



Alive!

According to Plan

THE CLUB

John Hawkins, CEO of the Los Angeles City Employees Association (the parent organization of the Club subsidiary), hands the reins of the Association over to current Club CEO Robert Larios. The transfer, effective Jan. 1, has been in the making for a decade.

- PAGE 10



From left: Outgoing parent company CEO John Hawkins with Club subsidiary CEO Robert Larios.

Alive! photo by Summy Lam



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Friendship and Service

As I write in this month's main news story, I very much am humbled and honored to serve Club Members as the CEO of both the Los Angeles City Employees Association and the subsidiary Employees Club of California. I trust you have or will read my thoughts at length later in this issue.

One thing I wanted to emphasize here, though, is the friendship I have with **John Hawkins**, who founded the Club in 2002. We have worked many hours on Members' behalf, and when work rides upon mutual respect and support, that work can only be more productive. I know our friendship has led to even higher levels of service to you, our Members. We have worked together for a single purpose – celebrating your work and lives. It is a friendship that has borne much fruit.

But that friendship goes beyond work efficiencies and productivity. All true friendships do. So, again, thank you, John, for your mentorship, your leadership, your vision – and your friendship.

Holiday Parties

I am delighted that City departments are slowly but surely celebrating the holidays with group parties again! (The Club had our own holiday festivities, too.) General Services threw a party for the first time since the pandemic, and nearly 350 people attended. LAFD's headquarters division celebrated with Santa, and of course our friends at RLACEI were at capacity for their holiday party. (All three parties are chronicled in this month's issue.) We love covering holiday parties, and we thank **Lydia Marquez, Eric Robles, Ruth Perry, Beverly Clark** and our own **Cynthia Ha** for inviting us.



From left: Club Founder John Hawkins and LACEA CEO Robert Larios.

ROBERT'S BLOG

by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club



Fifty Years

From time to time I use this space to congratulate City employees – some of whom are Retired, and some of whom have passed on – who served the City for incredible lengths of service. This month is different – Club Member **David Cook** is approaching 50 years of service, *and he's still working*. Just incredible! Thank you, David, for your example of service, and congratulations on your certificate of appreciation.

Worth Considering

Every morning, no matter how we perceive our lives, let's wake up with gratitude for simply being alive. Remember that there are others in this world who are courageously battling for their very survival.

A Toast

I wish Club Members a very Happy New Year. Use this milestone as an opportunity to delete the outdated version of yourself that's taking up space in your mind, and start anew.

¡Gracias por leer!

— Robert Larios



Raise employee morale! Schedule a #ClubMobile visit!



At a recent Mobile Team site visit.

The #ClubMobile Team will bring benefits experts and Club legendary apparel for purchase at low prices (hats custom-made on site). It's one of the best ways for staff to feel appreciated. Your employees will be grateful!

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



#ClubMobile is cashless!

For your convenience, now accepting:



#ClubMobile Schedule:

The Mobile Team sets up in the North Central Sanitation area the first Monday of every month:

Mondays:
Jan 8, Feb. 5 and Mar. 4
North Central Sanitation
452 N. San Fernando Rd.
6 – 11 a.m.

The Mobile Team sets up in the Downtown area the first Tuesday of every month:

Tuesdays:
Jan. 2, Feb. 6, and Mar. 5
Downtown
120 W. Second St.,
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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

Wednesdays:
Jan. 3, Feb. 7 and Mar. 6
Harbor Boys and Girls Club
100 W. Fifth St., San Pedro
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Mobile Team sets up in the West Valley StreetsLA area the first Thursday of every month:

Thursdays:
Jan. 4, Feb. 8 and Mar. 7
West Valley StreetsLA – New!
9324 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
12 – 2 p.m.

For additional #ClubMobile visit locations and times, check out our Instagram: @EmployeesClub

To schedule a #Club Mobile visit, Contact Lupe Lira, Retail Operations Manager: (213) 819-0350, or mobile@employeesclub.com



According to Plan

PAGE 10

COVER STORY:

According to Plan..... 10-14

Completing a ten-year succession plan, John Hawkins hands the reins of the LACEA to Robert Larios.

STORIES

The Club

- Applications for Club's Joannie Mukai Scholarship are now available. Deadline is June 30, 2024 7
- Club's annual meeting video wraps 7
- Jim and Donna Booth, Retired, pay a visit to the Club Truck in Chatsworth 7

Airports

- John Ackerman named new CEO of LAX 5

Citywide

- City departments celebrate the holidays: General Services, LAFD 20
- City Holiday Events: Enjoy the Season 21

Council

- 91st Hollywood Christmas Parade featured Councilmembers 21

LACERS

- Open Enrollment program assists more than 500 Retirees with their health plan choice for 2024 8

Public Works

- Sanitation and Environment begins new class of Engineering Associate mentees 5
- David Cook, Sanitation and Environment, honors as he begins his 50th year of City service . . . 7

Advertiser's Index

- Rosebud Marketing 23
- United Agencies 8

SECTIONS AND COLUMNS

- Alive!* Around the World 23
- Arlene on the Scene 23
- Club Mobile Schedule 2
- Club Team 4
- Coloring Contest: Kids 15
- Cooking with the Club: 2023 Recap 19
- Deaths: In Memoriam 22
- Employees at Work 23
- LACERS 8
- Lifes Important Moments 22
- People We See: Asti Sisco 24
- Picture Perfect: Best of 2023 9
- Picture Perfect: Contest Winners 9
- Picture Perfect: Theme for the Month 9
- Ready for Retirement 6
- Retirements 22
- Robert's Blog: From the CEO 2



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- Claims Monthly Web
- Library Top Ten Web

NEW THIS MONTH
ONLINE!
alive.employeesclub.com

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



Library Top 10

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



In this month's issue:

Best of 2023- *Alive!* looks back at the best of 2023 in Picture Perfect.

— See page 9



Be My Club Valentine

Send your loved one a special Valentine ... in the February *Alive!* and online at Web *Alive!*



We Want Your Party Photos!



From previous holiday parties



Did your dept. celebrate the holidays? Let us publish your photos!

The Club Holiday tradition continues – have photos from your department’s holiday party printed in *Alive!*, in our special holiday section, online and in print. It’s an *Alive!* tradition!



Submit your photos to the Club here:
alive.employeesclub.com/holidayparty



The Club Is Here 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

Alive!

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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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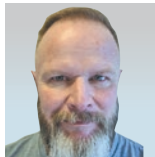
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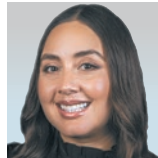
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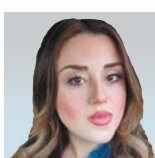
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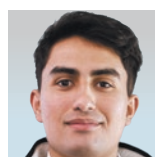
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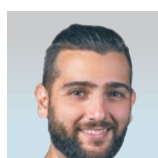


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Rey Hernandez
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Story courtesy Public Works, Photos by Jose Lozano

More for Mentoring

SANITATION BEGINS ITS NEXT CLASS OF ENGINEERING MENTEES.

PUBLIC WORKS: On Dec. 11, the Bureau of Sanitation and Environment began its next class of Environmental Engineering Associate mentees.

It's the first Mentorship Program event of the 2023-24 mentorship season.

During the kickoff event, Assistant Director Mas Dojiri welcomed the mentees and mentors; the mentor and mentee pairings were revealed, and the mentees and mentors got to hear all that is in store for the new Mentorship Program season. SEIU 721 sponsored the event lunch and also presented on the benefits of being an SEIU 721 member.

The Mentorship Program typically happens on an annual cycle once the new class of Environmental Engineering Associates (EEAs) is onboarded. It is a six-month program where pre-selected mentors, who are more experienced Sanitation Bureau Engineers, are paired up with newly hired EEAs and help guide and inspire them or support their needs in learning about work culture at Sanitation and Environment.

This year, Sanitation has extended the program to newly hired Mechanical Engineering Associates as well, to provide this opportunity for other types of engineers in the bureau. Throughout the Mentorship Program, organizers will host both social and networking events as well as learning opportunities, like presentations from core Sanitation programs, executives, and more.

Last July, Alive! published photos and information for the "graduation" of the last mentoring program.

Welcome, new mentees! May your upcoming program be one of learning, development and confidence-building!

The Club thanks Karina Gonzalez, Environmental Engineering Associate, and Mentorship Program Coordinator, for providing information and images. ●



New mentees and leaders, by rows, from left:

First row: Dara Alcazar, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Daisy Ojeda, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Sandra Cristobal, Environmental Engineering Associate III; Thania Flores Soto, Environmental Engineering Associate II; Erick Toscano, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Karelly Dorado, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Matthew Hanna, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Natalia Chacon, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Debora Leite, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Oge Ogbechie, Environmental Engineering Associate I; and Brenda Yaghoobi, Environmental Engineering Associate I.

Second row: Michael Fan, CE; John Villareal, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Eliseo Macias, Mechanical Engineering Associate I; Oscar Perdomo, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Timothy Hoang, Environmental Engineering Associate III; James Roska, Act. Environmental Engineer; Deontoe Taylor, Environmental Engineering Associate I; David Phung, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Christopher Vong, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Huy Nguyen, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Yoon Lee, Environmental Engineering Associate I; and Karina Gonzalez, Mentorship Program Coordinator/Act. Environmental Engineering Associate III.

Third row: Timmie de Ramos, Environmental Engineer; Gilberto Martinez, Mechanical Engineer Associate I; Nabih Akar, Environmental Engineering Associate III; Eduardo Valencia, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Pablo Hernandez, Environmental Engineering Associate II; Thomas Wyatt, Act. Environmental Engineer; Nodebechukwu Pauly-Umeh, Environmental Engineering Associate I; Kimia Nadir-Tehrani, Environmental Engineering Associate III; Adis Gharibian, Building Electrical Engineer; Paul Cobian, SRCRD Asst. Division Manager; and Doug Walters, Chief Sustainability and Chief Resiliency Officer.

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- Tomato bisque soup
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- Herb-basted potato
- Dessert of the Castle
- Slushies
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John Lands at LAX

INDUSTRY EXEC BECOMES NEW LAX CEO.



John Ackerman

AIRPORTS: John Ackerman, a longtime aviation industry executive most recently the Executive Vice President of Global Strategy and Development at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), was nominated as the new CEO of Los Angeles World Airports by Mayor Karen Bass, and later confirmed by the City Council Dec. 12.

He replaces Justin Erbacci, who left the position earlier in 2023 for a similar position in Saudi Arabia.

LAX is expected to see major developments open in 2024, including its foundational new system of accessing the airport through a people mover system.

John Ackerman is expected to begin as CEO of Los Angeles World Airports in February following several months of service from interim CEO Bea Hsu. Hsu helped continue major capital improvement programs and deliver world-class airports during this period of transition.

Ackerman mostly recently served as the Executive Vice President of Global Strategy and Development at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. Ackerman has a decade of experience in the aviation industry. Before managing Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, Ackerman was the Chief Commercial Officer at Denver International Airport (DEN). He has also worked with United Airlines as a Managing Director of Customer Experience. ●

READY FOR RETIREMENT



Resources for Club Retirees and Those About to Retire



YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO INSURANCE

by Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales CA LICENSE NO: 0H45598

“Retirement is not the end of the road. It is the beginning of the open highway.” –Unknown

Happy New Year, Retirees!

Now is the perfect time to review your Club benefits to make sure you and your family are protected and prepared for the future.

The Club is your resource for saving money through our discount programs, having financial security with our life insurance, and staying connected to your community.

Whether you are retiring soon, newly Retired, or have been Retired for some time, here are a few important tips for retirement.

1. Get Your Finances in Order

Organize your money so you can work out what you'll have to live on. Gradually reduce your spending in the time leading up to retirement to make it easier to adjust. The Club partners with My Club Deals that provides Member discounts on dining, attractions, travel, shopping, services and more. There are more than 75,000 two-for-one and 50-percent-off deals!

2. Get Your Insurance Policies in Order

Review your Club insurance benefits and decide how much life insurance you will need in retirement.

- A life insurance policy can provide an income for your spouse as they wait for your retirement benefits to transfer; cover funeral and burial expenses; and provide for any loved ones who rely on your income.
- Coverage is available for Members, spouses and dependent children
- Benefits range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

Speak to a Club Retirement Specialist. Do not wait!



Questions?

Don't hesitate to contact our Retiree specialists at info@employeesclub.com • or (800) 464-0452

Club Life Insurance Designed for Retirees

Lets discuss Retiree Life Insurance!

