



Alive!

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CITY LEGENDS

She Has Stories

Rita Robinson-Kane, one of LA's most significant public employees in some of its most critical departments, talks about her stellar career. Her first post-retirement interview ... an *Alive!* exclusive!

-PAGE 12

Rita L. Robinson-Kane, Retired, LADOT; Retired, LA County; Club Member and Club Board Member.

Alive! photo by Summy Lam



Celebrating the work and lives of public employees.

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Alive! photo by Summy Lam



COVER STORY:

She Has Stories12-16

City Legend Rita Robinson-Kane goes deep in her first post-retirement interview. Dig in!

STORIES

The Club

Club video ‘Along for the Ride’ sets its
YouTube world premiere for March 204

Staff development book club selects *The Four Agreements*,
focusing on growth, creativity and innovation7

Monica Zamudio returns as Club’s Sr. Claims Administrator. . .9
Applications for Club’s Joannie Mukai Scholarship
are now available. Deadline is 3 p.m. June 27, 20259

ITA

Some 200 staff members enjoy a holiday party in December . . 11

Airports

Airport Police welcomes new Officers7

Citywide

The Club responds to the historic LA Fires: an update5

LAFD

Annual Valor awards ceremony honored
those who went beyond the call of duty in 2024 10

Planning

Retired Associate Zoning Administrator Bill Lillenberg,
subject of the Alive! cover story in July 2020, passes away . . .5

Public Works

Retired Sanitation Director Del Biagi passes away. 21
Sanitation’s popular open houses return for 2025 23

SECTIONS AND COLUMNS

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| <i>Alive!</i> Around the World. | 20 |
| Arlene on the Scene | 20 |
| Club Mobile Schedule. | 2 |
| Club Sports | 21 |
| Coloring Contest: Grown-up Winners | 4 |
| Cooking | 24 |
| Deaths: In Memoriam | 22 |
| Insurance Corner | 6 |
| LACERS | 17 |
| Lifes Important Moments. | 22 |
| People We See: Joshua Jones | 8 |
| Picture Perfect: Winners | 11 |
| Retiree Events | 3 |
| Retirements Listing | 22 |
| Robert’s Blog: From the CEO | 2 |
| Your Insurance Dollars at Work:..... | 7 |



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alive.employeesclub.com**

Library Top TenWeb

Advertiser’s Index

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| Mike Wilkinson for LACERS Board. | 17 |
| Rosebud Marketing. | 7 |
| Water and Power Community Credit Union | 23 |



Meet Fellow Retirees

Make friends and have fun at Club social events

Attend a Club Retirees Event this month. Meet other Club Retirees for fun, socializing and networking. Meet Club staff, too!

For Retired Club Members and 1 guest each.

Cost to attend is free. The Club will provide coffee and an assortment of light refreshments.



More information about this new Club benefit will come soon.

Wed., March 26, 10 a.m.

The Trails

2333 Fern Dell Dr.,
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Thurs., March 27, 10 a.m.

Red Car Café

1151 Oxford Rd.,
San Marino, CA 91108

Sat., March 29, 9:30 a.m.

Caffe Luxxe

6420 Pacific Coast Hwy., Suite 145,
Long Beach, CA 90803

**RSVP by
March 20**

to Dulce Lopez,

Retiree Coordinator, at

(800) 464-0452 (ext. 188)

or email

retirees@employeesclub.com



Volunteer with Seniors

The Club’s new Retiree Events program seeks volunteers to bring joy and connection to Retirees.

Join us at the above events and share a meal, enjoy a laugh and lend a compassionate ear.

Much more information is coming.

For now, contact Dulce Lopez at the contacts listed above to get started. You will never regret it.

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to Help

Contact the Club

if you have an event you want covered in *Alive!*
or if you have questions about insurance.
help@employeesclub.com
(800) 464-0452

Alive!

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The Club
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GROWNUP COLORING CONTEST

WINNER! **Salvador Lopez Dias**
RETIREE



Salvador
received a
\$50
Amazon
Gift Card

**Congratulations,
Salvador!**

The winner of our Grown-
Up Coloring Contest from
January is Salvador Lopez
Dias, Retired Club Member.
Well done!

**Attention
Grown-Ups:**

Our next Grown-Up Coloring
Contest will be published in
July, with results announced
in the September issue.
The winner will receive a
\$50 Amazon gift card!
So sharpen those crayons,
markers and glitter!

**Look for our next
Coloring Contest:
July 2025**

**Scenes from *Along for the Ride* featuring
Members Cesar Ponce, Chermaine Fontenette and Kirk Broyard.**



Cesar Ponce

Traffic Officer II, LADOT

‘Along for
the Ride’
Premiere Set

CLUB’S ANNUAL LUNCH
VIDEO SETS YOUTUBE
WORLD PREMIERE
MARCH 20.

THE CLUB: “Along for the Ride” – the first in an
expected series of short documentaries featuring Club
Members at work and enjoying Club benefits that
debuted at the Club’s annual lunch in January – will
have its world premiere on the Club’s YouTube channel
Thursday, March 20.

That date will mark the first time most Club Members
can enjoy the video, which features Club Members Cesar
Ponce, Chermaine Fontenette and Kirk Broyard talking
about the dignity and pride of their public service jobs,
and how much they enjoy using their Club benefits.
“We’re really excited for Club Members to see ‘Along
for the Ride,’” said Club CEO Robert Larios. “The video
reflects the special ways the Club honors, thanks and
celebrates Club Members throughout every day in their
work and family lives. We’re very proud of capturing the stories our
Members told.”

TELL US YOUR STORY

This first installment is planned to be just the beginning of the
Club telling the stories of its Members; the Club is planning its pro-
ductions for 2025.

Interested in having Club video tell your story?

Write to us and let us know!

alive@employeesclub.com



Chermaine Fontenette

Focus Collection Truck Operator II, Sanitation



Kirk Broyard,

Retired, LADWP

**TELL US
YOUR STORY**

**Write to us and
let us know!**

alive@employeesclub.com



The Club Responds: An Update

LA FIRES: Last month, *Alive!* reported on the City’s tactical response to the historic LA Fires of January 7 within the City limits – Pacific Palisades, West Hills, Sylmar, Hollywood, Encino and other locations.

We also told you about how the Club responded to its Members who have been badly affected. **Here’s an update:**

CLUB CARE TEAM

The Club Care Team, first organized for the COVID emergency in 2020, personally called all Club Members thought to be affected directly by the fires. The team worked tirelessly to contact more than 1,100 Members. From those calls, the Club learned sadly that 14 Members lost their homes; 40 requested assistance of money for groceries and other day-to-day staples, and clothing. Some supplies were hand-delivered to those in the fire zones, including Altadena.

SECOND CLOTHING OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 22nd

Club Angels has scheduled a second clothing donation open house on Saturday, March 22, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Club Warehouse in Carson. A range of essentials for all ages is available. Reservations are required; contact the team at help@employeesclub.com

The clothing drives and distribution are coordinated by Guadalupe Lira.

CLUB ANGELS



Club Angels, the independent nonprofit charity run by Club staff, asks for Club Members to donate funds to help those affected, with all donations passed forward and none kept for administration. Here’s a report from Club Angels Director Arlene Herrero.

“On behalf of Club Angels, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for those who have generously donated. The monetary support has allowed us to provide much-needed grocery assistance to those most impacted by the recent fires.

“We raised \$4,000 from Members, and grocery assistance in that amount has been provided to 25 people from LA City and LA County.

“We also collected clothing donations and unused Club apparel in a clothing drive with our partner associations. Both active and Retired Members accepted donations during our first open house Feb. 8 for those who needed essentials.

“In times of hardship, kindness and generosity make all the difference. Thanks to those who have donated. We truly appreciate our community’s willingness to lend a helping hand.”

YOU CAN HELP: DONATE TO CLUB ANGELS

Club Angels, a nonprofit 501c3 charity led by the Club’s Arlene Herrero and dedicated staff, is managing the Club outreach through grocery assistance to public service employees facing hardships. Your gift could be tax deductible; consult your tax professional.

Follow this QR code to give via Zelle:

Follow this QR code to give via Zelle:



REACH OUT IF YOU ARE IN NEED

Members are welcome to reach out to the Club if you remain in need. Contact the Club at help@employeesclub.com

“While many of our Members and fire-affected communities are beginning to recover, we understand that some will face challenges in the coming months,” said Club COO Summy Lam. “We will continue our efforts to secure more financial donations to ensure Club Angels is prepared to provide assistance as needed.”

THANKS TO THE FIRST RESPONDERS

Finally, once again the Club thanks those First Responders – many of whom are Club Members – for their bravery and courage for saving lives during this historic emergency. We are grateful for your service.

The Club held its first clothing distribution to those in need on Feb 8. A second distribution is scheduled for March 22.



The Club collected clothing to be distributed to public service employees in need.

Club Headquarters Closed for Renovation

March 18 – April 7

The Club will remain fully open and ready to serve you while we renovate our offices from March 18 – April 7.

HOW TO ACCESS THE CLUB DURING RENOVATIONS:

While the Club Headquarters is closed, Members can access Club Counselors, staff and the Mobile Team through the numbers below. We’ll respond promptly to celebrate you!

Thanks for your patience.

Club Headquarters
311 South Spring Street, Suite 1300
Los Angeles, CA 90013



Help@EmployeesClub.com
Or Call (800) 464-0452

In Memoriam

Bill Lillenberg

1928-2024

Veteran, United States Navy,
Planning Dept., 38 years of City service

Bill Lillenberg, Retired, City Planning; United States Navy Veteran and pioneer in U.S. intelligence, passed away in December. He was 96.

Bill appeared on our cover in July 2020 as *Alive!* paid tribute over a number of years to US military veterans. He served on Midway Island just after the conclusion of World War II in the Pacific, and was called back during the Korean Conflict.

He then worked for the beginning of the National Security Agency (NSA) in Washington, DC, where he met his wife, Alice, and eventually moved to California.

Three of his children are Retired City Employees: LAFD Engineer Mark Lillenberg, LAPD Det. Amy Lillenberg, and LAFD Engineer Kevin Lillenberg. His grandson, LAFD Capt. I Josh Lillenberg, is active.

May Bill Rest in Peace. ●

Bill Lillenberg, Retired, City Planning, at his home.



Bill Lillenberg from July 2020 cover story

Bill serving at NAS Midway circa 1946-47.



THE CLUB INSURANCE CORNER

by Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales



CA LICENSE NO: 0H45598

Why It's Important to Update Your Information Regularly

Keep your records up to date with the Club. Review today!

When it comes to financial and legal planning, keeping your documents up to date is crucial. Life changes—sometimes unexpectedly—and ensuring your records reflect your current situation can save your loved ones from unnecessary stress and confusion. Here are three key areas to focus on during your regular document review:

Verifying Contact Information

One of the simplest yet most overlooked tasks is ensuring that the contact details of the institutions managing your accounts are correct. Whether it's your insurance provider, bank or legal representatives, outdated information can lead to missed communications, delays or even loss of access to important accounts. Take a moment to check that names, phone numbers, and addresses are current and correct.

Updating Beneficiaries

Life events such as marriage, divorce, the birth of children or grandchildren, and even changes in financial priorities may impact your beneficiary designations. Regularly reviewing and updating these designations ensures that your assets will be distributed according to your wishes. Many people assume that their will dictates all inheritances, but beneficiary designations on insurance policies, retirement accounts and annuities take precedence over a will.

Organizing for Others

While you may have a firm grasp on where your important documents are stored, your loved ones may not. In case of an emergency, it is essential to have your records well-organized and easily accessible. Consider creating a secure yet accessible system for storing legal documents, insur-



ance policies, account details and contact information so that a trusted family member or executor can step in if needed.

Taking the time to review and update your financial and legal documents on a regular basis can prevent complications and ensure a smooth transition for your loved ones when the time comes. A proactive approach today can spare your family from significant difficulties down the road.

Contact Club Counselors today by phone at (800) 464-0452 ext. 4 or by email at info@employeesclub.com to review and update your information.

FOR RETIREES OR THOSE ABOUT TO RETIRE

The Club is here to guide you through the retirement planning process every step of the way!

If you plan to retire soon or are newly Retired, you have access to attend a retirement planning party with Club Retiree Specialist Counselors that will set you up for success in retirement.

We will be reviewing topics including pension deduction, Retiree Life Insurance, Retiree Legal Insurance, the Club's Retiree Mentorship Program, our Retiree Recognition Awards, and other valuable Club benefits.

The Club strives to make your transfer from active to Retired as easy as possible by guiding you through the processes; educating you on new, important topics; and welcoming you to our Club Retiree Community.

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

Attend a Retirement Planning Party!

Date: Last Thursday of each month
(Choose one: Apr. 30, May 29)

Time: 1 – 2 p.m.

Location: Club Headquarters
311 S. Spring St., Suite 1300
Downtown Los Angeles

Parking: Validated parking provided.

RSVP today!

To reserve a spot at an upcoming Club Retirement Planning Party:

- Call us at (800) 464-0452, option 4, or
- Email us at info@employeesclub.com



Meet Your Club Counselors



Dalila Vielma
Member Services
Counselor



Dylan Noel
Member Services
Counselor



Cynthia Ha
Member Services
Counselor



Cheryl Martin
Member Services
Counselor

Update your benefits and get all of your questions answered by booking a one on one or group presentation appointment with your colleagues at your job site.

