team, and is available on the Club's YouTube channel after Jan. 20.



The Club Store Is Closing Jan. 31

As part of the #ClubMobile expansion of Club services, the physical Club Store downtown will be closing Jan. 31.



Employees Club of California
311 South Spring Street, Suite 1300
Los Angeles, CA 90013
WEB: employeesclub.com
TEL: (800) 464-0452

A LETTER FROM ROBERT LARIOS PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE CLUB

Dear Members,

Welcome to #ClubMobile!

We're thrilled to launch an exciting new service! Starting this spring, your favorite Club Store will be serving you with two separate mobile units right at worksites and offices across Los Angeles and California. Get ready to experience the ultimate convenience – Member services delivered straight to your work. It will be easier than ever for employees everywhere to access products that can make your life simpler, more convenient and a whole lot of fun.

#ClubMobile is more than just retail – we're bringing a wide range of our most important services, including free insurance benefit consultation, free notary services to Club Members, and other Membership services.

Our online store continues to deliver top-notch service around the clock, every day at employeesclub.com

As the Club goes fully mobile, we'll be closing the retail Club Store downtown Jan. 31.

Be sure to mark your calendars and help us celebrate our big change! From now until Jan. 31, Club Members can enjoy a 40 percent discount on select merchandise at the downtown Los Angeles Club Store location. With savings like this, you don't want to miss out; stock up on all of your favorites before time runs out (while supplies last, of course)!

#ClubMobile conveys that your loyalty is appreciated and honored. We can't wait to take our show on the road. Join us as we continue providing quality benefits to make your lives better and more financially protected.



Robert Larios

- Robert

SKI RESORT DISCOUNTS NOW AVAILABLE!



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THEME PARKS, MOVIE TICKETS, SHOWS, ATTRACTIONS, SPORTING EVENTS...



READY FOR RETIREMENT



Resources for Club Retirees or Those About to Retire



LONG-TERM CARE MAKES SO MUCH SENSE



Noelle Kauffman
Director of Sales
CA LICENSE NO: 0H45598

This month, we continue our discussion of the importance of having **long-term care insurance**.

2020 states that the median costs for these services range from \$53,768 to \$105,850 per year.

Long-term care insurance is designed to protect your retirement savings and assets by paying a monthly benefit for some of the expenses you may incur if you need supervision or assistance with basic activities of daily living (ADLs), such as bathing, eating, continence, dressing, toileting, ambulating and transferring – situations that can follow an accident or illness such as a stroke, because of older age and frailty, or because you need supervision due to

a cognitive disorder like Alzheimer's disease.

Make an appointment with our Retirement Specialists.

JOIN THE CLUB

Club Membership for Retirees costs only \$4 a month and can be deducted from your pension. As a Retiree, you are entitled to group rated insurance benefits including life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, pre-funeral planning, long-term care, and our popular legal plan by MetLife.

LET'S TALK ABOUT LONG TERM CARE (LTC) INSURANCE

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nearly 70 percent of Retirees will need some type of long-term care. A survey conducted by Genworth in

HERE'S WHY YOU NEED THE CLUB'S LONG-TERM INSURANCE

Long-term care insurance is designed to pay benefits for some of the expenses you may incur if you need supervision or assistance with basic activities of daily living (ADLs), including bathing, eating, continence, dressing, toileting, ambulating and transferring.

You may need this kind of help following an accident or illness such as a stroke – because of older age and frailty, or because you need supervision due to a cognitive disorder like Alzheimer's disease.

- Your premiums are conveniently deducted through your pension
- Affordable Club Member-only group rates
- Group rates are locked in at the age you apply
- Coverage is available to you, your spouse/domestic partner, parents, and grandparents
- Available payout benefits range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per month
- Your plan pays a monthly benefit directly to you, as opposed to most other programs that pay out on a reimbursement schedule
- Choose from four plans: 1) Long-Term Care facility; 2) professional home care; 3) total home care; and 4) simple inflation protection
- Available terms: four-year nursing facility/eight years in home. Also 10-year nursing facility/20 year in home. (Home care benefit pays out at 50 percent)

Schedule an appointment today with a Club Retirement Counselor, and be ready for your best retirement.

IMPORTANT: The best time to buy long term care insurance is **before you need it.**

LACEA Insurance Services, Inc. (Employees Club of California) is a licensed insurance agency offering insurance benefits to qualified Club members. The Club's CA DOI Lic. is #0B98000.

FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

ARE YOU READY FOR RETIREMENT?

HERE ARE SOME CURRENT PROGRAMS TO HELP WITH YOUR PLANNING:

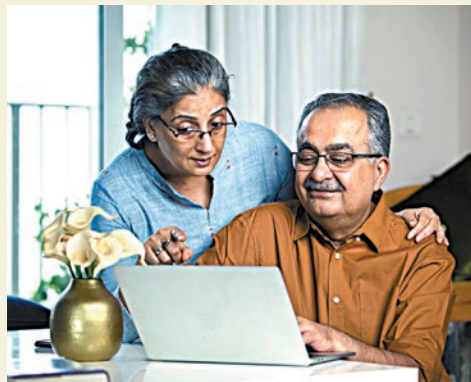
Learn about your retirement options and benefits at an upcoming Planning for Retirement webinar, hosted by the LACERS Member Engagement team. Register via your MyLACERS account. Upcoming dates include:

- Wed., Jan. 11**
 - Thurs., Jan. 19** (Tier 3)
 - Thurs., Feb. 16**
 - Tues., March 7** (in person at The California Endowment)
- All webinars/events begin at 9 a.m.

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 April 22, 2023, you would have aimed to submit your retirement application in the portal on Feb. 21, 2023. For more information, please visit lacers.org/applying-retirement.



Retired or Retiring Soon?

Call for a **FREE** insurance benefits consultation with a Member Services Counselor:



Cheryl Martin
(800) 464 -0452,
EXT. 136
Work cell: (213) 819-0794

23 years of insurance experience
CA LICENSE NO: 0C12823



Tiffany Sy
(800) 464-0452,
EXT. 202
Work cell: (213) 440-8270

20 years of insurance experience
CA LICENSE NO: 0D75348

2023 Events

2023 events will be added as they are announced.

RESERVATION INFORMATION:

LADWP Retiree Association:

vincedolores@gmail.com

LARFPA: events@larfpa.org

Contact Information

Employees Club of California

Club contact:
help@employeesclub.com

Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) (City Dept.)

(800) 779-8328
lacers.services@lacers.org

LADWP Retirees Association

Dolores Foley, *President*
(949) 388-1206
vincedolores@gmail.com

Fire and Police Pensions (City Dept.)

(844) 885-2377
pensions@lafpp.com

LA Retired Fire and Police Association (LARFPA)

(888) 288-5073
membership@larfpa.org

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)

See page 16



FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

In-Person Appointments Suspended During Move

Until further notice, LACERS is suspending in-person appointments as the department moves to its new location. LACERS looks forward to offering in-person counseling in its new location, but before that, there are many options for service active and Retired City employees can utilize during this transition.

- Use the LACERS' **Secure Document Upload** found at lacers.org/secure-document-upload to submit forms or required documents;
- Visit the LACERS Website at [LACERS.org](https://lacers.org) to obtain benefit information;
- Log onto your **MyLACERS** account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org> to view your account details; and
- Visit the **LACERS' YouTube channel** found at youtube.com/lacersyoutube where current and Retired employees can find a wealth of benefit videos.

Stay up to date with the move and all LACERS announcements by checking the Website periodically at lacers.org, contacting LACERS by email at lacers.services@lacers.org, and by phone at (800) 779-8328.

FOR RETIREES

New IRS Tax Withholding Pension Forms for 2023

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has released a new federal tax withholding form for pension payments in 2023. The new IRS W-4P form will be required for any withholding changes received after Dec. 12, 2022, for payrolls processed in 2023 and beyond. You *do not* need to submit a new form unless you would like to make changes to your withholdings.

If you live in California and you wish to change your state tax withholding election, you will need to submit a separate DE-4P state tax withholding form. These forms and Frequently Asked Questions are available on the LACERS website at lacers.org/forms and lacers.org/frequently-asked-questions respectively

LACERS and/or the Club are not authorized to provide tax advice. If you are seeking tax guidance or advice, we recommend you speak to a tax professional.

Kristine: New Assistant Chief

KRISTINE LARSON BECOMES HIGHEST-RANKING AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE IN DEPT. HISTORY.

LAFD: Battalion Chief Kristine Larson has been promoted to Assistant Chief, LAFD. She is the highest-ranking African-American female in the history of the department.

With more than three decades of experience in the field, she is now assigned to lead the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Bureau. During her illustrious career, she has served as a Fire Inspector, Captain I, Captain II and Battalion Chief—among other notable accomplishments. She will continue to excel in her new role and contribute immensely to the department.

Before her current rank as Section Commander, she was assigned to Battalion 18 and 13 as a Battalion Commander; Captain II at Fire Station 74; and Drill Master at Drill Tower 81. As a Captain I, she has worked at Fire Stations 47, 58, and Drill Tower 81. And before becoming a Captain, she was already accomplished as a Fire Inspector.

Congratulations, Assistant Chief Larson!



Assistant Chief Kristine Larson

THANK YOU! The Club congratulates Assistant Chief Larson on her pioneering promotion, thanks her for her assistance in producing stories involving the LAFD, and further thanks her for her service to the City.

Ted Takes the Title

GM TED ROSS NAMED AMONG US CITY EXECUTIVES OF THE YEAR.



Ted Ross

ITA: A municipal technology news group that focuses on cybersecurity issues has named Ted Ross, General Manager, ITA, Club Member, as one of its City Executives of the Year. The fourth annual LocalSmart Awards program highlights the people and projects making city, county and municipal governments better.

Readers cast more than 750,000 votes through Nov. 11. The 40 winners in 15 states and numerous cities and counties received the most community votes in their categories.

