

Serving More Than 50,000 Members



Alive!

The Cyber-Guardians

ITA The Cyberthreat Prevention Program team protects the City from online villains, a task that grows by the day. All City employees play a critical role.”

—PAGE 12

Be Honored.
Be Celebrated.
Be Thanked.

In the City's Integrated Security Operations Center are (from left) Tim Lee, Chief Security Information Officer, 29 years of City service; and Ted Ross, General Manager and Chief Information Officer, 23 years. Both are Club Members. The data on the video board behind them has been obscured intentionally and is for demonstration only.



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WARNING

Do not click on it!
It is not what it seems!
Delete! Delete!

That warning grows louder and more dire with each passing week, right? It feels like the current era’s version of “don’t cross your eyes” or “don’t run with scissors.”

Only much more dangerous – multiply those dangers of old by one billion, per day – the number of cyberthreats the City receives *every single day*. The current danger could take down a home network or a City without vigilance.

Preventing that from happening is the growing and ever-more-complicated task of ITA’s Cyberthreat Prevention



From left: Ted Ross, General Manager and Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Agency (ITA), 21 years of City service, Club Member; with Club CEO Robert Larios in ITA’s Integrated Security Operations Center.

Program, a comprehensive suite of professional staff members, gear and employee training programs to keep the City clear of those one billion threats it faces every day.

Read all about their challenge in this month’s very important story. The employee cyber-guardians might not wear white cowboy hats, but they are every bit as heroic.

We thank Club Member **Ted Ross**, ITA General Manager and Chief Information Officer, and **Tim Lee**, Chief Security Information Officer, also a Club Member, for sharing

their important work with *Alive!* readers. We also thank **Maryam Abbassi**, Assistant General Manager and Assistant Chief Information Officer, Club Member; and **Madeline Dia** of the Information Security Office; for making the story happen and ensuring it was safe to report.

We last visited Ted and his critically important ITA team during the COVID pandemic, as they set up in record time a communications system so City employees could work safely from home. ITA keeps on serving the City in urgent and irreplaceable ways.

Thank you, ITA, for all you do.

Storied Service

As I peruse the monthly retirement list here in *Alive!*, I enjoy calling out those Retiring after major dedication. I tip my Club cap this month to Nancy J. Nix, Young Adult Librarian, who Retired recently from the Library after an incredible 49 years of City service. Thank you, Nancy!

ROBERT’S BLOG

by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club





Alive! March 2021

Worth Considering

True leadership lies not just in teaching skills, but in igniting a vision that empowers others to re-imagine what’s possible and chart their own path forward. Leadership is like being the chef in a busy kitchen. It’s not about hogging the spotlight with your own dish but crafting a menu where every ingredient (and person) shines. Bonus points if no one’s left hungry...or burned!

¡Gracias por leer!


CEO

At a recent Mobile Team site visit.



Monthly Anchors:

North Central Sanitation
452 N. San Fernando Rd.,
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The first Monday of every month:
Mon., May 5, June 2

Harbor
100 W. Fifth St.,
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The first Wednesday of every month:
Wed., May 7, June 3

Van Nuys City Hall
6262 Van Nuys Blvd.,
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The first Thursday of every month:
Thurs., May 8, June 4

North Hollywood StreetsLA
10811 Chandler Blvd.,
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Thurs., May 22, June 12

City Hall Farmers Market
201 N. Main St.,
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The last Wednesday of every month:
Wed., May 28, June 25

Additional Visits:

StreetsLA Safety MeetingRon Deaton Auditorium
100 W. 1st St.,
7:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Tues., May 6

Sanitation CleanWater
2335 Dorris Pl.,
2 – 4:30 p.m.
Wed., May 14

StreetsLA Topanga
9324 Topanga Canyon Blvd.,
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Tues., May 27

Raise employee morale! Schedule a Club Mobile visit!

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

To schedule a Club Mobile visit:

Scan the Code to Schedule a Visit
Or contact Lupe Lira, Director of Retail and Ecommerce: (213) 819-0350, or mobile@employeesclub.com



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

Club Mobile is cashless!
For your convenience, now accepting major credit cards.



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



Alive! photo by Summy Lam



The Cyber-Guardians

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CLUBDEALS

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



The Club Is Here to Help

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

Alive!