Email help@employeesclub.com to request a Counselor visit today!

2025 Events

LARFPA

June 4 Annual Picnic

LA River Center and Gardens
570 W Ave 26, Los Angeles, CA 90065
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

LADWP Retirees Association

Times and dates for future events to be announced.

Reservation information:

LADWP Retiree Association:
(949) 388-1206

LARFPA: events@larfpa.org

Contact Information

Club Retirees Dedicated Helpline:

Club contact:
help@employeesclub.com

LA City Employees Retirement

System (LACERS) (City Dept.)
(800) 779-8328
lacers.services@lacers.org

LADWP Retirees Association

(949) 388-1206

Fire and Police Pensions

 (City Dept.)

(844) 885-2377
pensions@lafpp.com

LA Retired Fire and Police

Association (LARFPA)
(888) 288-5073
membership@larfpa.org

Retired Los Angeles City

Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)
See page 18

Mamma Mia!

Enjoy ABBA's hit songs and
a night of musical theater at
Segerstrom Center for the Arts!

Explore More Club Exclusive Ticket Offers Online



Details at EmployeesClub.com





More than
\$130 MILLION
in insurance
benefits paid!

Your Insurance Dollars at Work

When Members purchase insurance through the Club, they trust the insurance will help them in times of need. Below are the monthly amounts of claims paid back to Members. Club insurance plans will be there when you need them.

| INSURANCE PLAN | JANUARY | TOTAL SINCE 1992 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Life/Accidental Death and Dismemberment | \$151,512 | \$75,638,786 |
| Disability Insurance | \$170,488 | \$37,248,138 |
| Long-Term Care Insurance | \$223,020 | \$15,452,715 |
| Cancer/Critical Care Insurance | \$20,500 | \$5,471,500 |
| Accident Plan | \$1,500 | \$152,712 |
| Totals | \$567,022 | \$133,963,852 |

CLUB MEMBERS’ PRAISE

“I found the [Club’s Claims] service to be very helpful and timely; there was not a long turnaround after I submitted the necessary paperwork and payment of insurance. Thank you for your courteous and caring attention.”

— Articia Jenkins, December 2022



Monica Zamudio
Sr. Claims Administrator



Mikayla Sprague
Claims Administrator

Trust the Club’s insurance and claims services when you need them the most. Contact a Claims Administrator today:

(800) 464-0452

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Welcome, New Officers

AIRPORT POLICE WELCOMES THREE NEW OFFICERS.

AIRPORTS: On Feb. 7, Officers Giovanni Omg III, Edwin Quijada and Carlos Santana graduated from the LAPD Police Academy and joined the Airport Police. These Officers are now set to embark on a comprehensive six-month Field Training Officer program, where they will continue to hone their skills and serve the LAX and Van Nuys communities. Congratulations, Officers Omg, Quijada and Santana! Welcome from the Club. ●



Giovanni Omg III, Edwin Quijada and Carlos Santana joined the Airport Police. With them (in each photo) are Airport Police Chief Cecil Rhambo (left) and LAPD Assistant Chief of Support Services Dominic Choi.

Studying Excellence

STAFF BOOK CLUB BEGINS THIRD SELECTION ON GROWTH, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION.

THE CLUB: The Club’s internal Quasar Book Club – a method that Club staff uses to study and implement service growth, creativity and innovation – has begun reading and sharing its third selection, *The Four Agreements* by Miguel Ruiz. *The Four Agreements*, a guide to personal freedom through principles including integrity, non-judgment and doing one’s best, has sparked meaningful conversations within the Quasar team. “At the Employees Club, we foster a culture of growth, creativity and innovation,” said Robert Larios, CEO. “*The Four Agreements* has sparked meaningful change, enhancing how we communicate, lead and collaborate as a team.”

THE QUASAR TEAM

The Club’s internal Quasar Book Club highlights the Quasar mindset – a focus on growth, creativity and innovation. This mindset inspires leaders to shine brightly, drive growth and spark transformation while maintaining balance. It’s a powerful symbol of the Club’s commitment to personal and professional development.

RITA JOINS

For the first time, a Board Member is participating in a staff book club. Rita Robinson – subject of this month’s cover story, is reading along and adding her stellar feedback as one of the most successful City employees over the past few decades. She’s stepping forward with curiosity and commitment, and she demonstrates that growth and leadership are essential at all levels of the organization.

JOIN IN!

Club Members: Have you read *The Four Agreements*? What did you think? Send in your thoughts and comments, and we’ll share with the Quasar Book Club! **Send them to alive@employeesclub.com**



The Club Quasar Book Club discusses *The Four Agreements*. Staff members include (clockwise from bottom center) Dulce Lopez, Dalila Vielma, Citali Bon, Rebecca DeBolt, Noelle Kauffman, Mariana Guevara, Genesis Martinez, Cesilee Castillo, Marcus Martin, Leigh Thompson, Clara Flores, Ronald Cortez, Board Member Rita Robinson, John Hawkins and Isaiah Hawkins.



The Club Honors Public Employees

{ Who are the people you see every day? }

No. 118
in a series.



People We See

Shelterless in Los Angeles: stories of compassion and humanity



Meet Joshua Jones



One of Joshua's friends on the street is Malcolm Ashley (left), whom People We See profiled in May 2024. See that profile here:



By John Hawkins

Club Founder and Club Education and Training Officer

In the heart of Los Angeles, a young man sits on the pavement, his eyes full of resilience despite the hardships he's faced. Joshua Jones, 30, was born and raised just a few miles from where we met. His journey, from high school struggles to homelessness, is a stark reminder of how quickly life can change.

Joshua attended Miguel Contreras Learning Complex (high school), which sits right behind where this interview took place, but never completed his diploma. "I only needed 15 more credits, three classes," he recalls. His teenage years were turbulent—after stealing a classmate's phone, his mother transferred him to an adult school. "It was good for a minute, but then I stopped going and wasn't doing the work." The lack of structure led him further from education and into the workforce at a young age.

After leaving school, Joshua found employment at Pizza Planet, a job he held for a year before being let go unexpectedly. From there, he dabbled in various trades—low riders, solar panels and construction. However, none of these jobs provided lasting security.

Losing Everything

Joshua's life took a devastating turn in the past year. Within five months, he lost both of his parents. He had been living with them in a rented four-bedroom, two-bathroom home until he was forced out. "I walked by my old house today," he says, his voice heavy. "They were tossing my stuff out of the fifth-floor window into a junk truck." To make matters worse, his two cars were impounded for allegedly being "illegally



From left: John Hawkins and Joshua Jones.

parked" outside the home. With nowhere to turn, he found himself on the streets in December.

Now, Joshua stays in an area with others who have been homeless for a while. "I have a habit of always trying to help people. If I have extra, I share," he says. Despite his own misfortunes, he remains generous and hopeful.

A Father's Determination

Joshua's biggest motivation is his family. He has been married for eight and a half years to his wife, Jocelyn, and they have two children—eight-year-old Genesis and two-year-old Josiah. "Right now, the kids are with their mom," he shares. Though he has a twin brother and two sisters, he says they aren't close, and he keeps mostly to himself.

When asked about his five-year plan, Joshua is clear:

"Definitely not on the street. I want to be with my family." He is currently working with Pathways, a program that has referred him for transitional housing. He's waiting for the next steps.

Fighting Against the Odds

Joshua insists that drugs and alcohol are not his downfall. "No, not really. I just smoke a lot of weed." His main struggle, he says, is avoiding the influences of the streets. "There are people here who have been homeless for a long time, and they've gotten comfortable with it. That makes it easy for me to become too comfortable, and then I don't want to do anything."

His first step to recovery? "Getting focused," he says firmly.

Hopes and Dreams

Despite his current situation, Joshua remains hopeful. His favorite movie, *Silver Bullet*, reflects his love for suspense, while his music taste leans toward rap, especially artist Lil Durk. When asked about his three wishes, his answers are simple but powerful: "To be stable financially, to have no worries, and to live for a long time."

Joshua's story is one of hardship, but also of hope. His determination to turn his life around and be there for his family is evident. With the right support and opportunities, he stands a chance of reclaiming the stability he lost. For now, he waits, holding onto positivity and the belief that better days are ahead.

John Hawkins wished Joshua well and provided support.

The interview was conducted by Club Founder John Hawkins on Jan. 9, 2025 along West Second Street downtown. The contents described here were transcribed from a video recording.

{ In this feature, Club Founder and Club Education 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 stories to tell. }

Apply Now for Club Scholarship; Late June Deadline



APPLICATIONS FOR THE CLUB'S MUKAI SCHOLARSHIP ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE. DEADLINE IS JUNE 27, 2025.

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

The 2025 Mukai Club Scholarship Program, which expects to grant at least 20 awards and is named after the late Club Board Member Joannie Mukai, is now accepting applications.

Eligible candidates 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 2025. There is no age limit for Member or spouse, but all others must be under 25.

New for 2025: Club Member candidates, or the Club Member who is related to the candidate, must be an active Member in good standing for at least six months prior to application deadline.

All materials must be completed on the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 3 p.m. June 27, 2025. Winners will be notified by July 31 before school starts.

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

"The Mukai Club Scholarship program is one of the most important benefits of Club Membership," said Mariana Guevara, chair of the Club's Scholarship Committee. "And this year, with the fires that have devastated parts of greater Los



Garrett Viado, the son of Leticia Lopez, Recreation and Parks, 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

DEADLINE:
3:00 p.m., June 27, 2025



Angeles, the program is more important than ever. The Club takes its role very seriously in helping Club Members and their families reach the next level of their education.

"We welcome all Club Members and their close family members to apply for this very important scholarship program. We honor Members by supporting the future success of our young people. We encourage all those eligible to apply."

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

Interested candidates may begin the process directly on the *Alive!* Website at: alive.employeesclub.com/mukaischolarship

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

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 Member candidates, or the Club Member who is related to the candidate, must be an active Member in good standing for at least six months prior to application deadline.
- The successful candidate must attend an accredited four-year college or university full time in the fall semester 2025. Current high school seniors matriculating to a four-year school in Fall 2025 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 3 p.m. June 27, 2025. 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.
- Application essays may be checked by the Club for originality and authenticity. Club may request applicants to provide draft history."

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."



Save on See's For Easter!

GO TO: employeesclub.com

Welcome Back, Monica

THE CLUB: Monica Zamudio, the Club's longtime life insurance claims advocate, has returned to full-time Club employment. With 14 years overseeing the Club's Claims Dept. and one year as consultant, she returns as Sr. Claims Administrator. Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development, will continue to lead and manage the Claims Dept. to ensure its alignment with Club goals and service quality.

Monica will work alongside Mikayla Sprague, Claims Administrator, to serve Members with insurance benefits through the Club. Together, Monica and Mikayla serve Members with warmth, sensitivity, confidentiality, thoroughness and advocacy in handling claims at some of the most difficult times of Members' lives.

"We're thrilled to welcome Monica back to the Club," said Club CEO Robert Larios. "Her 14 years of experience and dedication to our Members make her return as Sr. Claims Administrator an invaluable asset to our team."

Welcome back, Monica! ●



Monica Zamudio

HELP FELLOW

LA City, LA County, and CA State Public Employees in Need

Financial Donation

100% of your financial contribution will directly support affected Club members and public employees.



Zelle

Scan the QR code in your Zelle app.

Please indicate it's for 'Club Angels'

When using Zelle, your payment will be facilitated by: LACEA Insurance Services, DBA Employees Club of California.

The recent fires in Los Angeles have severely impacted many of our fellow Club members and California public employees. We're reaching out to our members for urgent support through both essential supplies and financial donations.



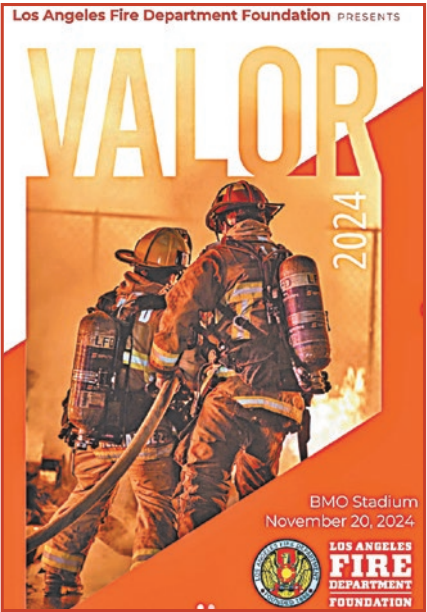
CONTACT US
help@ClubAngels.org

Your Zelle payment will be sent to LACEA Insurance Services, DBA Employees Club of California, which facilitates this donation. 100% of your donation will be forwarded to Club Angels, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN: 45-4735809), and is tax-deductible. Once funds are sent, they cannot be reverted. Please retain your Zelle payment confirmation as proof of your donation. **For donations over \$250, please contact Club Angels at help@clubangels.org for a receipt.**

Retirement Prep: Get Ready. Get Happy!