A life insurance benefit can help pay for things such as final expenses, outstanding debt and loss of income.

Life insurance can also be used to replace all or a part of your spouse's pension benefits. Have peace of mind knowing that your loved ones will be taken care of in the event of your passing.

The Club provides Group Rated Term Life Insurance for its Members, convenient payroll deduction, and an in-house claims department that works directly with your loved ones to make sure the claims process is as seamless as possible.



Retired or Retiring Soon?

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



Cheryl Martin
(800) 464-0452, EXT. 136
Work cell: (213) 819-0794
23 years of insurance experience
CA LICENSE NO: 0C12823



VERY IMPORTANT: If you have not contacted the Club yet to complete a form to have your Club Membership and/or insurance deducted from your pension, please do so ASAP! Even if you are not newly Retired, please call (800) 464-0452 or email help@employeesclub.com and let us know that you are a Retiree and need to complete a pension form. Never worry about a bill or late payment. Pension deduction is the most convenient and easiest way to handle your deductions. Offered to Club Members.

2024 Events

LARFPA and LADWP Retirees Association 2024 events to be 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

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(800) 464-0452 - www.EmployeesClub.com

Payroll Deduction Authorization Form
Los Angeles City & DWP

INSTRUCTION:

Please complete the following Payroll Deduction Authorization Form and return it to the Employees Club of California. Your payroll deduction will become effective as soon as the City Controller processes your request. Please note it can take up to two pay periods for the City Controller's office to process your deduction. The Club will do everything possible to ensure your payroll deduction gets processed sooner.

1 Member Information Please print in ink or type.

Member Name (First, Middle, Last):

Home Address: Cell Phone: ()

City: State: Zip: Email Address*:

City: State: Zip: Email Address*:

2 Deduction Status Update (select one)

Please select the reason for your change/update to your deduction.

I've changed departments within the City Other

I've retired/ or will be retiring Retirement Date: / /

I am a Surviving Spouse Date of Birth: / /

3 Payroll/ Pension Deduction Authorization

PAYROLL/ PENSION DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION

In addition to payroll/pension deductions for group benefits, if any, you will receive all Club benefits for a payroll/pension deduction of only \$6.00 per month (active employees) or \$4.00 per month (retired employees). You authorize these monthly deductions by signing the Payroll Deduction Authorization form.

Member's Printed Name:

Member's SSN: - -

City Dept# City Employee # (5 or 6 digits) DWP Employee #

Controller – City of Los Angeles, or Fire and Police Pension, or City Employees Retirement System, or Paymaster – Department of Water and Power

I hereby authorize the deduction from my salary or pension of amounts sufficient to cover premiums/ membership fees on any of my group benefits provided by the Employees Club of California. In the event any premiums should change due to age, increase in salary or benefits, or a general rate increase for the entire Association, I authorize you to make such change upon notification from the Employees Club of California and such deduction to remain in force until canceled by me in writing.

Member's Signature: Date: / /

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Code: Deduction:

SLAM-1901.02

Must Select One

- City Active
- Hiring Hall
- City Retiree
- DWP Active
- DWP Retiree
- Fire/Police Pension (Officers Only)

Photos courtesy Sanitation



The final shot of the video for the Club's upcoming annual meeting.



David Cook, front row, left, accepts a certificate from the Board of Public Works as he begins his 50th year of City service. Behind him are (from left) Clint Menk, Robert Potter, Kwasi Berko, David cook, Art Dibene, Barbara Romero, Azya Jackson, Simboa Wright, Julie Allen, Nicole Bernsen, Nelema Bhowmick and Jennifer Ly.

Fifty-Year Man

DAVID COOK HONORED AS HE ENTERS HIS 50TH YEAR OF CITY SERVICE.

PUBLIC WORKS: The Board of Public Works honored David Cook, Wastewater Collection Worker II, who entered his 50th year of City service.

The event took place Nov. 29.

David Cook, a longtime Club Member, began his City service for Rec and Parks in 1974 before transferring to the Bureau of Sanitation and Environment in the Clean Water Conveyance Division.

He's well known for his distinctive cowboy hat-style hard hat, and says he has no plans to retire at the moment.

Congratulations, David, and thank you for your outstanding five decades of service to Los Angeles!

The Club thanks Azya Jackson and Heather Johnson for information and photos of the event.



At the Board of Public Works event honoring David Cook.

That's a Wrap!

THE CLUB: In December the Club's marketing team wrapped "The Truck Whisperer," the Club's latest video for its upcoming annual meeting. The video uses the Club's brand of spirited humor to tell the story of a strong new Club Member benefit – in this case, the debut of the incredible Club Truck.

The final day of production took place at the StreetsLA yard in Chatsworth (with full permission, of course). Thanks to Pete Gomez, Supervisor, 16 years of City service, Club Member, for his assistance.

Members will be able to enjoy the video soon. ●



From left: ClubMobile staffer DeAngelo Thompson with Jim and Donna Booth. Jim Booth used his issue of *Alive!* to identify when and where he could purchase his official Club merchandise.

Photo Booth

JIM AND DONNA BOOTH STOP BY THE CLUB TRUCK FOR CLUB MERCH.

CLUBMOBILE: Jim and Donna Booth remember the date well – they circled it in November's *Alive!* For that's when they planned to stop by the Club Truck in Chatsworth.

"I live nearby, and I had no idea there was a City yard here," Jim said. "I drove by it several times, and then we stopped and walked in."

They stopped by the Club Mobile visit to the StreetsLA Yard in Chatsworth Dec. 7 to pick up a City shirt.

Jim retired from the LAPD (civilian) with 34 years of City service.

Great to meet you, Jim! Keep reading *Alive!* for the locations, and we'll be happy to see you and Donna again next time! ●

Apply Now for Club Scholarship; Late June deadline



APPLICATIONS FOR THE CLUB'S MUKAI SCHOLARSHIP ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE. DEADLINE IS JUNE 30, 2024

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

The 2024 Mukai Club Scholarship Program, which expects to grant at least 20 awards and is named after the late Club Board Member Joannie Mukai, is now accepting applications.


The scholarship deadline is June 30, 2024.

The scholarship program has simplified the application process to be contained in one step. 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 2024. 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 30, 2024. Winners will be notified by July 31 before school starts and will be invited to attend a scholarship banquet.

The Club expects to award each recipient a stipend of \$750.

"We welcome all Club Members and their close family members to apply for this very important scholarship program," said Robert Larios, LACEA and Club CEO. "The Club sincerely honors its many Members for their service to the City, County and State, and



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

DEADLINE
11:59 p.m.,
June 30, 2024

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. It's one of the most important ways we celebrate the work and lives of government 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

Send questions to the Club Scholarship Committee:

scholarship@employeesclub.com or

call: (213) 873-1843

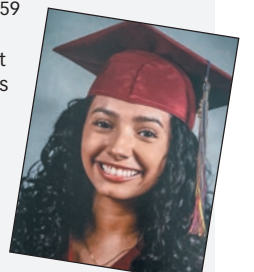


ABOUT JOANNIE MUKAI

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

Eligibility requirements:

- All Club Members and their spouses of any age; and children, grandchildren, step-children, foster children and nieces and nephews of Club Members under the age of 25; are eligible to apply. Club Members must be in good standing.
- The successful candidate must attend an accredited four-year college or university full time in the fall semester 2024. Current high school seniors matriculating to a four-year school in Fall 2024 are eligible.
- Candidates will be judged for academic excellence, community service and financial need.
- Scholarships are expected to be awarded in equal amounts of \$750 (each).
- Deadline: Applications must be completed online at the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. June 30, 2024. 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.



One of last years winners, **Maya Cereceres** is a student at San Diego State University, and daughter of Alfred Cereceres, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment, City of Los Angeles



FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

LACERS Returns to Regular Office Hours

LACERS welcomes all current and Retired City employees to its new headquarters at 977 N. Broadway. Regular hours are 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. No appointments are needed.

A current government-issued photo identification or City employee badge is required to enter the building except when attending public meetings of the LACERS Board of Administration. Also, parking is not available at the building. Paid parking lots, public transit, and street parking are available nearby.

Additionally, online options will continue to be available to you. Use the LACERS' Secure Document Upload found at lacers.org/secure-document-upload to submit forms or required documents, visit our website at [LACERS.org](https://lacers.org) to obtain benefits information; log onto your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org> to view your account details; and visit the found LACERS' YouTube channel at youtube.com/lacersyoutube where you can find a wealth of benefits videos. Stay up to date on LACERS announcements by checking our website periodically at [LACERS.org](https://lacers.org), contacting us by email at lacers.services@lacers.org, and by phone at (800) 779-8328. ●

Photoscan for more information



Add LACERS Number to Your List to Avoid Scams

LACERS recommends that you save LACERS' phone number to your contact list to protect against scams. Your phone service provider may register an incoming call from LACERS as SPAM or "Scam Likely". To ensure you do not miss calls from LACERS, save the department's caller ID number, (213) 725-5641, to your contact list.

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS

Information on Your 2024 Retirement

LACERS is providing the following information about next year's health benefits.

2024 LACERS Open Enrollment – Reminders and Updates

- Health plan changes made during the 2024 Open Enrollment period are effective from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2024, unless you experience a qualifying event and change plans by the associated deadlines. New deductions that reflect your health plan changes will appear on your Dec. 31, 2023, retirement check.

- If you changed plans during Open Enrollment, you will receive a new health plan I.D. card in mid-January, with the exception of Delta Dental PPO, which does not mail out physical I.D. cards. Members enrolled in Delta Dental PPO can create an online account at [DeltaDentalins.com](https://dentalins.com) to view and print I.D. cards. Please contact Delta Dental at (800) 765-6003 if you need assistance creating an account.

- An Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) from our Senior Medicare plans is required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). These notices are mailed based on the plan's enrollment/membership roster as of November 2023. Please be aware that Members who changed or disenrolled plans or deleted dependents during Open Enrollment will still receive the notice from the "old" plan based on the membership roster and this does not reflect their new coverage effective Jan. 1, 2024. Open Enrollment changes and disenrollments are not processed until December 2023 for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2024.

Medicare Part B Premium Increase for 2024

For 2024, the basic monthly Medicare Part B premium amount will be \$174.70 per month, an increase from \$164.90 in 2023. This amount does not include Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amounts (IRMAAs) or late enrollment penalties.

As a reminder, all Retired members and their dependents who are eligible for Medicare and enrolled in a LACERS plan are required to enroll in Medicare Part B. Retired Members enrolled in Medicare Parts A & B with at least 10 years of service who are enrolled in a LACERS Senior medical plan or participate in the Medical Premium Reimbursement Program (MPRP) are eligible for a reimbursement of their

basic Medicare Part B premium.

If you are a Retiree whose Medicare Part B premium is deducted from your Social Security Benefit check, and the amount is less than \$174.70 per month, you must submit proof of the amount to LACERS so that your reimbursement amount can be adjusted. An audit regarding Part B reimbursements will be conducted in 2024.

2023 1099-R Forms to be Mailed by End of January

LACERS will complete the mailing of 1099-R tax forms to Retirees and beneficiaries by the end of January 2024. The 1099-Rs will be sent to the address on file with LACERS. If you have changed your address or plan to, please submit a Change of Address form. In the event you do not receive your 1099-R, the earliest that you may request a duplicate to be mailed to you is the second week of February. You may also view your 1099-R via your MyLACERS account beginning in February.

2023 Tax Form 10995-B and Form 1095-C

As you prepare for tax season, you may receive one or more forms providing information about the health care coverage that you had or were offered in 2023. Beginning in mid to late January 2024, most retirees will receive a Form 1095-B which is sent directly from either the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) or your health plan carrier through LACERS (i.e., Kaiser or Anthem Blue Cross). Some retirees may receive two Form 1095-Bs and a Form 1095-C (from the City) if they retired within the last year; one 1095-B will reflect the LACERS coverage and the other one along with the 1095-C will reflect the coverage provided by the City of Los Angeles while working.

Please do not contact LACERS if you do not receive your form(s). LACERS does not administer the 1095-B or 1095-C forms. You may request a duplicate directly from your health insurance carrier. For questions about using Forms 1095-B and 1095-C to file your taxes, please consult with your tax adviser or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). ●



From LACERS' recent Open Enrollment events.

Story and photos courtesy LACERS

A Successful Open Enrollment

LACERS SIGNUP PROGRAM ASSISTS MORE THAN 500 MEMBERS.