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

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

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The Club Honors Public Employees

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

CLUB VIDEO

Come *Along for the Ride!*

THE CLUB: A new era of the Club celebrating you has begun with last month's premiere of "Along for the Ride." The innovative and more personal style of Club video can be viewed on the Club's YouTube channel and is collecting likes and shares.

"Along for the Ride" is 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. It 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.

Watch the Club Video here:



TELL US YOUR STORY
Write to us and let us know!
alive@employeesclub.com

TELL US YOUR STORY
Interested in having Club video tell your story in video? Let us know!
alive@employeesclub.com



Cesar Ponce
Traffic Officer II, LADOT



Chermaine Fontenette
Refuse Collection Truck Operator II, Sanitation



Kirk Broyard
Retired, LADWP



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www.EmployeesClub.com

Retire Ready!

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- Staying Connected, Having Fun



FOR THOSE ALREADY RETIRED



The Retiree Society

Join the Club and your fellow Retirees for a transformative experience – together, we'll celebrate community and presence through music, nature walks and mindful moments.

Light snacks and refreshments will be provided by the Club.

All participants must submit a waiver prior to arrival. Please ensure your waiver is completed to participate in the event.

We can't wait to connect with you!

Club Retirement Networking Events:

Join the Fun!

For Retired Club Members and 1 guest each. Cost to attend is free.

Fri., May 16

Discover human connection through music, nature and mindfulness.

10 a.m. to noon

White Point Nature Preserve

1478 W. Paseo Del Mar,
San Pedro, CA 90731

Sun., May 18th

Step Into Presence with Us

9 to 11 a.m.

Prime Desert Woodland Preserve

43201 35th St W,
Lancaster, CA 93536

RSVP by May 9 to Dulce Lopez, Retiree Coordinator, at
(800) 464-0452 (ext. 188) or email retirees@employeesclub.com

FOR ACTIVE EMPLOYEES RETIRING SOON



Planning a Smart Retirement

As you prepare to retire, are you making the right decisions? Start with a fun and productive party with the Club!

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.

Topics include 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.

Attend a Retirement Planning Party!



May 29, 1 – 2 p.m.
(Last Thursday of each month)

Club Headquarters

311 S. Spring St., Suite 1300, Downtown Los Angeles

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

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

NEW!



Retirees 'Your Best Life' Photo Contest!

Retirees: Show us your best life! Gardening ... dining with friends ... talking walks ... cooking ... show us what you're up to. And you could win a prize!

Submit your photo here:

Or email to Retirees@employeesclub.com

We'll award the first five to submit with a \$50 gift card, submitted from the first to the 15th of each month.



Volunteer With Seniors

The Club's new Retiree Society 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. You'll be doing a beautiful thing.

Interested? Contact Dulce Lopez, Retiree Coordinator, at (800) 464-0452 (ext. 188) or email retirees@employeesclub.com



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THE CLUB INSURANCE CORNER

by Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales



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Resources for Club Retirees And Those About to Retire

In a World Full of Unknowns, Now More Than Ever It's the Time to Protect What Matters Most

In today's uncertain world, one thing remains clear: Your health, security, and peace of mind are invaluable. That is why now, more than ever, is the time to take action and protect yourself and your loved ones with the Club's exclusive insurance benefits, designed specifically for government employees.



From unexpected health issues to life's everyday surprises, this comprehensive suite of benefits offers a safety net when you need it most. And the best part? **All benefits, except long-term disability, are fully portable. Whether you change jobs, move out of state, retire, or take a new path, your coverage stays with you.**

These exclusive, portable benefits include:

- Club Membership
- Life Insurance
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D)
- Accident Insurance
- Short-Term Disability Insurance
- Critical Illness Insurance

- MetLife Legal Plan
- Pet Insurance

This isn't just coverage; it is peace of mind that follows you wherever life takes you.

WHY ACT NOW?

The best time to enroll in these benefits is while you are healthy. Waiting could limit your options or make you ineligible for certain protections. Enrolling now ensures you are covered before the unexpected happens.

Do not wait until life catches you off guard. Secure your future today with the Club's trusted, government employee-only benefits.

Protect yourself today and protect your future.