Another Great CLUB BENEFIT





HONOREES

MEDAL OF MERIT

Firefighter III Jake Peters
Apparatus Operator Ethan Ramirez

LETTER OF SPECIAL COMMENDATION

Firefighter III Shedrick Griggs

UNIT OF THE YEAR

LAFD Heavy Equipment Division :
Capt. Rich Diede

SPECIAL THANKS

Harbor Freight Tools Foundation
(Foundation of the Year)
Southern California Gas Co.
(Corporate Impact Award)

Medal of Valor

The Medal of Valor is awarded to sworn personnel who have demonstrated bravery at great risk to their own lives, beyond a doubt and clearly above the call of duty, whether on or off-duty.

Medal of Merit

The Medal of Merit is awarded to sworn personnel who distinguish themselves by performing an act where the individual's actions, if not taken, would have resulted in serious injury or present imminent danger to life. The individual must have demonstrated a conspicuous act of bravery with calculated personal risk to his or her own life.

Letter of Special Commendation

A Letter of Special Commendation is awarded to department members who perform an act requiring initiative and/or ability worthy of recognition during emergency or non-emergency conditions.

Station/Division of the Year Award

The Station/Division of the Year Award is presented to the men and women assigned to one specific station or division, who collectively exhibit exemplary service, professionalism, bravery and compassion.

Corporate Impact Award

The Corporate Impact Award is presented to a company that exhibits philanthropic excellence in the community, outstanding corporate citizenship, and longstanding support of the Department and its personnel.

Foundation of the Year Award

The Foundation of the Year Award is presented to a foundation that provides invaluable service to the community and outstanding support for the people of Los Angeles.

Congratulations to all! Following are abridged narratives of the events for which the Firefighters were honored. Narratives are courtesy the LAFD Foundation.

READ THE COMPLETE
STORY OF ALL THE
HONOREES ON WEB ALIVE!



Photos and information courtesy LAFD Foundation Photos by Mike Apodaca, LAFD

VALOR AWARDS

Dept. honors 3 for heroic acts in 2024
(prior to the LA fires emergency in January 2025).

READ THE COMPLETE
STORY OF ALL THE
HONOREES ON WEB ALIVE!



LAFD: On Nov. 20, the LAFD hosted its annual Valor ceremony at BMO Stadium downtown. The ceremony, sponsored and produced by the LAFD Foundation, honored three who performed over and above the call of duty during 2024; celebrated Heavy Equipment as Unit of the Year; and thanked two external organizations for their support.

MEDAL OF MERIT



Firefighter III Jake Peters

Fire Station 27, Hollywood

Medal of Merit
Firefighter III Jake
Peters

On Jan. 17, 2024, the crew at LAFD Fire Station 70 responded to a reported smoke incident, a common call for the LAFD that indicated nothing out of the norm.

LAFD Firefighter Jake Peters was seated next to the window of the truck as the crew arrived at the scene, where smoke was visible from the attic of a single-story home. While the crew observed this, screams and yells caught Firefighter Peters's attention.

Two civilians ran up to the truck and began shouting for help. They were frantic, asking if anyone had a crowbar because people were trapped inside of the house.

As soon as the truck came to a stop, Firefighter Peters put on his breather, or Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), grabbed his forcible entry tool and rotary saw, and proceeded to the front of the home.

Preventing entry was a locked, metal security door. With no time to think, Firefighter Peters punctured a hole where he could reach through and unlock the deadbolt. Once he realized that the door was double-locked, he used the rotary saw and was able to get the door open.

A hunched-over man stumbled out of the house, dazed and coughing from the smoke. Firefighter Peters asked if there was anyone else inside and the man pointed inside, indicating that there was another trapped individual. Firefighter Peters crawled about five feet into the house, but could not immediately locate the second victim.

Firefighter Peters began crawling as close to the floor as possible, surrounded by smoke in all directions. After going about eight feet in, a force that Firefighter Peters can only ...

LETTER OF SPECIAL
COMMENDATION



Firefighter III Shedrick Griggs

Fire Station 3 downtown

On Jan. 5, 2024, LAFD Firefighter Shedrick Griggs was running errands for local LAFD fire stations, delivering pumps and other tools and equipment in an LAFD pickup truck.

He inched along for a while on the 134 East Freeway in what he assumed was Los Angeles traffic. In the distance, he noticed a large plume of smoke rising high into the sky. As he inched closer, he realized that the slowdown was much more than an average traffic jam.

A semi-truck was turned over on its side and had caught on fire. Firefighter Griggs realized that the accident had just occurred, and he was the first to arrive at the scene.

He immediately radioed Metro Fire Communications (MFC) or Metro dispatch, and began to assess the situation to determine an initial plan of attack without turnout gear, water, a truck or an engine.

Firefighter Griggs was immediately met by a civilian who had witnessed the semi-truck swerve, roll over and catch fire. The woman had a fire extinguisher in her truck and had attempted to put out the blaze, but was unsuccessful. She also told Firefighter Griggs that there was a person inside that she had tried to render care to, but the individual was unconscious and the fire was drawing nearer to the cabin.

As soon as Firefighter Griggs realized that a person was trapped, his fire suppression plans went out the window. His number one priority became the safe extraction of the trapped individual.

Firefighter Griggs pulled the unconscious driver out through the broken windshield and into a safe area away from the flame-engulfed cabin.

LAFD firefighters arrived on scene, and a rescue ambulance was able to provide care and swift transportation to the unconscious individual. Once the patient was safely handed off to paramedics, Firefighter Griggs coordinated with the responding station to continue fire suppression efforts and ultimately put out the auto fire.

After the situation was under control, a fellow LAFD member mentioned to Firefighter Griggs that his leg was bleeding. He had no idea he had even sustained an injury as he was focused on the rescue of the unconscious individual and putting out the fast-moving fire.

Due to Firefighter Griggs's quick-thinking and unyielding determination, the civilian survived the incident and was given timely treatment and care. Firefighter Griggs's actions exemplify the selfless decisions that LAFD Firefighters make every day, even at risk to their own safety, to protect those in danger. ●

CORPORATE IMPACT AWARD
Southern California Gas Co.

For more than a decade, Southern California Gas Co. (SoCal Gas) has provided the LAFD with more than \$375,000 in equipment, resources and programmatic support.

The emergency management piece of SoCal Gas's work amplifies the synergy between the company and the LAFD. During emergencies, SoCal Gas works hand in hand with the LAFD to keep Angelenos safe. Like the LAFD, SoCal Gas prioritizes community safety and cites it as the beginning, middle and end of everything that the company does.

SoCal Gas works directly with the LAFD to quickly assess and mitigate natural gas-related emergencies to minimize damages and strengthen public safety. Any natural disaster or major incident that could lead to downed power lines or put gas lines at risk requires SoCal Gas to immediately and strategically align with the LAFD to

safeguard communities.

SoCal Gas also takes a proactive approach to ensuring Firefighter safety by providing regular natural gas safety training at local LAFD Fire Stations. Annually, they host a joint training with Los Angeles City and County firefighters, simulating emergencies and mapping out the roles each organization should play.

In addition to the company's day-to-day connectedness with the LAFD, SoCal Gas has aligned with the LAFD Foundation to understand what LAFD Firefighters need and why. SoCal Gas has worked with the LAFD Foundation to bridge funding gaps and ensure the acquisition of equipment and tools that Firefighters need to do their jobs.

SoCal Gas provided responsive gifts to LAFD Fire Stations 38 and 49 following the Wilmington explosion, or "Alameda Incident," in February 2024 that left nine Firefighters injured with one in critical condition. SoCal Gas supported the campaign for the purchase of new Fast Response Vehicles (FRVs), which serve as both rescue ambulances and fire suppression vehicles.

SoCal Gas continues to provide ongoing responsiveness to local Fire Station needs through the Foundation's Adopt-A-Fire-Station program, and supports the next generation of Firefighters through funding for the LAFD's youth programs. ●

MEDAL OF MERIT



Apparatus Operator
Ethan Ramirez

Fire Station 64, Watts

Medal of Merit
Apparatus Operator
Ethan Ramirez

On Feb. 5, 2024, Apparatus Operator (AO) Ethan Ramirez and his fellow LAFD Fire Station 64 members were one of the first crews on the scene of the reported fire. It was the midst of Los Angeles's particularly rainy season, and the torrential downpour occurring on that day was one of the most severe in years.

The initial assessment was a one-story, single-family dwelling with smoke coming from the attic vents. While being pummeled by the rain, a fellow LAFD Firefighter went to the roof and saw a small amount of fire behind the smoke through the attic vents.

AO Ramirez and another LAFD member made their way to the roof to begin fire suppression efforts, visualizing the situation to ensure each other's safety. Both members quickly noticed a significant sag in the roof. Before either of them could make a move, they both heard a significant crack. Within seconds, the roof had collapsed and the other member fell through the roof, revealing eight-to ten-foot flames that were festering inside the home.

Immediately grabbing the member by the shoulder strap of his breathing apparatus, AO Ramirez issued a Mayday call for assistance while he started to pull him back up. He described the shaky portion of the roof that he was...

UNIT OF THE YEAR



LAFD Heavy Equipment
Division: Capt. Rich Diede

LAFD Heavy
Equipment Division
Capt. Rich Diede

Rainfall totaled 13.96 inches across Los Angeles during the 2023-24 rainy season, a whopping 98 percent of the normal seasonal rainfall of 14.5 inches. This triggered mudslides, sinkholes and other unique disasters, all of which required the skillsets and tools that are unique to the LAFD's Heavy Equipment Division.

Heavy Equipment boasts a team of LAFD firefighters who are on call 24/7 and is spearheaded by LAFD Capt. Rich Diede. The heavy-duty tools and equipment that are part of Heavy Equipment's fleet of machinery can do anything from clearing mudslide debris to fighting major structure fires when it's unsafe for firefighters to go inside.

The unit engages bulldozers, excavators, and the first robotic firefighting vehicle in the United States, RS3, to go out and accomplish what standard LAFD apparatus and City resources cannot. These vital pieces of equipment are all funded by LAFD Foundation donors and supporters.

In Fall 2023, when rain pummeled the Santa Monica Mountains and surrounding area, neighboring communities were inundated with rock slides. Proactively, Capt. Diede and his team filled upwards of 80,000-100,000 sandbags and distributed them to at-risk communities.

During and in the aftermath of the storm, Heavy Equipment was on the scene clearing debris, moving cars, and ensuring that roads remained open for LAFD fire trucks and engines to continue responding to calls for service throughout Los Angeles.

When LAFD Fire Station 109 experienced significant flooding in 2023, the City's budget did not cover repairs or cleanup. The Heavy Equipment crew went into Fire Station 109 and engaged the bulldozer to push mud and other debris out of the station.

This unit's unique expertise becomes particularly valuable when fire season encroaches on Los Angeles. For Capt. Diede and his crew, bulldozers and excavators create "dozer lines" in the potential path of the fire. These dozer lines clear several-foot-wide pathways of brush and vegetation to slow down the spread of the fire. Once fire suppression tactics are complete, Heavy Equipment then begins its land maintenance work to restore the environment that was impacted by the fire engines, dozers, and other apparatus....

FOUNDATION OF THE YEAR
AWARD

Harbor Freight Tools
Foundation

Eric Smidt, founder and owner of Harbor Freight Tools, has long embraced the vital importance of first responders—Firefighters, Police, and Veterans—by recognizing and supporting courageous people who keep our communities safe.

Harbor Freight Tools Foundation has been an ardent supporter of the LAFD and the LAFD Foundation. What started as a generous gift to support the needs of a local LAFD Fire Station has grown into significant contributions that have helped the LAFD Foundation fund state-of-the-art technology, communications, and equipment for the LAFD.

The Harbor Freight Tools Foundation team recognizes who is doing the hard work, responding to all calls for service to save lives and protect communities.

This notion is at the center of their mission, and the organization wants first and foremost to salute the Firefighters whose valor deserves all the recognition.

An added value of the Harbor Freight Tools Foundation partnership is the organization's responsiveness to urgent LAFD needs, especially in times of crisis. The organization stepped up to provide vital funding to the LAFD through the LAFD Foundation during the 2018 Woolsey Fire. Later, when Fire Chief Kristin Crowley identified Fast Response Vehicles (FRVs) as a top funding priority for the LAFD, Harbor Freight Tools Foundation responded and supported the purchase of three new FRVs. These special apparatuses serve as rescue ambulances and fire suppression vehicles, helping them relieve larger resources, mitigate hospital visits, and increase overall LAFD efficiency.

Over the past several years, Harbor Freight Tools Foundation's contributions through the Adopt-A-Fire-Station program have supported the ...



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



DEADLINES:
Publication in print and online: April 15
Online only: May 7

The City Parties!

"We delayed in bringing you these holiday memories while the City suffered from LA's historic fires. We're publishing them now."

ITA On Dec. 11, the Information Technology Agency (ITA) hosted its annual holiday party with great success. The sold-out event gathered 200 department staff members at Piper Tech to enjoy lunch, music, raffles and holiday cheer.

General Manager Ted Ross, Club Member, welcomed the party-goers. Special thanks go to the ITA Holiday Planning Committee members, volunteers, the Piper Tech team, and the Council Audio division, who made this event such a success. ●



General Manager Ted Ross (center) wishes Happy Holidays to ITA staff.