"Los Angeles deserves the best digital services for those who live, work and play here," Ted Ross said in response. "I am honored to receive a prestigious U.S. City Executive of the Year award, but I know we still have much to deliver in technology tools to improve LA homelessness, crime and housing."

"As we close out 2022, StateScoop is honored to recognize these dynamic leaders in city, county and municipal government," said Jake Williams, the vice president of content and community for StateScoop and EdScoop. "From Gallatin County, Montana, to Chicago, to Coral Gables, Florida, technology is playing an increasingly important role in residents' lives. These leaders are the ones making that happen in an efficient, secure and prominent way."

The LocalSmart Awards program launched in 2019 and has recognized more than 150 people and projects since its inception.

Congratulations, Ted! ●

THANK YOU! The Club honors Ted for this award, and for his hard work in driving LA to be an international leader in technology and cybersecurity. Thank you for all you do!

Larios In the City

BY ROBERT LARIOS, Chief Executive Officer



Congratulations!

Robert Larios, Club President and CEO, honors Club Members with the coveted Club Retirement Plaque.



Solomon Hays

Airports, Retired after 32 years of City service. (He retired in July 2009.)



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

John's Picture Perfect Contest

Submit your best photos, and be in the running for a prize.

This month's contest theme:

Open (any picture)

The Club's online photo contest, organized by CEO John Hawkins, has a monthly theme. But for the next contest, we are leaving the theme open – send in your best photos, with any theme you like (or no theme). We'd love to see your favorite shots.

DEADLINE: Jan. 17

Submit your best photos online here: alive.employeesclub.com/pictureperfect/ Club Members only. Good luck!





City Holiday Guide

There are a few events and dates remaining for the list of City holiday activities. They are:



LA Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow

When: 6-10 p.m. nightly through Jan. 22 (closed most Mondays and Tuesdays, plus Christmas Eve and Christmas).
Where: LA Zoo and Botanical Gardens, Griffith Park, 5355 Zoo Dr. Free parking.
Cost: \$27-\$39 (daytime Zoo admission extra).
Value nights: Some nights are lower cost; some are premium cost. Check the Website.
City sponsor: LA Zoo.
Information: (323) 644-6042 or www.LAZoolights.org

The after-hours attraction, which requires a separate ticket from the Zoo's regular day hours, is a self-guided 90-minute walking tour of tens of thousands of LED lights, flurries of illuminated snowflakes, 3-D animated projections, a musical light-and-water show and glittering light tunnels. Animal characters brought to "life" include mischievous animated monkeys, a gigantic glowing snake coiled on a roof, animated elephants and much more.



Holiday Light Festival Train Ride

When: 5-8 p.m. weeknights; 5-9 p.m. Fri-Sun. through - Jan. 6
Where: 4400 Crystal Springs Dr., Griffith Park
Cost: \$7
City sponsor: Rec and Parks
Information: (323) 662-9678, www.griffithparktrainrides.com

Guests can take an evening train ride around the festively decorated one mile of track. Magical scenes and tens of thousands of lights are set to captivate families and set the mood for a wonderful holiday season.

The trains operate every night until Dec. 23, then resumes Dec. 26-Jan. 7. The trains do not operate in the rain.



LAFD Chief Kristin Crowley and Deputy Chief/West Bureau Commander Richard Fields.

Photos courtesy Hollywood Christmas Parade.

Hollywood on Parade

90TH HOLLYWOOD CHRISTMAS PARADE RUMBLES DOWN THE BOULEVARD WITH CITY COUNCIL SPONSORSHIP.

COUNCIL: Actor Danny Trejo was the grand marshal of this year's Hollywood Christmas Parade, held Sunday, Nov. 27 in Hollywood. The parade was also scheduled to be aired on national television and supported the U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots program.

The annual parade is presented in association with the City. The parade was canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Mayor Eric Garcetti participated in his final parade as mayor.

Dozens of celebrities from film, television and stage and other VIPs could be seen in the parade. More than a dozen award-winning bands and equestrian teams from around the country were featured.

THANK YOU!



The Hollywood Christmas Parade simply could not exist without the dedicated work behind the scenes of hundreds of City employees in Public Works/Street Services, the LAPD, LAFD, LADOT, LADWP, General Services, and others. We thank you for your excellent service in making LA shine!



Councilwoman Heather Hutt.



Mayor Eric Garcetti.



Santa Claus traveled from the North Pole to make his much-loved annual appearance in the parade.



Grand Marshal Danny Trejo.

Club Store Schedule

Physical Club Store Hours:

Open: Mon.- Fri., 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Closed:

- Jan. 2. (Monday), closed for the New Year holiday
- Jan. 16 (Monday), closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan. 17 (Tuesday), closed for Club Annual Meeting

The Club Store is also closed for curbside pickup on the above days.

Staff Meetings: The physical Club Store is closed every Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. for staff meetings.

Online Club Webstore Hours: The online Club Webstore is open 24/7, but orders are not processed on holidays. Order at www.employeesclub.com

Curbside Pickup: Club Webstore orders will be processed and available for curbside pickup (by request) instead of shipping Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. except those days listed above.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Club Store Is Closing Jan. 31



The physical Club Store on Second Street downtown will be closing permanently Jan. 31, 2023 as part of the Club's new #ClubMobile program to bring all Club services directly to Members. The online Club Store remains in service and ready for your orders.

ORDER ONLINE 24/7

The online Club Webstore is open 24/7 : www.employeesclub.com



The 28 promoted Assistant Chiefs, Captains and Engineers at the Dec. 1 ceremony.

Story and photos courtesy LAFD

Meet the New Leaders

LAFD PROMOTES 28 INTO LEADERSHIP RANKS.

LAFD: On Dec. 1, 28 LAFD Firefighters were promoted into positions of leadership. The ceremony was held at the Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center.

The 28 New Leaders are:

Assistant Chief:

Rudy Hill
Amir Caspian
Kristine Larson

Captain II:

Arturo Tarango
Enrique Borboa
Jesus De La Cruz
Miguel Meza
Aaron Halvorson
Louis Polanco

Captain I:

John Arai

Engineer:

Morgan Montoya
Tom MacIntyre
Steve Venegas
Kevin Smith
Brian Buehler
Eric Knudsen
Patrick Turner
Daniel Faulkner

Mark Wagoner
Eloy Zepeda
John Jimenez
Louis Avila
Matthew Zuleski
Daniel Bui
August Weideman
Kenneth Hunter
Gregory Sanders
Brett Salley

Congratulations to the LAFD's newest leaders!

THANK YOU!



The Club thanks all 28 for their hard work and dedicated service to LA, and to Chief Kristin Crowley and Cheryl Getuiza for their assistance.



Daniel Tarica

Daniel Is New DCA GM

DANIEL TARICA, LONGTIME CULTURAL AFFAIRS STAFFER, PROMOTED TO GENERAL MANAGER.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: Daniel Tarica, former Interim General Manager, Cultural Affairs, was promoted Nov. 30 to General Manager by then-Mayor Eric Garcetti. Daniel has more than 20 years of City service.

"Daniel is a leader with a track record of delivering and increasing access to art, music and culture in every corner of Los Angeles," Garcetti said in a prepared statement. "I commend Daniel's efforts to help raise funds and resources and look forward to seeing what he does to deepen the work of Cultural Affairs, cementing our City's role as the creative capital of the world."

Daniel has served the City for more than 20 years As Interim General Manager, Daniel and his team were responsible for grant investments of \$4 million that provided more than 3,000 Angelenos with jobs in the arts and supported more than 1,000 art events.

He will now oversee all programs and services managed by the department to maximize relationships with other City agencies, artists and cultural nonprofits.

Congratulations, Daniel!

THANK YOU!



The Club honors Daniel for keeping the thriving LA-sponsored arts community moving forward during the pandemic, which was very tough on creative artists. Thank you for your hard work, and we look forward to working with you in the future!

Be My CLUB Valentine

Send your loved one a special Valentine... in the February Alive!

Here's how it works:

Send us a favorite photo (high-resolution digital) 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 the print and Web Alive!

DEADLINES:

January 18 for Print and Web Alive!
February 9 for Web Alive! only.

To send your digital photo and your message, go to:
alive.employeesclub.com/valentines



Alive! Feature



AIRPORTS

FLORA, CLEARED FOR DEPARTURE

Photos by Summy Lam, Club VP of Marketing, and courtesy Airports and Flora Margheritis



Flora Margheritis, Director of Airport Operations, Van Nuys Airport, 32 years of City service.

Flora Margheritis, Director of Airport Operations at Van Nuys, retires after piloting the general aviation facility into clear skies ahead.

With the world-class improvements going on at LAX – nothing short of a transformation is taking place, as we have chronicled – there is plenty of positive news coming out of Airports, and will continue to do so.

That includes Van Nuys Airport, one of the country’s most important general aviation airports. The facility in the middle of the San Fernando Valley has seen major infrastructure projects being realized in the last few years, too, as it weathered the pandemic.

Piloting that has been Flora Margheritis, Director of Airport Operations, Van Nuys Airport, 32 years of City service, who has announced her retirement for the end of this month. In this feature, *Alive!* chronicles her long career in aviation; the work she has led to improve the airport; the ties to the community she has built; and her thoughts on the future of general and business aviation in Los Angeles.

Join us as we celebrate the career of an aviation administration giant, Flora Margheritis. ●



THANK YOU! 🙌

The Club thanks Flora Margheritis for her many years of service to the aviation community and the citizens of Los Angeles; and Christian Moreno and Paul Herrera, Van Nuys Airport leaders who will take over upon her retirement, for inviting us to tell Flora’s story. We honor all of you! And finally, the Club thanks Bob Nash and Bud Carson at Van Nuys Airport and Victoria Spilabotte, Airports Public Information Officer, for coordinating our efforts.



(055-92L-4AB)(6-1-40-11.20A)(8.25-

An aerial view of the beginnings of Metropolitan (Van Nuys) Airport with its dirt landing strip, 1928.