Contact your Club Counselors to learn more and enroll in the Club's Accident Plan:
(800) 464-0452 | info@employeesclub.com



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

June 7 Annual Picnic
Whittier Narrows Park "The Meadows"
750 S. Santa Anita Ave., South El Monte
9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
\$15 admission

Reservation information:

LADWP Retiree Association:
(213) 367-3146
LARFPA: events@larfpa.org

Contact Information

Club Retirees Dedicated Helpline:

Club Retirees Email:
help@employeesclub.com

LA City Employees Retirement

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

LADWP Retirees Association

(213) 367-3146
activitycommittee@ladwp.com

Fire and Police Pensions

(City Dept.)
(844) 885-2377
pensions@lafpp.com

LA Retired Fire and Police

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

Retired Los Angeles City

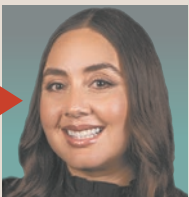
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See page 18

Your Club Retirement Experts We're here to serve you!

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.

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Dalila Vielma
Member Services
Counselor



Dylan Noel
Member Services
Counselor



Cynthia Ha
Member Services
Counselor



Cheryl Martin
Member Services
Counselor

Arlene on the Scene

Alive! follows Arlene Herrero as she meets Club Members.

by Arlene Herrero

Vice President of Business Development



On April 8, Arlene and Club Counselor Dalila Vielma stopped by LAPD/Communications to welcome Class 127.

And on April 10, Arlene visited LA's Personnel Dept. and met Lionel Mares, Admin Clerk, 2 years of City service, and brand-new Member. In his off time, he serves as the Budget Advocate 2024-25 for Region 1 (North East Valley).



Arlene with Robert Lopez, Sr. PSR II, 22 years of City service, Club Member, during Arlene's visit to LAPD/Communications.



Arlene and Dalila at LAPD/Communications.



Lionel Mares, Administrative Clerk, Personnel, and Club Member.

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Below are the monthly amounts of claims paid back to Members.
Club insurance plans will be there when you need them.

INSURANCE PLAN	MARCH	TOTAL SINCE 1992
Life/Accidental Death and Dismemberment	\$94,297	\$76,019,113
Disability Insurance	\$175,976	\$37,549,980
Long-Term Care Insurance	\$182,337	\$15,844,897
Cancer/Critical Care Insurance	\$60,100	\$5,605,000
Accident Plan	\$3,080	\$155,792
Totals	\$515,792	\$135,171,784

CLUB MEMBERS' PRAISE

"I've been very touched by the compassion the [Employees Club] has shown me during this difficult time. The kindness the staff has given me, from phone calls to letters and even emails, made me feel comfortable. My dad loved working for the City. He would be very touched by the heartfelt sentiments. The book [The Fall of Freddie the Leaf, given by the Club to all with a life insurance claim] was very sweet, and my dad would have loved it. I love it. Thank you all for all you've done."

— Dana Sher, December 2022



Monica Zamudio
Sr. Claims Administrator



Mikayla Sprague
Claims Administrator

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Troy and his family.



Troy Lehman with his plaques from the LADWP and the Employees Club.

'Legendary' Troy Says Goodbye

TROY LEHMAN RETIRES AFTER 32 YEARS OF CITY SERVICE.

Photos courtesy Brian Carlton

LADWP: A retirement party was held in December for Troy Lehman, Construction and Maintenance Supervisor III, LADWP. He retired Jan. 1. He began working for the LADWP in 1999. He began his City career as a Water Utility Worker in 1992, and was promoted to Park Maintenance Supervisor in the San Fernando Valley. He was also a high school basketball referee for 30 years. Troy is a longtime Club Member. Assisting at the retirement celebration were LADWP employees Susan Briasco, Elena Gary, Dean Gallina, Andrea Yip and Helen Olivares. Congratulations, Troy, on your retirement. And thank you for your longtime dedication. ●



At Troy's retirement party.



MORE PHOTOS ON THE ALIVE! WEBSITE!



The Club Responds

LA FIRES: The Club is very much still assisting Club Members and other public service employees facing hardships due to the historic and devastating fires that leveled Pacific Palisades and Altadena, and also damaged West Hills, Sylmar, Hollywood Hills, Encino and other locations.

Here's an update:

CLUB CARE TEAM: HOW CAN WE ASSIST YOU?