LACERS: The Club congratulates the dedicated LACERS staff who assisted more than 500 LACERS members during open enrollment seminars, both in-person and virtually. Their hard work helped many people register for the health plan that will suit them in the new year.

Seminars were held live in person at locations in Alhambra, Ontario and Van Nuys; and virtually in five different sessions.

Open Enrollment changes became effective Jan. 1.

To learn more about qualifying events and making changes to your LACERS health or dental plan, go to: <https://lnkd.in/gz5vj9tC> ●



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DIRECT LINE FOR CLUB MEMBERS



Home and Auto Insurance Services provided for members of the **EMPLOYEES CLUB**



We also have great rates on Homes, Boats, Motorcycles, RV's, Rental Properties and Apartment Buildings.

A FREE Benefit to members of the Employees Club

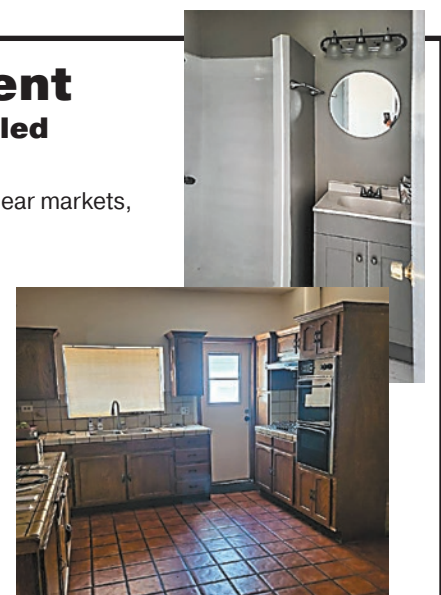
These insurance products are brought to you by the Club's Partner, United Agencies, Inc. CA Lic. # 0252636 United Agencies represents Mercury Insurance Group, as well as Chubb Insurance, Hartford, Fireman's Fund, Progressive, Civil Service Employees Insurance, Allied, Safeco, Travelers, Unigard and Encompass.

Apartment For Rent

2 bd., 2 bath. Newly remodeled bath/tub/shower.

- 10 min. to DTLA, near 5, 60, 101 Fwys. Near markets, post office, banks.
- Kitchen open to living room, dining room. Refrig. can be supplied or bring your own.
- Laundry/hookups. Patio in backyard. 2-car pkg. Lg. front porch. No pets. Utilities paid by tenant.
- 1 yr. lease. \$3,400/month. First/last rent required plus \$1,700 deposit

Contact: Rosana, (661) 563-3931





Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

Noelle's Picture Perfect

A 'PICTURE' OF 2023

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

During 2023, Club Member photographers and their photographic eyes found beauty in our world.

We printed our favorite photos from contest's entire span. Readers liked it so much that we decided to run an annual recap. In 2023, 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

"Not really sure who's playing who here, but it seems these outdoor lovers are enjoying themselves and each other's company."

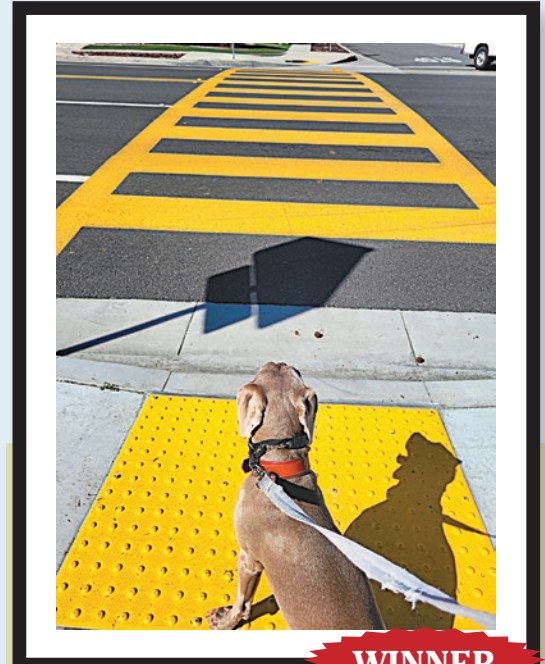
— Yves Didier, Airport Police



WINNER

"Second day during the Dodgers' opening week. I was capturing the beautiful sunset from my seat."

— Leticia Zepeda, Retired, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment



WINNER

"Roxy and I on our daily walk near a local elementary school in Rossmoor. She is patiently waiting to use the crosswalk to get to the other side."

— Teresa Henkhaus, Retired, Harbor

MORE WINNERS ON WEB ALIVE!

WINNERS JAN. 2024



"This photo was taken at the Water Lantern Festival this past November. It was a special event not only because I was able to decorate and cast the lantern on to the lake, but it was shared experience with my family and friends."

— Sharon Khaw, LADWP

Noelle's comment: For all those reasons this is a winner, Sharon, and because it's beautiful.



"SoCal is known for sunsets. But it is hard to compete with a Los Angeles sunrise in December."

—Monti Ramorino, LADWP

Noelle's comment: We get to work pretty early in the morning at the Club, and I wholeheartedly agree on those sunrises. And I love how you surprised me with the buildings, and then the tree in the same shape. Clever!



"I snapped this photo of my beautiful wife as we celebrated her birthday this year!"

— John Sousa, Airport Police

Noelle's comment: I love the sparkler, and I've seen them before in photos. But the way it lit up her happy face is the difference-maker here. Excellent shot ... and happy birthday to your wife!



"Sometimes you get lucky. I put my camera on sports mode and moved with the pelicans and clicked away. Their formation is an awesome beauty to behold – so smooth and fluid!"

— John Nance, Retired, LADWP

Noelle's comment: What an amazing photo, John! You got lucky, and we benefited! Really amazing shot. Thanks for submitting.

This month's theme was: Open



"I took this picture of my mom, Lynette Howlett, Retired, wandering in the Big Horse corn maze in Temecula."

— James Howlett, Public Works/Sanitation

Noelle's comment: Sounds like a maize maze! Well done, James!



"The picture says it all. The new bride is my wife's niece who has been showcased in your previous Picture Perfect contests. Tears of joy everywhere. Everyone was very happy. Food and company were great. Open bar was icing on the cake!"

— Dominique Daito, LAPD

Noelle's comment: I know you have submitted before, Dominique, and with photos like this one, you honor us by submitting. Another amazing photo.

The next photo contest theme: **Storytelling**

DEADLINE: Jan. 15



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

ENTER TO WIN \$50 AMAZON E-GIFT CARD

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

Alive! Feature LACEA

According



From left: Outgoing parent company CEO John Hawkins with Club subsidiary CEO Robert Larios.

The Birth of the Club

Here's a timeline that describes the creation and growth of the Employees Club, as created by John Hawkins.

1928

The Los Angeles City Employees Association (LACEA), the parent organization of the Club, is created by active City employees. (City Hall also opens.) To this day, the LACEA is governed by a board of City employees.



1994

John Hawkins joins LACEA as a Member Services Counselor.

1998

Robert Larios joins LACEA as a Member Services Counselor.



2000

After leaving briefly, John Hawkins returns to LACEA as Chief Operating Officer.



to Plan

Photos by Summy Lam, Club COO; from the *Alive!* archives; and sources as indicated

The Club Mission Statement:

Celebrating the work and lives of public employees in California since 1928.

Association parent company CEO John Hawkins hands the overall reins to longtime Club subsidiary CEO Robert Larios, who now leads both entities. The transfer of the steadfast commitment to serving City Employees has been in the making for a decade.

Last November, after a decade of preparation, John Hawkins, CEO of the parent company Los Angeles City Employees Association (LACEA), enacted a succession plan and handed the overall reins to Robert Larios, the CEO of the Employees Club of California, a subsidiary. Robert Larios will now lead both the parent company, LACEA, and its subsidiary, the Employees Club.

The LACEA, one of the nation's largest voluntary employee benefits organizations, is the parent organization over the Employees Club.

The leadership of both the parent and subsidiary organizations is now consolidated under Robert Larios. Robert had led the Employees Club subsidiary since 2021.

Back in October 2002, in a dramatic change that propelled the association

forward to great success, John Hawkins created the Employees Club which he headed along with the LACEA until October 2021, when Robert Larios took over the Employees Club role. John remains involved in the parent association; his role now becomes Club Founder and Training Officer, ensuring the association's 96-year legacy of exemplary customer service continues seamlessly.

Both personnel moves are effective Jan. 1.

John's and Robert's changes were accepted unanimously by the parent LACEA Board of Directors, chaired by Andrew Virzi III, LADWP. The LACEA Board consists entirely of current employees of the City of Los Angeles, as has been true since the LACEA was founded in 1928.

About Robert Larios

Robert served as the Chief Operating Officer for the Employees Club of California subsidiary for nearly six years, during which he oversaw and drove record new expansion of its membership base increase by 66 percent and upgraded the customer service experience for its membership. He became the CEO of the Employees Club in October 2021.

He brings more than two decades of experience with the association, where he was first hired as a Member Services Counselor in 1998 and quickly learned to leverage the execution of difficult strategic leadership decisions within a nonprofit organization and for-profit subsidiary.

Robert was the third CEO for the Employees Club of California subsidiary

and the first Mexican American. He holds a Master's degree in business administration from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, and a Bachelor of arts degree in Spanish literature and linguistics with a minor concentration in business administration, both from the University of Southern California.

Thank You

The LACEA Board, on behalf of all active and Retired Club Members, and staff and friends of the association, sends a bountiful and heartfelt thank you to John Hawkins on his steadfast, innovative, passionate and tireless advocacy of the lives and work of government employees.

More information can be found in this feature story.

JOHN HAWKINS: A Celebration

CLUB FOUNDER JOHN HAWKINS REFLECTS ON HIS TIME HELMING LACEA AND THE CLUB.

by John Hawkins

It was one big experiment.

Thirty years ago, the Los Angeles City Employees Association (LACEA), which was created in 1928 to serve City employees, was at a very serious crossroad – “Do we shut down the association because we are irrelevant and can no longer compete?” Or, “Do we re-invent ourselves, start a process of evolving into something bigger than ourselves?”

Danna McDonough, our President at the time, chose the latter: to re-invent ourselves, to create something that no one has ever done before, to be bigger than ourselves, to give back, and to show the world how awesome the employees are in the City of Los Angeles. It was a bold move, revolutionary really; even to this day, no one has matched how much we celebrate the work and lives of public employees. She gave this new venture a name: The Club.

So, the work began. Our mission? “To Celebrate the Work and Lives of City Employees.” We started by taking a cue from Darwin: We took our *Alive!* newsletter, which existed as a six-pager that we published quarterly, and forced its evolution into a full-fledged newspaper. We became reporters, photographers, interviewers ... we learned on the fly, we kept evolving, experimenting, and kept focused on that mission.

My father, Robert Hawkins, was a County Employee for 30 years. He worked for the LA County Sheriff's Dept. as a firearm and tool mark examiner. For the majority of his career he and four others worked in the basement of a nondescript little brick building on Alvarado



John Hawkins

— John Hawkins, continues page 12

ROBERT LARIOS: Path and Pledge

ROBERT LARIOS, NOW PRESIDENT AND CEO OF LACEA AND THE EMPLOYEES CLUB OF CALIFORNIA, ADDRESSES THE MOMENT.

By Robert Larios

As the sun sank behind the majestic mountains, stretching its shadows over the lush citrus and avocado farms of Pauma Valley, California, I found myself reminiscing about my childhood in a tiny agriculture town on the edge of San Diego County's rich farming heritage. It was there, as a wide-eyed Mexican immigrant with big dreams, that my journey to where I am today began.

Back in the day, my sisters and I would hold fancy “board meetings” at the dining table, dreaming big dreams. We imagined an unstoppable factory, churning out mysterious goodies from its magical smokestacks. You see, living on a lonely farm without cable TV meant we had to get creative to keep ourselves entertained. But surprisingly, my true passion wasn't factories – it was all about the fascinating world of people!

As I assume the role of CEO at both the Employees Club of California and the Los Angeles City Employees Association, I reflect on the path that brought me here. It's a path marked with invaluable lessons, mentorship, growth and a succession plan years in the making. My story begins with my parents, Rafael and Carmen Larios, who raised me and my three younger sisters on a farm in San Diego County. They carried me across the perilous Mexican border into America when I was just one year old. They risked everything for the promise of a better life – a chance for a slice of the American dream.