Flora Margheritis, a licensed private pilot in addition to her administrative duties at Van Nuys Airport, sits inside the homebuilt aircraft she owns with her husband, Alex Margheritis, Superintendent of Airport Operations, LAX. They built the experimental aircraft in their garage; it’s kept in a hangar at Whiteman Airport.



Various aircraft on the Beechcraft ramp, 1957.



SuperScoopers leased by LA County Fire Dept. are parked at Van Nuys during wildfire season.



The Condor Air Squadron – volunteer pilots flying A6 Texan aircraft – is stationed at Van Nuys Airport.



Flora Margheritis (center), Director of Airport Operations, Van Nuys Airport, 32 years of City service, in her office with her leadership team Christian Moreno (left), Chief of Airport Operations, 18 years, Club Member, and Paul Herrera (right), Airport Manager, 23 years, Club Member.

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW

'A DREAM FULFILLED'

On Oct. 6, Club CEO Robert Larios and Alive! editor John Burnes interviewed the leadership team at Van Nuys Airport – Flora Margheritis (center), Director of Van Nuys Airport, 32 years of City service; Paul Herrera (left), Airport Manager, 23 years, Club Member; and Christian Moreno (right), Chief of Airport Operations, 18 years, Club Member. The interview was held via Zoom and was in anticipation of Flora's retirement at the end of January.



Thanks for joining us today, as we get ready to bid farewell to Flora, who's retiring in a few months.

Flora Margheritis: Sure! We love talking about Van Nuys Airport. Not too many folks know how great the airport is. This is a golden opportunity. So thank you.

Of course. We'd like to start by asking how you attained the job and position. With Flora's impending retirement, that will be especially important to journal.

Flora: I'll try to keep it short. I've been asked that many times through the course of my career. I like to tell my story because it takes me back to my childhood.

Sounds interesting!

Flora: When I was about eight years old, I paid a visit to Mexico City's International Airport where my uncle was executive director at the time. On a family visit I remember going to his office and being very impressed with the fact that you could look outside the window and see airplanes and runways. That left an impression in my mind.

Curiosity got the best of me when I was trying to figure out how on earth an airplane could fly. I was flying back and forth between LA and Mexico City at the time on a 747; I couldn't understand how such a heavy machine could maintain flight in the air. Being the curious bug that I was, I wanted to figure it out.

When I was 13 or 14, I took an interest in aerodynamics and wanted to know how an airplane flew. That led to me wanting to take flying lessons; I started taking flying lessons when I was 15. I actually earned my private pilot certificate before I earned my driver's license, or maybe right around the same time.

I always knew that something in airports or aviation would be the career for me. That's when I set my aviation path at a very young age. And once I earned my private pilot's certificate, I had my sights set on getting my first real aviation job at an airport somewhere.



Right. Were you instrument-rated when you were that young? How high was your license?

Flora: No, just a private pilot certificate. I did start my instrument rating, although I never completed it. Being a recreational pilot is what I wanted to do first; I wasn't too interested in flying in inclement weather.

Got it. Keep going.

Flora: I did think about how great it would be to be a commercial pilot and

maybe go down that path, but for one reason or the other I decided not to pursue it. I wanted a job at an airport, and I kept thinking back to my uncle's office. How can I get an airport office some day?

You certainly got that! That's where we photographed you on the cover.

Flora: Right, you look out the window and see aircraft and runways. That's a dream fulfilled, as far as I'm concerned.

But anyway, my very first job at an airport – and I laugh at this, although it was wonderful – was at the Burbank Airport gift shop. But I had a strategy; I had a plan. I wanted a job with the airlines or airport in some capacity. I figured, if I get this job at the airport gift shop selling cigarettes, candy and gum, eventually I'm going to meet a manager where I could demonstrate these great customer service skills that I have. I hoped that would lead me into an aviation job.

Did it?

Flora: That's exactly what happened. It didn't lead me into an airline job, but it led me into a job at an FBO. An FBO is an acronym for Fixed-Base Operator. The FBO manager at one of the FBOs at Burbank Airport at the time, Martin Aviation, offered me a job because he was impressed by my customer service skills. So I worked at Martin Aviation for six years...



'If you love what you do, it's not really work. That holds true.'

— Flora Margheritis

The iconic control tower and west taxiway at Van Nuys Airport.

THE REBUILDING OF RUNWAY 16R

Van Nuys Airport's iconic Runway 16R after it is repainted following reconstruction.



On Aug. 8, the Van Nuys Airport community celebrated the reopening of reconstructed Runway 16R/34R with a ceremonial first flight using a 1979 Cessna 152 modified using unleaded fuel.

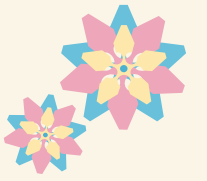


On Oct. 7, Van Nuys Airport marked the completion of reconstruction work on Runway 16R/34L, a \$13 million project to improve the safety of the airfield facilities.

Alive! Interview continues on pages 21 and 22



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.

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



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

Retirements*

Below is a listing of those who Retired from the City in Oct. 2022. To all we say, welcome to the best years!

We honor the people who have spent their working lives building, managing and imagining a better LA, and are now Retired. We thank and appreciate all you have done!

NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS
Adams, Nancy Ann	Animal Keeper	Zoo	15	Jamil, Azhar	Safety Engr. Press Ves. Bldg. & Safety		36	Pedersen, Steve	Chief Env. Comp. Insp.	Public Works	36
Barragan, Diane C.	Benefits Spec.	Fire/Police Pen.	34	Johnson, Lawrence S.	Power Op./Maint.	LADWP	N/D	Pelham, Leeann Marie	Executive Officer	Ethics Comm.	19
Bland, Elmer R.	Sr. Build. Mech. Insp.	Bldg. & Safety	18	Jones, John E.	Mgmt. Analyst	Airports	22	Pheine, Leona Y.	Customer Service	LADWP	N/D
Brajevich, Joseph A.	Sr. Asst. City Att.	City Attorney	14	Julom, George L.	Power Supply	LADWP	N/D	Ramos, Ramiro	Equipment Mechanic	Gen. Services	17
Broersma, Dirk Preston	Dep. City Attorney	City Attorney	18	Kelly, Brian J.	Survey Party Chief	Public Works	22	Rinehart, Susan	Criminalist	LAPD	30
Burnett, Everett S.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D	Kusch, Christina D.	Human Resources	LADWP	N/D	Rodriguez, Fred G.	CPD	LADWP	N/D
Ciemian, Maureen P.	Bulk Power Business	LADWP	N/D	Lambert, Victor W.	Motor Sweeper Op.	Public Works	21	Rodriguez, Joe D.	Security Services	LADWP	N/D
Ciranna, Raymond P.	General Manager	Fire/Police Pen.	33	Lau, Dennis J.	Lieutenant	Airport Police	20	Rodriguez, Teresa C.	Administrative Clerk	Rec and Parks	32
Coca, Rick F.	Council Aide	Council	12	Lee, Annette Y.	Asst. City Attorney	City Attorney	31	Sanchez, Celia V.	Water Distribution	LADWP	N/D
Daniels, Gary M.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	N/D	Lopez, David H.	Sr. Security Officer	LAPD	20	Schulzinger, Michael	Sr. Bldg. Mech. Insp.	Bldg. & Safety	30
De Gruy, Eric B.	Commercial	LADWP	N/D	Lopez, Miguel	Refuse Coll. Truck Op.	Public Works	20	Scott Stafford, Jessye	Sr. Mgmt. Analyst	LAPD	36
El Saheb, Naser S.	Pr. Civil Engineer	Public Works	30	Lujan-Bagheri, Elia	Water Services	LADWP	N/D	Sharp, Christopher S.	Integrated Support	LADWP	N/D
Gonzales, Esperion E.	Fleet Services	LADWP	N/D	Lyons, Anthony C.	ITS	LADWP	N/D	Siders, Porretta G.	Custodian	Gen. Services	14
Hagan, Kenneth	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	N/D	Markel, George T.	Security Services	LADWP	N/D	Sohn, Yong Woo	Deputy City Attorney	City Attorney	25
Hearns, Anita S.	Sr. Comm. Operator	Airports	31	Mdodana, Mary Ann	Pr. Clerk, City Att.	City Attorney	34	Spotts, Gregory J.	Asst. Director	Public Works	13
Heine, David J.	Build. Mech. Insp.	Bldg. & Safety	21	Morales, Juan J.	Fleet Services	LADWP	N/D	Stangeland, James A.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D
Heredia, Maria L.	Sr. Admin. Clerk	LAPD	14	Morris, Craig S.	Power Safety/Training	LADWP	N/D	Swan, Nancy E.	Accounting	LADWP	N/D
Hicks, Cynthia S.	Librarian	Library	15	Munoz, Ricardo Andaya	Systems Aide	LAPD	27	Yuan, Donald C.	ITS	LADWP	N/D
Holloway, Mark	Rehab Constr. Spec.	Housing	24	Nambo, Elvia	Gardener Caretaker	Rec and Parks	29	Whitfield, Trudell W.	Traffic Officer	Transportation	25
Houston, Tonica M.	Forensic Print Spec.	LAPD	22	Napier, James H.	Deputy City Attorney	City Attorney	21	Zimmerman, Patrick J.	Supply Chain	LADWP	N/D
Irvin, Clarence W.	Power Transmission	LADWP	N/D	Ofalla, Hilaria Maralit	Mgmt. Analyst	LAPD	27				

* **NOTE:** If you wish to have a listing deleted from our online posting of Retirement notices, please email us at admin@employeesclub.com, stating the name and department of the Retired person. The request must come from the actual Retired person. We derive our lists from official public records provided by the City and LADWP.

N/D = not disclosed

In Memoriam**

We honor those who have passed away and recognize their lifelong service to the City of Los Angeles. Their lives mattered to our City and our region. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the following current and Retired City employees who were reported to have passed away.

DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE
ACTIVE					
Acord, April L.	CAO	15	Culpepper, Ruth M.	Library	21
Coronado, Celvin A.	LADWP	15	Cunningham, Oliver	N/D	N/D
Cruz-Rivas, Samuel A.	Bldg. & Safety	5	Curdes, Sandra A.	LADWP	32
Flores, Charlie G.	General Services	2	Dang, Thinh T.	Airports	13
Manzo, David	LADWP	4	Daugherty, Stanley E.	LADWP	12
Nemec, Joseph V.	Library	15	Davenport, Ralph G.	LADWP	32
Palmer, C.A.	General Services	35	Denton, Glanner F.	City Attorney	26
RETIRED					
Adams, Emile	LADWP	32	Diaz, Thomas M.	LADWP	39
Alayo, Orlando P.	Rec and Parks	35	Downs, Floydell	LADWP	32
Ancheta, Lourdes C.	Controller	24	Dreher, Lawrence L.	N/D	N/D
Angotti, Shirley M.	LADOT	17	El Saheb, Naser S.	Public Works	30
Araujo, Herman R.	LADOT	19	Flores, Pete	N/D	N/D
Atkins, Floyd	LADWP	25	Foley, Janice M.	LADWP	32
Ayson, Jesus F.	Airports	13	Fountaine, Gwendolyn A.	LADOT	9
Barillas, Rufina M.	LADWP	27	Fuchs, Howard M.	City Attorney	29
Bass, Robert	N/D	N/D	Gonzalez, Everardo	Airports	11
Boutte, Margaret M.	LADOT	15	Harbin, Ronnie D.	LADWP	31
Bowers, Kenneth H.	Airports	25	Hepburn, Walter J.	N/D	N/D
Browne, Fletcher H.	N/D	N/D	Howard, Robert J.	N/D	N/D
Buck, Lawrence	N/D	N/D	Hull, Jerry R.	LADWP	27
Bynum, Emerson L.	N/D	N/D	Jackson, James N.	N/D	N/D
Carter, Antoinette M.	N/D	N/D	Johnson, Harvard A.	LADWP	38
Castillo, John M.	Public Works	30	Kaya, Winston, T.	N/D	N/D
Choe, Young	LADWP	10	Larson, Harry W.	N/D	N/D
Cox, Milton	Airports	37	Leacher, Guy	N/D	N/D
Crellin, Dayne D.	N/D	N/D	Licon, Ramon P.	Public Works	34
			McGee, David E.	LADWP	29
			McLaughlin, James F.	Mayor's Office	21
			Miller, Gerald F.	N/D	N/D
			Moreno, Dorine W.	Public Works	30
			Nittinger, Carolyn N.	LADWP	40
			Oda, Frank T.	LADWP	38
			Parra, Dean C.	LAPD	18
			Perry, Clarence J.	N/D	N/D
			Piechura, Donald R.	N/D	N/D
			Pongvarin, Suree	General Services	15
			Rao, Joe Ling	Public Works	23
			Rashkin, Lewis H.	LADWP	35
			Rezamand, Mohammad	LADWP	32
			Rodriguez, Arthur	Rec and Parks	31
			Schaad, George A.	N/D	N/D
			Simmons, R.D.	LADWP	39
			Sisson, Mary S.	LADWP	24
			Smith, Launa	LADWP	29
			Sneidmiller, John R.	LADWP	20
			Snyder, Darla L.	N/D	N/D
			Stonebreaker, Larry L.	Housing	35
			Thompson, Canon W.	N/D	N/D
			Tucker, Ronald L.	General Services	23
			Valdez, Jose M.	Rec and Parks	22
			Villafana, Henry S.	N/D	N/D
			Wade, Daniel	N/D	N/D
			Wecker, Robert C.	Public Works	36
			Weissman, George E.	N/D	N/D
			Wells, Marilyn M.	Airports	38
			Williams, Virginia	N/D	N/D
			Willingham, John W.	Rec and Parks	27
			Wilson, Richard B.	LADWP	28
			Woods, King R.	N/D	N/D

** **NOTE:** If you wish to have a listing deleted from our online posting of these death notices, please email us at admin@employeesclub.com, stating the name and department of the deceased, and your relation to that person. We derive our lists from official public records provided by the City and LADWP.

N/D = not disclosed



Karen Bass is sworn in as Mayor by U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris.

A New Administration

NEW MAYOR, COUNCILMEMBERS SWORN IN.

CITYWIDE: The weekend of Dec. 10-11 saw the swearing in of the City of LA's new administration:

- Mayor** Karen Bass
- Councilwoman** Eunisses Hernández, District 1
- Councilwoman** Katy Young-Yaroslavsky, District 5
- Councilwoman** Traci Park, District 11
- Councilman** Hugo Soto-Martínez, District 13
- Councilman** Tim McOskar, District 15
- City Attorney** Hydee Feldstein Soto, and
- City Controller** Kenneth Mejia

Karen Bass is the 43rd person and first Black woman to serve as Mayor of LA. She enters with experience in community organizing and representing LA in the California State Assembly and U.S. Congress. Congratulations to all new City administration and staff. The Club looks forward to working with you to ensure LA remains the best City in which to live and work in the country.



From left: City Clerk Holly Wolcott after the swearing-in of Councilwoman Eunisses Hernández and newly elected City Controller Kenneth Mejia.



Traci Park is sworn in at Loyola Marymount University in Westchester.



From left: Hydee Feldstein-Soto, the City's first female City Attorney, with Chief Kristin Crowley, LAFD, the City's first female fire chief.



Tim McOskar is sworn in in San Pedro.

Curren Price Jr. was sworn in as Council District 9's continuing Councilman.



INSURANCE FROM THE CLUB



Long-Term Disability Insurance

The most important product you can get at the Club.

Get it today. Here's why:

- Protect your monthly income! You never know what might happen to you.
- How would you pay your bills if you couldn't work?
- City and DWP employees have limited sick time or salary continuation and no State Disability Insurance (SDI). The Club's Long-Term Disability Insurance is more than an option - it's vital.

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



Tiffany Sy
Member Services Counselor
(at the Club Store)
tsy@employeesclub.com
Work cell: (213) 440-8270
(800) 464-0452, Ext. 202

20 years of insurance experience
CA LICENSE NO: 0D75348



Cheryl Martin
Member Services Counselor
cmartin@employeesclub.com
Work cell: (213) 819-0794
(800) 464-0452, Ext. 136

23 years of insurance experience
CA LICENSE NO: 0C12823



Phone and virtual meeting appointments available.

Email: help@employeesclub.com

Or call: (800) 464-0452

LACEA Insurance Services, Inc. ('Employees Club of California') is a licensed insurance agency offering insurance benefits to qualified Club members. The Club's CA DOI Lic. No. is 0B98000.

Ana for Sustainability

ANA TABUENA-RUDDY NAMED NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, STREETS.LA.



Ana Tabuena-Ruddy

PUBLIC WORKS: Public Works/Street Services has named Ana Tabuena-Ruddy as its new Assistant Director; chief of Urban Forestry, Street Maintenance, and the Investigation and Enforcement Division; and the City's Chief Sustainability Officer.

She replaces Gregg Spotts, who left the City last year to become the transportation chief for the city of Seattle.

Previously, Ana, a Landscape Architect II, managed StreetsLA's grants program, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for City initiatives, among other tasks.

Congratulations, Ana! We look forward to working with you to tell the story of StreetsLA's many sustainability efforts. ●

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www.RosebudMarketing.com

The Alive! Kids' Coloring Contest

Coloring

The Club

with

Deadline for submission:

Feb. 10, 2023

Compiled by:



Guadalupe Lira,
Club Store Manager



DeAngelo Thompson,
Customer Service Associate

Mail completed coloring art to:

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

The Club will do every-
thing it can to gather all
the submissions, but it
cannot be responsible for
lost or misdirected mail.

Print and Online Schedule

Alive! has moved half of its children's coloring contests online.

In the printed Alive!:

January (winners published in March)
July (winners published in September)

In the online edition of Alive!:

April (winners posted in June)
October (winners posted in December)



SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD ART



Download Coloring Art From the Web

You can also download and print art from *Web Alive!*:
alive.employeesclub.com/kidscoloringcontest

We want to know about you! Tell us a little about yourself:

Your name _____ How old are you? _____

When is your birthday? _____ What is the first name of your best friend? _____

What is your favorite snack? _____

What is your favorite television show? _____

Why do you want to go to the Aquarium of the Pacific? _____

For parents/guardian to complete:

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Job title and department with the City: _____

Parent/guardian phone number: _____

Child's address/city/zip: _____

Club Membership number: _____



Apply Now for Club Scholarship; Deadline Revised

APPLICATIONS FOR THE CLUB'S MUKAI SCHOLARSHIP ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE. DEADLINE HAS BEEN MOVED EARLIER BY TWO WEEKS, TO 11:59 P.M., JUNE 15, 2023.

CLUB: Fill out your application now for the Joannie Mukai Memorial Club Scholarship on the *Alive!* Website.

The 2023 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 scholarship deadline has been moved earlier, to June 15, 2023.

The scholarship program has simplified the application process to be contained in one step. (Previously, eligibility confirmation required a preliminary step; it has been streamlined into one process.) 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 2023. There is no age limit for Member or spouse, but all others must be under 25.

All materials must be completed on the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. June 15, 2023. Winners will be notified by July 31 before school starts and will be invited to attend a Scholarship Banquet.

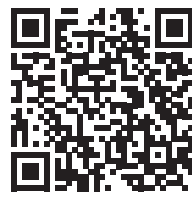
The Club expects to give each recipient a stipend of \$500.

"We welcome all Club Members and their close family members to apply for this very important scholarship program," said Robert Larios, Club CEO. "The Club sincerely honors its many Members for their service to the City, County and State, and it is part of honoring Members that we support the future success of our young people. We encourage all those eligible to apply."