Are you in need? The Club's helpline remains active for all Club Members who have and are still experiencing hardships due to the devastating fires. Reach out so we can help you:

help@employeesclub.com

CLUB ANGELS: STILL OFFERING FINANCIAL HELP

Club Angels, the independent nonprofit charity run by Club staff, remains active and is assisting fire victims. Club Angels Director Arlene Herrero reports that Club Angels has raised more than \$6,000 from Members, and that grocery assistance in that amount has been provided to public service employees in need from Los Angeles City and County.

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:

zelle



MORE CLOTHING OPEN HOUSES SCHEDULED

The Club plans a third clothing donation open house **Sat., July 12** at the Club Warehouse in Carson to distribute clothing and household items that have already been donated. A range of essentials for all ages is expected to be available. Reservations are required; contact the team at help@clubangels.org

The clothing drives and distribution are coordinated by Guadalupe Lira.

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. ●



"Wishing my hardworking dad a Happy Father's Day! We love you, grandpa. Love, Jeremiah."
— **Stephanie Bernal, Rec and Parks**



"We love and appreciate you every day! But Father's Day is a great day to celebrate you and all that you do for our family. Love, Marquas and Kim."
— **For Burt Smith, Public Works/Sanitation**

Send in your Father's Day tributes!

High-Fives for Dad!

Pay tribute this Father's Day ... with a photo and message of respect, honor and love, published in *Alive!* in print and/or online.

In our June issue, we'll print a photo of you and your dad (or just your dad) ... and a two- or three-sentence message of Happy Father's Day from you. Then you can take your copy of *Alive!* and show him what he means to you.

Act quickly, as our June issue is fast approaching.

DEADLINES:

MAY 20:
published in print and online

JUNE 11:
published online only



To submit your Father's Day tribute, go to:
alive.employeesclub.com/fathersday



"Watching you grow from my amazing little brother to the best daddy in the world fills my heart with joy and love. Happy Father's Day, Tito! Love, Tia Maggi."
— **Det. Sandra Platero, LAPD**



"Happy Father's Day to the best dad and husband ever! We love you and hoping you rock on every day!"
— **For Chris Ewing, Housing**

Sgt. Acosta after working his final LAPD shift.

Goodbye, Sgt. Acosta

SGT. EDWARD ACOSTA RETIRES AFTER NEARLY 29 YEARS.

LAPD: On March 18, Sgt. Edward Acosta worked his last shift with the LAPD, retiring after nearly 29 years of City service. He spent the last 15 years of his career serving at Newton. The Club thanks and honors you for your service. Enjoy your retirement!

Colleagues at LAPD Newton Division gather to wish him well.

First day/last day.

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Open Houses Continuing

SANITATION’S POPULAR OPEN HOUSES CONTINUE THROUGH JUNE

PUBLIC WORKS: Public Works’ Sanitation and Environment continues hosting its popular open houses through June 21.

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.

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 the West LA Open House.



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

The Public Works/Sanitation Open House dates and locations are Saturdays:

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

Celebrating the Captain

FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR CAPT. II RUIZ HONORED.

LAFD: On March 20, the LAFD and the City of Los Angeles Firefighters Association honored Capt. II Andrew Ruiz as the 2024 Firefighter of the Year. Capt. Ruiz has dedicated 31 years to the fire service, with more than 26 of those years serving the citizens of Los Angeles.



Maura and Capt. II Andrew Ruiz

The luncheon was held at the Universal Hilton Hotel.

Capt. Ruiz serves as a Unit Commander in the In-Service Training Section and has served as a Drill Master at the LAFD Training Academy. His past assignments have included Fire Stations in Battalions 1, 5, 11, and 13. Outside of his duties with the LAFD, he is the Lead Master Instructor for the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Fireground Survival (FGS) program and has been teaching internationally since 2009, where he has influenced thousands of firefighters on how to save their own lives.

Capt. Ruiz is an instructor at the Rio Hondo Fire Academy, where he has taught various disciplines since 2008, focusing his efforts on training the next generation of firefighters. He is collaborating with California State Fire Training (SFT) to revamp the Fireground Survival Program, Rapid Intervention Company

Story and photos courtesy Gary Apodaca, LAFD



Capt. II Andrew Ruiz is honored by Los Angeles Fire Association President James S. Dolan.



