



# Alive!

Save with Club travel deals  
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## Friends to the Ends of the Earth

LADWP The Cali Passport Posse —  
LADWP Retirees — travel the world  
with friends they met on the job.

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The Cali Passport Posse, top row, from left: Steve Starks and Max Reyes. Second row: Trinh Nguyen, Aditya Sharma, Ethelinda Reyes and Gregory Hornsby Sr. Front row: Julie Naslund, Earl Rodgers, Zebbra Corbin-Rodgers and Latrice Williams. Not pictured: Leslie McKay-Martin. All but four are Retired, LADWP and LADOT. Most are Club Members. (Titles are listed inside.)

Alive! photo by Summy Lam



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# Looking Our Best

**ROBERT'S BLOG**  
by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club

**Earl Rodgers** first wrote to *Alive!* in 2018 to submit photos to our fun "Alive! Around the World" section. But this was different; this was a group.

His submission chronicled the adventures of he and his friends from the LADWP – the Dirty Dozen, as they were then known, traveling the world. We could clearly see they were hav-

ing great fun; we have been thinking about featuring the team, now the Cali Passport Posse, since then. But then there was a pandemic, and other feature stories got in the way, so to speak.

No longer. Our cover story this month is all about them, and we're so happy to catch up while they're in one place. It is not easy!



CEO Robert Larios with the CPP at a rare moment – when they're not traveling!

I see there are three take-aways from the Cali Passport Posse: One, send us your travel photos holding *Alive!*, just like Earl did. We love seeing them! Two: Don't forget about the tens of thousands of discount deals the Club provides for you. We save you money every day. Get in the habit of sampling the prices. It's real value for you.

And three: They are living the lives they want to live, with the people they want to live it with. They are laughing and feeling young. Friends make life better. It is that simple. They are an inspiration to us, and we hope for you, too.

**Oh Deer**

Speaking of "Alive! Around the World," we have enjoyed

Members taking their copies in some incredible places, including under water and the top of Mount Everest. But I do not recall any where their copy was literally being eaten! That is what Andrew Ko, LAPD, experienced in Japan. See it for yourself on page 20. I love it!

**Women's History Month**

As March is Women's History Month, I want to take a moment to thank Guadalupe Lopez Torres, City Attorney's Office, Club Member. She asked us to mention a special non-profit downtown – the Downtown Women's Center, which works with City and County agencies to help unhoused women to get off the street. Through our own "People We See," that is a cause we care a lot about. If Club Members are looking for a charity to support, consider the Downtown Women's Center.

**Worth Considering**

Here's to channeling positive energy for health, a stress-free mindset, epic opportunities, financial independence, and hearts brimming with joy. This month, let's crush it with real happiness and success that breaks the ceiling!

As we await spring, I wish you a grounded character but a traveling heart.

*¡Gracias por leer!*

— Robert Larios



# Raise employee morale! Schedule a Club Mobile visit!



At a recent Mobile Team site visit.

The Club Mobile 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:



**Club Mobile is cashless!**

For your convenience, now accepting major credit cards and:



**Club Mobile Schedule:**

**The first Monday of every month:**

**Mon., March 4**

**North Central Sanitation**

452 N. San Fernando Rd., 6 – 11 a.m.

**The first Wednesday of every month:**

**Wed., March 6**

**Harbor**

100 W. Fifth St., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**The first Thursday of the month:**

**Thurs., March 7**

**West Valley StreetsLA**

9324 Topanga Canyon Blvd., 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Additional Visits**

**Wed., March 20**

**Rec and Parks/Encino Golf**

16821 Burbank Blvd., 8 – 10 a.m.

**ATTENTION SUPERVISORS:**  
Raise employee morale! Bring the Club to your worksite!

**For additional Club Mobile 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**





LADWP  
**Friends to the Ends of the Earth**

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COVER STORY:

**Friends to the Ends of the Earth** ..... 12-15

A group of 11 current and Retired LADWP employees met at work, became friends, and then started traveling together. A lot. Read their fun story!

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**Get more *Alive!* content at [alive.employeesclub.com](http://alive.employeesclub.com)**

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**NEW THIS MONTH ONLINE!**  
[alive.employeesclub.com](http://alive.employeesclub.com)

**Rest Insured**

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.



**Noelle's Picture Perfect**

See all the winners from this month's contest with the theme "brightening the world."



**Coloring Contest for Grown-Ups!**

Hey Club Members, the deadline is soon for this year's Grown-Up Coloring Contest, so get out your crayons, sparkles and whatnot, and submit!



**DOWNLOAD THE ART AT:**  
[aliveemployeesclub.com/grown-up-coloring-contest/](http://aliveemployeesclub.com/grown-up-coloring-contest/)

**SEND ENTRIES TO:** Club Grown-Up Coloring Contest  
Employees Club of California  
311 S. Spring St., Suite 1300  
Los Angeles, CA 90013

**WIN \$50**

**DEADLINE: March 9**

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# Lopez to Leadership

NICK LOPEZ, 40 YEARS OF CITY SERVICE, IS PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, STREETS.LA.

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

Nick Lopez, a 40-year veteran of Street Services, has been named the Bureau's new Assistant Director and Chief Construction Officer.

Nick has had many roles at StreetsLA during his long career and is "an expert in all things Public Works," according to the Bureau.

Congratulations, Nick! The Club honors and celebrates you for your many years of serving the people of Los Angeles. ●



Nick Lopez



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](mailto:help@employeesclub.com)  
 (800) 464-0452

*Alive!*

Mar. 2024 • Volume 23 – No. 3

*Alive!* is the official publication of the **Employees Club of California**

311 Spring St., Suite 1300  
 Los Angeles, CA 90013

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*Alive!* (USPS P7960) is published monthly, 12 times per year by the Employees Club of California, 311 Spring St., Suite 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

**ALIVE! EDITORIAL OFFICES:**

311 Spring Street, Suite 1300,  
 Los Angeles CA, 90013 • (800) 464-0452

**POSTAGE:** Periodicals postage paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Annual subscription price for *Alive!* is included in the membership dues and is nondeductible.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address corrections to *Alive!*, Employees Club of California, 311 Spring St., Suite 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

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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](mailto:alive@employeesclub.com)

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# Club Team

Contact our help desk for all your Club needs:  
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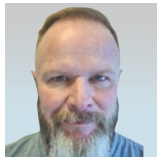
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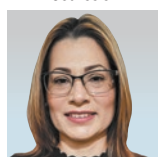
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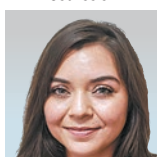
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**Dylan Noel**  
 Member Services Counselor



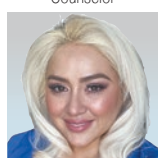
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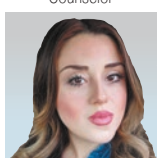
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**Guadalupe Lira**  
 Retail Operations Manager



**Rebecca DeBolt**  
 Customer Service Representative



**Eduardo Escalona**  
 Mobile Operations Representative



**Raul M. Salgado**  
 Customer Service Representative



**DeAngelo Thompson**  
 Mobile Operations Representative

## Tickets & Benefits Procurement



**Mariana Guevara**  
 Tickets and Benefits Procurement



**Megan Eckert**  
 Tickets and Benefits Procurement Associate

## Claims



**Dulce Lopez**  
 Claims Administrator



**Mikayla Sprague**  
 Claims Administrator

## Business Development



**Arlene Herrero**  
 Vice President of Business Development

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**John Hawkins**  
 Club Founder and Training Officer

## Accounting



**Leigh Thompson**  
 Controller



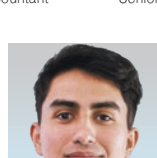
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**Trinh Pham**  
 Senior Accountant



**Daniel McAlinden**  
 Senior Accountant



**Frank Ochoa**  
 IT Accountant

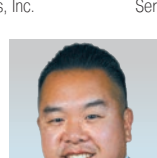
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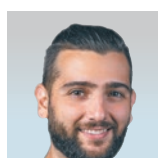


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**Citlali Bon**  
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**Edith Bon-Sanchez**  
 Data Processing Coordinator



**Alan Bound**  
 IT Business Analyst



**Ronald Cortez**  
 Assistant Quality Assurance Analyst



**Natalia Guevara**  
 Data Processing Coordinator



**Rey Hernandez**  
 IT Senior Developer

## 2023 PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNER





**“Schedule the Club Truck for a visit! It’s good for employees. It’s good for morale!”**  
 — Pete Gomez, Street Services Supervisor I, Public Works, Club Member

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*The Club honors the City’s public employees with first-rate service and merchandise.*



Airport Police Chief Cecil Rhambo swears in the division’s newest Officers (from left) Hazel Perez, Brandon Smith and Jessica Medina at the LAPD Academy in Elysian Park.

**Welcome New Officers!**

POLICE DIVISION WELCOMES NEW OFFICERS.

**AIRPORTS:** The Club welcomes new Airport Police Officers Hazel Perez, Jessica Medina and Brandon Smith to the force. We wish them well, and thank them for their decision to serve the people of Los Angeles. ●



**THE TRUCK WHISPERER**

The Club’s DeAngelo Thompson is *The Truck Whisperer*.

**‘Club Whisperer’ Premiere Set!**

CLUB’S FUN ANNUAL MEETING VIDEO SETS YOUTUBE WORLD PREMIERE MARCH 15.

**THE CLUB:** The red carpets are being rolled out for a Club premiere! “The Truck Whisperer” – a fun video promoting the incredible Club Truck that debuted at the Club’s annual meeting in January – will have its world premiere on YouTube March 15.

The video tells the story of the Truck Whisperer – played dramatically by Mobile Operations Representative DeAngelo Thompson and voiced by IT Accounting Assistant Frank Ochoa – who channels the Truck vibe and convinces the Club leadership team about the many advantages for Club Members that the vehicle delivers.

Mark your calendars for March 15, and be moved! ●



“The Truck Whisperer” video includes a tour of the truck and excerpts with Club Staff (from left) Rebecca DeBolt, Eddie Escalona, CEO Robert Larios, Lupe Lira and DeAngelo Thompson.



**Public Works/StreetsLA**

StreetsLA responded to a large tree emergency at the intersection of Hillcrest Drive and Obama Blvd in Council District 10.

**A Mighty Storm Response**

DEPTS. WORK HARD TO CLEAR THE CITY AFTER HISTORIC RAINS.

**CITYWIDE:** City departments responded after historic rainstorms confronted Los Angeles Feb. 4-6. The storms turned February into the wettest month in more than 26 years as of Feb. 21, 2023. More rain was predicted before the end of the month.

The storms of Feb. 4-6 destroyed neighborhoods, triggered debris flows and mudslides and killed several people across the state, according to the LA Times.

The Club thanks all City employees who worked hard to keep our roads clear, and the City safe. ●



**LADWP**

Hard-working crews restored power to affected customers in Brentwood after a tree fell on power lines. The crews worked around the clock to restore power to all those affected, including those in Koreatown.



**LAFD**

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass joined LAFD Chief Kristin Crowley in observing some of the damage caused by severe winter storms, here in Studio City. The department also made dramatic rescues from those in danger in the Los Angeles River. LAFD photo/Tyler Dixon



# 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

“Spring is the time of plans and projects.” – Leo Tolstoy

### Spring Cleaning

Spring begins in March and you know what that means: spring cleaning!

Now is the perfect time to organize your finances and insurances. Plan for your future by reviewing your Club benefits to make sure you and your loved ones are protected.

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.

#### 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. That's 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!**

### Club Life Insurance Designed for Retirees

Let's 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.

### Questions?

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



### 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

### ATTENTION RECENT RETIREES: COMPLETE THIS PENSION DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION FORM

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](mailto: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

**June 2 Annual Picnic**  
LA River Center and Gardens  
570 W. Ave. 26, Los Angeles  
Noon – 3 p.m.

#### LADWP Retirees Association

2024 events to be announced.

#### Reservation information:

LADWP Retiree Association:  
[vincedolores@gmail.com](mailto:vincedolores@gmail.com)  
LARFPA: [events@larfpa.org](mailto:events@larfpa.org)

### Contact Information

#### Employees Club of California

Club contact:  
[help@employeesclub.com](mailto:help@employeesclub.com)

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

(800) 779-8328  
[lacers.services@lacers.org](mailto:lacers.services@lacers.org)

#### LADWP Retirees Association

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

#### Fire and Police Pensions (City Dept.)

(844) 885-2377  
[pensions@lafpp.com](mailto:pensions@lafpp.com)

#### LA Retired Fire and Police Association (LARFPA)

(888) 288-5073  
[membership@larfpa.org](mailto:membership@larfpa.org)

#### Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)

See page 16



## Employees Club of California

311 S. Spring St. STE 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013  
(800) 464-0452 - [www.EmployeesClub.com](http://www.EmployeesClub.com)

## Pension Deduction Authorization Form — Los Angeles City & LADWP

### 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:

City:  State:  Zip:  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



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#### Must Select One

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

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.

#### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Code  Deduction





**EMPLOYEES Club CALIFORNIA**

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## EXPLORE YOUR SAVINGS

**BUY NOW** [EMPLOYEESCLUB.COM](https://EMPLOYEESCLUB.COM)



Sgt. Rob Pedregon, Club Member (third from left) with supporters Capt. Karla Rodriguez, Traffic and Security Section; Capt. Mario Patrick, Professional Standards Section; and Sgt. Sasheen Cooper, Training Unit.

Story and photo courtesy LAXPD

## Well Done, Sergeant!

SGT. ROB PEDREGON COMPLETES LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE TRAINING.

**AIRPORTS:** Congratulations to Sgt. Rob Pedregon, Manuals Orders and Compliance, Club Member, for completing the Sherman Block Supervisory Leadership Institute (SLI) training. This training consists of 192 hours of coursework that is completed one week per month over eight months.

The SLI is designed to stimulate personal growth, leadership and ethical decision-making in California law enforcement front-line supervisors. Continued education and development is a big part of the LAXPD culture.

Well done, Sgt., from your friends at *Alive!* ●

# Fin-Tastic

deals for  
**Birch Aquarium in La Jolla!**

Go to for details:  
[employeesclub.com](https://employeesclub.com)



## Noelle's Picture Perfect Contest

Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

Hello Club image makers! I love awesome photos and am so excited to see your best. And a shoutout to John Hawkins, who managed this monthly contest for more than a decade. Let's continue his creativity and have fun! And don't forget about Club insurance. Do you have all that you need? See page 6 for more information. — **Noelle**

This month's theme was: **Brightening the World.**



"While she may not brighten up anybody else's world, the abandoned baby kitten my wife and I rescued more than 17 years ago in our backyard has certainly brightened up ours ever since. (She can be an unpredictable beast at times, though!)"

– **Yves Didier, Airport Police**

**Noelle's comment:** That's a lot of cat, Yves! Glad she's doing her duty and brightening your day .... from such a close distance! And thanks for helping take care of the pet population. That matters.



"My springtime roses always brighten my day and they are one of my loves to photograph."

– **John Nance, Retired, LADWP**

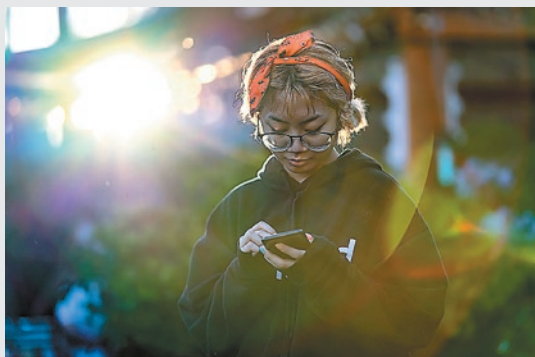
**Noelle's comment:** You really know how to shoot macro, John. This brightened my day. Well done!



"New Year's Eve 2023, East Coast vacation. This was my favorite picture of our whole New England vacation. This is the Nubbie Lighthouse, built in 1879 in Cape Neddick, York, Maine."

– **Joel Prendiz, Housing**

**Noelle's comment:** What a stunning image, Joel. The light coming from behind you beautifully sets off the white of the lighthouse against the blue/gray of the skies. With all the rain we've had, your image immediately brightens my outlook for clear and sunny weather to come. Thanks for submitting; is this your first time? Please continue!



"Sometimes, it's the imperfection that makes an impact. Given the right angle, light intensity, and (of course) the perfect subject: A lens flare can give the composition a certain character ... or I can simply admit that this was a Happy Accident."

– **Dominique Daito, LAPD**

**Noelle's comment:** I've been looking forward to your next submission, Dominique, since I took over the Picture Perfect contest. You consistently submit outstanding images. This is another amazing shot. Happy Accident or not, the lens flare here is the perfect tool to backlight your subject like an angel. Outstanding.



"Tulip bloom, Descanso Gardens, La Cañada. Lots of people out enjoying the flowers."

– **Alex Andrews, Building and Safety**

**Noelle's comment:** These brighten my world, Alex. I like the angle you chose to really emphasize the colors, like a carpet that wants to lead my eye into the distance. Thanks for submitting!

The next photo contest theme:

### Spring Forward

DEADLINE:  
Mar. 15



Submit your best photos online here:  
[alive.employeesclub.com/pictureperfect/](https://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.





Photos by Rebecca DeBolt, Club staff

# A Club

Club's 95th historic annual luncheon highlights Club succession and success.



**THE CLUB:** The Club held its 95th annual luncheon Jan. 23 at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles. The luncheon was the first to be led fully by Robert Larios, the newly promoted President and CEO of both the Los Angeles City Employees Association parent company and its subsidiary, the Employees Club of California.

"It gives me immense pleasure to stand before you today," Robert Larios said. "We are gathered here to celebrate, honor and acknowledge the incredible public service employees who, day in and day out, serve our wonderful state with dedication and commitment."

"Today, we're stepping into a new era of Club Service – an era marked by fast, flexible scheduling, and an unwavering responsiveness to your needs. All of these changes are driven by our desire to create a more enriching and enjoyable experience for each and every one of you."

CEO Robert Larios and Chief Operating Officer Summy Lam handled the hosting duties. Robert and Summy acknowledged Club business partners and vendors in the room before highlighting three who were awarded with annual honors (see below).

For the first time, the annual luncheon began with a prayer of invocation and ended with a closing benediction. They were performed by Officer Don Jenkins, South Traffic, of the LAPD's Chaplain Corps unit.

The luncheon featured a lively speech by Club Founder and outgoing Association CEO John Hawkins, who brought down the house when he displayed his brand-new "Club Universe" T-shirt. "There are no limits!" he said. According to the Association's corporate succession plan, John is now Club Founder and Education and Training Officer.

The Association's official annual meeting – the swearing-in of the Club board – was held virtually in mid-December of last year for the year 2023.



From left: Rich Aste with the Club's Summy Lam and Alan Bound.



Association and Club Board Members, top row, from left: Capt. Danny Wu, LAFD; David Muraoka; Andrew Virzi Jr.; and Andrew Virzi III. Front: Rita Robinson, Rose Hyland and Marilyn Holley.

**HOP BY  
HONEYBAKED**  
*for Easter*



**March 11-15 Buy \$25 Gift Cards for only \$17.95!**

**Club Member Exclusive  
Online-Only Discount**



Use Promo Code  
**JOY2024**

- Limit 4 Gift Cards per Member.
- Must Use Promo Code at Checkout.
- These are physical Gift Cards and will be mailed to you.



**EmployeesClub.com**



# Celebration!

## According to Plan

On the occasion of hosting his first annual luncheon as newly promoted President and CEO of both the overall Association and the Club subsidiary, Robert said, "My American journey began in 1976 in Pauma Valley in San Diego County. As a young immigrant boy, I dreamed of success, happiness, contributing positively to society, and leading a meaningful life."

"Back in the day, my sisters and I would hold fancy 'board meetings' at the dining table, dreaming big dreams," he continued. "As children under 10 years of age, 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, helping them, helping you attain your happiness and fulfillment!"

"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."

Robert then thanked all those who assisted him along the way, including his wife, Patty, and friends and mentors who were in the audience.

Earlier, he introduced his mentor and friend, John Hawkins, and thanked him for all he had done.

"I ask that each of you take a moment to thank John Hawkins."



**John Hawkins**  
Club Founder

**Robert Larios**  
Association CEO

He is a visionary leader, innovator and a champion of integrity. I worked side by side with John for 25 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 non-profit into a bustling and innovative \$35 million industry leader. 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 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."



Friends, mentors and dedicated to public employees: Club Founder John Hawkins (facing camera) and Association CEO Robert Larios.



More great meeting pics on Web Alive!

2024

## Board of Directors

### LACEA (Association)

- Chair Andrew Virzi III, LADWP
- Phillipe Chou, LADWP
- Jackie Koci Tamayo, Santa Clara County
- Carlos Rodriguez, LADOT
- Capt. Danny Wu, LAFD

### LACEA Insurance Services (The Club)

#### All Retired:

- Terry Carter
- Marilyn Holley
- Rose Hyland
- David Muraoka
- Rita Robinson
- Andrew Virzi Jr.

## Conclusion

Robert then concluded the luncheon: "To our valued Members, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your trust," Robert said. "As we move forward, our commitment to excellence, driven by meeting your needs and expectations, remains unwavering. We are more determined than ever to provide exceptional service and deliver unmatched value."

"Although the transition may bring new challenges, it also reveals exciting opportunities. Together, we will navigate this invigorating chapter, drawing on our shared history while eagerly anticipating continued growth and success. Our journey thus far is a testament to the transformative power of mentorship, strategic planning, and collaboration, and I am honored to lead our organizations into the next phase of our story."

"Let's remember that every ending marks a fresh start. Here's to a seamless transition and the start of a new chapter in our shared journey."

The crowd cheered for another great year of service to public employees.



# Awards

## Recognition for Great Club Service

The Club is all about great service to public employees. A portion of the luncheon was dedicated to recognition of exemplary service.

### 2023 PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNER



**Rey Hernandez**  
IT Senior Developer

### CLUB PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The Club President's Award is given to a Club staff member who has gone above and beyond the scope of their job. The award was presented by Petros Khachatryan, Club Director of IT, to **Rey Hernandez**, IT Sr. Developer, who could not attend the luncheon.

Rey Hernandez, "an individual of unwavering diligence and curiosity, has been making waves within our organization. His exceptional kindness and respectfulness stand out, paralleled with an eagerness to learn from peers. Always going above and beyond, Rey has played a big role in the success of a recent massive project. With deep knowledge, expertise, and an unyielding can-do attitude, he has helped propel our organization into the modern era. We are incredibly fortunate to count him as part of our Club family."

"This recent project required significant teamwork, but his contribution truly stood out. He single-handedly wrote an impressive 198,426 lines of code distributed across 4,548 files. As we geared up for the release over several months, he took on the responsibility of preparing the database for testing, beginning his day as early as 3 to 4 a.m. While that might sound like a perk for early birds, the reality is quite different—this individual consistently remained the last to sign off. I want to make it clear that I am not a tyrant. This level of dedication was entirely voluntary."

"We express our deepest gratitude for your exceptional service and dedication. You truly deserve this recognition."

### CLUB AMBASSADOR AWARD

The Club Ambassador Award is given to a Club Ambassador who exemplifies excitement and enthusiasm for this great City, colleagues and the Club. The year, the honor was given to **Chermaine Fontenette**, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment; and **Cesar Ponce**, LADOT.

Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales, introduced the two Ambassador Award winners.

Chermaine "played a vital role in helping the Mobile Club Team secure consistent appointments at her department," Noelle said. "She also 100-percent shared her enthusiasm for the Club with her colleagues, resulting in more than 100 employees becoming part of our Club community. Her dedication and unwavering support make her the best of what it means to be a Club Ambassador. Thank you, Chermaine."

"Our second recipient, Cesar Ponce, deserves equal recognition for his outstanding efforts," Noelle continued. "He was instrumental in helping me relaunch the Club's Sports Program – which was founded by Robert in 2008. Despite the challenges posed by Covid, his extensive contacts and exemplary organizational skills allowed us to navigate through all the red tape. As a result, we transitioned our focus to hosting Club-sponsored tournaments for softball and basketball, which turned out to be a booming success! Thank you, Cesar!"



Presenting the Club's Ambassador's Award, from left: The Club's Noelle Kauffman and Cesar Ponce, LADOT; and Chermaine Fontenette, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment, with Association CEO Robert Larios.



## The Club Truck

The luncheon Jan. 23 highlighted the emergence of the Club Truck, an innovative tool that is already paying dividends in returning value to Members at offices and worksites throughout Los Angeles. The Club Truck made its annual luncheon debut, stationing itself outside the venue's front doors to invite attendees to experience it in full operation.