Robert Larios

— Robert Larios, continues page 13

2002
John Hawkins creates the Employees Club, a subsidiary of LACEA. *Alive!* is reconstituted and created.



2003
LACEA CEO Danna McDonough retires. John Hawkins becomes CEO of both the LACEA and the Employees Club.



2007
John Hawkins begins People We See, a series of interviews and profiles of the shelterless in Los Angeles. Published in *Alive!*, the series reaches a wide and concerned audience.

2008

Club retail, which began in small tests earlier, is formalized at the opening of the physical Club Store at 120 W. Second St. downtown, and the Club Store online.



John Hawkins
— continued from page 11

and Beverly. For years he and his team toiled away solving crimes by inventing, creating new techniques and processes revolving around firearm and tool marks left over from the scene of a crime (usually murder). I used to think to myself ... wow, if the walls of that basement could talk, what amazing and interesting stories they would tell. But they couldn't talk, and the stories remained in the basement, fading into lost memories. I know as a kid, how proud I would have been to have seen my dad and his team featured in a newspaper, with them telling their stories of how crimes are solved by matching a bullet and a gun ... or that screwdriver found in a suspect's car that was used to pry open a window. So, that was my impetus to get the stories out about what City employees do every day – to spread the word, to spread pride, to let the spouses and children know that their mother or father is doing something special, contributing to a greater cause, each and every day. That's why we have a policy, that the cover of every *Alive!* must be a picture of a City or DWP employee, no matter the rank or position ... and, no politicians or City officials. (We broke that rule only once, and that was to feature one of the most amazing City official ever, Tom LaBonge, who had been a City employee before he ran for Council office, and who became a good friend of the Club. He truly appreciated the sense of community we were trying to achieve). Rest in Peace, Tom; we miss you.

Another rule we had was to always interview people in person, at their job site; no email interviews. We wanted to experience the personal connection, we wanted to breathe the same air they breathed, to see what they saw, to walk in their shoes as best we could. (We had to use Zoom once the pandemic hit, for safety.) Which leads me to another rule – we would use no stock photos unless absolutely necessary. Every cover shot needed to be taken by us. It was our way of focusing on our mission, to stay true to it, to be part of the City employee fabric. No shortcuts.

When we decided to give *Alive!* a new "life," we needed a team to make it happen. We needed a seasoned editor and a graphic designer who could handle the workload of a monthly publication. By sheer magic, and through a host of serendipitous circumstances, we brought on board John Burnes (Burnes Creative) and David Jamgotchian (JILA Associates). Both local Los Angeles consultants who have been with us on every issue of *Alive!* since day one. John Burnes has organized and conducted every single interview, always making great efforts to keep me, the interviewer, on point. And David, the magician behind the design of every cover, every page layout, every printing every month for the last 20 years. There is absolutely no way we could have done this without the two of them. Thank you, John and David! (And Dearbhla and Marie!)

So, we started with turning our *Alive!* – a small, quarterly newsletter – into the *Alive!* newspaper. And we made it big, 11 inches by 17 inches. The very first one was only eight pages, but at times it grew to more than 100 pages – so much to celebrate, so many faces. Some issues we printed had more than 1,000 pictures of City employees, each one of those creating connections from family members to fellow employees. Fuses were being lit, and it spread like wildfire. Crazy story for you: After printing a story on the staff at the LA Zoo (yes, City employees run the LA Zoo!), we took a bunch of copies of that issue back to the Zoo to distribute to the employees. And something amazing happened: Their staff meeting was paused, and everyone started signing their name next to their pictures; they were autographing copies of their coworkers' *Alive!* John Burnes, our Chief Editor, and I looked at each other ... and smiled. If that's not building community and connection, than nothing is.

When people ask me what the Club is all about, I say, "Take a look at *Alive!*; it will tell you everything you need to know."

As a kid I loved reading the *Glendale News Press* and our local small town newspaper, *The Valley Sun*. I always sped to the sections where local people were highlighted. Either with them holding up the newspaper on their travels or announcements for weddings, deaths; or maybe it was local businesses and their employees being highlighted. Something clicked for me – a sense of community, belonging to something, being in the know.

And that's what I envisioned the Club to be. A "device" (I would say "company," but that sounds so sterile) that would build community for City and LADWP employees, that would connect people by telling their stories and celebrating their lives.

And that's what we did. We created The Club, the perfect name for what we do, and the credit for the name must be given to my predecessor Danna McDonough, who sparked the passion of building community 20 years ago with the very first *Alive!*

We tell the stories of the amazing things City and LADWP employees do, for if we didn't, they would be lost forever.

So, we started. Humbly. And slowly evolved to what we are today – the largest independent employee benefits association in California.

Retail

At the same time we jumped into the world of ticket brokers, looking for the most affordable tickets to amusement parks, movie theaters, zoos, anything we could get our hands on.

We made a decision to never mark the tickets up in price, going against the norm in the ticket business. We decided that to be different, to truly honor the hard work of every City employee, we would sell every ticket at cost – not a penny more than we paid for it. Many of you remember the "Ticket Guy," Navin Cotton. As an intern at the Club he started that program from scratch. All he was given was a list of names and phone numbers, and then he ran with it.

He even took us to a whole new level of selling City seal merchandise, T-shirts, mugs, hats, etc. After he left for new opportunities, we kept evolving the discount program, getting better and better. Today we have a full-blown working warehouse where we keep our ClubMobile van, red tent and now the incredible Club Truck; merchandise inventory; and hat presses and silk-screening equipment, all managed by Guadalupe Lira.

— John Hawkins, continues page 14

I am delighted that as I hand the reins to Robert Larios, I will continue on as Club Founder and Training Officer, forming new Club hires to work toward our true goal, celebrating your lives.

— John Hawkins, Club Founder and Training Officer



John Hawkins and Robert at the association's annual meeting.



John Hawkins at the association's annual meeting, 2012.



During production of the Club's annual meeting.



Alive! profiles several World War II Veterans, including (from top) Michael Bevelacqua, Joe Govea and Art Spaulding.



"People We See" begins, 2007.



John Hawkins profiles the LAPD Crime Lab – one of eight stories in the *Alive!* series.



The monthly "John's Picture Perfect" contest highlights Club Member creativity.

From left: Paul Blount and John Hawkins in a story about the City's mulch program.



Current Club staff celebrates to serving public employees

2009

The Robert Larios, CEO, LACEA founds the Club Sports program, including City-based leagues and tournaments for co-ed softball, basketball and bowling.



2010

Alive! begins its eight-part series on the processes and successes of the LAPD Crime Lab. The series becomes the internal and unofficial introduction for new LAPD Crime Lab hires.



2012

The Club partners with the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) to maximize service to City Retirees.



2013

The Club partners with Employers First Choice, and Aflac statewide, to expand beyond Los Angeles and open Club membership to government employees throughout California.

Alive! Feature LACEA According to Plan

Robert Larios
— continued from page 11

My American journey began in 1976 in Pauma Valley. As a young immigrant boy, I dreamed of success, happiness, contributing positively to society, and leading a meaningful life. Today, I realize that these dreams would have remained just that without the support from my support network.

Here are some of those people:

My wife Patricia, the guiding star in my life.

My parents, Rafael and Carmen Larios. My sisters Ana, Norma and Patty.

Verne and Joyce Maynard, RIP.

My mentor Bud Bradford and my second mom, Penny, RIP.
I miss you both so very much.

Heather & Nels Ortlund, Bradford Ortlund, Robert Ortlund, and Sumner Ortlund.

All my teachers at Pauma Valley Elementary School.

My 8th grade teacher Sherman Johnson (RIP), his wife Susan Johnson and their children – Michael, Matthew, and Jamie.

All my fellow alumni and alumnae I was honored to meet at Pauma School, including Tyler Allison, Brad Bradford, Jonathan Burgos and Brad Thompson.

All my fellow alumni and alumnae I was honored to meet at Fallbrook Union High School.

All my fellow alumni and alumnae I was honored to meet at the University of Southern California, including Paul Cicala, Enrique Diaz, Mario Perez and Reymundo Trejo.

All my professors and administrative staff at the University of Michigan and the University of Michigan - Stephen M. Ross School of Business.

All my fellow alumni and alumnae at the University of Michigan - Stephen M. Ross School of Business, EMBA19-Los Angeles. In my experience, the most influential figures in my success story are not only supportive family, friends and mentors, but also those who provided honest feedback and encouragement during discouraging moments. Their influence is immeasurable.

The LACEA and Club staff I've known from day one – your hard work continues to impact Members and society to this day. You never cease to inspire me. Thank you.

To the Board Members, past and present, thank you for your support, mentorship, empathy and leadership.

And Now to John Hawkins

I began my career here 26 years ago under the guidance of our former CEO, John Hawkins. He wasn't just a boss – he was a mentor, guide and friend. He believed in my abilities and supported my personal and growth, setting the stage for my journey within the organization. His forward-thinking led to a well-thought-out succession plan, ensuring the organization's success for years to come. As part of this plan, I made the decision to attend the prestigious University of Michigan – Ross School of Business, known for its world-class MBA program. Remember the Discount King, the Sports Dude, and Chef Larios? These vibrant personas that took over the pages of *Alive!* and other marketing materials were part of the strategic plan. It's all part of the master plan! This entire transition was carefully crafted to ensure a seamless handover and the continued success of our mission. And first-rate customer service, too, of course. It's a case study that business schools should take note of.

On a lighter note, the tie I donned for the cover photo bears a sentimental value. It is the same one I wore when I first interviewed with John.

Before executive coaches became mainstream, John served as my executive coach, guiding me through the intricacies of leadership. Together, we identified critical focus areas, built strong rapport with staff and Members, and fostered a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. We understood that our employees were our greatest asset and invested in their growth and development. We also recognized that the trust and satisfaction of our Members were paramount to our success, and worked relentlessly to meet and exceed their expectations.

I ask that each of you take a moment to thank John Hawkins. He is a visionary leader, innovator and a champion of integrity. How do I know? I worked side by side with John for 25 years, and in those years, I witnessed his unparalleled ascent from middle management to becoming the first Chief Operating Officer and then the second Chief Executive Officer in the 95-year history of the organization. He had charismatically transformed a dormant \$3 million company into a bustling and innovative \$35 million industry leader – yielding a 900 percent return on investment within 23 years. Through navigating intensely difficult leadership decisions, he spearheaded a strategic campaign that boosted the membership base by more than 350 percent during this time as well. He could have chosen to lead any other private or public firm but

Please email your messages of gratitude to John Hawkins here: alive@employeesclub.com.

— Robert Larios, continues page 14



Annual meeting, January 2023.



Robert Larios at the association's annual meeting, 2012.



Robert Larios meeting StreetsLA staff, South LA, June 2022.



video, 2019.



Robert Larios, 2002.

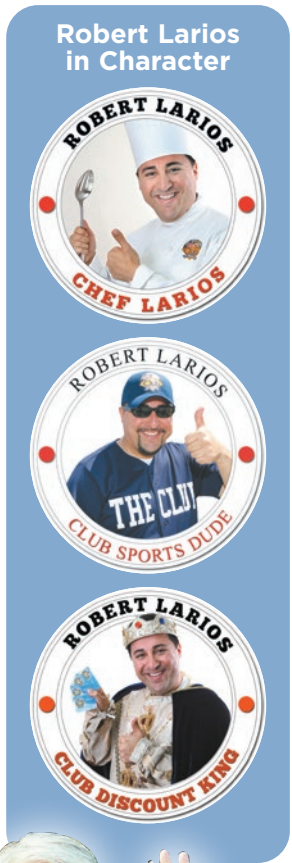


Robert Larios conducts "Question of the Month."



John Behind the Camera

John Hawkins photographed many *Alive!* covers behind the scenes, including these



...the continued commitment of employees in California.

2013
Discussions of CEO succession begin.

2017
COO Robert Larios promoted to Employees Club COO. The Club joins social media.

2019
The *Alive!* website is launched.

2021
Robert Larios is elevated to Employees Club CEO.

2023
Robert Larios is elevated to CEO of both organizations – the LACEA and the Employees Club. John Hawkins becomes Club Founder and the Club's first Training Officer to ensure the continuation of the legacy of customer service and innovation.