Capt. II Andrew Ruiz

(RIC) operations, and firefighter rescue techniques. Capt. Ruiz has also served as a panel member for the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI) focused on Coordinated Fire Attack and Ventilation. Congratulations, Capt. II Ruiz! ●



IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Stokes

1949 - 2025

Sr. Recreation Director
Rec and Parks

It is with great sadness that we announce that one of Recreation and Parks’ exemplary Sr. Recreation Directors, Thomas Stokes, died March 4. He was 79 and Retired.

Tommy Stokes was an amazing recreation professional who cared greatly for every community in which he worked.

Born in New York, Tommy’s recreation career began as a Recreation Assistant in May 1972 through January, 1974 when he worked in the West Region as Messenger. He brought documents to regional headquarters for all of the Recreation Directors and Recreation Leaders.

From January 1974 to January 1978 Tommy served as a Recreation Leader assigned to South Park Recreation Center.

Tommy was promoted to Recreation Facility Director at Van Ness Recreation Center from January 1978 until February 1979. Tommy then took his talents to Oakwood Recreation Center in Venice, where he became a well-loved and well-respected recreation professional embracing the needs of all community members.

In February 1999, Tommy returned to Van Ness Recreation Center as he was promoted to Sr. Recreation Director, a position he held until he Retired in February 2010.

Tommy was a positive influence on everyone he encountered. He was respected as a coach, father figure and confidant.

Everyone at the Oakwood and Van Ness Recreation Centers will have a story about how positively Tommy Stokes affected them and made their lives better.

He leaves a legacy with his wife Betty, sons Kevin and Kasey, and a host of relatives and friends. He will always be one of the best recreation professionals of the City of LA Recreation and Parks Department. He will be greatly missed.

Retrospective by Carolyn Anderson, Principal Recreation Supervisor II, Childcare Program, Recreation and Parks, Club Member.



TRIBUTES TO TOMMY

During the years that I worked for Recreation and Parks in the Pacific Region, Tommy Stokes was universally recognized and respected as someone who set an outstanding example as a Sr. Facility Director. The work he put into his programs was so thorough; he truly helped set the gold standard wherever he worked. In addition to his great programs, he also was someone who would make time to help other people, no matter how busy his day happened to be. Tommy may be gone too soon, but the legacy he left will be around for a long time to come.

– **Andy Felz, Management Assistant, Dept. of Aging**

From the time I had the pleasure of meeting Tommy in the early 1990s and up to today, I can’t recall any colleague who cared more for the communities that he served than Tommy did. The youths of those communities were blessed to have Tommy as their Recreation Director!

I regret never telling my good friend that he not only was an outstanding Recreation Director but an even greater human being. I miss running into him at the basketball gym.

Thank you, Tommy!

– **Javier Soto, Recreation Supervisor**

I met Tommy at Cal State Los Angeles when I was with [Tommy’s wife] Betty, and I just knew that Tommy was going to be a lifetime friend. He was always a quiet kind of friend. Tommy would always say, “Hi, Donna” with a smile. I will always remember the good times we all had from college years to adulthood.

We will miss you, Tommy.

– **Donna Lecesne, lifelong friend**

I have been blessed to call Tommy Stokes my mentor, but most importantly my dear friend. Tommy set the recreational standard and made a difference. I admired his desire to make his parks, programs and community better for the children he served.

And he was such a family man. Betty, Kevin and Kasey, thanks for sharing this loving husband, father and friend with us.

Tommy will truly be missed, but will live in our hearts forever!

– **La Verne Kimble, Retired, Facility Director, Rec and Parks**

My heart is filled with memories, my eyes are full of tears. My life is filled with missing you, each day throughout the years. I pray you found the peace in that you may not have found on earth. I hope we were the people you were proud of. Love, Nicole.

— **Nicole Griffin, Sr. Recreation Director, Rec and Parks**

May he rest in peace.



Happy Mother's Day

From the Club



"Gracias por tu esfuerzo, guianza, y amor. Siempre te amaremos, Mama."
Carlos Peralta, LADWP



"Happy Mother's Day, Mom! Thank you for all the love you pour into us every day and for being a darling grandmother. Love, Candace."
Candace Velasco, LADWP



"Happy Mother's Day to the best mom ever."
Lorenzo Sandoval, LA County Probation



"Happy Mother's Day, Mommy! Continue to rejoice in heaven! Love you always."
Larna Jordan, Public Works/Street Lighting

More Mother's Day Messages on Web Alive!