The Club also screened "The Truck Whisperer," a video presentation highlighting the debut of the Club Truck. The video was written and co-produced by Burnes Creative and filmed, edited and co-produced by ALAS Media.



# Cooking with the Club

with Chef Robert Larios



Photos: Patty M. Larios



## Spinach Caprese Salad with Chickpeas, Ciabatta Croutons and Dressing

This salad is my special treat for all you food lovers. I've mixed a spinach salad, full of vitamins A, K and C, with the traditional Italian caprese salad. This combo is sure to make your taste buds dance!

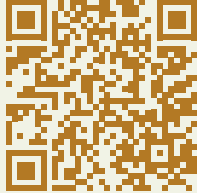
Imagine this: bright, soft spinach leaves mixed with small, red tomatoes packed with health-boosting antioxidants, health experts say. I've thrown in pieces of fresh mozzarella cheese, which is known for being high in protein and calcium.

For a bit of a twist, I've added chickpeas, known for their high fiber and protein content. They provide a smooth texture that contrasts well with the crunchy golden ciabatta croutons, made from a type of Italian bread known for its crispy outside and chewy inside.

All these ingredients, each bringing their own unique nutritional benefits and textures, are mixed together under a creamy balsamic dressing. Balsamic vinegar adds a sweet and sour kick and is also known for health benefits like reducing cholesterol and helping digestion, according to experts.

This salad is sort of like the famous combo of chocolate and peanut butter, but it's got its own unique twist. It shows how mixing different food elements can create a dish that's not just yummy, but also good for you. Enjoy your meal!

Follow this recipe online:



¡Buen provecho! *Chef Larios*

### INGREDIENTS: Serves 2

- 4 ounces grape tomatoes
- 1 unit fresh mozzarella (contains milk)
- 5 teaspoons chickpeas
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons mayonnaise
- 5 ounces Dijon mustard
- 2 bundles spinach
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### Utensils You Will Need

- Strainer
- Small bowl
- Whisk
- Large bowl

### DIRECTIONS: Total time is 20 minutes



**1 Prep** - Wash and dry produce. Halve tomatoes lengthwise. Dice mozzarella into half-inch pieces. Halve ciabatta; drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with half the garlic powder (all for 4 servings). Toast until golden. Drain and rinse chickpeas.



**2 Start Dressing** - In a small bowl, whisk together half the vinegar, half the mayonnaise, half the mustard, and half-teaspoon sugar until smooth. (For 4 servings, use all the vinegar, all the mayonnaise, all the mustard, and 1 teaspoon sugar.) Slowly whisk in 2 tablespoons olive oil (4 tablespoons for 4) until creamy; season with salt and pepper.



**3 Make Croutons (or Not!)** - Dice toasted ciabatta into 1-inch pieces. Season with salt and pepper. Or use your favorite pre-made croutons if you don't want to make them.



**4 Finish and Serve** - In a large bowl, combine spinach, tomatoes, mozzarella, croutons, half the chickpeas (all for 4 servings), and as much dressing as you like. (You'll have extra dressing; save for another use.) Taste and season with salt and pepper.

### Cooking Tidbit

This recipe calls for ciabatta bread and making it into croutons. Instead, I recommend that you use your favorite brand of croutons to save time, and you won't lose on flavor. If you would like to know my favorite brand of croutons, contact me at [alive@employeesclub.com](mailto:alive@employeesclub.com)

### Food Quote:

"This salad is a symphony of flavors and textures. Each ingredient, from the spinach to the mozzarella, contributes to a culinary masterpiece. It's proof that great food balances taste with harmony."

— **Chef Robert Larios**

### Food Lover's Dictionary:



**Chickpea** : Irregularly shaped, buffed-colored legumes have a firm texture and mild, nutlike flavor. Chickpeas (also called garbanzo beans and ceci) are used extensively in the Mediterranean, India and the Middle East for dishes such as couscous and hummus. They've also

found their way into Spanish cuisine, Italian minestrone, and various Mexican dishes. They're most commonly used in salads, soups and stews

Bibliography: Copyright Barron's Educational Services, Inc. 2009, adapted from The New Food Lover's Companion, 2007, by Sharon Tyler Herbst and Ron Herbst.

Recipe: 1. Hellofresh.com - <https://www.hellofresh.com/recipes/spinach-caprese-salad-621e859bb089c66fdb1a559b>. Accessed Feb. 15, 2024



**MEMBER DEAL**

**Save on HelloFresh Deliveries**

**Membership Power:**

Hello Fresh is just one of more than **75,000** discount deals Members can access through the Club! We honor your public service with these deals. Take advantage!





From left: PIII Fernando Martinez, Haz-mat, 18 years of City service, Club Member; PIII Dong Lee; Lt. Ryan Howley; Capt. Daniel Cobos, 21 years; PIII Roberto Ramirez, 17 years; and Sgt. Frank Huang, 18 years.

Story by Arlene Herrero, Vice President of Business Development  
Photos by Dylan Herrero, Customer Service Rep



From left: PII Madrial Martinez, 10 years of City service; PIII Dong Lee and PII Kevin Kuramoto, 5 years. All are Club Members.



From left: PIII Dong Lee and Josh Galvez, Equipment Mechanic, General Services, 5 years of City service, Club Member.



From left: Officer Al Garcia, Tac Planning, 15 years of City service; PIII Dong Lee; and Katrina Schutte, Sr. Management Analyst, 21 years. All are Club Members.



From left: Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development, with PII John Pham, 15 years of City service, Club Member.



From left: Sgt. Jose Magana, 16 years of City service, with PIII Dong Lee. Both are Club Members.



From left: Aswin Reddy with Club Members PIII Dong Lee and PII Eddie Martinez, 15 years of City service.

# Goodbye, Officer Lee

OFFICER DONG LEE MOVES ON FROM PORT POLICE.

**HARBOR:** A goodbye reception was held last August for Port Police Officer Dong Lee, Club Member, who decided to leave his position to pursue other opportunities.

The reception was held at Ten Mile Brewing in Signal Hill, where friends and family gathered to share stories and wish him well.

Officer Lee left with 19 years of City service. He started his career working for the General Services Police Dept. and transferred to Port Police in 2005. He worked several units during his tenure at the Port Police Dept. including Patrol, Sea Marshal, Detective and finished at Haz-Mat.

Officer Lee's wife, Sooji, also thanked everyone for coming to wish her husband farewell as he entered the next phase of his career.

Congratulations, Officer Lee, on your new career opportunities. The Club wishes you success!

The Club thanks Lt. Ryan Howley and Officer Fernando Martinez for their assistance in producing this story. ●



From left: PII Andy Wang, 15 years of City service, with PIII Dong Lee. Both are Club Members.



From left: PII Eddie Martinez; Lt. David Clements, 20 years of City service; PIII Victor Fernandez, 17 years; and PIII Dong Lee. All are Club Members.



From left: PIII Alex Castillo, Hazmat, 18 years of City service, with PIII Dong Lee. Both are Club Members.



From left: PIII Dong Lee and PII John Pham, 15 years of City service. Both are Club Members.



From left: PIII Dong Lee, Club Member, with college friend Peter Kim, son Ethan and wife Jennifer.



From left: Sgt. Frank Huang and PIII Dong Lee, Club Members.



From left: Club Member P3 Dong Lee, 19 years of City service, Club Member, with Keli Legaspi, PII, 17 years, Club Member, and Clint, Richard and Lee.



From left: Capt. Daniel Cobos, 21 years of City service, Club Member, with Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development, and PIII Dong Lee, Club Member.



From left: PIII Roberto Ramirez; PII Cueva, 7 years of City service; PIII Dong Lee and Sgt. Mark Pagliuca, 17 years. All are Club Members.



From left: Club Member P3 Dong Lee, 19 years of City service, Club Member, with Keli Legaspi, PII, 17 years, Club Member, and Clint, Richard and Lee.



From left: PIII Roberto Ramirez, PIII Dong Lee and PIII Fernando Martinez. All are Club Members.



From left: PIII Dong Lee with his wife, Sooji. They organized the event as their thanks to their friends and Port Police family for the lifelong friendships.

From left: Sooji and Officer Lee with Lt. Ryan Howley, Club Member, and his daughter, Emma.



# Mukai Scholarships Honor Academic Excellence

DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR CLUB SCHOLARSHIP IS 11:59 P.M., JUNE 30, 2024.

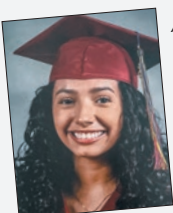


**CLUB:** Applications are now being accepted for the Joannie Mukai Memorial Club Scholarship on the *Alive!* Website.

The 2024 Mukai Club Scholarship Program expects to grant at least 20 awards and is named after the late Club Board Member Joannie Mukai. Scholarships recognize achievement, academic excellence and community service.

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



**Maya Cereceres**, the daughter of Alfred Cereceres, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment, City of Los Angeles received a stipend last year as part of the Club's Mukai Scholarship Program.



**Apply Today**  
on the *Alive!* Website:  
[alive.employeesclub.com/scholarship](http://alive.employeesclub.com/scholarship)

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

notified by July 31 before school starts.

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

"The Club celebrates and honors public employees in California, and our Mukai Scholarship is a primary example of that," says Association CEO Robert Larios. "Giving back to Members is what we're all about."

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

[alive.employeesclub.com/mukaischolarship](http://alive.employeesclub.com/mukaischolarship)

**Send questions to the Club Scholarship Committee:**

[scholarship@employeesclub.com](mailto: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."

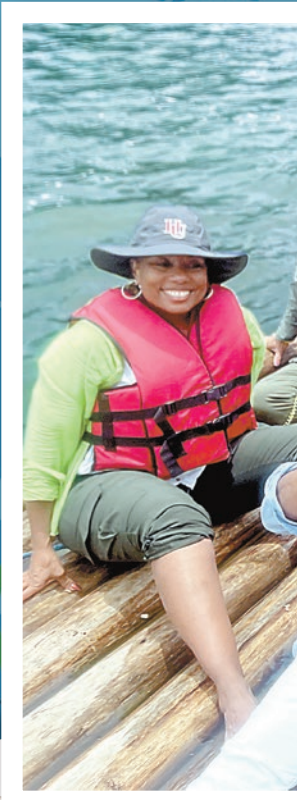
### Eligibility requirements:

- 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.



Alive! Feature

# LADWP Friends to the Ends of the Earth



The **Cali Passport Posse** — LADWP Retirees — travel the world with friends they met on the job.

This is more than a story about traveling, or working, or retirement. It's a story about friendship, with those other subjects all rolled into one.

This is the story of the **Cali Passport Posse (CPP)**, 11 people who met working for the LADWP, became friends through their City work, Retired (most of them) and then started traveling together. They are the best of friends, and are having the times of their lives. Our photos in this issue convey that.

The CPP consists of (all are Club Member):

- **Earl Rodgers**, Retired, Utility Service Manager III, 38 years of City service
- **Zebbra Corbin-Rodgers**, Retired, Electrical Engineering Associate II, 35 years
- **Gregory Hornsby Sr.**, Retired, Assistant Director of Customer Service, 32 years
- **Latrice Williams**, (current) Utility Services Manager III (Manager of Key Accounts Section of Customer Service), 31 years
- **Ethelinda (Ethel) Reyes**, Retired, Utility Services Manager IV, 32 years
- **Maximo (Max) Reyes**, LADOT, Retired, Sr. Management Analyst, 33 years
- **Trinh Nguyen**, (current) Management Analyst II, 28 years
- **Steve Starks**, Retired, Utility Services Manager IV, 41 years
- **Leslie McKay-Martin**, (current) Utility Services Manager III
- **Aditya Sharma**, (current) Utility Services Manager IV, 21 years
- **Julie Naslund**, Retired, Utility Services Manager III, 40 years.

Enjoy their story, and perhaps use it as inspiration to live your best lives, too.

Photos by Summy Lam, and courtesy the Cali Passport Posse members

BELOW: Olympia, Greece



Trinh Nguyen and Aditya Sharma







The Amazon

## The Alive! Interview

### 'If You Never Go, You'll Never Know'



On Feb. 2, Club CEO Robert Larios and Alive! editor John Burnes interviewed members of the "Cali Passport Posse" – 10 LADWP employees and one LADOT employee (nine Retired and two active) who have traveled all over the world together. They met at work, became fast friends, and started traveling together, which they've been doing for almost a decade, interrupted only by the pandemic.