Alive! Feature LACEA According to Plan**John Hawkins, continued from page 13****COVID**

The pandemic hit the Club, like it did everyone. The world went dark, and suddenly we found out how amazing toilet paper was. Do we shrink and lie low, when our Members needed us? Heck no. In true "Celebrating the work and lives of City employees" form, we thought to ourselves, what could we do in the midst of supply shortages and the anxiety that COVID was bringing? A light bulb went on in our heads: "Let's call every single member, all 50,000, to see if they are okay and if they need anything. So we did! Our entire staff was enlisted for making calls. We started with the Retirees and then worked our way to the active members. We ended up sending out 10,000 packages, free of charge, which included food, face masks, toilet paper (of course), gloves and hand sanitizer. We met many "freelance" suppliers in parking lots all over the City securing these hard-to-get items due to the normal channels being completely out of stock. Once again, we adapted. We thought outside the box, all the while focused on our mission.

Howard

We have also been hit with tragedy. Howard Pompel, one of our most revered employees, lost his life in the tragic Chatsworth Metrolink crash back in 2008. He exemplified our mission; he lived and breathed the Club. To this day people still comment about his good nature, sage advice and his ability to make a cloudy day sunny again. Rest in Peace, Howard.

Evolution

Evolving also means looking at the competition in a different way. To serve our Members better we created partnerships with fellow insurance brokers, who also happened to be former competitors. We joined with Employers First Choice (EFC) in Sacramento and Aflac here in Los Angeles. And when I say partnerships, I mean true, dyed-in-the-wool-type partnerships with Patrick Miller and Daren Everett from EFC and Shem Bostick from Aflac. Both organizations embrace what the Club stands for, what we espouse, our mission and goals. A complete win-win.

According to Plan

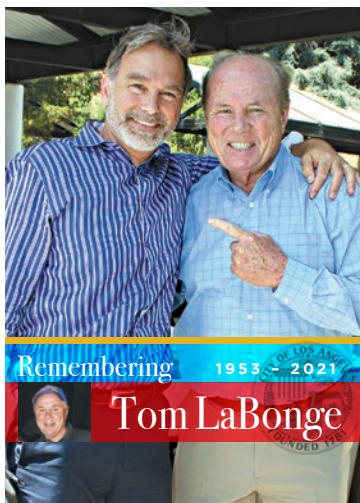
So now, time to get to the purpose of this historic issue of *Alive!* About 10 years ago I began planning for my retirement – as in looking for someone who could grab the Club torch out of my hand and continue the relentless pursuit of celebrating the work and lives of public employees. I wanted to consider someone from within, not an outsider, and luckily we had an employee who understood our mission, our vision, our goals; it was in his bones. That person is Robert Larios. I have had the privilege of working closely with Robert for more than 20 years, and in the last 10 years working with him with the specific goal of him taking over. That's ten years of collaborating on tough issues, working together on how to keep evolving, never standing still, always focusing on being better than yesterday.

Memorable Moments

As I review the last 20 years, here are some moments that really stand out:

- Our story and flight in the LAPD Air Support helicopter, zooming through downtown, landing on the Library Tower and then descending straight down the side of it. And then that helicopter becoming the "quarterback" in the sky on an actual crime in progress, a jewelry heist. Exciting stuff!
- I'll never forget our first big interview. I was very nervous, I had never interviewed someone in a professional setting. But I had John Burnes, our editor, with me, who knew exactly what to do. It went beautifully, and really put *Alive!* on a professional map. And thank you, Larry Keller, Port Director, for the opportunity!
- I'll never forget one of the nicest guys in the City, Alvin Blaine, former General Manager of General Services. He too agreed to meet us for an interview. He was a true gentleman – warm, inviting, and overflowing with energy and enthusiasm about what his department was doing.
- Ever wonder what it was like to drive a refuse truck all day? Well, so did we, so I did an all-day "ride-along" with Ken Fox. Thanks, Ken, for one of my most memorable days!
- In January 2005 a severe storm hit LA, knocking down trees, and those trees knocked down power lines and poles. Out we went with cameras in hand taking pictures of the LADWP crews repairing the damage.
- Jawbone Canyon? A City facility? Yep! We covered the new giant wind turbines that the LADWP installed out in Jawbone, near the Mojave Desert. I remember we were struggling to capture the enormity of the wind turbines themselves for a cover shot, so we hiked a mile or so out into the surrounding mountains and took a zoom shot with a couple employees on between us and the turbines: *voila!* Magic! A great cover shot and an amazing experience.
- As a dog lover (and cats!), it was a treat for me to do a series of stories on the LAFD and LAPD Service Dogs. We worked with LAFD Capt. Deresa Teller, who had brought LAFD cadaver dogs to work in the aftermath of the Twin Towers terrorist attack in New York City, on several of our stories. Recording that terrible event in our own pages was special.
- I'll also never forget the cover shot of the late Paul Blount and the story of his mulch program, nor his stories of being a Special Forces Operative during the Vietnam war.
- In 2011, Robert Larios became the Sports Dude, creating the Club's first-ever all-City sports program. Today it is run by our Noelle Kauffman, and still going strong as it returns from a temporary shut-down due to the pandemic.
- And then there is Doug Scarborough, an Airport Police Officer who made his first attempt climbing Mt. Everest in 2012. Then, he summited in 2013. But get this, he took an *Alive!* with him and got a selfie photo with it. But he didn't just take a ripped-out cover, he took the entire 54-page *Alive!* Thanks Doug!
- And what an honor to interview Laura Biggie, the City's first female Plumbing Training Officer. We even sat in one of her classes so we could see her in action. Thanks, Laura, for the memories!

- Iguana in a garage! This was another exciting ride-along, but this time with Animal Services. Incredible.
- For years we tried to catch Capt. Michael Barnes, Harbor, for a story, and finally got our chance in the October 2018 issue. He was famous for being the Captain of the City's tour boat the Angelina II, a lost relic that carried many memories. I still keep in touch with the Captain as he travels around the world in retirement, and he writes a monthly travel column for *Alive!*
- Being a Veteran myself, it was a real joy every year to interview fellow Veterans for our special July issue. One of our World War II Combat Veterans just passed away, Joe Govea. I attended Joe's funeral and presented his widow with the actual newspaper that featured Joe. What an honor it was to be able to tell Joe's story as well as the other Veterans we interviewed.
- I am still in awe regarding one of the boldest cover shots. We were doing a story on LADWP Linemen and our Sales Manager/*Alive!* reporter and photographer Angel Gomez wanted to get a "top-down" shot of two LADWP Linemen working at the top of a pole. So what did he do? He got in a cherry picker and rose above them all and got the incredible shot!
- As I am thinking about it, I want to give a big shout-out to Eric Robles at General Services. For more than 30 years he has been "Oz," pulling all the strings behind the scenes in creating the department's special events. People knew that if they want to get something done, Eric is the guy to call. Thanks for all your help over the years, Eric!
- And then there is Dr. Ed Krupp, the world-renowned and respected Director of Griffith Observatory (he's worked at the Observatory for something like 50 years!). We did two stories on him, with detailed interviews. Gracious, kind, and always fun to talk to, he had an amazing ability to take extremely complicated astrophysical concepts and realities, and help us understand them. He even gave us a personal tour of the incredible restoration of the Observatory when it was almost finished. As far as I know, we were the first to publish pictures of the restoration. That was a real moment for *Alive!*



From left: John Hawkins with (then) Retired Councilman Tom LaBonge, Club Member.

and gathered as a staff to grieve. There was an incessant knocking; it was Tom, delivering flowers. No one had told him we lost Howard. No one told him what we were going through. He just knew. He was a special man.

- The LADWP's Snow Survey Team. We drove to Mammoth, never once thinking about how we would get to the survey location until we saw the Snow Cats, the snow tracking vehicles. That was absolutely amazing.
- Our series of eight features on the LAPD Crime Lab, which connected me to my father's career at the Sheriff's Office. The LAPD used that series informally as an introduction to the Crime Lab for all its new hires. That was quite an honor.
- Hurricane Katrina featured many City employees sent by the Federal Government for Urban Search and Rescue duties. And the *Alive!* team was all over it – we produced very nearly 100 pages (in one month!) to cover this huge and important story.
- And so many, many others: the cargo ship interdiction ... the Hoover Dam LADWP Yard ... I will never finish telling all the stories.

Thanks

I give great thanks to the original believers and founders of the Club:

Mike Biagi	Michael Leighton	Maria Romasanta
Dorothy Dillard	Joanie Mukai	Stuart Tom
Regner Globus	Dave Peterson	Andrew Virzi Jr.
Rose Hyland	Rodney Punt	Robyn Wilder
	Rita Robinson	

And Finally

I am delighted that as I hand the reins to Robert, I will continue on as Club Founder and Training Officer, forming new Club hires to work toward our true goal, celebrating your lives. The overwhelming sense of gratitude of serving Club Members is the real joy that I will take with me. Taking care of your financial stability with insurance ... celebrating your births ... grieving your deaths ... honoring your years of serving Los Angeles ... and letting me help take care of you – that's what it has all been about. Thank you, thank you.



— JOHN

Robert Larios, continued from page 14

found profound satisfaction in rolling up his sleeves and witnessing firsthand the impact he made on his company employees, Board of Directors, business partners, customers, and the communities he served throughout California and the rest of the country.



Robert Larios receives the association's President's Award at the 2005 annual meeting.

A Pledge of Service

As I stand on the cusp of this new chapter, I am reminded of those early dreams forged in Pauma Valley. The factories of my dreams may have been replaced by people and their potential, but the ambition remains the same. I am committed to leveraging this opportunity to serve our employees and members better and to continue the legacy of service and excellence that defines our organization.

As I embark on this new leadership role, feelings of gratitude for the journey so far and anticipation for what is yet to come fill me. The lessons from our past have paved the way, and the vision for our future shines brightly.

To our devoted staff, I affirm that our collective journey is merely at its dawn. The legacy of mentorship and personal development, which has been a foundational pillar of our organization, will continue under my stewardship. Your growth, innovative ideas and well-being remain at the forefront of my priorities.

To our respected Members, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your enduring trust in us. As we advance, our pursuit of excellence, guided by serving your needs and expectations, will not waver. Our pledge to provide exceptional service and deliver unparalleled value is stronger than ever.

While the transition may present novel challenges, it simultaneously uncovers fresh opportunities. United, we will steer through this invigorating chapter, leveraging our shared history while eagerly anticipating a future filled with continued growth and prosperity. Our journey thus far stands as a testament to the transformative power of mentorship, strategic planning, and collaboration, and I am thrilled to guide our organizations into the next phase of our narrative.

As we flip to a new page, let us bear in mind that each conclusion heralds a fresh start. Here's to a seamless transition and the commencement of a new chapter in our shared journey.

— Robert Larios



The Alive! Kids' Coloring Contest

Coloring The Club

with

Deadline for submission:

Feb. 10, 2024

Compiled by:



Guadalupe Lira,
Retail Operations Manager



DeAngelo Thompson,
Mobile Operations Rep

Mail completed coloring art to:

Club Coloring Contest
Employees Club of California
311 Spring St., Suite 1300
Los Angeles, CA 90013

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: _____





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

2023 Executive Board of Directors

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

RLACEI DIRECTORS

Dial (800) 678-4145 plus extension

- | | |
|---|----------|
| Beverly Anderson, <i>Nominations Chair</i> | Ext. 702 |
| Loucin (Lucy) Artinian, <i>Treasurer</i> | Ext. 718 |
| Mark Blunk, <i>Audit Chair</i> | Ext. 704 |
| Beverly J. Clark, <i>Publicity Director</i> | Ext. 716 |
| Nancy Hammoudian, <i>Secretary</i> | Ext. 705 |
| Verkin (Vicki) Keoseian, <i>Director</i> | Ext. 719 |
| Ruth B. Perry, <i>President</i> | Ext. 717 |
| Joe Quan, <i>Director</i> | |
| Ann Seales, <i>Membership Director</i> | Ext. 706 |
| Leonard Torres, <i>Director</i> | Ext. 707 |

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 Ann Seales, Membership Chair, at (800) 678-4145 ext. 706 or Ann.Seales@RLACEI.org for a change of address or to add or change your email address. Also notify LACERS, ACEBSA, LAPCU, and LAFUCU as applicable.



Beverly J. Clark

Send in your Interesting News Contributions!

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

RETIREE EVENTS

Stay Tuned!

The following events will be scheduled for 2024 with dates and locations soon to be announced:

- Spring Fling
- Summer Picnic
- Holiday Party

RLACEI EVENTS RESERVATION LINE

Call: (800) 678-4145, ext. 701 or Email: contact@rlacei.org

Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.