The ITA holiday party, held at Piper Tech, was well attended.



Raffle winners.

Every year, departments put aside their hard work and come together for fun and socialization at their festive holiday parties. And *Alive!* publishes as many of your party pics as we can, in print and online.

Enjoy!



Noelle's Picture Perfect Contest

Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

This month's theme was: **Chocolate**

ENTER TO WIN \$50 AMAZON E-GIFT CARD



"This photo was taken with chocolate letters obtained in Belgium and placed over my second favorite thing, the *Alive!* paper. I always take a copy wherever I go just in case a photographic moment arises."

– **Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor**

Noelle's comment: No matter how you spell it, it still looks delicious ... and very informative! Thanks, Captain!



"Talk about the classiest recognition of a chocolate lover and birthday girl (my wife) as presented by the incredible staff of the Baoase Resort in Curacao."

– **Det. Yves Didier, Retired, Airports**

Noelle's comment: The strong light and deep shadow make this dessert seem even richer. Is that a shell on top? (I wouldn't wait for an answer to dig in.)



"Nothing like a decadent tartufo that was introduced to me in Firenze. A round ball (sliced for presentation) of gelato w/ multiple flavors, a gooey center like melted chocolate, all encased in a chocolate shell resembling a truffle. This was in NYC."

– **Monica Lara, Retired, LAPD/Communications**

Noelle's comment: What do these birds have to be angry about, Monica? At least that's what it looks like to me – "Angry Birds." Nice job on grabbing the image from directly above.



"From Antica Dolceria Bonajuto, the oldest chocolate factory in Modica, Sicily. Been around since 1880. It's an amazing little chocolatier store found in one of the most beautiful and colorful cities in Sicily."

– **CT Feng, LAPD**

Noelle's comment: Shooting this in black and white – or processing it that way – was an inspired choice, CT – the chocolate disks really stand out and form their own textures. Thanks for the added creativity!



"I love the movie *Serendipity*, so I knew I just had to go to the restaurant. Seriously amazing chocolate cake and great food!"

– **Karen Kishita, Retired, Public Works/StreetsLA**

Noelle's comment: You didn't mention which *Serendipity* restaurant you enjoyed (there are lots), so I might just have to try all of them to find this sumptuous concoction. Thanks for submitting! Thanks. Myrna!



The next photo contest theme:

Green

DEADLINE: March 12

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

The Club's online photo contest, organized by Director of Sales Noelle Kauffman, has a monthly theme. For the next contest, the theme is "green" – send in a photo that features the color in any of its forms, in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

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



CITY LEGENDS

She Has Stories

Rita Robinson-Kane, once one of LA’s most significant public employees, tells tales in her first post-retirement interview.

Rita L. Robinson-Kane, Retired, LADOT; Retired, LA County; Club Member and Club Board Member.

- She quotes *Hamilton* to describe her City of LA career: She was in the room where it happened.
- Was she ever: Once a General Manager. Twice an Interim General Manager. Once a Bureau Director.
- And once Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the largest County in the United States.
- She was – and is – friend of mayors, Councilmembers, national leaders, community organizers and countless others.
- She’s a longtime passionate Club Member and twice a Club Board Member.
- She is living history: Rita Robinson-Kane was responsible for many big and successful projects in the City and County.

And *she has stories*. And in this *Alive!*-exclusive interview, Rita is ready to tell them.

Rita, retired from the City since 2010 and fully since 2018, could be considered an insider’s insider, but that would neglect her strong rapport with everyday City employees who weren’t on the inside, too. She was a supporter of anyone who matched her passion for excellence and honesty.

Make sure to read our exclusive interview with Rita. And then don’t miss part two of Rita’s interview next month in an intriguing follow-up. ●





Club CEO Robert Larios interviews Rita Robinson-Kane.

THE *ALIVE!* INTERVIEW Part 1

Rita and the City

In Part 1 of our robust, frank and exclusive interview with Rita Robinson-Kane, she talks about fear, ambition, and moving up the City charts ... with integrity, always.

On Jan. 10, Club CEO Robert Larios and *Alive!* editor John Burnes interviewed the legendary Rita Robinson-Kane, Retired, General Manager, LADOT, and Retired, Deputy CEO, LA County. She retired from the City in 2011 with 33 years of City service, and from the County in 2018 with seven years of County service.

Rita is a Club Member and serves on the Club Board.

Diet Coke

***Alive!:* Welcome Rita, it’s so good to have you here to tell your stories.**

Rita L. Robinson-Kane: Thank you for inviting me! I’m a little nervous, actually – you are asking me to look back 47 years!

I am. First things first, though ... do you want to remove your Diet Coke for the photos? And set it to the side?

Rita: Oh, no! I take it everywhere. I always took it to the Council meetings and other meetings. I knew the meeting was bad if I had a two-Coke meeting.

So it would be out of place for it to not be front and center.

Rita: It would be. Somebody was always waiting for me with a Diet Coke. It’s almost always in my veins. It was my safety net.

So it will stay, then!

Retirement

Excellent. How’s your retirement? Are you enjoying it?

Rita: Yes. It’s wonderful to not have the restrictions of time to be here, to be there, to be at every meeting. There really is a wonderful amount of freedom involved. I like the amount of freedom.

How are you spending your days?

Rita: These days it looks like the leisure of life. I’m not a big traveler. I’ve not taken many trips. My happy place is Las Vegas. That’s where I go most often, maybe to see a show or something. Or just to relax there because the Wynn Hotel is my second residence, or as my staff used to call it, Ritaville. If I ever win the lottery or something, I would have a residency at the Wynn Hotel. I’ve been going there for years and I love it.

Do you gamble?

Rita: Some. I treat the penny slot machines like video games. I’m no big gambler, but I like the fun of it. It relaxes me.

Is this the retirement that you planned on, or is it surprising you?

Rita: When I first retired, I was still taking care of Michael [her late husband] when he was ill at the time. So my time was really spent making sure he was okay. I was going to Phoenix a lot to check on him and come back. My retirement was wrapped around him. And once he passed, it was more like an empty space of what to do. I really wasn’t sure at that time what to do. That’s when I decided that I needed a rest, so I took one. I decided to not worry about anything and just rest.



Rita with her late husband, Michael Kane. He passed away in 2021.

I don’t think I had a lot of expectations from retirement other than to get out of my career alive, which was important because in the upper echelons of what you do at a management level, it can sometimes be daunting. To get out alive, through the political climate and all the things that can happen, you want to do good work. All of those things were nipping at my heels.

When I looked down and realized I had served 40 years to the City and County, I said it was time to go.

— CONTINUES PAGE 14



Rita with Club CEO Robert Larios.



Rita’s famous phrase: “No Whining.”

Rita’s Career: A Timeline

‘As Best Remembered’

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1976-90 | Community Development Dept. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grants Management Specialist• Management Assistant• Management Analyst I, II• On loan to the Dept. of Labor (1983-85)• Training Consultant, San Francisco, as Training Specialist for the Western Region |
| 1990-1998 | Office of the City Administrative Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sr. Administrative Analyst I, II• Budget Officer over Building and Safety, Ethics Commission and the Bureau of Sanitation |
| 1998-2000 | Housing Dept. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Management Analyst |
| 2000-01 | Rec and Parks Dept. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Management Analyst |
| 2001-03 | LADOT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistant General Manager• Interim General Manager |
| 2003-04 | Housing Dept. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interim General Manager |
| 2004-07 | Public Works Dept./ Bureau of Sanitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director |
| 2007-10 | LADOT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Manager |
| 2010 | Retirement from the City |
| 2011-17 | Los Angeles County <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) |
| 2018 | Retirement from public service |

‘I never forgot that when you’re doing anything for anybody, whether you’re being paid for it or not, do it with a lot of excellence and a lot of love. The connection between excellence, goodness and love makes your life better.’

— RITA ROBINSON-KANE

CITY LEGENDS **She Has Stories**



Rita (right) celebrating the 100th anniversary of Public Works in 2006. With her are Cynthia Ruiz and Stan Asato.



Rita (right) helps introduce Sanitation's recycling characters, 2007.



Rita celebrates the successful implementation of a project at Hyperion Treatment Plant, 2005, with Steve Fan.



Rita at an East Valley Sanitation Yard holiday party, 2004.



Rita (left) at a barbecue hosted by Tom LaBonge for Fourth District employees, 2005, with Fabio Arias and Yolanda Gardner.



Rita (center) and the team inspects a Sanitation pipeline for the first time, 2007. With Traci Minamide, Mas Dojiri, Steve Fan and Ken Redd.

THE *ALIVE!* INTERVIEW **Part 1**

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

City Origins and Lessons Learned

Was Community Development your first City department?

Rita: Yes. It was under the Mayor's Office then. I had been a summer worker for two summers prior to that. One of the supervisors asked me to apply for a job there. I wasn't really thinking about the City because I was just coming out of college. At that time, college was like management training for banks. I wanted to be in these corporations. Security Pacific Bank was recruiting for management.

I was raised by my grandparents in Festus, Missouri, outside St. Louis until I was 11. I was talking to my grandfather when I was in college. "Corporations are nice," he said. "But they lay off people because business goes up and business goes down. I think you should look into some of the government opportunities, especially since you worked for the City for two summers. That's not a bad opportunity," he explained, "because they never solve any problems [permanently], so they will always be in business." I thought, well, that's kind of an odd way of looking at it. But he said, "I guarantee you, you may not get as much money to start, but you have unlimited opportunity. And eventually you will make the kind of money that you think you want to make. You need to make only enough money to take care of yourself. But they have health benefits and things that I want you to have." So that's how I ended up eventually going to the City.

How did he know so much about City life and City work?

Rita: He lived to be 103, so he had seen a lot of life. Even though I often tell people that my grandparents probably had the culmination of an eighth-grade education together, they had numerous PhDs in life. They raised me to be able to handle life. And he said, life means you take care of yourself. You make sure you have a roof over your head. You make sure you have a car to drive or bus fare if you don't have a car, and food to eat. I told him that the City was paying like \$300 less a month than I would get at the bank. And he said that he could guarantee I was going to make that up and more in the time to come. In the end, I got a City job, and that's where I started.

What was your first title?

Rita: Oh, goodness. I can't remember! It wasn't even Management Assistant. It was like City Coordinator, because it was under the Mayor's Office. It wasn't even a City title. It was more like a title that the City used for exempt employees. Eventually I did become a Management Assistant with the City. The Community Development Dept. handled grants and housing issues and other community needs that were identified.

Were you excited to get your first job?

Rita: Initially I was terrified of my first boss, Clarence Broussard. It was Earl Jones who advised me to work for the City. He was just the greatest guy ever. Just the sweetest man.

My first interview was with Clarence Broussard. I'd never met him. He didn't even ask me to sit down. I waited for him to ask me to sit down. He didn't ask, so I stood. He mentioned that I went to Scripps College in Claremont and that he went to Claremont Men's College. At least they taught you how to read and write, he said. His head was still down.

He said, it looks like you did a good job the two summers you were here. Can you come to work on time? And I said, yes, sir. He said, "I'll see you tomorrow morning at 7 a.m." I just walked out and went home. Five minutes, and that was that. I don't even know what he looked like!

My grandmother told me to be at work at 6:30 a.m., a half-hour early. Which I did. Clarence appreciated that I came to work early. From then on, we became the best of co-workers and friends. He worked hard, and he gave me so much opportunity. That set my framework for working life.

He became part of your support circle?

Rita: Absolutely. My support came from my grandparents and my church family, mainly. My grandma did housework for important people in town like the librarian, the sheriff, and others. As a child a lot of times, I'd go to work with her. She taught me how to work carefully, thoroughly. Once, when I was in a hurry, I did a poor job and hadn't taken the time to do it right. "There's something I need to tell you," my grandma said. "When you work for people, people are paying you to do a job, and they expect a good job. Otherwise, they don't want you to work for them. Nobody likes anything that's less than excellent." I cried and cried and cried, and she said, "No, dry those tears. There's nothing to cry about. You did a poor job. You own it. You're still going to get ice cream, but I don't want you to ever do that again. We all make mistakes. Lesson learned." I never forgot that when you're doing anything for anybody, whether you're being paid for it or not, do it with a lot of excellence and a lot of love. The connection between excellence, goodness and love makes your life better, and others, too.

Taking Tests, an Ultimatum, and Onto CAO

After Community Development, your next stop was the CAO – the City Administrative Officer department.

Rita: I wanted to stay at Community Development, but the mood in the City was always to take as many tests as you could. Every position would have its own test. A lot of my friends were taking any tests they could qualify for. It was important to get through the process of testing, to go to Hollywood High School, know where to park, stand in line, and understand the proctor system and the timing of taking a test. I took tests on so many Saturdays for jobs that I had no interest in. If I qualified, I would take the test just to get the feeling of taking a test. And when a real test came around, I would be able to qualify for it. Over time I was able to move up and into the civil service system within Community Development.

People didn't get out of CDD very often into the real City for a long time; it was out of the Mayor's Office, and people didn't consider us to be City employees, really. Frank Martinez was the first person I remember who got out and went to a City department, and it was a big deal. I went to Housing for a little bit. I became a Senior, and then I took the test for the CAO's Office. Barbara Ziedman had encouraged me to take the Sr. Administrative Analyst test. Eventually that's how I ended up at the CAO's Office. It was not an easy road, but I got there.