Interviewed here between trips are Earl Rodgers, Retired, Utility Service Manager III, 38 years of City service; Zebbra Corbin-Rodgers, Retired, Electrical Engineering Associate II, 35 years; Gregory Hornsby Sr., Retired, Assistant Director of Customer Service, 32 years; Latrice Williams, (current) Utility Services Manager III (Manager of Key Accounts Section of Customer Service), 31 years; Ethelinda (Ethel) Reyes, Retired, Utility Services Manager IV, 32 years; Maximo (Max) Reyes, LADOT, Retired, Sr. Management Analyst, 33 years; and Trinh Nguyen, (current) Management Analyst II, 28 years. Other members are Steve Starks, Retired, Utility Services Manager IV, 41 years; Leslie McKay-Martin, (current) Utility Services Manager III; Aditya Sharma, (current) Utility Services Manager IV, 21 years; and Julie Naslund, Retired, Utility Services Manager III, 40 years. Most are Club Members. • The interview took place via Zoom.

### Thanks for joining us today in your retirement! Well, most of you. What was your career path through the City?

**Earl Rodgers:** I spent more than 38 years with the LADWP, beginning as a Meter Reader in 1977. I was promoted to Commercial Field Representative. I was later promoted to the Water Operation Division as a Water Service Specialist. In the middle of my career at the LADWP I came back over from the Water Operation Division to the Customer Service Division, where I worked as a Sr. Commercial Field Representative as an Energy Theft Investigator. I was then promoted to Supervisor over Meter Reading, Field Training and Field Safety. I was later promoted to Utility Service Manager III over Field Groups before my retirement in 2016.

**Zebbra Corbin-Rodgers:** I spent all 35 years with the LADWP. I started in 1983 as an Electrical Engineering Assistant in the Remote Terminal Unit group. In 1997 I transferred to the Prescheduling group where I eventually became an Electrical Engineering Associate II. I retired in March 2018 as an EEA II.

**Gregory Hornsby Sr.:** I started in 1986 as a Maintenance Laborer for the LADWP. I was promoted through the Field Groups as a Meter Reader, Commercial and Sr. Field Representative, Supervisor, Manager, and finally became Assistant Director in 2008, where I Managed Field Operations and later, our Key Accounts Section until I retired in 2019.

**Latrice Williams:** I have been with LADWP my entire career. I started as a Clerk in Payroll/Timekeeping within the Financial Services Organization, in June 1993. I was promoted to Customer Service Representative (CSR) in the Customer Service Division in 1996. I have been with this Division ever since, promoting my way through the ranks of Lead CSR, Commercial Service Supervisor and now Utility Services Manager III.

**Ethel Reyes:** I started in 1985 as a Clerk Typist for the LA Sanitation Dept., and then I was promoted to Sr. Clerk Typist at LA Tax and Permit Division. In 1988, I became a Customer Service Representative with Water and Power, promoted to Customer Service Supervisor, then a Management Analyst. In 2017, I retired as a Utility Services Manager IV.

Zebbra Corbin-Rodgers



— CONTINUES PAGE 14

# CLUB DEALS

FROM THE CLUB DEAL DESK

## Travel Deals

**Car Rentals**  
 Club discounts for Budget and Avis are the best we've seen anywhere! Use the Club's Deals Powered by Entertainment to access your savings.

**Hotels**  
 The Club offers many ways to save on hotels – through Deals Powered by Entertainment; through MemberDeals; and through Hotelogical. Try them all and see how much you can save. (And don't forget discounts on Wyndham properties, and if you're headed to Orlando, check out our discount portal for that city.)

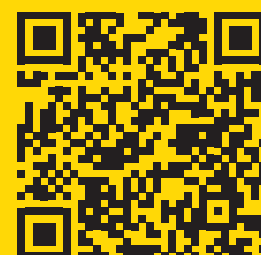
**LAX Parking**  
 We love the new LAX long-term parking solutions, but it's always good to check whether you can find a better deal. Club deals include discounts on QuikPark at LAX.

**Cruises**  
 Access savings through Deals Powered by Entertainment to save money on all the major cruise lines.

**Theme Parks**  
 Walt Disney World, Disneyland, Universal Hollywood/Orlando, SeaWorld, Six Flags, Legoland, Knott's Berry Farm ... the Club has discounts for all of them, and lots more! Find them on the Club's website, plus through My Deals and Deals Powered by Entertainment. (Important note: Discounts for Disney parks are limited and generally save you the most on multi-day admissions.)

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Explore Travel Deals Today!

Log in to employeesclub.com to access the Club's direct deals, plus portals to connect to your discounts through Deals Powered by Entertainment and MyDeals.



## Alive! Feature *Friends to the Ends of the Earth*

### THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

**Max Reyes:** I started out with the LAPD as a Station Officer in 1979. In 1982 I moved to Water and Power as a Customer Service Representative and became a Customer Service Supervisor. Then in 2001, I moved to the Dept. of Transportation as a Management Analyst and was promoted to Sr. Management Analyst in 2005. I participated in the Early Retirement Incentive Package (ERIP) in 2010.

**Trinh Nguyen:** I started with the City in 1995 with the Community Development Dept. in their MIS section, moved to the Harbor Dept.'s Office of Homeland Security, and then in 2007 I transferred to the LADWP Customer Service Division's Safety Office. I am now in Human Resources.

**A quick question for Latrice and Trinh. You are two of the four CPP members who are still working, right? Not retired yet?"**

**Trinh:** Yes, unfortunately. If it weren't for my co-workers, I would've retired early.

**We'll get to all the trips in a second, but when the group is planning their trips, do you ever have to say to your retired friends, "Hey, wait a second. I'm still working"?"**

**Trinh:** All the time. All the time.

**Latrice:** We have to slow the group down. Recouping the vacation bank is a thing!

### *Friends, to Start*

**Were you all friends before you started traveling?**

**Earl:** Yes, most of us were friends and colleagues before we started traveling together. I first met Greg after I returned to the Customer Service Division. Trinh worked with me when I was Safety Supervisor and from there I met and worked with everyone else. CPP member Steve Starks and I worked as Meter Readers together back in the early 1980s.

**Zebbra:** By the way, we nominated Greg to answer all of those questions!

**Gregory:** I was declared Foreman!

We all worked together at some point during our 30-plus years with the department. After all is said and done, we're going to wind up with 30-plus years for those who are still working. We met as colleagues and enjoyed each other's company, and we just took that to the next level. Many of us had the same meeting schedules and went to lunch together while working, and started going to retirement events, hanging out, doing a couple little small vacations together, and it turned into us traveling on a larger scale.

**Latrice:** A lot of us were traveling individually as small little groups, and then it kind of just morphed into, "Oh, you guys are going to Hawaii this year. We're going too, and let's plan it at the same time." The Reyes were going to Hawaii every single year, right?

**Ethel:** Yes.

**Latrice:** And then it morphed into, "I'm going also, so let's go around about the same times, and then we can hang out and do dinner" or something like that.

**Ethel:** It grew from there with the rest of the group.

**Zebbra:** Most of the group all knew each other from working around each other. Even though I worked at LADWP, I did not know anyone from the group. They were associated with Earl. Being Earl's wife, I eventually got to know everyone and I am now friends with the whole group and loving every minute of it.

**Latrice:** Most of us worked in the same division at LADWP. More than half of my career of 30 years has been with the same division with the Department. We would always cross paths, whether for a meeting or to go out to lunch. It was the cool kids club. Everybody was hanging out. Those conversations led to, "Who's going on vacation? Where are you going? Oh, I want to go there." Small groups of us started going together on vacation.

**Where in Hawaii do you go? Which islands?**

**Gregory:** All of them!

**Max Reyes:** The first time we went to Hawaii with Greg we started out in Oahu. Then years thereafter we started spending a lot of time in Maui, and then Kauai.

**Ethel:** It's a place where everyone can recharge.

**Trinh:** The best trip was with the Rodgerses to Kauai. We did everything under the sun except for snorkeling. I love traveling with everybody in this group, but the Rodgerses keep me on my toes trying to make sure we don't injure each other, we're not drowning, and the rain is not hitting our heads because somebody just spent hundreds of dollars keeping our hair all nice or the shoes we just bought not touching any of the rain puddles! Those two keep me on my toes to make sure that we come back home unscathed and uninjured.

**Zebbra:** The Hornsbys and the Reyeses have been to all of the islands. Earl and I have been to Kauai, the Big Island and Oahu, so Maui is next.

**It sounds like the traveling group grew pretty quickly into a big hearty group of you going together.**

**Ethel:** It was quick.

**Max Reyes:** The early stages of CPP started when Latrice took some classes from USC in Shanghai, China, and she asked if we wanted to go there. I said "Sure. We want to go to Shanghai, but I want to go to other places in Asia," and that trip morphed into China and Thailand.

**Latrice:** I was doing the Master's program at USC, and we had classes in Shanghai. I said, "If you guys want to go, I think I can get the school to help us all with our visas and the planning." Greg and Max always add someplace to the trip —we're not going all the way to China and not seeing some other places over there. The USC staff helped arrange visas for the group, which was eight to 10 of us. Then four or five more joined us in Thailand.

**Gregory:** That was our first branded trip; we made it a collective. We said, "Hey, let's give it a name," and that's when we initially started as the Dirty Dozen.

**There was also a retirement party somewhere in there, too, if I recall.**

**Earl:** It was my retirement party in Cabo San Lucas. I wanted to travel instead of a regular retirement dinner. This was in 2016 before the China and Thailand trip. I didn't want my retirement announced at work. So after I retired, I wanted to travel. I told Zebb, "Let's just go somewhere." We contacted Trinh. Trinh is one of those people who ...

**Zebbra:** Coordinates things ...

**Earl:** ...coordinates everything, so Trinh set it up at this special restaurant in Cabo called the Mona Lisa. She set up the dinner for us, and we all met in Cabo and stayed there for a week. That sparked a discussion of "Let's do something like this again," so that following year is when some of us went to China and the rest of us met them in Thailand. That spawned the Dirty Dozen.

### *Four Corners*

**Give us a quick rundown of the places you've visited so far.**

**Trinh:** Jamaica, Aruba, Cabo, Greece, Italy, Croatia ...

**Max Reyes:** Montenegro.

**Trinh:** Some just came back from Costa Rica, Peru ...

**Zebbra:** We visited Ecuador and Peru in South America.

BELOW: The CPP dining in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico



The CPP getting into the travel spirit with Association CEO Robert Larios (center)



*Best Friends Forever!*



# Alive! Feature Friends to the Ends of the Earth

## THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

**Max Reyes:** Washington, DC.

**Max Reyes:** Machu Picchu.

**Latrice:** We're on our way to Vietnam.

**Trinh:** Vietnam and Thailand.

**Max Reyes:** Cambodia.

**Trinh:** Malaysia and Singapore.

**Zebbra:** In 2017 when we went to Thailand, we visited Bangkok and Pattaya. This time when we visit Thailand in March we will do Chiang Mai and Phuket.

**Earl:** Aruba was where Greg and Latrice got married, and it was quite an experience.

**Trinh:** It united the group together. We came together and got to know each other a little bit more.

**Earl:** Absolutely.

**So, for the record, we have three couples here – the Rodgerses, the Reyeses, and Greg and Latrice.**

**Latrice:** Yes.

**Beautiful.**

**Gregory:** Lucky me!



Machu Picchu, Peru

**Did you have one that got canceled?**

**Zebbra:** Yes, we were going on an Alaskan cruise in September 2020. That got canceled.

**Latrice:** We were just trying to stay safe and healthy. That was our concern for everybody.

Rome



**The Cali Passport Posse motto: 'Eating, drinking and laughing our way around the world.'**

that's why it works.

**Zebbra:** It's not always just traveling. We do other things, like 5K runs together. We may go to dinner at each other's house, or we may just go out to dinner as a group.

**Earl:** It's more like a family. Our personalities seem to click.

**Ethel:** We were all colleagues and friends outside of work. We know what works for us, and we know each other's personalities. We genuinely care about each other.

**Gregory:** Yes.

**Max Reyes:** I love to travel. There's this saying, "If you never go, you'll never know." I'm very inquisitive. I like to see things I've never seen before. I like to eat food I've never eaten before. It's a way of acquiring knowledge.

**Latrice:** Max is our resident historian; he's going to know all about wherever we're going.



Ecuador

### A First-Rate LAX

**We at the Club think that LA is blessed with a first-rate airport and Airports Dept. It's undergoing a massive**

**transformation at the moment, but we think we're lucky to have this incredible facility. You use it all the time. How do you feel about it?**

**Trinh:** When I go to other countries' airports and compare them, it's like no comparison to what we have here in Los Angeles. We just came back from India. The airports in India and in Germany have nothing on LAX, which was very easy coming and going, and finding our gates.