CARRIE'S CORNER

By Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director
Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org or (800) 678-4145 ext. 716



Beverly J. Clark

Catching up with RLACEI's 101-year-old member.

Carrie A. Gabriel began working for the City in 1946 and retired in 1978. She celebrated her 100th birthday in 2022. With all the wisdom, experiences and changes she has seen throughout the 20th and now 21st centuries, we thought it would be interesting to get her perspective on various topics of the day. If any reader is interested in her opinion or viewpoint on a certain topic, please contact Beverly Clark at Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org.

I asked Carrie for an update on her incredible life. Here's her report:

"Well, here it is January 2024! I would have never dreamed of reaching this milestone in my life. and I know that I am blessed. I am looking forward to, with anticipation, reaching my 102nd birthday at the end of this month, January 28. People continue to ask what is my secret. I can only say that I have tried to live a good life helping others wherever I can and trying to be kind wherever I can. I have been blessed to meet a lot of wonderful people along my journey.

"Last year, 2023, was not such a good year for me, I was devastated by the sudden death of my only son in July shortly after his birthday. He had been my support in so many ways, especially my emotional support. So, it has been very difficult to adjust without him. I am grateful that I have friends that have

stepped in to help. My advice to Retirees is to make it a priority to stay socially engaged with others. When I was younger, in my 80s and early 90s, I was active with four senior centers and did volunteer work with Oasis in Westwood, which was a resource for seniors to travel and stay socially active.



Carrie A. Gabriel

"Since the pandemic, I have been visiting health-care providers more often than I visit or see my friends. While I am doing my best to maintain my health, it has become increasingly difficult due to the bureaucratic hurdles I have to go through to get certain medical procedures approved by my health-care provider. I often joke that it's not my fault that I'm more than 100 years old!

"Though I am looking forward to my birthday and feel privileged to have experienced so many things in life and seen so many things, I do miss my son.

"I wish everyone a wonderful New Year, filled with good cheer and people in your life who bring you joy and laughter."

Happy 102nd Birthday

Please join the RLACEI Board of Directors in wishing Carrie a very happy and blessed 102nd birthday. You may send well wishes directly to Carrie at cgabriel18@roadrunner.com or post on RLACEI's Facebook page.

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU

The RLACEI Board of Directors sends its best wishes and a fond farewell to Board Director Tom Moutes, who served on the board for three years.

Tom was elected to the board in 2019 and brought with him a vast amount of knowledge from his previous position. He joined LACERS in 2001 and served as LACERS General Manager from 2010 until he retired in 2018.

As a board director, he served as the legislative chair and was instrumental in working to revise the board's



Tom Moutes

by-laws. Tom was always willing to help wherever needed and has provided informative and thought-provoking monthly articles in Alive! for Retirees. Tom's contributions to RLACEI have been invaluable. He has been a tireless advocate for the organization and its members. As director, Tom was always willing to share his knowledge and expertise, and always looking for ways to improve the organization. He will be deeply missed by everyone who has had the pleasure of working with him and reading his articles.

Tom has helped to make RLACEI a stronger organization and has left a lasting impact on its members. Thanks, Tom, and farewell! ●



Michael R. Wilkinson

LACERS BOARD UPDATE

by Michael R. Wilkinson, *LACERS Commissioner* • MikeWilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com

LACERS Reports on Its Funding Levels

LACERS gets a yearly report from our actuary to measure our progress in funding our retirement plan and health benefits. This is reflected in the funded ratio, or the assets of the retirement plan as a percentage of the liability of providing the benefits to active and retired members.

The capsule summary is that the funded ratio was improved from last year. The funding level for the retirement plan has decreased slightly, but this was more than offset by an increase in the funding for our health plan, which is more than 100 percent funded.

Why is the funded ratio important? This is one of the most important measures of how the retirement plan and health plan are funding all our benefits in the future. Also, this funding measure is used for another vital reason, to set the contribution level for payments by the City.

The funded level for retirement benefits decreased from 73.3 percent to 73.1. However, the health benefits increased its funded ratio from 97.0 percent to 107.1 percent. Because of the boost from the health-funded ratio to 107.1 percent, the combined funded ratio is now 77.1 percent (up from 76.4 percent last year).

LACERS' high funded level for the health plan is due in part to the fact that the plan has been funding the health benefits on an actuarial basis for decades, while most other plans were operated on a "pay as you go" basis without any money invested for future years.

Finally, how does this information affect you as a Retiree? This data is used to set the City's contribution rate, which assures that LACERS will continue to be financially strong. The City has paid the actuarially determined contribution rate in full every year.

It is critical for the City to make its required contribution. Other plans that are in financial troubles generally share the problem that their employer failed to make these required contributions. The failure to make these contributions meant that those plans had less money to invest and then fell further behind.

This coming year (fiscal year 2024-25), the contribution rate will go down slightly from 33.36 percent of payroll to 33.29 percent of payroll. ●



LACERS
LOS ANGELES CITY EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT SYSTEM



Beverly J. Clark

By Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director
Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org or (800) 678-4145 ext. 716

Holiday Party Spreads Festive Cheer!

Photos by Summy Lam, Club Operating Officer; and courtesy RLACEI



The RLACEI annual holiday party brought more than 230 Retirees together at the Friendship Auditorium on Dec. 14. What a joyous occasion it was! The festive atmosphere was contagious, with everyone enjoying the holiday spirit and catching up with old friends and coworkers.

Santa Spreads Holiday Cheer

No holiday party is complete without a visit from Santa! RLACEI Retirees were delighted to welcome Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and their trusty helper. They brought smiles and laughter as they took photos with Retirees, and Santa ensured everyone was on the "nice" list for the upcoming year.

Delicious Delights from Mr. Ardi's Catering

Mr. Ardi's Catering once again provided a delicious, boxed lunch that everyone enjoyed consisting of baked turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and a delicious vegetable medley. And to top it off, a slice of pumpkin pie for dessert.

Informative and Engaging Guest Speakers

The party wasn't just about merriment and good food; it also provided valuable insights and updates. In attendance were guest speakers Mike Wilkinson, LACERS Commissioner; Neil Guglielmo, LACERS General Manager; and

Stephanie Smith, LACERS Wellness Program Manager, who shared important information about Retiree benefits and resources.

The Employees Club of California CEO Robert Larios provided Club updates. Club representatives in attendance included Summy Lam, Chief Operating Officer; Noelle Kauffman, Director of Sales; Guadalupe Lira, Retail Operations Manager; and Alive! editor John Burnes.

Additionally, Edith Monge, Manager of Employer Sales for SCAN Health Plan, provided updates on their services.

A Celebration of Community and Connection

RLACEI was honored to have in attendance former LACERS General Manager Jerry Bardwell, who always attends RLACEI events, and Retiree Carrie Gabriel, who is looking forward to celebrating her 102nd birthday this month.

The RLACEI holiday party was a chance for Retirees to reconnect with old friends, make new acquaintances, and create lasting memories. The laughter, joy and camaraderie that filled the Friendship Auditorium were a testament to the strong bonds that exist within the Retired Los Angeles City employees' community.

Here's to a Happy New Year to all RLACEI Retirees! The RLACEI Board looks forward to a new year of continued advocacy paving the way for a prosperous future for our Retirees.



Happy Holidays from the RLACEI Board, from left: Vicki Keoseian, Lucy Artinian, Beverly Anderson, Quan, Santa, and Ann Seales. Not pictured: Mark Blunk.



"Mrs. Claus" Esther Porter, Retired, Rec and Parks, 18 years of City service.



Beckie Gonzalez, Retired, Rec and Parks, 30 years of City service, and Jack Gonzalez, Retired, Rec and Parks, 37 years.



Seated: Carrie Gabriel, Retired, ITA, 32 years of City service and 101 years old; with (standing) Beverly Clark, First Vice President, RLACEI, and Club Retail Operations Manager Lupe Lira.



Rhonda and Michael Holmes, Retired, Public Works/Street Services, 39 years of City service.



Association President Robert Larios (left) and Vas Singh, Retired, Finance, 17 years of City service and former Club Board Member.



From left: Maria Castillo, Retired, Community Development, 40 years of City service; Roslinda Moscozo, guest; and Michael R Wilkinson, Retired, City Attorney and current LACERS Commissioner, 34 years of City service.



From left; Leonard Torres, Retired, Personnel Director, 35 years of City service; Mrs. Claus, who resembled Esther Porter, Retired, Rec and Parks, 18 years; Santa Claus, who resembled Elliot Porter, Retired, Rec and Parks; and Jennifer Stanley, Senior Center, 2 years.



From left: Uma Vyas, Retired, Transportation, 21 years of City service, with Anju Vyas, guest; and Pauline and Derek Jackson, LA Zoo, 25 years.



From left: Edward Pina, Retired, General Services, 35 years of City service; Terry Pina, General Services, 16 years; Socorro Belmontes, guest; Angelica Navarro Rios, Retired, General Services Construction Forces, 33 years; and Yolanda Navarro, Retired, Finance, 30 years.



Song and Joe Quan, newly elected RLACEI Director, with Santa.



Alfonso and Diana Medina, Public Works/Accounting, Retired, 37 years of City service, visiting with Santa Claus, who resembled Elliot Porter, Retired, Rec and Parks.



From left: Juan and Sally Lopez, Retired, Library, 15 years of City service; and Monette Carranceja, LADWP, Retired, 30 years; with Jude Carranceja, LADWP, 30 years.



Schiry Monroe, Retired, LADWP, 43 years of City service (right) with her mother, Etheree Wesley.



Gail Brown, Retired, General Services, 38 years of City service, with Avis Brown, guest.



From left: Mike Wilkinson, Jerry Bardwell, Neil Guglielmo and Tom Moutes.

Raffle Winners!



At the registration assistance table, from left: May Seales, guest, with Board Directors Ann Seales and Beverly Clark.





Arnette Travis

By Arnette Travis
Author/Activist/Advocate, RLACEI Contributing Author

Get Happy Now!

“Goals are as common as sand on the beach!”

The process of setting, working toward and reaching goals is part of most positions in the workplace, and play a part in our family and everyday lives as well. If the workplace involves sales, goals are the lifeline and the most important factor in determining the success of the organization.

But what happens to that ever-striving-to-reach-a-higher-level mindset once you retire? After years of working hard and advancing in your career, it can be difficult to adjust to a life without structure or purpose. In fact, nearly one-fourth of Retirees report feeling like they are stuck in a no-growth zone where they lack motivation and achievement; and feel like they're not contributing anything to society, or that they're just wasting their time.

Lack of growth and motivation during retirement is a common problem. Here are three tips to combat these feelings:

1. **Find a new hobby or interest.** This could be anything from learning a new language to volunteering at a local charity. Finding a new passion can help you stay engaged and motivated.
2. **Stay active and eat healthy.** Exercise can help improve your physical health, mood and energy levels. Eating healthy will help you stay physically and mentally fit.
3. **Set goals for yourself.** Having something to work toward can help you stay motivated. Whether it's getting in shape for a marathon, learning a new skill, traveling, or spending more time with family and friends, setting goals can give you a sense of purpose and direction.

What can you do?

If you're struggling with a lack of growth and motivation, find ways to inject purpose and structure into your life to make retirement a time of happiness and freedom. ●



RLACEI MEMBERS

Not an RLACEI member?

Join and like us on FACEBOOK

Call (800) 678-4145 x706 or visit our website at RLACEI.ORG

Become an RLACEI Member!



RLACEI is dedicated to advocating for retiree interests. We are over 6,300 strong! Members of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. enjoy all RLACEI events such as, member picnic and holiday party with FREE membership to the Employees Club and access to all group benefits (insurance, discounts, etc.).

Call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 706, or visit our website at RLACEI.ORG and join today!

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 19 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



Cooking with the Club

with Chef Robert Larios



2023: A Year of Great Cooking!

Featuring flavors from Asia to South America to Europe and all points in between, last year's Cooking With the Club proved another stellar culinary travelogue for Club Members who love to cook.

If you've been meaning to try out a recipe from Chef Larios last year, here are some staff favorites with easy links to the recipes.

Don't just look back – get cooking! Chef Larios will be back with a new year of new delectables next month.

For complete recipes, scan the codes below, or email alive@employeesclub.com for direct links. Please include the name of the recipe you are interest in.