Yeah. How long were you at the CAO's Office?

Rita: It had to be several years because I had so many different assignments. I became a Budget Analyst over Sanitation for a long time.

That would serve you later.

Rita: Yes. That parlayed me into becoming the Director. I really understood the City in the CAO's Office. Community Development was like a little arm, but you were at the heart pulse of the City at the CAO's Office, then under Mr. Keith Comrie. It was truly where everything flowed in and out of the City even beyond the Council; the CAO set the stage for everything. Most people never got into the CAO's Office; it was more like an Old Boys' Club. And very few minorities.

A representative of the RAND Corporation was on the interview panel for the Chief Administrative Analyst interview. The CAO's Office wanted top-notch people interviewing for their jobs. He said, "You're applying for a pretty high-level position as a Chief in the CAO's Office." He said it's about leadership and it sets the tone for the City. He then asked me, "If you're the leader, why should anybody follow you?" It was a profound question to ask me. It really hit me. I remembered the trick: To buy time, repeat the question within the answer. So I repeated it and then said, "People follow the examples of what they see. If you work with excellence, you do all the things you're supposed to do at get results. You lead with integrity and trust so that people want to follow you." He shook his head. And I got within the top-tier scores.

Were you ambitious at that time? Was this about the point in your career where you said to yourself, I'm going places and I'm showing my worth at an early stage?

Rita: There were more people telling me that than I was telling myself. My supervisor at the time was Barbara Zeidman. She was head of Housing at the time, and eventually became head of Personnel. She was so smart. She said, "I've been watching you." She tutored me over time. She told me it was time for me to go work for the CAO's Office. She drove me to the interview for the Chief. I didn't even want to get out of the car! I told her I didn't think I could do this, to interview for the



The story in *Alive!* announcing Rita's appointment as the General Manager of LADOT, 2007.



Rita (left) is sworn in as member of the LACEA Board in 2004, with (from left) Michael Biagi, Robyn Barnes, David Muraoka, Michael Leighton, Maria Romasanta, with the Club's Brian Trent.

CAO position. She said she would fire me from the City if I didn't get out of the car! "You have important work to do," she said. "Go in there and do your best!" It went well, and I was stunned. I'd never had an interview that focused more on who you were as a person rather than the mechanics of the job.

It was that important of a job.

Rita: At that time my grandmother was very sick. I didn't believe I could start a new job. I ended up interviewing and they told me I was going to be working for a man named George Wolfberg. He understood my needs and still made sure I succeeded. He said that I was going to fit in just fine there. He said I had thick skin, and I was going to need it in the CAO's Office for the political environment I was in.

I learned to write for the City from George. I would turn in reports, and I was proud of them. I was assisting Building and Safety at the time. When I turned in the report, he gave it back to me. George was one of those people who didn't look at you. "Try again," he wrote at the top. He said, "You can't make me believe your outcome if the body of your report doesn't support the conclusion. You can't write your conclusions first and then expect me to have a leap of faith into what you've written. All the facts have to line up so that I can come to this conclusion practically. This is not an assumption job. Also, if you can't wrap me up in three paragraphs, you fail."

So then I began to write better and better and better.

Later, you applied for the top position there, right?

Rita: Yes, but I didn't get a top position at the CAO's Office. Mr. Comrie called me in later and said he knew I was disappointed I didn't one of the 10 appointments. But he made sure that I would get a Chief Management Analyst position at Housing. "I think you'll go further if you're in the departmental land than if you're in the CAO's Office. Your leadership here can only go so far, but this opens you up to opportunities in the entire City." I said okay. I wasn't upset about it. It was a hard pill for people to swallow. There was already talk about lawsuits. But I'm not a person to sue the hand that feeds me. That's not me. I said, things will work out. That's where faith plays a role. I prayed about it, and I remembered what my grandfather said: There's no whining. "God doesn't always give us what we want," he said. Sometimes what we want is not the best for us, and sometimes the answer is no. He said he wanted me to smile like I've never smiled before. Go over there and do the best job you ever could do.

That's what I did; I went to Housing. In hindsight, it was the best opportunity because from Housing I went to Rec and Parks, where I worked for one of my favorite people in the whole world, John Duggan. As I moved through the departments, I went from tutor to tutor to tutor. They were all tough! They were people of excellence.

Rec and Parks, Housing And Unique Wallpaper

So now you're in Housing.

Rita: Housing was brief the first time. It was a contentious time in Housing; they were making room for a new guy to come in. From there I went to Rec and Parks. I learned good things about how that department worked.

One day while I was there, my boss – John Duggan – took me to this restaurant for lunch. I might have been at Rec and Parks a year or so at that point.

In the restaurant, there was this lady sitting at a table. Just one person. She started waving, and I thought it was for John. "She's waving at



Rita as Director of Public Works/Sanitation.

you," he told me. So I went over. Her name was Frances Banerjee; she was a bigwig in the City. *[She had been Assistant Chief Legislative Analyst with the City, and was then the General Manager of LADOT. – Ed.]* She said, "You're going to come work for me." "I'm sorry, ma'am. I don't even know you," I said. "There's going to be a job opening for Assistant Director of Transportation, and I want you to apply," she said. "You have the qualifications. Do the best job you can on the application and drop it off at Personnel." I was stunned by her. I didn't feel I was ready for that. But at a meeting she had seen me standing strong on a point I was making, and she was impressed, John told me later.

I got the job at LADOT; I was Frankee's Assistant Director there. And then I became Interim General Manager when she left. Frankee Banerjee remains a cherished friend to this day.

That was your first time at LADOT.

Rita: Right. While I was Interim at LADOT, they picked Wayne Tanda to be the General Manager.

I stayed as Assistant for a while. And then Tim McOsker, who is now a Councilmember – back then he was the Chief of Staff for Mayor James Hahn – called and asked me to consider going back to Housing and be the Interim for Housing. And I said, after all that I went through to get out of Housing! He said, it would be the best vindication ever!

The Housing staff was amazed I was coming back. The Housing staff, who had worked with me in rent control and risk stabilization efforts, pasted multiple copies of the official press release all over the wall of the office of the staff person who had made my first stint there so difficult. I thought that was one of the funniest things that had ever happened! It was hilarious.

I called into my office the person who had given me problems before, and I said, "Call me anything you want. Call me any name you want. Don't say it under your breath. Say it out loud, to my face, and then we can move on." This person apologized, and then we moved on and had an excellent working relationship. I don't hold grudges. This person didn't either. The mayor would ask me every once in a while through Tim if it was going well. And I said yes, it was. It was all good.

But still Interim.

Rita: Right. I got used to sitting like a Munchkin in that big yellow chair in the Mayor's Office! Then they hired a new Housing General Manager.

Sanitation and New Fees

Rita: Tim called after that, and said the mayor had two General Manager positions that he wanted me to apply for – Sanitation and Rec and Parks. They would be permanent this time. No more Interim.

The mayor said I had done an excellent job being an Analyst for Sanitation, and I had also done a good job at Rec and Parks. I said it would be monumentally historic if I applied for Sanitation within Public Works, because nobody would ever expect that. And the mayor liked doing things no one expected. I knew everybody there already.

You would be the first non-Engineer, African-American woman to lead Sanitation.

Rita: Yes.

And that's what you did.

Rita: Yes.

Then from there you went back to LADOT.

— CONTINUES
PAGE 16

Rita in the Words of Others

Below are quotes from the Alive! archives that were spoken at a City Council meeting at Rita's City retirement in 2010. All names and titles were accurate as of 2010. – Ed.

Councilman Bill Rosendahl:

Rita "is widely respected among the public, her peers, management, and of course, the elected officials for her innovation, strategic vision and problem-solving ability. She provides incredible leadership for the City government at all levels. She's a straight shooter, and in politics, it's nice to have a straight shooter around who's not afraid to tell it like it is. She never feels compelled to over-promise, and she always delivers. Rita has been a dedicated leader who has helped her staff, and we as a Council navigate some of the most difficult times this City government has ever faced. For all of that and more, I want to express my sincere gratitude and wish [her] continued happiness and success in all [her] subsequent endeavors."

Councilman Greig Smith:

"I sat here in the budget committee many times, and I said, 'I think we have two or three great managers from the City of LA,' and Rita was always at the top of that list. Rita is a tremendous manager. She's a role model for people that want to become general managers."

Councilwoman Jan Perry, Club Member:

"Rita, it's been a joy to work with you. You've always been responsive in whatever position you've held, and you have been an expert in many fields, not just in Transportation. And I enjoyed working with you. You've had a glorious career here in the City of Los Angeles, and I'm heartened by the fact that you're continuing your career in service."

Councilman Bernard Parks:

Councilmembers might have "asked you the same question in 12 different ways, and you answered it the same way each time. And finally you looked up and said, 'I'm not going to lie. I'm just going to tell you what the truth is, and I'm going to say it over and over again.' And I think that's what a General Manager should do. So thank you very much."

Councilwoman Janice Hahn, Club Member:

"Your skills as a General Manager really were important because every department takes its inspiration and takes its orders from the top. And you as a woman were a terrific role model for other general managers, but [also] for a lot of women employees in the City of Los Angeles. [They looked at you] for inspiration."

Councilman Dennis Zine, Club Member:

"I think you've served every department that the City has, [as] Assistant General Manager, General Manager [and] worker. Always [with] that smile, and always that can-do attitude to always make it happen. I wish you well."

Rita's response:

"I will always love this City. I have loved everybody that I've worked with ... Thank you to all who came today to be with me. I just couldn't be in a better place. And I will never love a family like yours. I will love the County, but I will always love my family here first. So thank you."

CITY LEGENDS **She Has Stories**

ALIVE! FEATURE

An *Alive!*
EXCLUSIVE

On not getting the top job at the CAO’s Office:
‘I remembered what my grandfather said: there’s
no whining. “God doesn’t always give us what we
want,” he said. Sometimes what we want is not
the best for us. He wanted me to smile like I’ve
never smiled before ... That’s what I did.’

— RITA ROBINSON-KANE

THE *ALIVE!* INTERVIEW **Part 1** — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Rita: I was at Sanitation when Mayor [Antonio] Villaraigosa came in. I had a lot of respect and care for him, I really did, because he was courageous. He had all the GMs write a letter to tell him why they should stay in their appointment – every new Mayor has a right to rename any General Manager. So I wrote a letter and said if you really want to make a difference in this City, you’re going to have to impose a new collection fee, which had been talked about since 1952, the year I was born. I had every file from the CAO’s Office on why we had to institute a trash collection fee. Not raise one, but institute one. We were hanging by a thread. To do some of the things that were coming – recycling, new trucks, and all kinds of things, we didn’t have the budget for it. We tried instituting one a few years before. I knew the history. But it was the time I felt the mayor could institute one.

So I sent the letter, and one of his staff, Marcus Allen, called me in and said, you have a lot of audacity writing a letter like this to the mayor! I said it was not disrespectful, it was factual. I have a big thing about peer review. I’m not the smartest kid in the room and I’ve always hired people who were way smarter than me. I asked my peer group to look at the letter and they tweaked it, but at that point I either had a job or I didn’t. I couldn’t lie to him.

Marcus, who was brilliant, got his own peer group to look at it. He said, if we could say the money’s going to police and then siphon some of it back to Sanitation, that’s how we can cover ourselves. That was a political thought. I have no political mind at all. He sold it to Mayor Villaraigosa, who loved it. Then we packaged it and sold it.

Effective.

Rita: That was when I saw the clever political side of a city. When you have really clever people who are also personable and smart, not ruthless, and able to make a sale, that’s impressive. Villaraigosa became such a salesman.

You were right in the middle of it.

Rita: Like in *Hamilton* when they said, you’re in the room where it happens. I was in the room where it happened so many times, but not always when decisions were made that I felt were right. Sometimes I was sorry I was in the room. I had enough goodwill with mayors and other leaders I worked with that I could say, maybe you shouldn’t go down this road. Personally or professionally. Sometimes they listened, sometimes they didn’t. One politician once told me there would come a day when he could no longer hear my voice of reason.

Last City Stop: Back to LADOT

And from Sanitation you went back to LADOT.

Rita: I’m trying to remember what happened! Oh okay ... Marcus from the Mayor’s Office put his arm around my shoulder and said, “I’ve got bad news.” I said, “Oh God, what now?” He said, “The mayor wants you to go back over to Transportation.” I said, “And leave Sanitation? After all we’ve done?” Also, I wasn’t eager to go back to the complicated Department of Transportation. It wasn’t my favorite, to say the least. “The mayor needs you to make room for this,” he said.

I was sad when I told my poor staff; it just broke my heart. When I met with the mayor, I told him the only way I’d do this willingly or even halfway willingly is if he let me help him name the person to take over Sanitation, so that the staff was not left in the lurch. The Hyperion Treatment Plant redevelopment and everything else that we were doing was so vital. And he let me. The new Director was Enrique Zaldivar, the best person at that time I knew to transition to Director, even though he was expecting a new baby at the time. The staff needed a leader to not rip them apart. It was better for the City that way.