"The scholarship program is about honoring achievement and excellence in our Club Members and their families," said Association CEO John Hawkins. "It's one of the most important ways we celebrate the work and lives of municipal employees. Joannie would be delighted at the level of scholarship and volunteerism applicants show every year."

Interested candidates may begin the process directly on the *Alive!* Website at:

alive.employeesclub.com/mukaischolarship



Apply Today
on the *Alive!* Website:
alive.employeesclub.com/scholarship

DEADLINE
11:59 p.m.,
June 15, 2023



Cameron Palacios incoming student at UCLA, and son of Shirley Palacios, Harbor, City of Los Angeles, received a stipend last year as part of the Mukai Scholarship Program.

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 2023. Current high school seniors matriculating to a four-year school in Fall 2023 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 15, 2023. 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



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," Club CEO John Hawkins 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."



Photos compiled by
John Hawkins, LACEA
Association CEO

• A 'PICTURE' OF 2022 •

John's Picture Perfect

Alive! presents some of our favorite winners from 'John's Picture Perfect' contest from last year.

During 2022, Club Member photographers and their photographic eyes found beauty in our world.

For the John's Picture Perfect contest's 10th anniversary in January 2015, we printed our favorite photos from contest's entire span. Readers liked it so much that we decided to run an annual recap.

In 2022, Club Members submitted a large number of entries and dozens of winners. Here are some of them with their commentary.

Keep submitting your great photos, and keep looking with a grand sense of wonder to capture that Picture Perfect! ●



WINNER

"At least look at me when I'm talking to me..." One in denial, while the other expression confesses a somber realization that we have to pack up that morning and go back home. Goodbye Vegas." — **Dominique Daito, LAPD/Communications**



WINNER

"This was taken at the LAPD Ahmanson equestrian facility. This is the majestic American quarter horse, featuring our great Flag in the background."

— **Officer Roberto Morales, LAPD**



WINNER

"Since telecommuting, I enjoy my new hobby, gardening. Occasionally, beautiful butterflies stop by, visiting my little garden!"

— **Constance Chang, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment**

MORE WINNERS ON WEB ALIVE!

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

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- Beverly J. Clark, *First Vice President*
- Mark Blunk, *Second Vice President*
- Loucin (Lucy) Artinian, *Treasurer*
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Dial (800) 678-4145 plus extension

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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 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 LAFCU 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

June 8, 2023 RLACEI 50th Anniversary Party
Location and time to be announced

RLACEI EVENTS RESERVATION LINE:
(800) 678-4145, ext. 701



Ruth B. Perry

A Message from President Ruth B. Perry

During this season of new beginnings and the welcoming of the New Year, one often reflects on the moments of the past year for which they are most thankful. Friends and family always come to mind, but all of us on the Board of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) are reminded of how thankful we are for our members and our partnerships with the Employees Club of California and the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS). Because of these partnerships, RLACEI was able to achieve significant results in increasing membership and providing information to our members. We express our gratitude to LACERS for allowing the mailing of our information sheet to all Retirees. Our membership increased by almost 800 new members as a result. Our partnership with the Employees Club not only provides free Club membership to all RLACEI members, it also allows us the opportunity to publish relevant articles in *Alive!*, and the Club graciously contributes the majority of the awarded prizes at our events!

In addition to our membership drive, we held the "Refer a Friend" campaign, which awarded a \$25 Target gift card to any current RLACEI member who referred a fellow City of Los Angeles Retiree to join. Although this campaign is now over, we thank those who participated, and we encourage you to continue to refer fellow Retirees as there is strength in numbers!

Member participation was at an all-time high this past year at our "Spring Fling," golf tournament, summer picnic and holiday party. We hope to continue that growth, especially in 2023.

Fifty years ago this upcoming June, a group of civic minded City of Los Angeles Retirees formed and incorporated RLACEI. Most of them served many years on the Board and, unfortunately, we have lost a great number of them. In their memory and to continue the spirit of fellowship and advocacy they established; we will host a grand 50th anniversary celebration this year. Further information will be posted in future editions of *Alive!*, and the RLACEI website and Facebook page. We hope you will join us to celebrate our continued efforts of camaraderie with our fellow Retirees.

In the furthering of our mission statement, this past

year, RLACEI joined the Alliance for Public Retirees to affect change to the Windfall Elimination Provisions (WEP), which unfairly impacts those Retirees who contributed enough quarters into the Social Security system by greatly reducing or eliminating the amount of Social Security Benefits received. Together with other Retiree organizations across the nation, we hope to advance federal legislation aimed at reforming both the WEP and the Government Pensions Offset (GPO) laws, which impact many of our members. The GPO can reduce the amount of Social Security spousal or survivor benefits by as much as two-thirds, when a retiree may need it most after the loss of their loved one.

RLACEI delivered public comment before LACERS Health Benefits Committee and the LACERS Board of Administration in support of an actuarial study to reimburse not only the base amount of the Medicare cost paid by Retirees, but also the additional Income Related Monthly Adjusted Amount (IRMAA) imposed by the Social Security Administration for those Retirees earning more than \$91,000 annually. The motion was passed, and we look forward to providing additional information on this matter once the study has been completed. We thank all those members who submitted public comments and emails to the LACERS Board in support. Your support, trust and cooperation are the indispensable factors that help us achieve our success and affirm our strong position in continuing to advocate for the protection of our benefits and voicing our support or protest when they are being impacted.

In closing, we express heartfelt sympathy and send condolences to the families of our 283 members who passed away this year. We hope fond memories bring you comfort and peace.

With our utmost respect and gratitude, we look forward to your continued support and wish all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! ●

— 2023 RLACEI Board

Beverly Anderson, Lucy Artinian, Mark Blunk, Beverly Clark, Nancy Hammoudian, Vicki Keoseian, Tom Moutes, Ruth Perry, Elizabeth Torres

RETIREES UPDATE



Tom Moutes

IS 'MEDICARE ADVANTAGE' REALLY AN ADVANTAGE?

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

As I creep closer to age 65, I find myself suddenly a lot more interested in figuring out how Medicare works and the differences between the Medicare Supplement plans and the Medicare Advantage plans LACERS offers. While I have done some research, I am certainly not an expert yet. Also, as a disclaimer, different Retirees have different needs and may make different decisions among health plans.

Over the last several years, LACERS has switched some of its Medicare Supplement plans (for Retirees who are 65-plus years old) to Medicare Advantage plans. I would strongly encourage you to review the 2023 LACERS Health Benefits Guide for the differences in the specific benefits those plans offer.

The Medicare.gov website provides a general comparison between traditional Medicare plans and Medicare Advantage plans, including:

- With traditional Medicare, you can go to any doctor or hospital that takes Medicare, anywhere in the United States With Medicare Advantage in most cases, you can use only those doctors and other providers who are in the plan's network and service area (for non-emergency care).

- With traditional Medicare, in most cases you don't need a referral to see a specialist. With Medicare Advantage, you may need to get a referral to see a specialist.

- Some Medicare Advantage plans offer additional benefits, including vision, hearing and dental.

There are other areas of comparison between tradi-

tional Medicare plans and Medicare Advantage plans on the Medicare.gov website.

So, what have I figured out so far from my research?

- Because I have a preferred provider organization (PPO) plan, I am inclined toward a Medicare Supplement plan, which seems to operate in a more similar fashion than the Medicare Advantage plans – which seem to be more like health maintenance organizations (HMOs);

- I am very concerned about why insurance companies and their celebrity endorsers are pushing so hard to get folks to enroll in Medicare Advantage plans – my presumption is because it is to the insurance companies' "Advantage" and not to my "Advantage;"

- The "extra benefits" some Medicare Advantage plans offer, including vision, hearing and dental, don't seem necessary to me as LACERS already provides those to a large extent.

- I have real concerns regarding the recent press coverage of Medicare Advantage plans that includes allegations of unjustified denials of claims as well as errors in payments.

- As LACERS considers whether to continue with Medicare Advantage plans or switch some back to Medicare Supplement plans, I hope the LACERS staff and consultant will thoroughly review the performance of the Advantage plans and survey Retirees on their experiences.

That's all for now! ●

— RLACEI CONTINUES PAGE 18

So Long, Dennis!

By Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director

Board Director Dennis Harding is retiring from the RLACEI Board after serving four years on the Board and lastly holding the position of Entertainment Chair and Nominations Chair. He served on the Board at the same time as his dad, Ed Harding, who was the Board President for more than 25 years. Dennis started with the City in 1968 following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who also had careers in Public Works/Street Maintenance. Dennis retired from the City of Los Angeles in 2005 in the same position as his father had in 1981.

Throughout the years as Entertainment Committee Chair, Dennis has been instrumental in planning and organizing the social events sponsored by the Board. Also, serving as Nominations Committee Chair, he has interviewed and selected most of the Board members who serve on the Board today. Dennis has also contributed several light-hearted and comic relief articles to *Alive!*



Dennis Harding

Since his retirement from the City and in addition to serving on the Board, Dennis has been employed as a part-time property manager for Canoga Park Lutheran Church and serves as the project manager for a charter school on the church property.

Dennis has been married to his wife Rica for 46 years. They have three children and eight grandchildren. He is a collector of vintage 1940s-'50s plastic toys and 1950s-'60s Superman, Superboy, and science fiction comic books.

Parting Words? "I am confident that the Board is in good hands with hardworking individuals. I wish them continued success in all they do to preserve our retirement benefits."

The Board will miss both Dennis and Rica. Dennis' participation and the knowledge he contributed is well appreciated. The RLACEI Board and Retirees send best wishes for a happy, healthy and stress-free retirement! ●



Beverly J. Clark

Let's Celebrate Another Milestone With Carrie A. Gabriel

By Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director

Last January, Carrie Gabriel was featured as our "Retiree on the Move!" At that time, she was looking forward to celebrating her 100th birthday on Jan. 26, 2022. What a wonderful celebration and milestone that was! She had planned to have a big celebration but due to the pandemic, plans were changed. Now here it is a year later, and we anticipate celebrating another birthday with Carrie as she awaits her 101st birthday! She, herself, is amazed that at 100 she is still moving about.