**Latrice:** It's going to be even better when all the construction is done.

## Choosing Locations

**Does everyone get a turn choosing a location?**

**Trinh:** Greg, show them our list.

**Zebbra:** Is that the list behind you?

**Trinh:** No, that's my bills to pay!

**Gregory:** We meet at least annually at someone's house. We throw a bunch of ideas out there and see what sticks. We take our own personal travels with our kids, our family, ourselves, too, but we try to save a couple of side trips with members of the CPP, too. We try to figure all that out, and plan our next few years. We negotiate our travels.

**Latrice:** Once we have a location, we then try to figure out what we'll do there. Max and Greg will get on the phone and say, well, if we're going there, what other cities can we add? Eventually they start emailing us. "If we're going to this place, we might as well do all of these cities." We can leave a meeting and say we're going to one location, and by the time it's all planned out, it might change. It always ends up growing!

**Earl:** Yes!

**Gregory:** I have a mantra that says, "I didn't come this far just to come this far," so if I'm going to go somewhere and there's something within a decent proximity I want to go there as well.

**Max Reyes:** I agree.

**Gregory:** Max agrees!

**Zebbra:** For the South American trip, I overheard Latrice and Ethel talking about taking a trip to Machu Picchu, and I said, "Wait a minute. You guys are going where? That sounds good. I want to go." With me I'm all about the Seven Wonders of the World. I wanted in! They were very sweet about allowing us to jump in on their trip. I did the same thing with their European cruise (Italy, Croatia, Montenegro, and Greece). I asked if the Rodgerses could join them and they were totally okay with it.

**Ethel:** Of course you were invited. If you are able, then always go. I'm glad you went.

**How did you handle your travel during the pandemic?**

**Zebbra:** There was no travel.

**Latrice:** We were all pouting.

**Zebbra:** We were sad.

**Earl:** We were all locked up in our homes.



Athens



Amazon Rainforest

**Earl:** And sane.

**Latrice:** To come out of this pandemic safe and healthy so we could pick it back up where we left off.

**Trinh:** Even though we plan a lot of trips, with side trips and main trips, I've never felt pressure to go to all of them because something might be outside of my allotted vacation time and budget. It's no problem at all with anyone in this group. They've always supported me.

**Latrice:** Right. If you can go, go. If you can't, you don't.

**Trinh:** Yes.

**Max Reyes:** Speaking of the City, I'll add that none of this would be possible, all the traveling that we've been doing, without the great benefits that we got from the City. We had a very, very good retirement package, and that allows us to basically do what we're doing now.

**Earl:** Absolutely.

## Experiencing the World

**What do you love about traveling? And what's not so good about it?**

**Trinh:** We accept the things that we can't control and just move along. I enjoy everybody's perspective on what they see and what we do. Everybody's open to new things, and they'll just try it. If they don't like it, the next time they'll just say, "Nope, it wasn't for me."

For me the bad part of traveling is sitting on the airplane for 15, 10 or 12 hours and losing of the luggage. But the number one best part is traveling with this amazing group of people who are very open to everything and trying new experiences.

**Gregory:** This being a group of all type-A personalities mostly – we've got managers and engineers; everybody's always been in charge of something – I'm naturally curious. Everybody else is naturally curious. We're all game for pretty much anything, and it's fun to hang off the clock with people you've spent 30 years of your life with, to "kick it into the reality portion of life." Work is one thing to me. What we do in our free time is our reality. Being able to enjoy the company of your friends in the real world and have it work is pretty rare, so I truly appreciate being in this group. It's an eclectic group, and

## 'Tarzan' and Bey

**You must have funny stories about travel. Share a few.**

**Gregory:** I have one! On our first branded trip as the Dirty Dozen, when we went to China and Thailand, our member Steve went to order some Thai food. When they brought him his dish, he told the Thai chef that that wasn't how you cook Thai food.

**Trinh:** He was telling the Thai chef how to cook Thai food ... in Thailand!

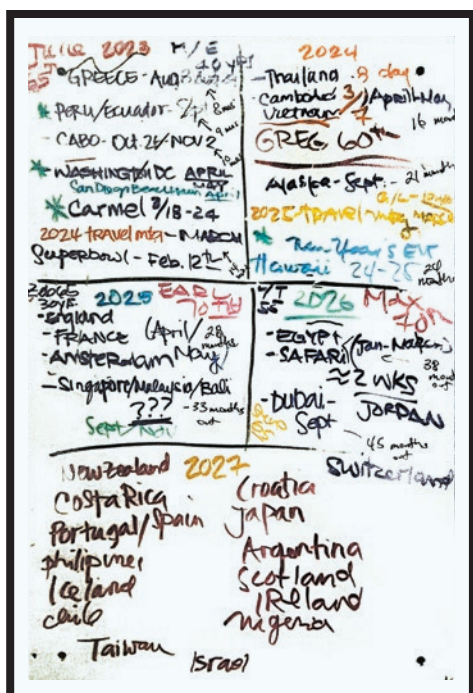
**Gregory:** We got a big laugh out of that one.

**Max Reyes:** On our way back from the Amazon we had to stop and have some guinea pig barbecue.

**Latrice:** We stopped by the side of the road and got some barbecue. This animal was on this skewer – it was a guinea pig. They chopped up the guinea pig to have us taste it, but I didn't taste it.

**Gregory:** Guinea pig tastes like chicken. I figured I didn't come this far to come this far. If I'm there I'm going to try the local delicacy. It was okay. I don't have to ever do it again, but it was okay.

**Max Reyes:** I tried it. The beer drowned out the taste of the guinea pig.



The CCCP's white board, where travel plans are made or saved till next time.



**ALIVE! FEATURE CONTINUES ON WEB ALIVE!**

[alive.employeesclub.com](http://alive.employeesclub.com)





Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

# RLACEI

For Retired  
Club Members

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)**



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**2023 Executive Board of Directors**

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**RLACEI RETIREE HELPLINE:**

**(800) 678-4145, Ext. 0**

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

**RLACEI WEBSITE**

Visit the RLACEI website [www.RLACEI.org](http://www.RLACEI.org) to find the latest news. Call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 0 to make suggestions. EMAIL: [Contact@RLACEI.org](mailto: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](mailto:Ann.Seales@RLACEI.org) for a change of address or to add or change your email address. Also notify LACERS, ACEBSA, LAPCU, and LAFCU as applicable.



Beverly J. Clark

**Send in your Interesting News Contributions!**

Contact: **Beverly J. Clark**, Publicity Director  
Email: [Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org](mailto:Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org)  
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**

**Dec. 12, Holiday Party 2024**  
Friendship Auditorium  
3201 Riverside Dr., Los Angeles  
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**RLACEI EVENTS RESERVATION LINE**

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

Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.



Beverly J. Clark

**RETIREES ON THE MOVE**

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

**Meet Vas Singh  
He's a Retiree on the Move.**

Meet Vas Singh. Vas started with the City of Los Angeles in 2003 as an Administrative Clerk working in Public Works/Sanitation. After 17 years, he retired from the Office of Finance as a Sr. Administrative Clerk.

In retirement, Vas is very active in social and community activities. His goals are to advocate for community needs such as outreach, homelessness, beautification, education, land use and sustainability.

Vas doesn't let retirement slow him down. As part of his community service, he is an active member with RLACEI, the Wilkinson Senior Center in Northridge, LACERS Well, and AARP. He is also very active with his church (Gurudwara) and attends regularly on Fridays and weekends.

Vas is very much community oriented and has previously served in the following positions:

- Vice President, Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council
- Planning Committee Member, Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Congress
- Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Congress Representative
- Mayoral North Valley Regional Budget Representative
- Board Member, the Employees Club of California

Vas has traveled to the United Kingdom, Europe and Canada, immersing himself in diverse cultures and learning about different ways of life and customs.

**Any words of wisdom for Retirees or those about to retire?**

Vas encourages Retirees and soon-to-be retirees to "make future plans and set daily schedules." He emphasizes the

importance of staying active and engaged, crediting his involvement in social and community activities for enriching his retirement.

**What was the smartest thing you did to prepare for retirement?**

"I got involved in social and community activities."

**What do you miss from your years of service with the City of Los Angeles?**

"I miss office colleagues, friends, get-togethers, birthday parties, picnics and other events."

**As you reflect on your City career, would you have done anything differently?**

"No, not at all. I enjoyed my experience being employed with the City of Los Angeles."

**How do you fill your days in retirement, and do you get bored?**

Exercise, social gatherings, community meetings, and quality time with loved ones keep Vas busy and fulfilled. He emphasizes the importance of staying active and engaged, ensuring a fulfilling retirement free from boredom.

**Looking ahead to a new challenge**

Vas continues to pursue his goals of making a difference by running for City council in District 12. His dedication to his community and passion for service shine through in this newest endeavor. ●



Vas Singh

**RLACEI BOARD ACTION UPDATE**

**RLACEI urges support for COLA and IRMAA reimbursement but to no avail by the EERC.**

RLACEI Board President Ruth Perry; and Directors Lucy Artinian, Nancy Hammoudian and Leonard Torres attended the City Council's EERC (Executive Employee Relations Committee) meeting Feb. 2 to appeal and provide public comments in support of the 2.6 percent discretionary COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) and the IRMAA (Income-Related Monthly Adjusted Amount), both of which financially impact many of our Retirees.

Unfortunately, neither the discretionary COLA nor the IRMAA motions were advanced to City Council for vote.

Even after RLACEI's public comments, CAO Matt Szabo informed Mayor Karen Bass and the Councilmembers present that the 2.6 percent COLA to Retirees would cost the City \$32.4 million and compound each year forever, and it cannot be afforded due to the City's current financial state. He further stated that of the 22,000 current Retirees, only about 1,800 could potentially be impacted by IRMAAs. Unfortunately, no further discussion or questions were pursued by the members of the EERC.

The mayor acknowledged the appeal and called for a motion and a second. It was unanimously voted to receive and file with no action.

We thank all the RLACEI members and Retirees who submitted public comments on both matters. We assure you that with your continued support RLACEI will always advocate and bring to light issues that are important to and impact LACERS Retirees and RLACEI members. ●

**LACERS BOARD UPDATE**

by Michael R. Wilkinson, *LACERS Commissioner*  
[MikeWilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com](mailto:MikeWilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com)



Michael R. Wilkinson

**LACERS Active vs. Passive Investing, pt. 2**

NEPC, LACERS' investment consultant, just reported to the LACERS board on the current trends for active versus passive investments.

Following up on last month's discussion of passive and active investing, I'll now share specific methods that LACERS has for putting them into practice.

To recap on definitions, "active investing" means the use of a money manager to buy and sell individual investments such as stocks that aims to produce returns that are higher than an index, such as the S&P 500 stock index. "Passive investing" is a strategy to pick investments that mirror the index. This is a system to buy all the investments in the index in the same proportion as the index.

Which is better? As with many interesting questions, the answer is, it depends. However, institutional investors have been increasing their investing in passive strategies from \$7 trillion in passive investing 10 years ago to \$20 trillion today, according to Pension and Investments magazine quoted by NEPC.

NEPC ran two tests that were designed to help decide which asset classes made sense to invest with actively and which were best passively managed based on how active managers have done against passive investing in the past. Based on these tests, NEPC has reviewed many different asset classes and lists which classes make sense to keep in active management and which could be profitably invested passively.

It is way too much detail to go into a discussion here of asset class by asset class to report on the recommendations. However, it follows the discussion in my previous article that certain asset classes fall naturally into the group that's appropriate for passive treatment and others do not.

Finally, NEPC reported on the active versus passive allocation of other large public pension fund clients without naming them. LACERS is 71 percent active and 30 percent passive, while the other pension plans used strategies that ranged from 100 percent active with zero passive, to 50 percent active and 50 percent passive.

So, where do we go? Active management has its place, but LACERS will continue to look at low-cost passive investments where that makes sense. ●





Arnette Travis

By Arnette Travis

Author/Activist/Advocate, RLACEI Contributing Author

## The Meaning of Morning

*“The afternoon of life is just as full of meaning as the morning.*

*Only its meaning and purpose are different.” -Carl Jung*

After a quiet start to 2024, I find myself in a state of urgency. “Just do it,” the motto coined by Nike propels me most days to work towards the goals I’ve set for myself. On the off days, when I feel little to no drive to get out of bed, I acknowledge the lack and give myself permission to slow down. This permission gives way to forgiveness, self-love, and gratitude.