So you took over as General Manager at LADOT. And then you were out – LA County came calling, and you Retired from the City from that position. Was it because of the nature of the job, or you had enough years served? Why did you decide to retire from the City?

Rita: I was lured out.

Tell that story please! ●

COMING IN APRIL

Part Two of *Alive!*’s exclusive interview
with City Legend Rita Robinson-Kane:

Her transition to the top of LA County ... the promising
future of Los Angeles ... her strong belief in the mission
of the Employees Club, and much more: **Don’t miss it!**



Rita at a social event at City Hall. This photo was taken by Tom LaBonge.



Rita Robinson as Director of Public Works/Sanitation.



Rita (bottom row, left) at the Trailblazers reception hosted by the LA Association of Black Personnel (LAABP), 2008. With Kenneth Garner, Cora Jackson-Fossett, then-Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Imudiase Aimuwwu, Ronnie Cato, Bertha Hurd and Regina Adams.



Rita (left) at the retirement celebration of Jimmy Price, LADOT, 2011. With John Emerson, Julie Butcher and Susie Frierson.



Rita (right) with former Mayor James Hahn and LA County Assemblywoman Janice Hahn, Club Member. The fourth is unidentified.



Rita at a press conference announcing her retirement from the City, 2010.

LACERS

LOS ANGELES CITY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Appointment-Based Service Is Now in Place at LACERS

LACERS uses an appointment-based system for all members who need in-person assistance. There are two options for appointments: in person, at our headquarters, and virtually, via Zoom. These options allow for timely and convenient access to get your questions answered. Visit lacers.org/contact-us to make an appointment online or call (800) 779-8328.

Appointments aren't necessary if you drop off documents Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., and don't need to speak to anyone.

In-Person and Virtual Appointment Hours:

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Phone Hours:

7 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday;

7 a.m. – 3 p.m. Tuesday

FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Security Is Critically Important

LACERS routinely reviews and enhances the security of its information technology infrastructure to prevent unauthorized access. Additionally, LACERS regularly reviews and refines its privacy policies to ensure that all member information received and processed by its staff is kept secure at all times.

Members play a part in helping LACERS maintain information security. Please take 2 minutes to read this article found on [LACERS.org](https://lacers.org) to be sure you are playing your part in maintaining information security.

Link to the article here:https://www.lacers.org/article/cybersecurity-best-practices?utm_campaign=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=bundle_and_blast

If you suspect your personally identifiable information has been compromised in any way, please call us immediately at (800) 779-8328.

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS

1099-R Tax Forms Have Been Mailed

LACERS completed the mailing of 1099-R tax forms to Retirees and beneficiaries at the end of January 2025. The 1099-Rs were sent to the address on file with LACERS. In the event that you did not receive your 1099-R, contact LACERS. Members may also view and download their 1099-R via your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org>.

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Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

RLACEI

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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.

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Visit the RLACEI website www.RLACEI.org to find the latest news.
Call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 0 to make suggestions.
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Change of Address?

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



Send in your Interesting News Contributions!

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

RETIREE EVENTS

Thurs., May 15

Spring Fling: Western Theme
Friendship Auditorium
3201 Riverside Dr.
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Thurs., Sept. 18

Summer Picnic- Luau
Friendship Auditorium
3201 Riverside Dr.
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Thurs., Dec. 11


Holiday Party
Friendship Auditorium
3201 Riverside Dr.
11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

RLACEI EVENTS RESERVATION LINE

Call: (800) 678-4145, ext. 701
or Email: contact@rlacei.org
Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A Message from RLACEI President Ann Seales



Ann Seales

As RLACEI’s newly elected president, I reflect on the incredible journey shared over the past year and marvel over our achievements, and I look forward to what is next on the horizon.
RLACEI has made remarkable milestones, such as successfully lobbying for the cancelation of the Windfall Elimination Provision, or the Government Pension Offset as a part of the Social Security Fairness Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden on Jan. 4, 2025. This change will have a tremendous impact on a substantial number of our membership. In addition, RLACEI appeared before the Los Angeles City Council to petition approval of an additional 2.85 percent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) recommended by the Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System (LACERS) to offset the high inflation we all have faced over the past four to five years. While we did not receive the results we wanted, the fight continues, and with the continued support of our members, we are confident that change is possible. RLACEI has made great strides in advocating for causes close to our hearts, strengthening our community’s voice and affecting real change.

RLACEI’s alliance with the Employees Club of California remains intact; however, changes to our contract has resulted in RLACEI members no longer receiving free membership to the Club. We will continue to partner with the Club to provide the best benefits possible for our members. Going forward, articles published in *Alive!* by RLACEI will be added to our website and emailed to members. We also anticipate increasing our communication via email blasts to keep members informed of RLACEI activities, including our annual social events which continue to receive increased participation. RLACEI will continue to partner with the LACERS Wellness Program to offer our members additional activities to maintain and improve wellbeing.
I look forward to the continued growth and success of our mission to advocate for and monitor our retirement benefits in the year ahead.
May this year be filled with new opportunities, lasting partnerships and moments of joy. I look forward to a wonderful year and offer my thanks for allowing me the privilege to serve as President.

— Ann Seales

RLACEI, President



Western Roundup

Thursday, May 15, 2025

11:30 – 2:00 PM

FRIENDSHIP AUDITORIUM

3201 Riverside Drive

Los Angeles, CA 90027

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

RLACEI member plus one(1) guest limit at no cost

To join RLACEI, call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 706

Please RSVP no later than Thursday, May 8, 2025

RLACEI 2025 Western Roundup Reservation Form

Name

Phone

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State

Zip Code

Number of Attendees

(Limit 2)

Email to: Contact@RLACEI.org

or

Mail to: RLACEI, P.O. Box 86264
Los Angeles, CA 90086

or

Call: (800) 678-4145 Ext 701



Only RLACEI members are eligible to win prizes.



Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.

For Retired Club Members

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

Sunshine of Tomorrow



Arnette Travis

In a recent televised interview, Microsoft founder Bill Gates shared why he doesn't look backwards much. In his words, "There's so much to look forward to." These words are a reminder that life doesn't include do-overs, and we have no viable choice except to move forward.

In a sense, we are all products of our past living in the present time. However, our past lives exist in memory ranging from high to low levels of good and bad. The good memories bring a smile to our face and lift us up. Most of us take no issue in reliving the good times, and they benefit us at times. Which is great!

But reviving bad memories delivers the opposite effect, and we avoid them. After all, they are in the past. But should we avoid the bad parts of our past completely? The answer is no and yes. If the bad parts continue into present-day life, then they are not truly past, and the answer is no. If the past isn't present, then the answer is yes. If you find that negative issues from your past continually resurface and hinder you from moving forward, there is something you can do to change direction.

Take a self-assessment by asking and answering these two questions:

Do you presently engage in or tolerate negative behaviors? For example: overdrinking alcoholic beverages; insulting, teasing or bullying someone.

If you are the culprit, only you can change your behavior. Make sincere apologies where appropriate and stop the bad behavior. Seek professional help if necessary. If someone close to you is the problem, let them know that the bad behavior will not be tolerated or allowed, and stick to it!

Are you unable to move forward because of an unresolved past issue or incident?

Usually, this involves some form of denial and can strain or destroy present relationships and more.

Denial is often used as a protective shield. Fear of potential and actual pain that facing the past could (and likely would bring) is miniscule compared to denial and outright refusal of the past. The failure to acknowledge and/or accept the past is a life sentence of limiting behaviors and recurrent painful memories. In other words, self-destructive.

But there is a way out, and work to do. Face up to whatever the issue is, and in the words of Oprah Winfrey: "Feel the feel, then take the wheel." Make amends, apologize and move forward with the understanding that while you cannot change the past, it is just that – past.

Finally, seal the deal by creating a mantra that acknowledges the past, but urges you forward. For example: You got this! ●

— Arnette Travis



LACERS BOARD UPDATE

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

LACERS Reports Investment Gains



Michael R. Wilkinson

It is now time again to look at LACERS' financial performance for the third quarter of the year, which ended Sept. 30, 2024. I am pleased to report that the performance results are strongly measured against our benchmarks and against other similarly sized funds.

The reports were prepared by NEPC, LACERS' investment consultant. For the third quarter (ending September 2024), LACERS returned 5.55 percent net of fees for three months; 9.79 percent for the year-to-date; 17.39 percent for 1 year; 3.94 percent for 3 years; 8.15 percent for 5 years; 7.32 percent for 10 years; 7.40 percent for 20 years; and 7.02 percent since inception (July 2001).

For perspective, it is good to look at what our goal is for our investment program. We aim to earn our assumed rate of investment return of seven percent over the long term. The return for all the time periods of at least a year exceeded seven percent except for three years. As they say, "Your mileage may vary," and not every year will be a winner, but our system is designed to perform for the long term. So do not expect positive returns for every period. Preliminary reports for the period ending Dec. 31, 2024, are lower, but they are not finalized.

Two ways to measure our investment performance are to compare our returns to a benchmark (a comparison to what an index fund would return) and to compare it to a similar-sized fund. LACERS' results beat the benchmark for all the time periods listed above except for year-to-date.

Compared to other public plans of \$5 billion to \$50 billion in assets, LACERS performed better than or equal to the median fund for most time periods in gross of fees returns. Here are the relative returns with the lowest percentiles being best. A first percentile means the plan outperformed 99 percent of other funds. LACERS relative returns with the percentile in parenthesis are: three months (10), year-to-date (33), one year (36), two years (33), three years (68), five years (50), seven years (49) and 10 years (42).

Finally, NEPC reported on risk adjusted returns, and the report was mixed. For some time periods, on some measures of risk, LACERS underperformed peers but for other time periods and a different peer group, LACERS outperformed.

As you know, I am a die-hard advocate of passive investments (index funds) to control risk and keep fees down. This doesn't work for every asset class, but LACERS is strongly committed to passive investing as shown by the most recent NEPC report on the percentage of LACERS' passive investment: total fund, 31 percent; U.S. equity (stocks): 80 percent; Non-U.S. Equity, 44 percent and Core Fixed Income, 22 percent. ●

CARRIE'S CORNER

by Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director

Catching up with RLACEI's 103-year-old member.



With Carrie at her 103rd birthday celebration were Retired LAPD personnel (from left) Steve Adams, Edgar Payne, Marcella Winn, and Evangelyn Nathan; friends Margaret Collins and Helen Embry; Police personnel Synthia Lee and mom Ora Lee, Carrie Gabriel; Beverly Clark, RLACEI; and Police personnel Stan Embry.

Carrie A. Gabriel began working for the City in 1946 and retired in 1978.

Oh What a Celebration!

Carrie Gabriel celebrates her 103rd birthday with friends.



Carrie celebrated her 103rd birthday on Jan. 28, 2025, at a surprise party with a group of friends at the prestigious Il Pastaio Restaurant in Beverly Hills.

The celebration was attended by friends and Retired Police Officers who sponsored the celebration – some of whom met Carrie last year at an annual police reunion picnic. At the picnic, attendees were fascinated to hear about her experiences working in the Police Dept. in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Carrie's longevity, vitality and sharp mind continue to amaze those she meets and to those who know her.

She was overjoyed to see both old and new friends gathered to celebrate this milestone. It was a perfect day of delicious food, good company and well-deserved recognition for a truly special lady.

As always, her birthday was marked by a flood of phone calls, and her home was filled with flowers, birthday cards and balloons. She had hoped for a grand celebration on her 100th birthday, but the COVID-19 pandemic put those plans on hold. Instead, she celebrated at home with a few well-wishers stopping by. She was presented with a beautiful plaque from the Employees Club, presented by CEO Robert Larios, and a delightful chocolate cake—her favorite—along with flowers from RLACEI.

However, this year's celebration was truly unforgettable for her. She had anticipated a simple lunch with a few friends but was pleasantly surprised to find a large gathering ready to honor her. The Retired LAPD Officers, who have embraced Carrie as one of their own, presented her with a Certificate of Celebration signed by Police Chief Jim McDonnell; a creative money cake; and numerous gifts of love and appreciation.

Carrie's 103rd birthday celebration was an indication of the love and respect she has garnered throughout her remarkable life. With heartfelt tributes, smiles and laughter, the celebration honored Carrie's enduring spirit that continues to inspire all who know her.

RLACEI extends a special expression of appreciation and gratitude to the Retired personnel of LAPD who went out of their way to make Carrie's birthday a memorable occasion: Steve Adams, Stanley Embry, Synthia Lee, Evangelyn Nathan, Edgar Payne and Marcella Winn. ●



Become an RLACEI Member!

RLACEI is dedicated to advocating for retiree interests. Members of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. enjoy all RLACEI events such as, member picnics and holiday party.

"Protecting Retirement Benefits since 1973"

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

JOIN TODAY!

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Chimney Rock National Monument

Pagosa Springs, Colorado



Intrepid traveler Dr. Ed Krupp, Director of the Griffith Observatory and Club Member, visited Chimney Rock National Monument in Colorado, with an Observatory Internet broadcast team.

The Broadcast Team includes (from left) Griffith Observatory Astronomical Observer Vanessa Alarcon, Griffith Observatory Production Engineer Matthew Burlando, and Griffith Observatory Director Dr. E.C. Krupp.