Lemony Spaghetti with Brussels Sprouts

Scan for Recipe



Black Bean and Poblano Flautas

Scan for Recipe



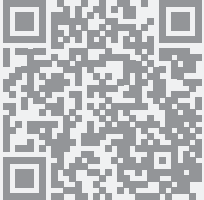
Zucchini and Sun-Dried Tomato Panini

Scan for Recipe



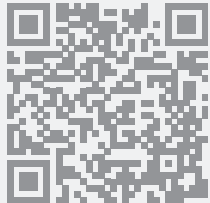
Garden Spinach Ricotta Ravioli

Scan for Recipe



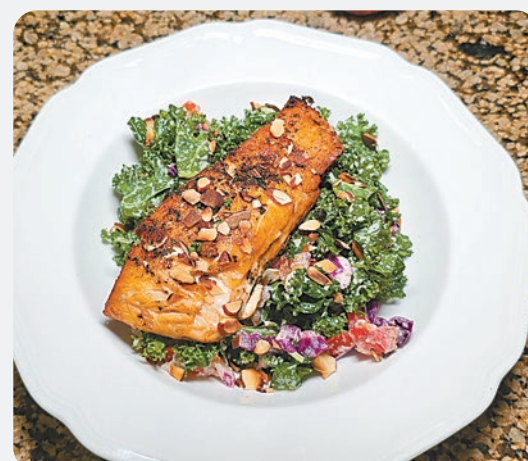
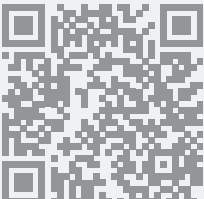
Sweet Chili Beef and Green Bean Bowls

Scan for Recipe



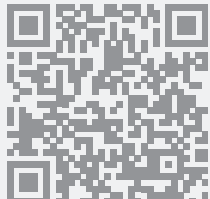
Spicy Peruvian Chicken

Scan for Recipe



Salmon With Creamy Dill Sauce

Scan for Recipe





The City Parties!

It's an annual Alive! tradition!

Every year, City departments put aside their hard work and come together for fun and socialization at their festive holiday parties. And Alive! publishes as many of your party pics as we can, in print and online. Starting this month, we cover the City Parties. And we'll continue in the next months as the photos come in.

Happy New Year!



The Executive Team, from left: Tina Fermin, Executive Administrative Assistant, 34 years of City service; Melody McCormick, Assistant General Manager, 38 years; Emily Mayeda, Assistant General Manager, 17 years; Tony Royster, General Manager, Club Member, 30 years; Lydia Marquez, Executive Administrative Assistant and Holiday Committee Chair, 28 years; Melissa Yusilon, Assistant General Manager, 19 years; and John Trevgoda, Assistant General Manager, 32 years.

General Services

On Dec. 12, General Services held the return of its annual holiday party at the Friendship Auditorium near Griffith Park. More than 340 employees attended the event, which featured a buffet lunch, fun and game, a photo booth and a raffle.

The party marked the return of the General Services holiday party, which took a pandemic hiatus.

The Club honors and thanks Lydia Marquez, Holiday Committee Chair, for all her work to produce the party, and for inviting the Club to attend! ●



From left: Evelyn Hernandez, Management Assistant, 1 year of City service; Teiko Leslie, Supply Services Payment Clerk, 4 years; and Alicia Babb, Supply Services Payment Clerk, 4 years.



From left: Melida Jimenez, Construction Forces Buyer, 4 years of City services; and Patricia Nava, Construction Forces Buyer, 4 years.



Michelle Plascencia, Sr. Administrative Clerk, 22 years of City service.



General Manager Tony Royster (right) and Mayor's Deputy Matt Hale welcomed the attendees.



From left: Tricia Solomon, Chemist II, 1 year of City service; Jessica Gordon, Chemist II, 1 year; and Valerie Zometa, Materials Testing Technician II, 1 year.



From left: Dustin Watanabe, Materials Testing Engineer Assoc. III, 6 years of City service; Pedro Garcia, Materials Testing Engineer II, 23 years; Richard Villacorta, Director of Standards Division, 37 years; and Madison Chan, Sr. Chemist, 32 years.



From left: Thanh Doan, RES, 23 years of City service; Eric Robles, Director of Special Services, Club Member; Emily Mayeda, Assistant General Manager, 17 years; Mark Lopez, Sr. Management Analyst II, 29 years; and Lauren Ross, Management Assistant, 1 year.



Clence Berry, Storekeeper, 7 years of City service; and Terra Jones, Sr. Administrative Clerk, 23 years.

LAFD

More than 30 revelers attended the LAFD HQ's holiday party, held Dec. 7 in City Hall.

The Club contributed attendance prizes to enhance the holiday fun.

The party included catered food, games of musical chairs, an ugly/cute sweater contest, raffles, prizes, and photos with Santa! ●



From left: Ruth Stankiewicz, LAFD Sr. Auditor, 6 years of City service; and Claire Aguirre, Fiscal Regulatory Specialist II, 28 years.



From left: Laura Kakita, Accountant, 17 years of City service; Santa, who resembled Gene Bednarchik, Retired, Battalion Chief, 41 years; Elsa Rodarte, Sr. Admin Clerk, 34 years; and Paul Garcia, Accounting Clerk, 16 years.



From left: Irma Romanelli, Personnel Director II, 33 years of City service; Santa, who resembled Gene Bednarchik, Retired, Battalion Chief, 41 years; Britney Medina, Management Analyst, 7 years; and Tylhecia Bonnett, Sr. Administrative Clerk, 24 years.



From left: Santa, who resembled Gene Bednarchik, Retired, Battalion Chief, 41 years of City service; with Mariano Bucag, Sr. Management I, 6 years.



From left: Santa, who resembled Gene Bednarchik, Retired, Battalion Chief, 41 years of City service; with Ronnie Villanueva, Acting Chief Deputy, 40 years.



From left: Sandy Duare, Sr. Personnel Analyst I, 28 years of City service; Ana Hernandez Bonilla, Administrative Intern II, 3 weeks; and Natalie Castillo, Personnel Records Supervisor, 7 years.



From left: Bonn Colorado, Fiscal Systems Specialist I, 18 years of City service; Podinilame Dissanayake, Sr. Management Analyst, 20 years; and Jeimie Hidalgo, Auditor I, 4 years.



From left: BJ Ivie, Temp Office Clerk, with Margaret 'Marge' Mendoza, Retired, 16 years of City service.



From left: Susana Amezcua, Management Assistant, 1 year of City service; and Lorrie Dacuma, Sr. Management Analyst, 8 years.



From left: Santa, who resembled Gene Bednarchik, Retired, Battalion Chief, 41 years of City service; with Chief Kristin Crowley, 24 years.



From left: Lishayna Miller, Sr. Admin Clerk, 3 years of City service; Santa, who resembled Gene Bednarchik, Retired, Battalion Chief, 41 years; and Jennifer Corona, Sr. Management Analyst I, 21 years.



Doug Zabalski, Battalion Chief, EMS Bureau, 35 years of City service; with Estela Urzua, Sr. Admin Clerk, Homeland Security Grants, 38 years.





Council President Paul Krikorian.

Photos courtesy Galaxy Press/Hollywood Christmas Parade, and the LAFD

Hollywood on Parade

91ST HOLLYWOOD CHRISTMAS PARADE RUMBLES DOWN THE BOULEVARD WITH CITY COUNCIL SPONSORSHIP.

COUNCIL: Retired US Army Col. Paris Davis, Medal of Honor recipient, was the grand marshal of this year's Hollywood Christmas Parade, held Sunday, Nov. 26 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.

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.



City Council President Paul Krikorian and Paula Abdul.



From left: Capt. Cody Weireter, Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau, and LAFD Chief Kristin Crowley.



LAFD Chief Kristin Crowley rides aboard a vintage fire engine.



Councilwoman Heather Hutt.



Betty Boop balloon.

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!

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. 7

(closed most Mondays and Tuesdays, plus Christmas Eve and Christmas).

Where: LA Zoo and Botanical Gardens, Griffith Park, 5355 Zoo Dr. Free parking.

Cost: \$29-\$35 (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. 5

Where: 4400 Crystal Springs Dr., Griffith Park

Cost: \$7 (18 months and under ride free)

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 through Jan. 5. The trains do not operate in the rain.



Holiday Ice Rink Pershing Square

When: various times, through Jan. 16.

Where: Pershing Square downtown, 532 S. Olive St. Take Metro Red/Purple Line to Pershing Square, or park in nearby facilities (fee).

Cost: Starting at \$20. Skate rental included.

City sponsor: Rec and Parks.

Information: (213) 624.4289; holidayicerinkdowntownla.com

Suitable for experienced and novice skaters. Holiday hours limited. Lockers available for rent. Sessions last one hour.



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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. 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
Alikhan, Arif, Police Admin.		LAPD	22	Martinez, Juan J., Gardener Caretaker		Rec and Parks	26	Vargas, Vicente J., Sr. Heating/Refrig. Insp.		Bldg. & Safety	33
Anguiano, Marta, Sr. Project Coordinator		Eco/Wrkfrc Dev.	26	McKaskle, John S., Power Transmission		LADWP	—	Vazquez, Martin, Special Prog. Assistant		Rec and Parks	5
Arreola, Robert, Aquatic Facility Mgr.		Rec and Parks	34	McRoberts, Robert D., Energy Distribution		LADWP	—	Vorhis, Robert J. Build, Mech. Inspector		Bldg. & Safety	6
Berru, Johnny J., Ref. Coll. Truck Op.		Public Works	20	Metcalf, Ronnie R., Env. Compliance Insp.		Public Works	20	Walker, Rhonda L., Library Assistant		Library	15
Beech, Ronald L., Power Transmission		LADWP	—	Myers, Letecia P., Airport Guide		Airports	12	Yip, Wai Quen, Environmental Engineer		Public Works	33
Bradley, Martin D., Water Operations		LADWP	—	Norona, Juan F., Computer Operator		ITA	36				
Bunluenuchalee, Wandee, Airport Guide		Airports	16	Pantaleon, James L., Mech. Repairer		Public Works	27				
Burgat, Marc H., Mayoral Aide		Mayor's Office	2	Patel, Bhupendra, Ch. Env. Comp. Inspect.		Public Works	38				
Burgos, Maria E., Retirement Plan		LADWP	—	Pierson, Russell N., Water Operations		LADWP	—				
Ceniceros, Alfredo, Heavy Duty Truck Op.		Public Works	22	Pointer, Lawrence B., Ref. Collect. Truck Op.		Public Works	27				
Cermak, Robert J., Refuse Coll. Truck Op.		Public Works	34	Ramos, Herlinda, Crossing Guard		LADOT	1				
Cerule Jr., Nicholas, Power Transmission		LADWP	—	Reyes, Martha S., Exec. Admin. Assistant		LAPD	27				
Claus, Mark J., Sr. Constr. Inspector		Public Works	39	Rosa Callejas, Freddy E., Crossing Guard		LADOT	1				
Dalmatov, Gloria B., Treasurer		Library	28	Saldin, R. John, Sr. Civil Engineer		Public Works	40				
De Foor, Joya C., Treasurer		Off. of the Treas	9	Shimokochi, Linda, ITS		LADWP	—				
Madrid, Gilbert H., Power Supply		LADWP	—	Smidt, William G., Sr. Security Officer		Airports	27				
Martin, Bruce R., Power Transmission		LADWP	—	Smith, Yvette D., Animal Control Officer		Animal Services	17				
Martin, Kenneth B., Refuse Coll. Truck Op.		Public Works	23	Solidum, Leo M., Vocational Worker		Gen. Services	15				
Martinez, Adolfo, JFB/Facilities		LADWP	—	Van Stryk, Albert A., Power Transmission		LADWP	—				



* **NOTE:** If you wish to have a listing deleted from our online posting of Retirement notices, please email us at admin@aliveemployeesclub.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.