Last year – 2022 – was quite a year for Carrie; nothing astounding other than at 100 she still has clarity of mind and is very active and mobile. She believes staying active and on the move is one of the keys to her longevity, along with God's grace and favor, as well as not harboring hatred. Throughout the year Carrie has shared some of her words of wisdom with us in her "Carrie's Corner" articles and



Carrie Gabriel

will continue to do so. She is not lacking in conversation and loves to talk about politics and world events.

Although COVID-19 has diminished many of her activities and social gatherings, she's looking forward to moving about more freely soon. Of course, she has

had some health challenges but overall for a centenarian, she is remarkable. Carrie lives independently, still cooks her own meals, uses the computer, uses public transportation (Access) to move about and is a walking history book. At the insistence of her son, she stopped driving in late 2020 and says it makes her feel a little less independent.

Please join the RLACEI Board of Directors in wishing Carrie a very blessed 101st birthday. Send well wishes directly to Carrie at cgabriel18@roadrunner.com or post on RLACEI's Facebook page.

Happy 101st birthday, Carrie! ●



From left: Beverly Clark, First Vice President, RLACEI; Carrie Gabriel; and Club CEO Robert Larios. From last year's 100th birthday celebration.



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Call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 717, or visit our website at RLACEI.ORG and join today!



Looking for a Board Member With Computer Skills



Computer savvy RLACEI Board Director needed! Experience and skills in Webpage maintenance,

Facebook management and extensive Microsoft Office proficiency particularly wanted. Other computer skills greatly appreciated. If you enjoy working with and assisting City Retirees, join us.

For more information on this position contact:

Dennis Harding at: (800) 678-4145, ext. 706

Email: Dennis.Harding@RLACEI.org or

Beverly Clark at: Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org

RLACEI

— Continued From Page 17



Good Times: Celebrating the Holidays

By Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director
RLACEI hosts its annual holiday party.

Photos by Summy Lam, Club Director of Marketing

It's clear our Retirees know how to "show up and show out!" A great time was had by all who attended our annual holiday party, held Dec. 15 at Friendship Auditorium. This year's event marked the highest number of reservations in many years, if ever. All who attended were in a festive, holiday spirit and ready to win a prize, adding to the fun.

Although the weather was a little chilly for Southern Californians, the attendance was great. Attendees were served a delicious lunch that included herb roasted turkey, garlic mashed potatoes, cornbread stuffing, mixed vegetables, salad and pumpkin pie.

Gifts and prizes were provided by RLACEI, the Club and the Los Angeles Federal Credit Union. Special guests and speakers included LACERS

Commissioner Michael Wilkinson; Club Vice President of Marketing Summy Lam, and Club Director of Sales Noelle Kauffman.

Commissioner Wilkinson provided updates on LACERS and the new facility that LACERS will be moving into shortly. Summy Lam highlighted some of the upcoming events that the Club will be hosting for Club Members next year and included news of the Club Store's transition to mobile units starting Feb. 1 and that Club Members should stop by the store for 40 percent off select merchandise during January.

RLACEI is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year on June 8. Mark your calendars to join in the celebration. Watch for time and location to be announced.



From left: Roobik Gorjian, Retired, Public Works/Engineering, 26 years of City service; Armando Tapia, Retired, Public Works/Street Services, 34 years, with his wife, Alice; and Nellie Deom, Retired, Mayor's Office, 31 years, and her husband, Bill.

Sally Lopez, Retired, Library, 15 years of City service, and her husband, John.



From left: Daniel Bravroff, Retired, General Services, 30 years of City service, and his wife, Sandy Bravroff; and Connie and Dennis Clyde, Retired, LAFD, 22 years.



From left: Marlene Brown, Retired, LACERS, 35 years of City service; Cathy Hagopian, Retired, LACERS, 32 years; Tim Stratton, Retired, Convention Center, 34 years; and Beverly Jacobs, guest.



RLACEI Board Members, from left: Lucy Artinian, Treasurer; Elizabeth Torres, Entertainment Director; Mark Blunk, Audit Director; Beverly Anderson, Director; Dennis Harding, former Director; Ruth Perry, President; Beverly Clark, Vice President; Nancy Hammoudian, Secretary; and Vicki Keoseian, Director.



Ruth and Fred Kong, Retired, Public Works, 33 years of City service.



From left: Henry Orona, Retired, General Services, 33 years of City service, and his wife, Carol; and Dennis Harding, Retired, Public Works, 36 years.



From left: Daisy Vasuthasawat, Retired, Controllers Office, 31 years of City service; Elizabeth Lee, Retired, Finance, 37 years; Tony Lee, Retired, Public Works, 40 years; Dodie Munoz, Retired, ITA, 26 years; and Irene Munoz, Retired, ITA, 26 years.



From left: Nancy Hammoudian, RLACEI Board Member, and Beverly Jacobs.



From left: Hank Murakami, Retired, LAFD, 33 years of City service, and his wife, Ofelia; Cherry Recio, Retired, Housing, 39 years; and Connie Gacad, Retired, Public Works, 31 years.

Green Light for ATSAC

TRANSPORTATION OPENS ITS NEW TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER.

LADOT: On Nov. 30, then-Mayor Eric Garcetti cut the ribbon on Transportation's new and renamed Advanced Transportation System and Coordination (ATSAC) Center. The new facility controls the timing of traffic signals across Los Angeles and upgrades a system that was first established to support the 1984 Summer Olympic Games. The expansion enables ATSAC to manage the increasing complexity of Los Angeles' transportation system as well as prepare the City to host major events like the LA 28 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"Our ATSAC system is the nerve center that helps us keep LA moving – in all the various ways and modes in which Angelenos travel today," said LADOT Interim General Manager Connie Llanos. "This state-of-the-art facility brings our legacy system into the 21st century, improves the daily lives of all Angelenos, and helps prepare Los Angeles to host the world for the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games."

The expanded workspace allows for specialized teams including emergency response, special traffic operations, parking enforcement and traffic control command, and transit optimization to work collaboratively across disciplines for the kind of large-scale coordination needed during special events.

The ATSAC system utilizes more than 26,000 sensors and detectors and 620 traffic monitoring cameras to improve the efficiency of travel in Los Angeles. A Texas A&M Transportation Institute study showed that ATSAC reduces stopped delay on arterial streets by more than 32 percent and overall emissions by 3 percent.

Congratulations, LADOT, on the new ATSAC Center! ●

THANK YOU!

The Club honors Transportation Engineers for their hard work behind the scenes keeping LA moving, and General Services' Construction Services and other units that helped construct the new ATSAC Center.

Alive! has featured the previous ATSAC Center in the past. Look for **Alive!** to cover this brand new version soon.



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{ Who are the people you see every day? }

No. 104
in a series.



People We See

Shelterless in Los Angeles.

Meet Priscilla Cordero



Association CEO John Hawkins and Priscilla Cordero.



INTERVIEW

DATE OF INTERVIEW

Dec. 7, 2022.

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:

Third and Main Streets downtown.

BIRTHDAY:

"Dec. 7, 1985."
It was Priscilla's 37th birthday on the day of the interview.

Birthplace: "East Los Angeles."

Married?: "Never."

Parents: Her parents got divorced when she was nine; she stays in touch with her dad, who lives in Mexico.

Family: "Two sisters, ages 29 and 45."

Religion: Catholic, but doesn't practice.

Education: "High school."

Favorite TV show: "That '70s Show."

Favorite candy: "Skittles."

Favorite food: "Italian."

The story: "I ended up being in a very destructive relationship. My boyfriend got me hooked on heroin and other hard drugs. For the 12 years we were together, my life got worse each day." Eventually Priscilla was fired from her job at Food for Less after working as a cashier there for 10 years. Soon after she found herself living on the streets of downtown LA.

Advice for everyday people: "I can't think of anything at the moment."

The Club gave Priscilla toiletries, food, \$20 and bottled water.

The interview was conducted by John Hawkins, CEO, Los Angeles City Employees Association.



{ In this feature, Association CEO John Hawkins introduces you to people you see every day, but you might not know who they are. The Club reminds you that we all have names and stories to tell. }

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Medieval Times' Royal Feast Menu:

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- Tomato bisque soup
- Sweet buttered corn
- Herb-basted potato
- 2 rounds of select beverages
- Dessert of the Castle
- Slushies



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ALIVE! INTERVIEW

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

That was a true aviation job; I was providing services to aircraft operators – selling fuel, taking their catering order, setting up their ground transportation, and offering all kinds of aeronautical services. That was an excellent job. Not only did it allow me to pursue my education in aviation – we were allowed to do our homework during slow times – but learning the business side of aviation was really helpful to me. I focused on getting an actual degree in aviation management or airport management. I earned my associates degrees at Glendale Community College in airport administration and pilot training. With those degrees, I transferred to Cal State LA, which offered a bachelor's degree in aviation administration, which I earned.

A colleague mentioned to me that the City of L.A. managed four airports (at the time). I was getting close to graduation; I made a simple phone call to one of the high-level managers, Jerry Lee, at LAX and asked if he could help me – were there any internship opportunities? He communicated to an airport superintendent that I needed a job in airport operations. "Let's make it happen," he said. That's how I got an internship position at LAX for the Department of Airports. Today that position is called a Student Professional Worker. It's an excellent opportunity to get started at the airport.

Once I was at LAX, I learned about the Civil Service process to get a full-time job. I had my bachelor's degree, so I was eligible to take the exam for an Airport Operations Coordinator and was lucky enough to land at the top of the list to be called for an opportunity to join the City. So when the opportunity came up where there were open positions available at LAX, I was already an intern learning about several divisions at LAX – engineering, public relations, maintenance, police and risk management. I learned about how all the pieces of the puzzle worked together to run the airport. With all of that experience and my degree, I earned my first real government civil service airport job in February 1993 as an entry-level Airport Operations Coordinator.