**Let me repeat that:** Slowing down opens you up to forgiveness, self-love and gratitude. Every time I feel unmotivated, this process turns the tide and I have a productive day.

I started working after school at age 15 as a file clerk, and retired at age 62 as a licensed financial

adviser. After working 40-plus years in mostly corporate environments, I have a strong sense of having earned the right to do what I want, when I want. I am no longer driven by competition with colleagues or myself, nor an intense desire to make more money, or to increase my status. I deserve my retirement.

But retire from what exactly? For me, there is still much to be done. Experiences to share across the life spectrum, including the evaluation and valuation of purpose, people and self. Experiences to have that range from trying certain recipes to visiting faraway places. I want to see my grandson grow into manhood. I want to spend more time with new and old friends. I want to improve my communication skills and write a memoir about my mother. Et cetera.

Retirement offers different options for work that don’t fit the old, stereotypical ideas. Your retirement means that you decide what you do to continue your life’s work from day to day. Just make sure that whatever it is, meets two criteria:

- Does it give me a sense of purpose?
- Does it serve or offer value to others?

### What Can You Do?

Discover how 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 x717 or visit our website at [RLACEI.ORG](http://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](http://RLACEI.ORG) and join today!**




# Pay Tribute to Your Mom!

Pay tribute to your mom this Mother’s Day ... with a photo and message of lifelong love, published in *Alive!*.

In our May issue, we’ll print a photo of you and your mom (or just your mom) ... and a two- or three-sentence message of Happy Mother’s Day from you. Your tribute will also appear on *Web Alive!* (if received by April 16), starting just before Mother’s Day.

Send in your digital photos and your message now!

To submit, go to: [alive.employeesclub.com/mothersday](http://alive.employeesclub.com/mothersday)



**DEADLINES:**

Publication in print and online: April 16

Online only: May 8





**Lucciana Garcia, 5**

BIRTHDAY: Sept. 17 • BEST FRIEND: Jocelyn • FAVORITE SNACK: cereal • FAVORITE TV SHOW: "Bluey" • WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC: So I can see the axolotl • PARENT: Luis Garcia, Gen. Services



**Soamaya Jarvis, 6**

BIRTHDAY: April 11 • BEST FRIEND: Savana • FAVORITE SNACK: Hot Funnys • FAVORITE TV SHOW: "Alvin and the Chipmunks" • WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC: Because I want to touch sting rays. I love animals. I want to be a veterinarian. • PARENT: Dorian Jarvis, LADWP



**Paige Curtis, 10**

BIRTHDAY: Feb. 7 • BEST FRIEND: Sloane • FAVORITE SNACK: popcorn • FAVORITE TV SHOW: "Dance Moms" • WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC: I love animals and have not been there for a while. • PARENT: David Hadley, Retired



**Noemi Barragan, 13**

BIRTHDAY: Oct. 27 • BEST FRIEND: Giovanna • FAVORITE SNACKS: blueberries • FAVORITE TV SHOW: "Free Rein" is about horses. • WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC: I haven't been there since I was more little. Me and my dad love fish. • PARENT: Sergio Barragan, LADWP

# Coloring with The Clubs

Compiled by:



**Guadalupe Lira**  
Retail Operations  
Manager



**DeAngelo Thompson**  
Mobile Operations  
Representative

## Congratulations to the

# WINNERS!

## of our Club Coloring Contest!

Everyone who turned in a design is a winner in our opinion! But our top four participants win

**4 tickets to Aquarium of the Pacific**

Look for our next contest in April online at:

[alive.employeesclub.com/kidscoloringcontest](http://alive.employeesclub.com/kidscoloringcontest)

## Honorable Mention

CHILD	AGE	PARENT/GUARDIAN	DEPT.
Child	Age	Parent/Guardian	Department
Khari Moure	2	Miguel Chilin	Public Works
Amai Baychue	3	Rhonda Baychue	Retired
Grace Cerda	3	Steve Cerda	Public Works
Lanie Soto	4	Juan Soto Funes	LAPD
Muhammad Umar	5	Muhammad Imran	LADWP
Shahab Hasan	5	Russell Hasan	LADOT
Gwendolyn Parada	6	Elmer Parada	LADOT
Everly Pham	6	Sing-Ling Liu	LADWP
Isabella Hernandez	6	Eduardo Hernandez	Rec and Parks
Saraiya Lewis	7	Monica Lewis	Retired
Aisha Imran	7	Muhammad Imran	LADWP
Kenley Ninofranco	7	Phyllis Ninofranco	Harbor
Olivia Ahn	7	Elizabeth Lee	Retired
Wesley Merritt	7	Charlotte Merritt	Finance
Alan Rodriguez	8	Jose Rodriguez	Public Works
Karina Cheung	8	Ka Man Fan	Airports
Luke Montemayor	8	Jesse Montemayor	Retired
Mila Zarukian	8	Artin Zarukian	Bldg. and Safety
Muhammad Ayaan	8	Muhammad Imran	LADWP
Allison Tiet	9	Than Tiet	LADWP
Dorothy Parada	9	Elmer Parada	LADOT
Emma Cooper	9	Amanda Cooper	Gen. Services
Leah Vazquez	9	Manuel Ornelas	LADWP
River Gray	9	Richard Gray	Public Works
Dylan Soto	10	Juan Soto Funes	LAPD
Jc'ion Perkins	10	Evelyn Fitzpatrick	Retired
Kelsey Cheung	10	Ka Man Fan	Airports
Isaac Granados	11	Bryan Granados	LAPD

## Print and Online Schedule

### 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)





RETIREMENT PLAQUE PRESENTATIONS

# We Honor Your Service!

Association CEO Robert Larios honors Retired Club Members with a plaque for their many years of dedicated service to Los Angeles.

**FREE!\*** CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE

**Retired or Retiring Soon?** Get started here:

Receive your own personalized Club Retirement Plaque, free! (Must be a Club Member for at least five consecutive years.)

\* a \$499 value!




**Byron A. Robert**  
LAPD, Retired after 29 years of City service.



**Norine Carrier-Russeau**  
LADWP, Retired after 33 years of City service.



**Giselle C. Federis**  
LAFD, Retired after 31 years of City service.



**Chantey D. Berry**  
Public Works/Sanitation, Retired after 30 years of City service.



**Wedmay J. Lao**  
Housing, Retired after 26 years of City service.



**John D. Gonzalez**  
LAFD, Retired after 37 years of City service



**Oscar A. Arce**  
LADWP, Retired after 20 years of City service



**Mark S. Fassam**  
LAPD, Retired after 20 years of City service



**Gilbert H. Madrid**  
LADWP, Retired after 43 years of City service



**Alejandro Olvera**  
LADWP, Retired after 31 years of City service



**Jesse D. Palacios**  
General Services, Retired after 32 years of City service



**Zenaida B. Agustin**  
LAPD, Retired after 17 years of City service



**Freneshia L. Clark**  
Public Works, Retired after 36 years of City service



**Baron Greenhouse**  
LADWP, Retired after 23 years of City service



**Arturo R. Gomez**  
LAPD, Retired after 30 years of City service



**Isaac Alvarez**  
LADWP, Retired after 34 years of City service



**Arturo A. Alonso**  
Airports, Retired after 27 years of City service



**Anthony C. Mendoza**  
Public Works, Retired after 30 years of City service



**Ramon P. Pasillas**  
General Services, Retired after 11 years of City service



**Arthur M. Flores**  
Rec and Parks, Retired after 34 years of City service.



# Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

## Turkey



"Cappadocia in Turkey."  
Jose Guitron, LADWP

## Japan



"The deer at Nara Park are very friendly, so I tried reading to them. They were hungry for more."

Andrew Ko, LAFD



Andrew, get out of there while you're still ... Alive! Hilarious! – Ed.



## Captain's Log

Traveling with Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor

### Letter From Bali, Pt. 2 Sunsets and Exotic Coffee

Legian Village, a luxury five-star Padma Hotel beach resort on Bali's tropical coastline, is like Honolulu resorts with white beaches, stunning sunsets, restaurants and bars; it is also a popular honeymoon destination. Fortunately for Honolulu, that city does not have Legian's narrow streets crowded with hundreds of tourists on motorbikes, often causing total chaos.

The Padma Hotel's beach resort with manicured tropical gardens, a striking deep blue pool with a sunken bar serving icy cold adult beverages and an in-house restaurant, Tenkai, provides unique dishes. It's the perfect base to explore the surrounding countryside. (I'm too old to backpack anymore!).

Opposite the resort is a free public beach, which, unfortunately, due to all the coconut and alcohol vendors, has become a little trashy. But just a mile and a half away is Kuta, famous with surfers who host world-class surfing competitions or for dancing the night away at the Hard Rock Cafe after dining at one of the many fine restaurants like the English chef Jamie Oliver's. Many tourist bars serve Western comfort foods, but be daring and try the local Indonesian dishes, like traditional banana pancakes for breakfast or chicken satay and nasi goreng (fried rice with sweet, thick soy sauce and Acer, pickled cucum-



Tegengan Waterfall

ber, and carrots).

In Legian, practically every third building in its maze of narrow streets is a tattoo or affordable massage parlor, which is a perfect way to unwind after a day of shopping or sightseeing with lots of little old ladies appearing from nowhere with amazing fingers massaging your shoulders while you relax. A few bucks well spent!

Most visiting Europeans, regardless of sex or age, seemed to be tattooed and wearing clothing that's too

tight and short for their figures. People-watching is entertaining; a favorite spot was the Posers Bar, adjacent to the Padma and opposite a small motorbike parking area. Watching slightly overweight middle-aged people trying to mount a motorcycle gracefully was hilarious and very revealing.

Nearly all tourist attractions on the island do not have car parking lots, so hiring a driver for the day is the most practical way to enjoy the countryside and not worry about parking. The drive-through lush green rice paddies to the Tegengan Waterfall near the Village of Kemenuh were perfect. Hidden in a beautiful rice-terraced valley, its crystal-clear water cascades into a pool by the D'tukad River Club, ideal for swimming. For the bold and adventurous, high up on the valley sides are many swings attached to very tall palm trees; the fantastic view from the top of the swing over ...

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](http://alive.employeesclub.com/alivearoundtheworld) You'll find a convenient online form to send your text and pics for publication.



Newton Division Patrol Officers honor the 20th anniversary of the death of Officer Ricardo Lizarraga.

Photo courtesy Capt. Keith Green

## Remembering Officer Ricardo

NEWTON DIV. REMEMBERS THE LATE OFFICER RICARDO LIZARRAGA.

**LAPD:** On Feb. 20, Newton Division marked the 20th anniversary of the line-of-duty death of Officer Ricardo Lizarraga.

Officer Lizarraga was shot and killed Feb. 20, 2004 while investigating a domestic disturbance in the Leimert Park area of Los Angeles. While on patrol, he and his partner were flagged down by a woman who informed the two Officers of a domestic incident. As the Officers approached a man to search him, he pulled out a handgun and opened fire, striking Officer Lizarraga in the abdomen, below his vest. Officer Lizarraga's partner returned fire as the suspect fled the scene. Officer Lizarraga was taken to a local hospital where he died from his wounds approximately two hours later. The suspect was apprehended and died the next day in custody by his own hand.

On the 20th anniversary, Officers from Newton Division paid tribute to him throughout the day. "I was honored to stand beside the men and women of Newton Patrol W-3," wrote Capt. III Keith Green. "Officer Lizarraga, Rest in Peace." ●



Officer Ricardo Lizarraga

## Goodbye, Sgt. Ted

SGT. TED MORSE RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS OF CITY SERVICE.

Story and photos courtesy LAPD

**LAPD:** A casual reception was held Jan. 25 at Wilshire Division for Sgt. Ted Morse, who retired after 35 years of City service.

A Police Commission proclamation read, in part: "After 35 years, you have provided professional, dedicated and exemplary service to the people of Los Angeles, your supervisors and your coworkers alike."

Sgt. Morse began his career in 1988 in Southeast Division, then moved to Newton, where he rose to Police Officer III. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2000 and transferred to Van Nuys Division. His final move, to Wilshire Division, came in 2002.