Letter From Bruges

The Venice of the North

Halfway between Belgium's capital city of Brussels and the port of Ostend on the English Channel lies the Flemish town of Bruges. Known for its picturesque cobblestone streets, museums, historic breweries, world-class chocolatiers and Christmas market, it's no wonder that the town is the most popular destination in Belgium.

Bruges means "bridge" in Flemish and refers to an ancient Roman bridge across the River Reie. The town grew around the fortification built by the ninth-century Counts of Flanders. The city's many canals give it easy access to the sea, making it popular with merchants importing and exporting textiles for the spinning and weaving industry. Today, the canals are ideal for river tourism, making it a must-see stop on a river cruise, often called the "Venice of the North." Look for medieval stone monk figures on some bridges used as water levels.

In 1475, English merchant William Caxton printed the first book in English, *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, the Greek story of Troy, in Bruges.

Bruges Square contains several historic buildings, including the 12th century Belfry, once the town treasury. The 272-foot-high tower with its 47 bells served as a watchtower for spotting fires and, in times of conflict, foreign troop movements, which were often judged by the number of castles and fortified châteaux in the area. The Provincial Courthouse was rebuilt in the Gothic Revival style after a fire in 1878. It has a free bicycle tire pump by its entrance and, next door upstairs, a beer museum overlooking the square – the perfect place to wait for your partner on Wednesdays while they are shopping in the open-air food and flower market below before taking a romantic horse-drawn carriage ride around the town.

On a more historical note, visit the Basilica of the Holy Blood, built in 1428 as a replica of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Supposedly there is a preserved drop of the blood of Jesus Christ, brought back from the Crusades in Israel. For those interested in art, there is the Groeninge Museum, known for its collection of Flemish primitive paintings, and the Lace Museum, which displays the city's most celebrated craft.

The people of Bruges have a dry sense of humor bordering on irreverence. One popular restaurant displays a version of Da Vinci's painting of the Mona Lisa to show where the toilet rolls are stored. Johannes Vermeer's *Girl With a Pearl Earring* warns of unpleasant odors in their restroom...



The High Street in Bruges.

BY DR. E.C. KRUPP

Here I am now with a picture of the Griffith Observatory Remote Livestream Internet Worldwide Broadcast Team at one of its appointments with the major standstill northern moonrise at Chimney Rock National Monument, near Pagosa Springs in southwest Colorado.

Griffith Observatory, with help from Griffith Observatory Foundation, has been developing this capacity for remote broadcasts since 2023, with the first on-site tests performed at Chimney Rock for the benefit of the U.S. Forest Service, which operates this Ancestral Pueblo site. At Chimney Rock, the northernmost moon seen each month over a two-year period in an 18.61-year cycle appears to rise between the two natural rock pillars on the summit of the ridge, where a Chaco-Canyon-like Great House was built about a thousand years ago by the prehistoric people of this area.

Although some ancient and prehistoric sites in various parts of the world have been argued to have been built to align with the moon's greatest excursions, there is no proof these alignments were intentionally designed into the structures. Nonetheless, the northernmost moonrise at Chimney Rock is perhaps the most visually persuasive. High interest in these moonrises cannot be satisfied, however, by visits to the site because the summit can accommodate very few people.

Griffith Observatory has instead been able to capture the moonrise on live video from the summit, where there is no power and no connectivity. The transmission is done with the help of Starlink satellites to the Visitor Center amphitheater for 200 people at the bottom of the high ridge. The broadcast at the same time was transmitted to the world on the Internet. Three broadcasts were successfully conducted in 2024, and the Broadcast Team will return to Chimney Rock in September, 2025, as the major standstill season winds down.

Griffith Observatory also produced broadcasts for several of the northernmost and southernmost moonrises and moonsets from Griffith Observatory in 2024 and will continue in 2025 until the major standstill season closes at year's end.

All of the Griffith Observatory major standstill broadcasts, including those from Chimney Rock, may be accessed at <https://griffithobservatory.org/extreme-moon-the-major-lunar-standstills-of-2024-2025/>

Standing still for no moon,
— Ed

Captain's Log

Traveling with Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor



The adventures of Michael Barnes continue on Web Alive!



Send in a travel picture



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



Arlene on the Scene

Alive! follows Arlene Herrero as she meets Club Members.

by Arlene Herrero
Vice President of Business Development

Arlene and the Club Mobile Team represented the Employees Club at the 72nd annual PORAC (Peace Officers Research Association of California) members conference in Palm Desert in November 2024.



Arlene with Commanding Officer Adonis Cutchlow, LA Airport Police, Club Member.



Arlene with (from left) Commanding Officer Mas Sossikian, LAX Airport Police, Club Member; DeAngelo Thompson, Club Mobile Operations Rep; and Tarek Azmy, LA Airport Police Officers Association, Club Member.



Arlene with Club raffle winner Brenden Berry, Marin County Sheriff's Office.



Arlene (right) with Cheryl Morris and attorney Howard Liberman.

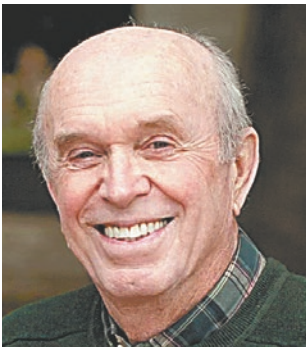
In Memoriam

After the above photo was taken at the PORAC conference, Cheryl Morris, Retired, LA Port Police, Club Member, passed away Dec. 20. She and Arlene were good friends for more than 20 years. "Her kindness, laughter, smile and presence brought so much joy, and I will cherish the memories we shared," Arlene said. "My heart goes out to her husband Paul; son Paul Jr.; and the rest of her loved ones during this difficult time. She will be deeply missed."

In Memoriam

Del Biagi

1942-2025
Retired Director,
Sanitation
33 Years of City Service



Delwin "Del" Biagi

1990 Employee of the Year passes away.

Delwin "Del" Biagi, 83, passed away Feb. 7 in Brea, California.

A Club Member, he Retired as Director of Public Works/Sanitation in 1977.

Del's remarkable 33-year career with the City spanned three different bureaus, including Engineering, Street Maintenance, and ultimately Sanitation, where he served as Director for the last 13 years of his employment. At the time he was appointed Director, he was the youngest to ever hold such a high post for the City of Los Angeles.

Del graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in civil engineering in 1964. He later went on to earn a master's degree in public administration from USC and a management certificate from UCLA.

Del's career with the City began in the Westchester-Venice Office of the Bureau of Engineering in 1964. He started as a Civil Engineering Assistant and rose through the ranks in Engineering. In 1977 he was promoted to Assistant Director of the Bureau of Street Maintenance. In 1981, he returned to Engineering as a Deputy City Engineer. Finally, in 1984 he became the Director of the Bureau of Sanitation, where he would stay until his retirement in 1997.

Del received numerous accolades during his City career and was well known for his public speaking skills and his quick wit. Shortly after taking the helm at Sanitation, the Bureau was threatened by a potential trash hauler strike. When a disgruntled Sanitation driver emptied the contents of his truck onto the City Hall steps, the media was there to ask for Del's reaction. With a straight face he responded, "That looks like a full load!"

He also helped guide the City through the 1984 Olympics and, as a vital member of the EOC, he contributed to the City's response to the Northridge earthquake in 1994, among many other high-profile events.

Those who knew him well saw Del as a true family man. He coached Little League Baseball for his boys, volunteered at the YMCA and took annual summer vacations with his family. Early in his career he was a shortstop and pitcher in the Bridge Division fast-pitch softball league and also was the center for The Gunners City basketball team. Later he played many seasons in the City Summer Comp. golf league with his son, Mike. Del was very involved in his church and loved helping others.

Del's retirement party in 1997 was held at Castaway in Burbank with more than 300 people in attendance, including many Councilmembers, current and Retired department heads and other City officials. When the festivities concluded, Del and Linda took off for several weeks in their tent trailer, camping in National Parks, fly fishing and hiking. Of course they stopped at nearly every golf course they encountered to play a round!

Despite his numerous professional accolades, including being named City Employee of the Year in 1990, a Top Ten Leader in the United States by the APWA in 1991 and appearing on the cover of Public Works Magazine in 1989, Del most treasured his more than 60 years of marriage to his wife, Linda, and raising their three sons. Del will be remembered for his integrity, sense of humor and ability to put others at ease.

A memorial service for Del was planned for March 1 at Friends Community Church in Brea.

Del is survived by his wife, Linda; sons Michael (Marla), Robert (Kathleen) and Kevin (Stacey); and his sister Marge (Mike). Del had eight grandchildren: Matt (Dana), Deni (Stephen), Cory, Laine (Hannah), Juli, Natalie (Jonathan), Emily and Wyatt. Great-grandchildren include Cody, Bryce, Summer and Nora, Sean, Jacob, and Goldie.

Contributed by son Michael Biagi, former Division Chief, Airports, and former Club Board Member

Noelle
Kauffman,
Club Sports
Commissioner



CLUB SPORTS

Softball



Coed Softball League: Sign Up by March 31

Get ready to hit the field and join the fun! The Employees Club is proud to introduce an exciting new Coed Softball League, launching this summer.

Starting June 2025, this league is your chance to stay active, enjoy some friendly competition, and connect with fellow Club Members. Whether you're a seasoned player or just someone looking to spend summer evenings outdoors, the Coed Softball League is perfect for all skill levels.



The league welcomes both full teams and free agents, so whether you're rounding up coworkers or signing up solo, there's a place for you. It's an incredible opportunity to meet new people, bond with friends, or sharpen your skills.



DATES: June 3 to Aug. 12 2025

GAME NIGHTS: Every Tuesday night

LOCATION: Glassell Park –
3650 Verdugo Rd.
Los Angeles, CA. 90065

HOW TO JOIN: Participation is open to all current Club Members. Not a member? No problem! Joining the Club is quick and easy, so you can get in on the action. To secure your spot, email Noelle Kauffman, the Club Sports Commissioner, at nkauffman@employeesclub.com. Noelle is happy to answer any questions and assist with team registrations or individual sign-ups. Contact:

Noelle Kauffman,
the Club Sports Commissioner, at
nkauffman@employeesclub.com.

WHY YOU SHOULD PLAY: The Coed Softball League is about more than just competing. It's about staying active, having fun, and making lasting memories with fellow Club Members. Whether you're looking to improve your fitness, enjoy a laid-back evening of softball, or expand your social circle, this league offers something for everyone. Grab your glove, lace up your cleats, and get ready for an unforgettable summer on the diamond!

**Reservations close March 31.
Reserve your spot today!**

Soccer



Club's-Sponsored Soccer Tournament

Members Kick It Up a Notch

CLUB-SPONSORED SOCCER
TOURNAMENT UNITES MEMBERS.

Four teams comprising 50 Club Members competed in a Club sponsored Martin Luther King Jr. soccer tournament Jan. 19 at LAB FIVE Soccer Center in Pacoima. The tournament, comprising seven players per side (7v7) on an intense, smaller format field, was filled with action and excitement in the spirited tournament that showcased teamwork and camaraderie.

The event featured thrilling plays, impressive athleticism and a lively crowd cheering every goal, tackle and save. After an intense competition, the LADOT South/West team claimed victory in a hard-fought final.

"The energy was incredible," shared one Club Member. "You could feel the camaraderie not just within the teams but throughout the entire event. It wasn't just about winning; it was about coming together as a community."

LAB FIVE Soccer Center provided the perfect setting, offering top-tier facilities and a dynamic atmosphere for both players and spectators.

In a show of generosity, participating teams donated items to support Club Members affected by the recent LA fires.

The tournament's success reinforced the Club's commitment to strengthening bonds among members through sports and recreation. With expectations set high, many are already eagerly anticipating the next competition.



Tournament trophies.



The Club's Dailia Vielma and Noelle Kauffman attend the Martin Luther King Jr. soccer tournament, which featured 50 Club Members.



The LADOT soccer tournament featured spirited action with good camaraderie.



Fifty Club Members participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Club-sponsored soccer tournament Jan. 19.