From there, I was promoted to different levels as an Airport Superintendent of Operations. I was promoted to a Superintendent II, then to a III. I spent 17 years of my career at Los Angeles International Airport prior to coming out to Van Nuys; that came in 2008 when an opportunity opened up at Van Nuys Airport. The Van Nuys Airport was hiring for a Chief of Airport Operations, so I was promoted into that position. I was the Chief of Operations for eight years, focusing on safety compliance of the airport, overseeing staff who were responsible for making sure that we ran a safe airport in compliance with federal, state and local regulations. While I did that for eight years, I learned a lot watching and learning from the previous airport managers, learning how they handled everything – the issues, the challenges, the stakeholder interests, the politics – you name it. When the opportunity came to step into the Airport Manager position in 2016 – I accepted that role and have been the Airport Manager ever since.

In my final year, I was promoted to Director of Operations. But my primary function was to continue to manage Van Nuys Airport, one of the busiest general aviation airports in the world.

That is my story!

Quite a story! Christian, how about you?

Christian: My dad was in aviation. Airshows were the thing to do when I was a kid. I went to the Rialto Airport and met Art Shaw. He was an aviator. There was a small group there called the Civil Air Patrol, which managed a small cadet program there, which I joined. Art Shaw gave me my first logbook. It has his signature on it, which is kind of cool in today's world.

I stayed on that trajectory. I wanted to become a commercial pilot, but I didn't know how to do that. I became a pilot at 16 at Torrance Airport. I received my IFR at Brackett Field in Pomona.

I joined the airlines back in 1989; I'm one of the last employees with Pan Am Airways. I was with Pan Am at Terminal 2 at LAX at that time. Pan Am left, of course. I moved around with the airlines until I got the opportunity to work with the City in Airport Operations, managing aircraft parking positions (gates). That was in 2004. The Airport Manager at that time decided that all Coordinators and Superintendent

I's should be out on the airfield. That's how I got my taste out on the airfield itself, driving around between airplanes. I loved every second of it.

I moved to Van Nuys as a Superintendent II. I worked for Flora when she was a chief here, then I was promoted back to LAX as the terminal manager at the Tom Bradley International Terminal. I did that for three years, and I worked with all the airlines. I came back here as a Chief of Airport Operations working for Flora again. This is round number two for me in separate roles working for Van Nuys Airport.

Was that the original Pan Am? Or the second version?

Christian Moreno: It was the second. We still have some folks who were there for many, many years.

Great. Paul, how about you?

Paul: I was born and raised in Santa Monica. I learned how to fly with a scholarship by the Santa Monica Airport Association that encouraged high school students to put their name in the hat for consideration to get a private pilot certificate. I was fortunate enough to also land a job there at Tantalizing Takeoffs, a pilot supply shop that allowed me to get a flavor of what aviation was all about. I learned a lot from the Noise Officer there, Jason Morgan, who gave me a pamphlet of the Federal Aviation Regulations – Part 139, which described how to run an airport – it's our bible of how airports are supposed to be maintained and regulated for commercial service. Through that high school scholarship opportunity, I found jobs at the Santa Monica Airport refueling and washing airplanes as a young kid. I worked at Justice Aviation for Joe and Sharon Justice and then got a job at Burbank Airport in the late 1990s. I experienced a significant aircraft accident while working there – a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 overshot the runway and went through the blast fence there in the late '90s. Through that experience in emergency operations and just being in the thick of it, I continued to learn about this fascinating industry and the super dynamic growth in air travel.

I joined LAWA in 2008. Like Flora and Christian, I was fortunate enough to get different opportunities at LAWA on a variety of different projects and programs. I found strong interests in emergency management, emergency operations, customer service and working with the terminal operations team on a variety of different aviation topics. I've been able to come back to the roots of general aviation and propeller-driven aircraft here at the Van Nuys Airport compared to Los Angeles International Airport. I'm super excited to continue the good work that Christian and Flora have done all these years.

It sounds to me like we have three people who not only work in aviation, but who also live and breathe it. All three of you were in aviation before you ever worked for the City.

Paul Herrera: Right.

A Better, Greener Airport

Flora, you're retiring soon. Talk about the progress of the airport since you began.

Flora: I started at Van Nuys Airport in July 2008, and I've been the Manager since 2016. The progress has been tremendous. We've invested more than \$100 million in capital projects, including the investments the tenants have made. We've invested in our runways, our taxiways, taxi lanes – the core infrastructure. The tenant investments have been in their facilities, their hangers, their private terminals, and other facilities. I've seen so much investment in the years I've been here at Van Nuys.

But also what's different – when I got here in 2008, there wasn't this tremendous focus on sustainability and environmentalism. We are very focused on these elements today. We recognize that there are impacts to our

neighbors, and we invest significantly in programs to try and reduce our carbon footprint. For example, our tenants have invested a lot in solar projects; there are more rooftop solar panels here at Van Nuys than at any other general aviation airport, at least in the state, if not broader. Our facilities are being built in a very green way. Many of our tenants are seeking LEED [green building] certification. We're seeing so much on the environmental/sustainability front. Van Nuys Airport now offers Sustainable Alternative Jet Fuel, unleaded gasoline for piston-powered aircraft, and renewable diesel fuel. Van Nuys Airport is a national leader in environmental sustainability due to the collective efforts of our tenants. That's what's happening here.

What will you be most proud of?

Flora: At the top of the list will be the partnerships and the relationships I've built with all of the Van Nuys Airport stakeholders. By stakeholders, I'm talking about everybody – my airport staff, airport tenants, our government and business partners, our neighbors, our communities, our elected officials, and their staff. Those strong partnerships and relationships make me very proud and without them doing my job would have been very hard.

Speaking of my staff – LAWA has a lot of employees. And almost 60 of them work here at the Van Nuys Airport. We're talking about police, operations, maintenance, and our administrative folks. We have one electrician out here, one plumber. We have a Maintenance Supervisor, a painter, and custodians. We have public relations staff out here. Collectively we're one team here and everybody has the common goal of making this airport one of the best general aviation airports in the country. Van Nuys Airport is L.A.'s premier business airport. I'm very proud of my staff.

Community relations has to be a big part of the growth.

Flora: Yes. That's a big part of my job. My number one job here, as it relates to the community, is work collaboratively, and to express to the community the value that the airport brings. Cities and counties are more successful when they have an airport, and the value that we bring in terms of the jobs and the economic impact is tremendous.

But before we move on, I want to make sure I mention how exceptional our employees were during the pandemic.

Sure.

Flora: We had never been through a pandemic. This airport had never experienced that. It's important to mention the resilience and the strength of all of the employees who work at the airport, not just the LAWA employees but our airport tenants, too. Their commitment to their jobs to get us through this was amazing. It was a stressful time, but through it all they kept the airport going, and we played a significant role in the City's economic recovery. We learned a lot of lessons on how to handle things, and I feel we're ready if another one comes. We recovered a lot quicker than other businesses. For that, I'm very proud.

Transition of Flight Types

Is there any way to quantify the development of Van Nuys since you started? And how did the pandemic affect your business?

Flora: When we talk about growth, we focus on airport operations, defined as takeoffs and landings. Van Nuys actually used to have a lot more takeoffs and landings than we are doing today. Our highest number of operations occurred in the mid '90s when the airport was doing more than 600,000 operations annually. That's a lot of operations. But that airport was a different airport. It catered more to propeller aircraft; it was not the business aviation airport that it is today. I wasn't here then. Also, this airport has always been a very popular airport to conduct flight training. Every time you do flight training, and you conduct a touch and go operation, that drives up the operational count.

Today there are more than 300,000 operations annually. We've gone from that 600,000 down to 300,000 operations because we've seen a decline in general aviation aircraft operations typically conducted by propeller aircraft. We're seeing an increase in jet operations, but we are still seeing a lot more propeller aircraft takeoffs and landings than we are jet operations. A lot of the propeller traffic has moved to other airports.

One thing that I do see at Van Nuys is the impact of the economy. When the economy's doing great, we see a lot more takeoffs and landings. The economy went down for a while. Back in 2015 and 2016, we dipped down to the low 200,000s.

We are at more than 300,000 operations today and climbing. We're getting busier. The pandemic was very, very impactful. I've never been through a pandemic, and what I saw in April 2020 I hope Van Nuys never sees again; we had an 80 percent drop in takeoffs and landings. You can imagine how hurtful that was to our businesses, to our users, to LAWA, to the City. But we recovered quickly. Travelers who can afford it discovered the convenience of flying business aviation and chartering a jet. Travelers did not want to fly commercial airlines throughout the pandemic for different reasons, including health concerns and because of the rules that were always changing. They turned to business aviation where there was a lot more flexibility, a lot more privacy, a lot fewer restrictions.

Leadership

A question for Christian and Paul, and we know she's listening: Talk about Flora's leadership.

Flora: Make it good!

What impresses you the most?

Christian: It's the way she manages the



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variety of complex matters that impacts this airport. There's always something happening out here. She has a depth of knowledge gained throughout her career that is remarkable. Her ability to recall and deliver information to our stakeholders, to the community, to elected officials is really impressive. Flora has a skill in being able to understand her audience and deliver information that can be quite complicated. She knows how to explain complex matters in a simple way. She identifies resources that are available and will speak to our stakeholders and community members with confidence.

Paul: Flora has done an outstanding job in being a caretaker of this great San Fernando Valley airport. I'm truly impressed by the wealth of knowledge and information that she can recite. You can ask her just about any question from sustainability, to infrastructure, to local government and politics, the surrounding communities, and she's really a walking encyclopedia. I have big shoes to fill. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue this trajectory that we are on, but Flora leaves a wake behind her as she departs with an incredible depth of knowledge and experience.

The Future Van Nuys

Paul, you'll be in charge. Where is the airport going from here?

Paul: It's an exciting time. I'm thrilled. There's a positive future on its horizon. But as Flora has pointed out, it's a new era. I'm grateful that Christian is going to help shepherd me along as I make the transition. He has a lot of experience and knowledge of this great airport for the last 10 years or so, if not more. I'm looking forward to it.