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					
Jones, Anthony C.	Airports	17			
Ip, Steven	LADWP	16			
Lin, Louis T.	Transportation	15			
Pickens, Machel	Transportation	29			
Reese, William J.	Public Works	34			
Toliver, Nicholas M.	LADWP	32			
RETIRED					
Baier, Edmond E.	—	—	Marquez, Charles L.	LADWP	22
Boone, Dolores T.	Airports	30	Mastrolia, Catherine A.	Personnel	11
Brown, Arthur T.	—	—	Mathieu, Odell	LADWP	42
Carazza, Alfred	Public Works	30	Mayfield, Carolyn J.	—	—
Carlin, John W.	General Services	29	McReynolds, Laurent	LADWP	34
Caulfield, Monica A.	Library	16	Momohara, Harold H.	General Services	28
Cirella, Alfonso F.	LADWP	35	Mosley, John E.	Rec and Parks	28
Cota, Frances A.	—	—	Najera, Joaquin A.	—	—
Culbertson, William J.	LADWP	32	Nelson, Don O.	—	—
Douglas, Janet M.	LADWP	35	Packard, Robert F.	—	—
Eason, Tafalla N.	ITA	24	Patron, Susan H.	Library	34
Engel, Gloria A.	LADWP	20	Paul, Mickey L.	LADWP	29
Freed, Robert	LADWP	10	Reaux, Forest	—	—
Gagnon, Robert J.	Finance	24	Reed, James W.	—	—
Gonzales, George J.	LADWP	30	Rolfe, Ernest J.	Rec and Parks	37
Gonzalez, John A.	LADWP	29	Samara, Jack N.	LADWP	31
Hall, Robert L.	—	—	Sanchez, William V.	LADWP	31
Heinrich-Josties, Hans	Public Works	28	Scavone, Rocco A.	—	—
Hernandez, Steven A.	LADWP	31	Smith, James	—	—
Johnson, Marcus L.	—	—	Spaulding, Arthur O.	—	—
Kellogg, Robert W.	—	—	Stallings, Joe S.	LADWP	29
Lebo, Charles I.	LADPW	31	Stekkinger, Leo P.	Harbor	37
Lorence, Charles W.	LAPD	30	Tripp, Albert L.	Rec and Parks	1
Louck, Frank A.	Library	34	Vercher, Jasper W.	Airports	10
Lozano, Octavio J.	Building and Safety	23	West, Katherine M.	LADWP	44
Magee, Charles V.	LAPD	34	Williams, Phillip	Transportation	27
Marrero, Victor A.	ITA	32	Wilson, Betty R.	Dept. on Disability	27
			Young, Fred E.	Public Works	30
			Zorick, Mark R.	LADWP	30



EMPLOYEES AT WORK



Catching Up With Claudia

Spotlight on Our Club Members! Club Founder and Training Officer John Hawkins had an amazing encounter with one of our Members, Traffic Officer Claudia Jones, LADOT, outside Aquarela Coffee just north of DTLA. "The best espresso in the City," John says.

Cheers to you, Officer Claudia, for keeping our streets safe!

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Captain's Log

Traveling with Capt. Michael Barnes,
Retired, Harbor



Letter From Australia - Friends in Cool Places Down Under

For most tourists, a list of "must-sees" on a trip to Sydney, Australia, would include the world-famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, the iconic Opera House, and possibly a visit to the equally world-renowned Bondi Beach, a mere 4 miles from the center of Sydney. A climb up the Harbour Bridge is a memorable experience, and the 360-degree views are nothing short of magnificent. A short stroll from Circular Quay will take you to the historic Rocks area where you will find an abundance of restaurants and pubs, including the Fortune of War, the oldest pub in Sydney dating back to 1828. The Harbour View Hotel is a great pub where you can sit and have a drink with food and wave to the Bridge climbers as they descend. The Rocks is a beautiful part of Sydney with weekend markets that attract many locals and tourists; it's very easy to spend a day exploring this area.



Off-road trail view of Sydney

A ferry ride not to miss is a 25-minute scenic journey to Manly, one of the most popular beaches in Sydney. The northern beaches' Pacific Ocean coastline stretches some 18 miles and boasts more than 20 beaches. The Corso in Manly (named after Rome's Via del Corso) is mostly a pedestrian mall 1,500 feet long connecting the harbor ferry wharf to the Manly Pacific Ocean side of the peninsula. Most restaurants, coffee shops and pubs in this area have outdoor areas taking advantage of the great Australian climate.

People watching is as popular in Sydney as it is everywhere else. One great place to do this is from the balcony of the Four Pines Brewing Company, which originated in Manly in 2006. Their microbrewery overlooking Manly Cove is a very popular venue with great food and tasting racks if you're unsure which beer to drink. A five-minute walk from here is the hugely popular 1875 Manly 16ft Skiff Club. The deck is built out over the harbor and offers uninterrupted views of boats...



Sydney Harbour iconic Opera House

From Circular Quay you can catch a ferry to the beautiful Taronga Zoo; it's cleverly crafted into the sloping site to capture harbor views from all angles. Or a quick ferry ride will take you to a recently revamped area called Barangaroo, again with many restaurants and bars on offer and the magnificent Crown Casino Hotel. But be warned, if you'd like to stay there you can expect to pay more than \$A900 (\$600) per night.

The adventures of Michael Barnes continue on Web Alive!



Send in a travel picture holding Alive!

- Snap a high resolution photo of you holding Alive!
- Go to: alive.employeesclub.com/alivearoundtheworld You'll find a convenient online form to send your text and pics for publication.

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Arlene Herrero
Vice President of Business Development

Arlene on the Scene

Alive! follows the Club's Arlene Herrero, Vice President of Business Development, as she meets Club Members.

May 25 Last May 25, Arlene presented to the newest LAPD custody class at the LAPD Ahmanson Recruit Training Center.

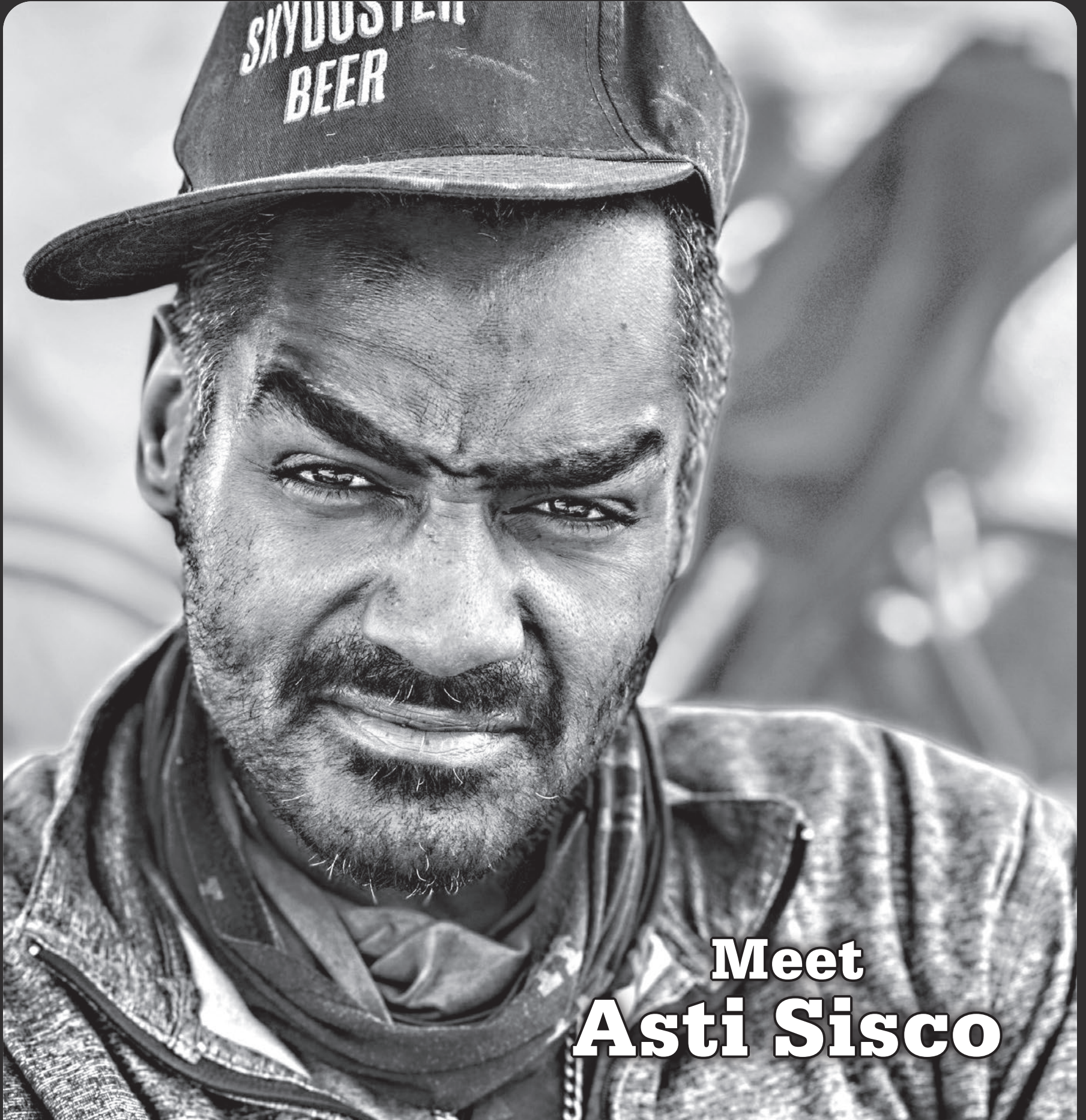


{ Who are the people you see every day? }

People We See

Shelterless in Los Angeles: stories of compassion and humanity

No. 112
in a series.



▶ Meet Asti Sisco

INTERVIEW

Note: This interview includes language of the street that might not be appropriate for all readers.



John's impression: "Asti was a good-natured man – friendly, personable, and quite a showman. And he loved the camera."

Location of interview: Main Street across from Union Station.

Birthday: Sept. 19, 1983 (40)

Birthplace: "Cincinnati."

Education: After graduating from high school, he earned degrees in electrical engineering and computer science from the Ohio State University.

Family: "I have two sisters."

After college: "I did more drugs, leading to a prison sentence for selling weed and cocaine to an undercover cop," he alleged.

Drugs admittedly taken: Cocaine, mushrooms, marijuana and heroin, he alleged.

Lessons in prison: "I learned some valuable life lessons and became a master barber."

Path to LA: "After 'hoe-ing' around from place to place, I had no more people I could stay with" ... combined with "not being able to follow directions from my grandmother. I became an 'apprentice' to my cousin and moved to Florida selling meth," he alleged. Soon he was under the care of a "sugar Mama" for several years. When that ended, he headed to Los Angeles.

Current medications: "None, although I wish I was," he joked.

Favorite candy: "Jolly Rancher cherry and De la Rosa *mazapan*."

Favorite movie: "*The Fifth Element*."

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

Last meal: "Pancakes this morning."

Make a wish: "That my sister wasn't in prison at the moment," he alleged. "That I knew who the Creator was."

That I never started taking drugs."

The Club gave Asti \$40 for his time and his modeling debut.

The interview was conducted by Club Founder John Hawkins on Dec. 14. The contents described here were taken directly from a video recording.

{ In this feature, Club Founder and Training Officer 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 our stories to tell. }

— OVERFLOW TO WEB *ALIVE!*

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

— continued from page 23

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If you’re feeling energetic, you can explore one of the many parks in the area where you can see ancient Aboriginal rock engravings. There are also many bike paths and off-road trails. During May and November there are regular whale-watching cruises that take you from the harbor out through the heads to the Pacific Ocean. If you’re lucky, you might also see the Little Penguin colony at Sydney’s North Harbour, near Manly – they forage for food throughout Sydney Harbour and come to Manly each year to breed between May and February.

Surfing is a huge sport in Australia, and the dedicated are out there from dawn to dusk. Swimming in daylight was banned until 1903, and in that year Manly held the first demonstration of surf lifesaving methods. Following the deaths of 17 people, one of the world’s first surf lifesaving clubs was formed. In 1914 Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku arrived and popularized surfboard riding at both Manly and Freshwater beaches. A bronze statue of Duke stands on the northeastern side of the Freshwater Surf Club.

A HISTORICAL NOTE

When Britain was defeated by the American colonial rebels in 1783 (in America), Britain could no longer transport its convicted footpads, highwaymen and Ladies of the Night to North America as free labor. Hence Britain’s Secretary of State, Lord Sydney,



World-famous Sydney Harbour Bridge.

established a penal colony in Sydney (named after him). He dispatched Capt. Arthur Phillip in 1788 with 1,400 convicts, soldiers and free people in 11 ships on a 252-day journey halfway around the world from Portsmouth, England, to Botany Bay. On arrival he established a convict settlement. While exploring local bays and coves around the settlement, the new governor discovered a group of indigenous men in canoes, and he was so impressed with their manly physique and behavior that he named the place Manly after them.

Visit friends and family while you can. No one is immortal.

The Captain