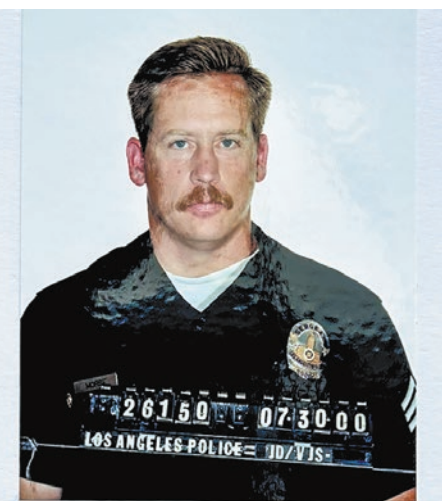
Congratulations, Sgt. Morse! The Club thanks and honors you for your dedicated service. ●



Sgt. Ted Morse at his retirement reception.



Ted Morse as he began his LAPD service in 1988.





Photos courtesy Sanitation



# LACERS

LOS ANGELES CITY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

**FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS**

## LACERS Continues 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](https://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](https://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](mailto:lacers.services@lacers.org), and by phone at (800) 779-8328. ●

## 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**

## IRS Tax Forms Have Been Mailed

LACERS has mailed its 2923 1099-R tax forms to Retirees and beneficiaries. The 1099-Rs are sent only to the address on file with LACERS. Therefore, if you have recently moved or changed your address, please complete and submit a Change of Address form. If you have not received your 1099-R, the earliest 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.

### 2023 Tax Form 1095-B and Form 1095-C

As you prepare to file taxes this year, you may receive one or more forms providing information about the healthcare coverage you had or were offered in 2023. Beginning mid to late January, most Retirees will receive a Form 1095-B sent directly from 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 your tax adviser or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). ●

**FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS**

## Are You Ready for Retirement?

Here are some current programs to help with your planning.

**Webinars:** Learn about your retirement options and benefits at an upcoming Planning for Retirement webinar, hosted by the LACERS Member Engagement team. Register via your MyLACERS account. Upcoming dates include: Sat., March 9 (in person, LACERS HQ); Tues., March 19 (webinar); Wed., March 27 (webinar); Thurs., April 11 (webinar); Thurs., April 18 (in person, Van Nuys); Sat., April 20 (in person, LACERS HQ)

Check the LACERS calendar as events are scheduled. • **Webinars/events begin at 9 a.m.**

**Applying for Retirement Online:** Members are encouraged to submit their retirement application 60 days before their retirement date when using LACERS' new Retirement Application Portal (RAP). The RAP is a great asset to LACERS Members that helps to streamline the retirement process.

For example, if your desired retirement date is April 20, 2024, you would have aimed to submit your retirement application in the portal on Feb. 20, 2024. **For more information, please visit [lacers.org/applying-retirement](https://lacers.org/applying-retirement).** ●

# All Stars!

## SANITATION'S WEST YARD COMMENDS EMPLOYEES WHO WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND.

**PUBLIC WORKS:** In late January, Public Works/Sanitation and Environment's West Los Angeles Yard honored 10 employees who went above and beyond to serve customers, help colleagues and otherwise do an exceptionally amazing job.

The honorees included:

- Anthony Wiggins**
- Carlos Ortiz**
- Cesar Gil**
- Christopher Dulay**
- Craig Cox**
- Donald Smith**
- James Navarrette**
- Jesse Hernandez**
- Jesus Ramirez**
- Manuel Leyva**



With Anthony Wiggins (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Cesar Gil (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Carlos Ortiz (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Craig Cox (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Christopher Dulay (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With James Navarrette (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Donald Smith (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Jesus Ramirez (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Jesse Hernandez (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.



With Manuel Leyva (center) are Robert Potter, LASAN Assistant Director (left) and Mark Shin, Manager, Solid Resources South Collections Division.

## Looking for Promotional Products?

Print your logo on anything:

- Pens
- Coffee mugs
- T-shirts
- Magnets
- Key Tags
- And more!



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[rosebud@getpromos.com](mailto:rosebud@getpromos.com)

**[www.RosebudMarketing.com](http://www.RosebudMarketing.com)**





# 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](http://alive.employeesclub.com/lifemoments)



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

## Retirements\*

**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!**

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

NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS
Alonso, Hortensia	Sr. Civil Engineer	Public Works	32	Duncan, Charles W.	Pr. Detention Officer	LAPD	14	Orozco, Edith O.	Custodian	Airports	20
Ariza, Donald K.	Survey Party Chief	Public Works	33	Garcia, Andrea M.	St. Services Investigator	Public Works	35	Patterson, Jacobi S.	Delivery Driver	Gen. Services	18
Armenta, Timothy J.	Airport Maint. Supv.	Airports	24	Garcia, Rosalinda Q.	Admin. Clerk	Rec and Parks	16	Puga, Martha	Custodian	Gen. Services	8
Armstrong, Mary N.	Librarian	Library	22	Gutierrez, Jamie A.	Mgmt. Analyst	Airports	24	Rivera, Ezequiel D.	Construction Inspector	Public Works	17
Arthur, Allan D.	Env. Lab	LADWP	—	Hernandez, Peter	Water Operations	LADWP	—	Rodriguez, Rosa I.	Custodian	Airports	23
Azevedo, Gabriel V.	Sr. Construction Insp.	Public Works	30	Johnson, Zelda P.	Sr. Accountant	Housing	24	Sandoval, Raquel G.	Administrative Clerk	LAPD	36
Biboso, Maria Isabel	Secretary	CAO	23	Kamiyama, Pauline K.	Arts Mgr.	Cultural Affairs	5	Scholl, Richard H.	Bulk Power Business	LADWP	—
Bonilla, Maria Guadalupe	Locker Room Attendant	Rec and Parks	2	Kha, Tri V.	Civil Eng. Associate	Public Works	33	Silva, Candido S.	Animal Care Tech	Animal Services	15
Brown, Adela C.	Recreation Assistant	Rec and Parks	3	Kidwell, Ronald W.	Building Mech. Insp.	Bldg. & Safety	23	Sim, Alfonso C.	Security Officer	Airports	16
Burrus, Emmer J.	Detention Officer	LAPD	23	Kuhn, Robert A.	Energy Support	LADWP	—	Slutsky, Tanya A.	Recreation Inspector	Rec and Parks	3
Carrillo, Jose G.	Special Prog. Assistant	Rec and Parks	14	Kyu, Kyu	Comm./Admin. Sup. Worker	Econ./Wrkfrce Dev.	8	Starks, Sean K.	Sr. Detention Officer	LAPD	12
Carter, Anita	Sr. Personnel Analyst	Personnel	34	Larsen, William	Dep. City Attorney	City Attorney	17	Stone, Lynn D.	Administrative Clerk	Rec and Parks	10
Choi, Sally	Gen. Mgr.	LACERS	17	Lee, Calvin K.	Transitional Worker	ITA	25	Tillman, Robin A.	Bus Operator	Airports	17
Cochrane, Jean M.	Supv. Occup. Health Nurse	Personnel	9	Lopez, Armando R.	Power Transmission	LADWP	—	Tran, Mayouly M.	Sr. Accountant	LACERS	19
Coleman, Virgil E.	Power Transmission	LADWP	—	Marks, Ronald R.	Water Executive	LADWP	—	Urzua, Rafael M.	Traffic Mark/Sign Supt.	Transportation	23
Concho, George J.	Traffic Officer	LADOT	32	McCord, Rita A.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	LAPD	32	Varela, Cynthia F.	Dept. Audit Mgr.	Fire/Police Pens.	18
Cottone, Steven C.	Water Engineering	LADWP	—	Mendez Segovia, Joaquin	Police Lieutenant	Airports	24	Vasquez, Rudolph R.	Sr. Police Service Rep	LAPD	28
Curry, Ramona N.	Emergency Mgt. Coord.	Emerg. Plan.	24	Myers, Marsha J.	Police Service Rep.	LAPD	27	Wagner, Douglas G.	Sr. Crime/Intel. Analyst	LAPD	22
De Guia, Maristela	Correctional Nurse	Personnel	13	Myles, Laura P.	Police Service Rep.	LAPD	24	Williams, Stephanie M.	Sr. Detention Officer	LAPD	22
De Leon, Luz R.	Sr. Mgmt. Analyst	Public Works	36	O'Leary, Julie A.	Chief Mgmt. Analyst	Comm. Inv./Fam.	35				
Deering, Christopher J.	Customer Service	LADWP	—	Oliver, Yolanda D.	Community Info. Rep.	Rec and Parks	15				
Dow, Doug E.	Sr. Gardener	Rec and Parks	12	Orona, Ramon M.	Gardener/Caretaker	Harbor	15				

\* **NOTE:** If you wish to have a listing deleted from our online posting of Retirement notices, please email us at [admin@aliveemployeesclub.com](mailto: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
<b>ACTIVE</b>					
Bush, John E.	LADWP	19	Ewbank, Phillip K.	Airports	22
Delgado, Mayra C.	Rec and Parks	4	Felix, Robert	Building and Safety	27
Engle, Ronald L.	LADWP	16	Fisher, Donald S.	LADWP	28
Herd, Ardis L.	Public Works	22	Fitzgerald, Robert J.	LADWP	30
Liberotti, Ronald P.	LADWP	16	Fritz, Lawrence L.	LADOT	13
Peoples, James	Public Works	23	Fuller, Kenneth R.	LADWP	38
Vaca, Anthony M.	LADWP	24	Gaw, Eddie K.	LADWP	40
			Gilhuly, John F.	—	—
			Gossy, William W.	LADWP	27
			Grant, Audrey L.	LADWP	31
			Griffin, Ronald L.	LADWP	35
			Harper, Augusta	—	—
			Hughes, Paul R.	Public Works	34
			Johnson, Roosevelt R.	LADWP	30
			Kessler, Robert S.	—	—
			Kochinas III, Anthony J.	Economic/Workforce Dev.	41
			Loquet, Louis J.	—	—
			Lowrey, William H.	LADWP	35
			Manns, Michael A.	LADWP	17
			Melancon, Betsy B.	—	—
			Mendoza, Marcelo A.	Public Works	17
			Meyers, Bruce L.	Public Works	23
			Minasyan, Asmik	Airports	9
			Moreno, Fernando P.	General Services	23
			Mosley, Joseph E.	Airports	23
			Nacke, Hubert L.	LADWP	26
			Napier, James H.	City Attorney	30
			Park, Joanie	LAPD	31
			Peters, Maryann Z.	Library	17
			Plyly, George M.	LADWP	36
			Prince, Elaine R.	LAPD	30
			Quintanilla, Juan	LADWP	27
			Ramos, Henry E.	LADWP	9
			Richardson, Maurice	Public Works	36
			Rodgers, Michael A.	Public Works	25
			Rosales, Richard L.	—	—
			Russell, Laurence M.	Harbor	25
			Stancil, Richard	Public Works	27
			Samuels, Edward L.	LADWP	32
			Sanders, Udell R.	LADWP	32
			Spinneberg, Glenn W.	LADWP	30
			Steffan, Richard D.	—	—
			Stolarik, Genevieve	LADWP	6
			Thornton, Steven C.	LADWP	32
			Torres, Prajedes B.	—	—
			Torres, Cheryl L.	Rec and Parks	36
			Trout, Lewis W.	Airports	22
			Ung, Clark T.	LADWP	29
			Wahrhaftig, Claire I.	—	—
			Washington, GERALYN H.	LADWP	44
			Watrous, Michael R.	—	—
			Westmoreland, Bernadine M.	—	—
			Williams, James L.	Public Works	30
			Willoughby, Gary N.	LADWP	29
			Wilson, Henry S.	LADWP	25
			Woodland, Roger P.	Building and Safety	18
			Wynns, John P.	LADWP	26
			Yoshida, Andrew M.	Airports	35





**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.*

Bowen Chen, LA County Probation Dept., with Arlene.



County Supervisor Hilda Solis with Arlene.



**Jan. 26** On Jan. 26, Arlene attended and represented the Employees Club at the Chinese Employees Association of Los Angeles County's Annual 2024 Lunar New Year Celebration. "It's always a great event to catch up with friends and acquaintances," Arlene says. "We also donated some of the evening's raffle prizes. Congratulations to all the winners!"



Rene Galano, Retired, LA County, Club Member, with Arlene.



Arlene with Spencer Yu, LA County.



Dara Smith, LA County Office of the Assessor, Club Member, with Arlene.

*Story and photo courtesy Harbor*

## Moreno Is Director of Community Relations

CECILIA MORENO NAMED NEW COMMUNITY RELATIONS DIRECTOR.