There are a number of topics that we can talk about. But the focus is to make sure that Van Nuys Airport maintains its premier status as a gold standard airport, and being the airport of choice especially here in Southern California. I know that the Los Angeles Green New Deal has a lot of focus as we look to sustainability initiatives. This will encourage thought-provoking discussions on renewable energy and zero emission policies that the City of Los Angeles wants to lead in. It's our job to amplify these initiatives and to encourage stakeholders to participate in these topics so that we can lead the industry and set the new sort of expectation of how we can do better and be a better neighbor. I'm definitely focused on sustainability and all the good it brings to our community.

Safety and security are at the forefront of how we need to be a caretaker of this great land. I am encouraged by the Airport Land Use Plan and how it provides a blueprint of what should be considered in the various areas of the airport. This plan could help us be mindful of the airports future and its development. We are having some really deep and great discussions internally on how to have a vision for this wonderful airport as we go into the next set of years. I'm very much involved with our future plan that was developed back in 2005, and working with our teams of engineers, architects and folks in the environmental group, as well as community relations and public relations folks on how to tell the story of where we have been and where we would like to go from here.

And something that's really exciting for us aviators is urban air mobility and how it's going to really shape the future of aviation. These are what appear to be traditional helicopters that could be used in a variety of ways through electrification. It is clear that urban air mobility and unmanned aircraft will soon be a method of transportation for goods and people who want to get around in an environmentally friendly aircraft. It's going to be fun to see how **The Jetsons** really comes full circle from when we were kids to what potentially could happen in our generation and what we could do in the airspace with these emerging technologies.

Finally, for Angelenos, I think we are all really excited about upcoming events in Los Angeles with the College National Championships, the next FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics. These are all fantastic world events that are coming to Los Angeles, and what better asset than a vibrant general aviation airport that packs a punch with the number of operations that brings business and opportunity to

the City of Los Angeles. It's a true treasure with what we have in our City.

Christian and I have a lot ahead of us. We have big shoes to fill with Flora's departure. We are excited for the future of the Van Nuys Airport. I'm really looking forward to the challenges that are ahead and the opportunities to care for this airport as good as she has done for all these years.

Having said all that, there is a rich history that exists here that should not be forgotten. From **Casablanca** and movies that were filmed here, we still have a pretty thriving film industry that continues to exist here at the Van Nuys Airport, to the backbone of the war effort and the manufacturing of aircraft that supported the war efforts. Van Nuys was deeply involved in World War II – P-38 pilots came here to learn how to fly and participate in the war effort. Marilyn Monroe was discovered here – Ronald Reagan sent a photographer to one of the warehouses to capture women who were involved in the war efforts at the time and on the assembly lines. A photo of Marilyn Monroe was taken; the rest is history.

I didn't know that.

Paul: Speaking of history, I should mention the Condor Squadron. It's a unique nonprofit organization founded in 1965 by a group of World War II fighter pilots. During holiday events, they fly their A6 Texans over the City. They're preserving a piece of aviation history along with the rich past of the Van Nuys Airport. We all respect and appreciate what they do to remember those that made the ultimate sacrifice. They're a true treasure for our City and our airport.

Christian: The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has an affordable mechanic school here at the airport, and not many people know that. The LAUSD program here is a fraction of the cost. We've got to make sure that we keep our kids interested in different options within this field of work. The mechanic school is definitely an option to seek an interest and develop a skillset as an Airframe and Powerplant mechanic. It's located on the west side of the airport and conveniently located to residents in the community.

Paul: Van Nuys has a really fascinating history, and also a fascinating future.

Flora: Our Van Nuys Airport webpage highlights a lot of the awesome history tied to this airport, going back to 1928 when it first started and was established as an airport.

From Manager to Customer

Flora: Speaking of the future, I'm going from manager to user. I'm a private pilot and aircraft owner. My husband and I own a small airplane that we keep over at the Whiteman Airport. He's a private pilot as well. Aviation just really runs in our family. I'll be able to fly in to the airport to see the great things Paul and Christian will be doing after I leave.

For the record, who's your husband?

Flora: Alex Margheritis, the Airport Superintendent of Operations at LAX.

Both aviators. Both City employees. There are a lot of parallels.

Flora: Right.

One-Six Right

You just launched the rebuilt runway.

Flora: It's a very significant runway – so significant that there is a movie named after it, **Runway One Six Right**. You ought to see it some time. It really captures the history and tells the story of the Van Nuys Airport in a very special way.

I have.

Flora: The runway was a major slurry seal project and a significant investment in our

infrastructure at the airport. In the world of general aviation airports, Van Nuys is known as a world-class airport and is LA's business airport. When you start talking about general aviation airports, you're always hearing about Van Nuys and Teterboro [outside New York City in New Jersey]. Investing in our runways allows us to maintain our world-class status. It maximizes operational safety. We improved our runways with new pavement, state-of-the-art LED lights, new signage, new markings and a new look. All of that translates into much safer runways. This investment in our runways gives us an excellent infrastructure and we're good for 20 years with it. Both runways were funded with federal funds, and we need to make sure that Runway One Six Left lasts for 20 years, and One Six Right for another ten years before we can get federal funding for those projects again.

Needed and Necessary

For a number of reasons, small urban airports everywhere are under fire. How important is it that Van Nuys Airport continues to thrive?

Flora: It's extremely important. I hear what's going on in the industry, with communities wanting to close down their airports because of noise and other environmental impacts. What the communities often don't understand is the economic impact that an airport brings to its community. In the case of Van Nuys, the last economic impact study that we did in 2015-16 showed that the airport contributes more than \$2 billion [annually] to the region. We are responsible for more than 10,000 jobs. There are about 5,200 employees who call Van Nuys Airport home. Even though only 60 of us work for LAWA, the remainder works for the more than 100 private businesses here. Imagine if the airport went away, and what that would do to jobs and to the economy. It would be very impactful.

Unfortunately, general aviation airports often are often perceived as airports for the rich, the one-percenters flying or chartering their private jets. But there's another important side – we are important for fire, police, air ambulance and public safety aircraft. A lot of our activity is directly tied to that. During the 1994 earthquake, this airport played a significant role in serving relief flights for the communities, all the flights to bring supplies to the communities that were very impacted. And that is Van Nuys' job, to serve the community critically. Van Nuys Airport plays a key role in the community. We provide flights to patients in need of medical care and provide aircraft facilities for our local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Also, the flight training conducted here helps keep a steady supply of pilots available for our airlines and military. Currently, there is a pilot shortage, and Van Nuys Airport is playing a major role in ensuring the availability of well-trained pilots.

Paul: Right now the industry is experiencing a significant pilot shortage. Most pilots who find their way into a cockpit is because they have found their way to an airport for flight training. Every pilot flying for Delta, United, American and Southwest found their way to those great companies by first flying a smaller propeller-driven aircraft. It's important for the San Fernando Valley to continue to provide an opportunity for pilots to be trained and to support the air transportation system in this manner. Having Van Nuys Airport allows for folks to learn and get involved in aviation and encourages young kids to become interested in this field of work. We hope that one day they too will find a career in aviation. It's important that Van Nuys continues to be a resource and presence in the community, and to provide training that is desperately needed.

Christian: We just had the "SuperScoopers" out here for fire prevention. LA County Fire was out here for fire season as usual, which plays a very big role in the region for fire protection. It's significant where they are, strategically placed, next to these mountains, just north of us. That's a huge benefit to all of us in having them so close

The Mystique of Flight

What do you love about what you do? And Flora, what will you miss?

Flora: The passion. If you have a passion for something, do you really call it work? That's how I feel about aviation and airports. They always say that if you love what you do, it's not really work. Right? That holds true.

I was just mentioning to Paul and Christian this morning that I actually like the smell of jet fuel. I don't know if that's weird or not, but I do. I love watching airplanes take off and land. That's probably something that I will miss in my retirement – watching the takeoffs and landings every day. I'll still be doing some flying on my own, but not every day. It's going to be kind of strange for me to not be able to look out of my office window and watch an aircraft take flight. But this passion isn't going to die with me; I hold it very close to my heart.

Christian: If I had my way, I would be outside watching every landing and takeoff. And I'm not talking about jets exclusively: I would go to the small runway and watch the students take flight. We have an instructors' bench out there – when the instructor believes that the student is ready to fly solo, they'll pull over to this bench, get out, and tell the student that he or she is going to solo. I've experienced it. We've all experienced it as pilots. Anybody who's had a license has experienced it. Seeing the reaction on the pilot's face as they do their first takeoff and landing, by themselves, is really special. With the added workload and areas of responsibility, I'm more in the office nowadays, but I have a nice, beautiful window, right behind me in my office, and I'm always looking to see and hear the pilots take flight and depart to their destinations across the globe. Once a pilot, always a pilot.

Great phrase.

Paul: Whether at Los Angeles International Airport or Van Nuys Airport, my job connects people, and the work allows me to see the connection in business. Our work at Airports creates opportunities for people all over the world to be connected, employed and have an ability to put food on the table with good paying jobs. Being able to work and be part of this connection is really fantastic.

There are so many emerging technologies that will be fascinating to watch.

And also, I think for many aviation nuts like the three of us, we have seen **Top Gun** and the latest, **Top Gun: Maverick**. It's the feeling of being in the cockpit, quietly pushing the envelope of the unknown, moving the throttle forward, even if for a few seconds to do what has not been done that touches home with all of us. Airport operations is our origin and destination that ties the route together. It's so much fun to be part of it, and to contribute where we can.

The mystique of flight is beautiful, interesting and thought-provoking. I'm super excited to be in this giant playground of people, aircraft and the beauty of flight.

Flora, Christian and Paul, thank you very much for this chat, and for all you do for the City of LA. Of course, Flora, we wish you the best in your retirement. You've earned it!

Flora: Thank you, Robert and John.