Life’s Important Moments

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

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



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



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

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 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------|
| Anaya, Enrique G. | Maintenance Laborer | Rec and Parks | 38 | Montgomerie, Paul N. | Principal Librarian | Library | 34 | Smith, Shawn M. | Officer | Airports | 24 |
| Azevedo, Teresa L. | Police Service Rep | LAPD | 19 | Novida, Benjamin Silva | Environmental Spec. | Public Works | 33 | Stillwell, Anthony M. | Security Officer | LAPD | 20 |
| Bailey, Byron J. | Crfs. | LADWP | — | Oliver, Scott J. | Water Operations | LADWP | — | Suarez, Ralph M. | Sr. Mgmt. Analyst | Airports | 35 |
| Baja, Arnel M. | Gardener Caretaker | Rec and Parks | 19 | Olivera, Lorenzo | Gardener Caretaker | Rec and Parks | 11 | Taber, Sean R. | Cust. Services Bus. Unit | LADWP | — |
| Baker, Karl V. | Crfs. | LADWP | — | Ortiz, Margarita | Custodian | Airports | 21 | Treguboff, John H. | Police Service Rep. | LAPD | 20 |
| Banda, Luis A. | Gardener Caretaker | Public Works | 30 | Peshek, Barry L. | Office Eng. Tech. II | Bldg. & Safety | 36 | Velasco, Zoot | Art Center Director | Cultural Affairs | 1 |
| Bankhead, Stephanie M. | Customer Service | LADWP | — | Post, Steven G. | Equipment Mechanic | Gen. Services | 23 | Venugopal, Thanninmuk D. | Instrument Mechanic | Public Works | 8 |
| Barboza, Richard | Equipment Operator | Public Works | 26 | Purcell, John K. | Maint. and Constr. | Public Works | 25 | Ward, Daniel A. | Water Distribution | LADWP | — |
| Brady, William V. | Bldg. Maint. Dist. Supv. | Gen. Services | 22 | Ramirez, Salvador | Power Transmission | LADWP | — | Weller, Mark S. | Supt. of Operations | Airports | 27 |
| Campbell, Fraser P. | Power Transmission | LADWP | — | Ruiz, Juan J. | Supply Chain | LADWP | — | Westby, Paul A. | Librarian | Library | 28 |
| Cerulle, Dominick | Power Transmission | LADWP | — | Saldin, Connie M. | Energy Support | LADWP | — | Wilcox, Robert G. | Admin. Crd. | City Attorney | 16 |
| Cervantes, Angela | Special Program Asst. | Rec and Parks | 8 | Sanchez, Maria D.L. | Sr. Administrative Clerk | Planning | 34 | Williams, Edith M. | Supply Chain | LADWP | — |
| Deweber, William D. | Power Executive Office | LADWP | — | Sanford, Martin J. | Energy Distribution | LADWP | — | | | | |
| Dye, John S. | Investigator | City Attorney | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| Frank, Lawrence M. | Parking Attendant | Convention Ctr. | 9 | | | | | | | | |
| Garcia, Victor | Special Program Asst. | Rec and Parks | 10 | | | | | | | | |
| Husband, Walter C. | Peace Officer | Airports | 33 | | | | | | | | |
| Kerr, Clifton | Comm. Electr. Supv. | ITA | 24 | | | | | | | | |
| Lee, David | Bldg. Mech. Inspector | Bldg. & Safety | 22 | | | | | | | | |
| Lee, Tai Chong | Locksmith | Airports | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| Lehman, Troy H. | JFB/Facilities | LADWP | — | | | | | | | | |
| Lopez, Danilo Del Rosari | Wastewater Treat. Mech. | Public Works | 18 | | | | | | | | |
| McCarthy, William J. | Boat Captain | Public Works | 10 | | | | | | | | |
| Mendoza, Armida | Custodian | Airports | 7 | | | | | | | | |



FREE!* CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE

Retired or Retiring Soon?

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

***a \$499 value!**

Get started here:



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

IN MEMORIAM



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



| DEPARTMENT | YEARS OF SERVICE | DEPARTMENT | YEARS OF SERVICE | DEPARTMENT | YEARS OF SERVICE | DEPARTMENT | YEARS OF SERVICE |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| ACTIVE | | | | | | | |
| Hall, Dennis K. | LADOT 20 | Cherry, Paula V. | Rec and Parks 22 | Lillenberg, William | — — | Schneider, Thomas P. | LADWP 32 |
| Kostrencich, John H. | Harbor 37 | Chicano, Stephen E. | ITA 18 | Lloyd, Thomas A. | LADWP 26 | Sinclair, Kenneth E. | LADWP 32 |
| Scott, Curtis L. | LADWP 2 | Ching, Ronald | — — | Knotts, Charles E. | Bldg. & Safety 7 | Sperrico, Vincent R. | LADWP 25 |
| Williams, Kenneth C. | Gen. Services 15 | Creer, Willie C. | LADWP 35 | Maldonado, Pedro R. | Public Works 18 | Stuart, Michael G. | Harbor 35 |
| | | Crowther, Steven L. | Airports 33 | Marte, Prescilio F. | — — | Takata, Dave T. | Rec and Parks 31 |
| | | Davis, Jerry E. | — — | Matus, Dermidio | — — | Tang, Bosco C. | Bldg. & Safety 21 |
| | | Doraiswamy, Cadambi | Finance 28 | McCall, Donald C. | LADOT 34 | Tarr, Barbara L. | — — |
| | | Dunaetz, Arlene | LADWP 15 | Maul, Magdalena | — — | Thisdell, Rodger L. | — — |
| | | Fernando, Cecilia M. | LADWP 26 | Miller, Donald A. | — — | Thompson, Mattie C. | — — |
| | | Godward, Bryan R. | Rec and Parks 30 | Mohajer-Rahbari, Asghar | LADWP 34 | Tibbetts, Marilyn R. | — — |
| | | Gomez, Gregorio H. | LACERS 33 | Moore, Lorenzo E. | LADWP 29 | Trama, Lydia | Rec and Parks 19 |
| | | Greenberg, Asha S. | City Attorney 34 | Newsom, Larry J. | Gen. Services 40 | Valentin, Fructuoso | LAPD 25 |
| | | Hagan, Kenneth | LADWP 5 | Norwood, Fred E. | Airports 20 | Villanueva, Oscar M. | Gen. Services 27 |
| | | Harbeson, Donald G. | LADWP 26 | Obrycki, Fred P. | LAPD 14 | Walton Straughter, Bonita | LADOT 23 |
| | | Harshaw, Nanette | LADOT 33 | Parker, Daryll L. | LADWP 29 | Ward, Marshall E. | LADWP 22 |
| | | Hendrix, Virgil L. | LADWP 31 | Perez, Leoncio D. | Airports 22 | Waters, Richard D. | LADWP 27 |
| | | Hoye, Walter W. | LADWP 31 | Porter, Elliott F. | — — | Weber, Dennis W. | Public Works 36 |
| | | Hwang, Oscar C. | — — | Richardson, Alvin M. | — — | Wells, Darlene | LADWP 7 |
| | | Irula, Teresa | Housoing 11 | Rogacs, John G. | LADWP 33 | White, Mary F. | LADWP 3 |
| | | Jarvis, Stephen K. | LADWP 12 | Roh, Jae M. | — — | Williams, Virginia L. | — — |
| | | Jones, Annie P. | LADOT 9 | Ruge, John D. | Public Works 20 | Wilson, Earnestine | Rec and Parks 37 |
| | | Jones, Leonard E. | Public Works 30 | Russell, Robert | Airports 16 | Wong, Darlene G. | LADWP 28 |
| | | Kutsch, Donald E. | Public Works 22 | Saulpaugh, Myron H. | Airports 27 | | |

Open Houses Are Back This Month

SANITATION’S POPULAR OPEN HOUSES AT SIX YARDS SET FOR 2025.



PUBLIC WORKS: Public Works’ Sanitation and Environment has released the schedule of its popular open houses for 2025.

Each of Sanitation’s six waste shed district yards will open to the public in a series of free Saturday events. The Open House program showcases Sanitation’s residential curbside collection programs with the promotion of proper recycling practices and information about bulky item collections. Each event will feature trash truck and equipment demonstrations in addition to facility tours, information booths, recycling games, and refreshments.

In 2019, more than 6,000 residents attended the open houses with more than 230 City Employees who volunteered their time to give back to the neighborhoods they serve.

There is no charge for admission and all ages are welcome, but Sanitation requests that pets be left at home for safety.

In 2003, LA Sanitation launched its first Open House at the West Los Angeles district yard. The goal of the program was to reconnect the refuse collection truck operators, on a voluntary basis, with City residents after the implementation of the automated collection program in 1993.

In the following years, the program grew to also promote recycling and proper disposal practices as well as to improve access to LA Sanitation services. The program expanded in 2005 to add the East

Valley, West Valley, North Central, and South Los Angeles district yards. In 2006, the Harbor district yard was added to provide Citywide coverage.

Residents visiting the yards have grown with approximately 200 visitors in 2003 to more than 6,700 in 2019. The popularity of the Open Houses can be traced to City and Sanitation leaders as well as City employees who volunteered their time to transform the six Sanitation yards into fun learning centers.

By combining solid resources, clean water, watershed protection, and recycling education, and recycLA information with refreshments, music and games, Sanitation has succeeded in capturing the attention of families across the City.



AT A PREVIOUS SANITATION OPEN HOUSE.



Will Brown, RCTO, 8 years of City service, and his son, Carter, 6 years old, with a young neighbor in the cab.

At the West LA Open House.



Earth Day Celebration
Saturday,
April 26, 2025
Location to be announced

| The Public Works/Sanitation Open House dates and locations are Saturdays: | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| West Valley Yard April 5 8840 Vanalden Ave. Northridge | South LA District Yard April 12 786 South Mission Rd., Los Angeles | East Valley Yard May 17 11050 Pendleton St. Sun Valley | North Central District Yard May 31 452 N. San Fernando Rd. Los Angeles | Harbor District Yard June 7 1400 N. Gaffey St. San Pedro | West LA Yard June 21 2027 Stoner Ave. Los Angeles |

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Cooking with the Club

with Chef Robert Larios



Photos:
Patty M.
Larios



Easy Cheesy Baked Rigatoni

The ultimate comfort food pasta dish.

If pasta speaks to you, cheesy baked rigatoni will sing whole symphonies. This bubbling, molten masterpiece is pure culinary comfort—a warm hug for those days when people, deadlines and lackluster takeout have done their worst. It's part cozy, part classy, and 100 percent what you deserve.

The beauty? It's absurdly easy. You're not slaving over a stove here. Mix marinara, cream sauce, garlic powder and mushroom stock right in an oven-ready tray. Toss in rigatoni, sweet peas, and a splash of water. Cover it with foil, bake, and revel as your home smells vaguely like an Italian villa. Zero pans, zero stress. Amen!

But wait—this is where it gets decadent. Pull off the foil, sprinkle a glorious heap of Italian cheese over the top, and add dollops of creamy ricotta like little clouds of joy. Ten minutes later? You've got yourself a golden, gooey creation that's perfect for sharing—or not.

Cheesy baked rigatoni isn't just a dish; it's edible self-care. Now, preheat that oven—it's time to treat yourself.

¡Buen provecho!

Robert Larios



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this recipe
online

Food Quote:

"Ricotta isn't just cheese—it's the punctuation mark that turns pasta into poetry."— **Chef Robert Larios**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 oven-ready aluminum tray
- 4 oz cream sauce base (contains milk)
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 4 oz peas
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 14 oz marinara sauce
- 4 oz ricotta cheese (contains milk)
- 1 unit mushroom stock concentrate
- ½ cup Italian cheese blend (contains milk)
- 7 oz fresh rigatoni pasta (contains eggs, wheat)
- Sea salt and fresh cracked pepper (to taste)

UTENSILS

- Aluminum foil

Serves 2

DIRECTIONS Total prep time is 40 minutes



Step 1: Prep and Mix Sauce

Preheat the oven to 450°F and adjust the rack to the top position. Wash and dry the produce, then gently separate the rigatoni to prevent sticking. Combine the marinara sauce, cream sauce base, mushroom stock concentrate and garlic powder in an oven-ready tray. Stir until the mixture is smooth and well combined. For 4 servings, divide the ingredients evenly between two trays.



Step 2: Mix Pasta and Bake

Add the rigatoni, peas, and 1/2 cup of water to the tray. If preparing 4 servings, divide the rigatoni and peas evenly between trays and add 1/2 cup of water to each. Stir to combine thoroughly. Cover the tray tightly with foil to retain moisture, then bake on the top rack for 25 minutes.



Step 3: Finish Pasta

Carefully remove the tray from the oven and peel back the foil, watching for steam. Sprinkle the Italian cheese blend evenly across the pasta, then dollop ricotta on top. Lightly season with salt and pepper. Return the tray to the oven and bake, uncovered, for 8-10 minutes, until the cheese is melted, golden brown, and the sauce is bubbling.



Step 4: Serve

Remove the tray from the oven and divide the pasta onto plates. Serve with chili flakes on the side for an optional kick.



Step 5: Enjoy!

Cooking Tidbit

Preheating and Rack Positioning Matter: Preheating the oven to 450°F and placing the tray on the top rack ensures even cooking and optimal browning of the cheese. This highlights the importance of oven setup for achieving the best results.

Food Lover's Dictionary:



Ricotta cheese
[rih-KAHT-tuh]: This rich, fresh cheese is slightly grainy but smoother than cottage cheese. It's white, moist and has a slightly sweet flavor. Most Italian ricottas are made from the whey drained

off while making cheeses such as mozzarella and provolone. Technically, this type of ricotta is not really cheese because it's made from a cheese by-product. In the United States, ricottas are usually made with a combination of whey and whole or skim milk. The word ricotta means "recooked," and is derived from the fact that the cheese is made by heating the whey from another cooked cheese. Ricotta is a popular ingredient in many Italian savory preparations like lasagna and manicotti, as well as desserts like cassata and cheesecake.

Bibliography: Herbst, Sharon Tyler, and Ron Herbst. The New Food Lover's Companion. 2nd ed., Sourcebooks, 1995. Recipe Source: <https://www.hellofresh.com/recipes/cheesy-baked-rigatoni-673b9aeffd3e9058428acbec>. Accessed Feb. 10, 2025

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