Cecilia Moreno

**HARBOR:** Last October, the Port of Los Angeles promoted Cecilia Moreno, a veteran Harbor employee, to be its new Community Relations Director. Moreno now oversees the Port's community relations team, special events, administration of the department's Community Investment Grants program, and manages the Port's sponsorships and memberships.

"Cecilia brings a wealth of knowledge and direct experience with our Port community to this position," said Harbor Executive Director Gene Seroka. "We are fortunate to have Cecilia's expertise and experience as we work to strengthen our community relations and communications throughout all of our Harbor communities."

Moreno joined the Harbor Dept. in 2006 as a Community Affairs Advocate, representing the stakeholders of her hometown of Wilmington. During her tenure at the Port, she has become a recognized leader in the harbor area. She was a founding member of the Wilmington Neighborhood Council and has served as a board member for the Wilmington YMCA, Friends of Banning's Landing and the Harbor Division Community-Police Advisory Board.

Having served on the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce board of directors for more than 20 years – many of them as a board member – Moreno was recently honored as Volunteer of the Year by the Chamber.

Moreno replaces Theresa Adams Lopez, who retired from the Harbor earlier in 2023.

Congratulations, Cecilia! ●



**WE'LL PAY YOUR UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD PARKING THIS APRIL!**

**APRIL 1 - 30, 2024**

**WE'RE THANKFUL FOR MEMBERS LIKE YOU!**

Thank you for your dedication and hard work as a public employee in California. We appreciate your unwavering loyalty as a valued member of the Employees Club of California.

**APRIL**



### CLUB MEMBER EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT!

The Club will reimburse the Universal Studios Hollywood parking fee (up to \$32) for the first 500 qualified Club Members who submit their parking receipt. Limit 1 refund per member.\*

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Park at Universal Studios Hollywood between April 1-30, 2024.
2. Save your parking receipt.
3. Submit a photo of your receipt via <https://join.employeesclub.com/FeesBack>.
4. Members eligible for refunds will receive them via Zelle, whereas those who have not arranged for Zelle payments will receive a check by mail.
5. Enjoy your day at Universal Studios Hollywood!

\* Valid for Universal Studios Hollywood parking receipts dated April 1-30, 2024. Limit (1) refund per Club member in good standing who has paid dues and been active since at least November 1, 2023. Maximum refund value of \$32. Receipt must be submitted through online link.



**SEND RECEIPT**

<https://join.employeesclub.com/FeesBack>



{ Who are the people you see every day? }

**No. 114**  
in a series.

# People We See

*Shelterless in Los Angeles: stories of compassion and humanity*



## Meet Armando Esquivel

**By John Hawkins**

*Club Founder and Club Education and Training Officer*

I found Armando Esquivel wandering in the rain at a popular homeless spot where Alameda and Main Street split in the shadow of City Hall.

Armando was born March 14, 1986, making him 37 going on 38. He was born in East LA, has two deceased brothers and was raised Catholic. I asked him about his mom and dad, but he said he is not too sure where they are living or even if they are still alive.

He went to South El Monte High School and made it all the way to 12th grade but dropped out before graduating. He told me that he had quite a bit of head trauma while in high school from things like football, skateboarding, biking, extreme sports and just messing around. He called himself the "OG Jackass" and that all the trauma to his head contributed to him not being able to continue with high school.

After he left high school, he told me he took a job with Sealmaster paving streets. He said he was fired eventually after getting into a fight with a co-worker, and that working any kind of job has been hard due to his back hurting so much, collateral damage from all the falls he recalled taking back in the day.

Armando said he is currently on General Relief and that he has been on the streets for about 10 years. I asked him



From left: John Hawkins and Armando Esquivel

about the first time he found himself on the street, and he said it was because of him constantly blacking out; he felt like something was going on in his head, and he described it as being like a hand probing around in his brain.

I asked him about drug use, and he said, "I only do meth." He explained that he wants to try heroin to relax him and ease the anxiety but he hasn't tried it yet. He said he can't do fentanyl because his brain is "too full." I asked him if he could kick the meth habit and he said no, it would be impossible, as

he is too addicted, he said.

Armando's favorite movies are *Armageddon*, *Deep Impact* and *Top Gun*. He likes Classic Rock, hip hop and rap. I asked him what his three wishes would be, and he meandered down a path that I couldn't quite understand but it had to do with him being a prophet, about being the brain and heart of the world, and something about the King and Queen of England. This was a tough part of the interview because Armando seemed to drift into and out of coherence, but I don't think it was drug-related.

While earning my degree in psychology I spent a couple of years as an art therapist at a home for young- to middle-aged people afflicted with mental illness, as in schizophrenia, bipolar (manic/depressive) and acute depression. I am by no means an expert and don't have a medical degree, but in my opinion I wonder if Armando started suffering from mental illness in his late teens and most likely was labeled as a "troublemaker" and treated as such. I would also wonder if his drug usage enhanced his paranoia and conspiratorial tendencies, and further labeled him as problem teen/young adult, which perpetuated the cycle of not getting the proper medical/psychological help. Homelessness is complicated.

*John Hawkins wished Armando well and provided support. The interview was conducted by Club Founder John Hawkins on Feb. 18, 2024. The contents described here were transcribed 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! Feature *Friends to the Ends of the Earth*

## THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

**Zebbra:** Also in Thailand we took a jungle excursion. Somehow a tick got on my head, and I kept asking everybody, "What is this thing on my head?" I was told it was a hair bump. Those who saw it agreed that it was a bump or pimple.

**Trinh:** We thought it was a pimple.

**Gregory:** Or a mole.

**Zebbra:** Three days later I looked in the mirror, and then I said, "Oh my God, I feel something moving" and it fell out of my hair into the sink! That sucker was full. It was nice and fat with my blood! I took a picture and I sent it to everybody. I said, "This is your mole/pimple!"

**Latrice:** And that's how Ethelinda found her tick on her head, too!

**Earl:** I don't know about Ethel, but Zebb's been crazy ever since that happened! [laughing]

**Max Reyes:** Another time, we were in Beijing. We were at the Forbidden City, and Latrice had her hair in these long braids, and locals were trying to touch her braid to take pictures – they were trying to be sneaky, to stand right next to her without her knowing and taking pictures. So the guide kept telling them, "Stay away. Stop taking pictures." When all that commotion was going on, I said, "Okay, look, it's Jay-Z and Beyonce. If you want to take pictures with Jay-Z and Beyonce, it's 100 yuan." People pulled out their money, and the tour guide said, "No, no. You can't do that. You can't take pictures with them."

**Gregory:** We were celebrities.

**Latrice:** They were very enamored with the long braids and wanted to touch me, and then they did touch me. I didn't know what was going on.

### I can see some resemblance. And Earl looks like Jay-Z.

**Latrice:** It was fun.

**Ethel:** And in the Amazon rainforest, in Ecuador, what about the Tarzan tree, when everybody tried to ride on that vine?

**Earl:** When Zebb hit the ground, it sounded like a car crash.

**Zebbra:** When I swung on the tree, I thought the ground was right below me, so I let the vine go to drop to the ground, but I kept falling until I hit the ground. It was more of a distance to the ground than I realized, but I wasn't hurt.

### How high was it?

**Zebbra:** It was the largest tree in the rainforest, so they told us. The tour guide said, "Anybody want to swing from the vine?" Of course I raised my hand, and I did it. But all of the sudden I thought, "Okay, so how am I supposed to get off now?" I thought the ground was right below me, but it wasn't. I only dropped about two to three feet, but it felt like 20 feet. Earl insists I let out a big yell. I did, I think.

**Earl:** They call them "walking trees" because they have large roots, and they actually move over time to get sunlight because the forest is so thick. The trees actually move over a period of time to get the sunlight so that they can continue to grow.

**Latrice:** Some of us knew better than to try to "Tarzan" our way across, so I left that to Zebbra.

**Zebbra:** I was 63 years old swinging on a vine. I should've known better, but I've always been a tomboy, so that was my thing. I hit the ground and then fell backwards, but then I jumped right up and yelled "Yay!"

**Earl:** I told you she was crazy.

## Retired, as Friends

**You started out as friends. Has this made you better friends?**

**Ethel:** Yes.

**Earl:** Absolutely. We're more than just friends. We're family. We care about each other. We check in on each other. We've gotten to know each other's families more after the travels started.

**Latrice:** We attend each other's kids' events. Whatever event is happening, any life event, we try to make sure that we are supporting each other.

**Do you recommend traveling together?**

**Gregory:** I say yes, but I say it with a grain of salt. I suggest people start small, and I suggest they find out what they can tolerate, find out exactly what you're working with and be certain that you're compatible. Traveling can also end a friendship as quickly as it can solidify one.

**Latrice:** It's happened. We're still friends.

**What do you love about being Retired?**

**Earl:** Every day is Saturday. When you're working, Saturday means you're coming off a full work week. You've got Sunday as a cushion, so you don't have to worry about getting up and going to work on Sunday; Saturday is the day that you really don't have to worry about the end of the last week, because it's over. You don't have to worry about the next week coming. If you can imagine every day feeling like that, that's how we feel. Every day is Saturday.

**Max Reyes:** The only bad thing about being Retired is that you only get one paycheck a month! But other than that, every weekend is a three-day weekend.

**Earl:** Yes. And if you didn't know how to budget before you retired, you know how to budget now!

**Latrice:** Those of us who are still working sometimes get tired of hearing "every day is Saturday." Every day is not Saturday, yet.

**Trinh:** We need a calendar. Someone should create a calendar where every day is a Saturday. There's no Sunday through Saturday. It should be Saturday the 1st, Saturday the 2nd, and so forth.

**Gregory:** I'm on it.

**You'll have that done ... by Saturday!**

**Zebbra:** We even forget – sometimes when the holidays roll around, it's like, "Wait, what day is it?"

## Feeling Young

**What's your advice to others thinking about forming their own travel group?**

**Earl:** I would say this: If you look at all of us, we look young. I have friends who have retired at roughly the same time and are the same age as myself. I'm 69 but they look older. The traveling we've done and the camaraderie we've developed have revived us to where we feel young and energetic. In the past I would remind folks of the "30-30 Plan" – 30 years of working and 30 years of enjoying a good retirement! We've accomplished the first 30 years and are working on the second. We look forward to being around each other, and I truly believe that's what's going on with us.

**Zebbra:** It's also a motivation to stay healthy and fit. For the women, if we go on a vacation, we want to put our swimsuit on and look good in it. We're constantly working out and trying to eat right and lose weight, so by the time we get on our trip we look good. It's a motivation. It keeps us fit and healthy and young-looking.

**Ethel:** Traveling is a good way to force you to get healthy.

And we plan ahead. We have years to look forward to. We look forward, not back.

**To the Cali Passport Posse, thank you so much for sharing your time and your stories about your travels together. We appreciate and honor you, and this is our way to say thank you for your service with the city of Los Angeles.**

**Earl:** Thank you for the opportunity.

**Zebbra:** Thank you.

**Ethel:** Thanks.

**Gregory:** Thank you, everybody.

**Trinh:** Bye. Happy Friday– I mean happy Saturday! ●

Washington, DC



Greece



Washington, DC



Zebbra Corbin-Rodgers and Earl Rodgers

Ethelinda Reyes



Steve Starks



# *Alive!* AROUND THE WORLD

— continued from page 20

the jungle valley below and the adrenaline rush is spectacular. Tickets can be bought at the entrance, so there is no need to purchase them ahead of time or through a tourist company.

Aside from the Bali swing, visiting the Alas Harum Bali tea/coffee tasting facility is very interesting, if somewhat unusual. Years ago, Dutch colonists started coffee plantations with beans from Yemen. Local farmers brew and drink coffee from excreted beans collected on their plantations from Civet Cats (Kaya Kopi Luwak). The cats have swallowed these coffee beans, whose digestive enzymes free some of the bean's amino acids before being excreted. It sounds gross, but the bean's outer layer is removed before being roasted. Kopi Luwak coffee can sell for more than \$1,500 a pound, making it the world's second most expensive coffee after Black Ivory coffee, produced similarly but with elephants. I could not tell the difference; it tasted like coffee without milk and sugar. But if it's not your cup of tea (excuse the pun), try the organic tea selection; they are delicious and said to have healing qualities.

**Tip:** While driving around the island, look for villages specializing in making various handmade crafts, such as wood carvings, paintings, rattan bags, spices, oils, lace, ceramics and silverworks. These are all for sale at reasonable prices, and the quality is good.

You are never too old to travel and never too young to start.