It's not too late to publish a photo of you and your mom (or just your mom)... and a two-or three-sentence message of Happy Mother's Day. Submissions received by May 7 will appear on Web Alive!

To submit, go to:
alive.employeesclub.com/mothersday



"To the best mother, grandmother and great-grandmother ever, I thank God for every single day; it's such a beautiful blessing. Thank you, Mother. Essie Taylor aka Na Na aka Boss. Love you from infinity and beyond."
LaTatia Taylor, Public Works/Street Services



"Happy Mother's Day! Thank you for your constant love, support and strength. I'm so grateful for everything you do and the person you are. Love you always, Ruby."
Eva Chiaravalle, LAPD



"To the best grandma and mom @-)- Thank you for all that you do for us, especially these blessings in our lives. We love you! Happiest of Mother's Days! Te queremos mucho!"
Michele Canela, City Attorney



"In loving memory of my dear mother, Lois Tyus, whose love, strength and wisdom continue to guide me every day. A gentle spirit who gave her love and unwavering support to her children and grandchildren."
Tracie Edwards, Airports



"Happy Mother's Day, Mom! Thank you for being the greatest mom ever! Love you!"
Sung (Kimberly) Jin, Public Works/Contract Administration



"Mami, you are the perfect mother! Thank you for such momentous meals, and great taste in music (A.K.A. Las Jiguerillas). We love you, Joanna."
Rosa Escareno-Rodriguez, LADWP



"Thank you for always being our rock and our confidant. We love you. Happy Mother's Day!"
Thomas Huerta, Retired, Building and Safety



"You're my one and only mom, and I'll always have a special place in my heart for you. Happy Mother's Day! Eres mi única madre y siempre tendré un lugar especial en mi corazón para ti. ¡Feliz día de la madre!"
Robert Larios, Club CEO
(pictured: Robert's mom and dad)



"Happy Mother's Day to the most amazing mothers I could ever wish for!"
Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales



Abuzz With Purpose

ST. BALDRICK'S FUNDRAISER RETURNED MARCH 29.

LAPD/LAFD: On March 29, the LAFD and LAPD united for the 22nd annual St. Baldrick's Foundation fundraiser to fight childhood cancer. The event was once again held at the Vineyards at Porter Ranch. The event, running from 9 a.m. to noon, featured a pancake and sausage breakfast, live music, family-friendly activities, and the signature head-shaving ceremony, all aimed at raising funds for childhood cancer research.

Firefighters, Police Officers and community members shaved their heads in solidarity with children battling cancer. As of the event date, more than \$25,000 had been raised toward the \$50,000 goal, with top individual fundraisers like Club Board Member, LAFD Capt. Danny Wu, leading the charge. Organized by Capt. Wu and LAPD Det. Nick Sinclair, the event has become a cherished tradition, uniting first responders and the community in the fight against childhood cancer.

The local event is part of a nationwide St. Baldrick's Foundation event. Organizers say they have raised more than \$1 million locally over the previous two decades.



At the St. Baldrick's head-shaving fundraiser.



LAFD Capt. Danny Wu, Club Board Member, 24 years of City service, with his family.



From left: LAFD Capt. Mario Gonzalez, 30 years of City service; and Apparatus Operator Ryan Primosch, 22 years.



Joseph Albaugh, Navy Veteran, 4 years of military service.



From left: Grace Boaziz, Cadet, 4 years of City service; Ani Ketelekyan, Cadet, 2 years; Firefighter Leo Kaufman, 1 year; Cody the Dog; and Henry Berkson, Cadet, 4 years.



Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales; and Councilman John Lee, 25 years of City service.



From left: LAFD Engineer Hilarion Meza, 7 years of City service; and Firefighter Erica Pena, 1 year.



LAFD Interim Fire Chief Ronnie Villanueva, 41 years of City service.



Officer Adam Sandoval, 22 years of City service.



Officer Oscar Cordoba, 20 years of City service.

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Compact enough to carry, stylish enough to make a statement. Be prepared for rain or shine with an umbrella that shows off LA.

REGULAR
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\$25

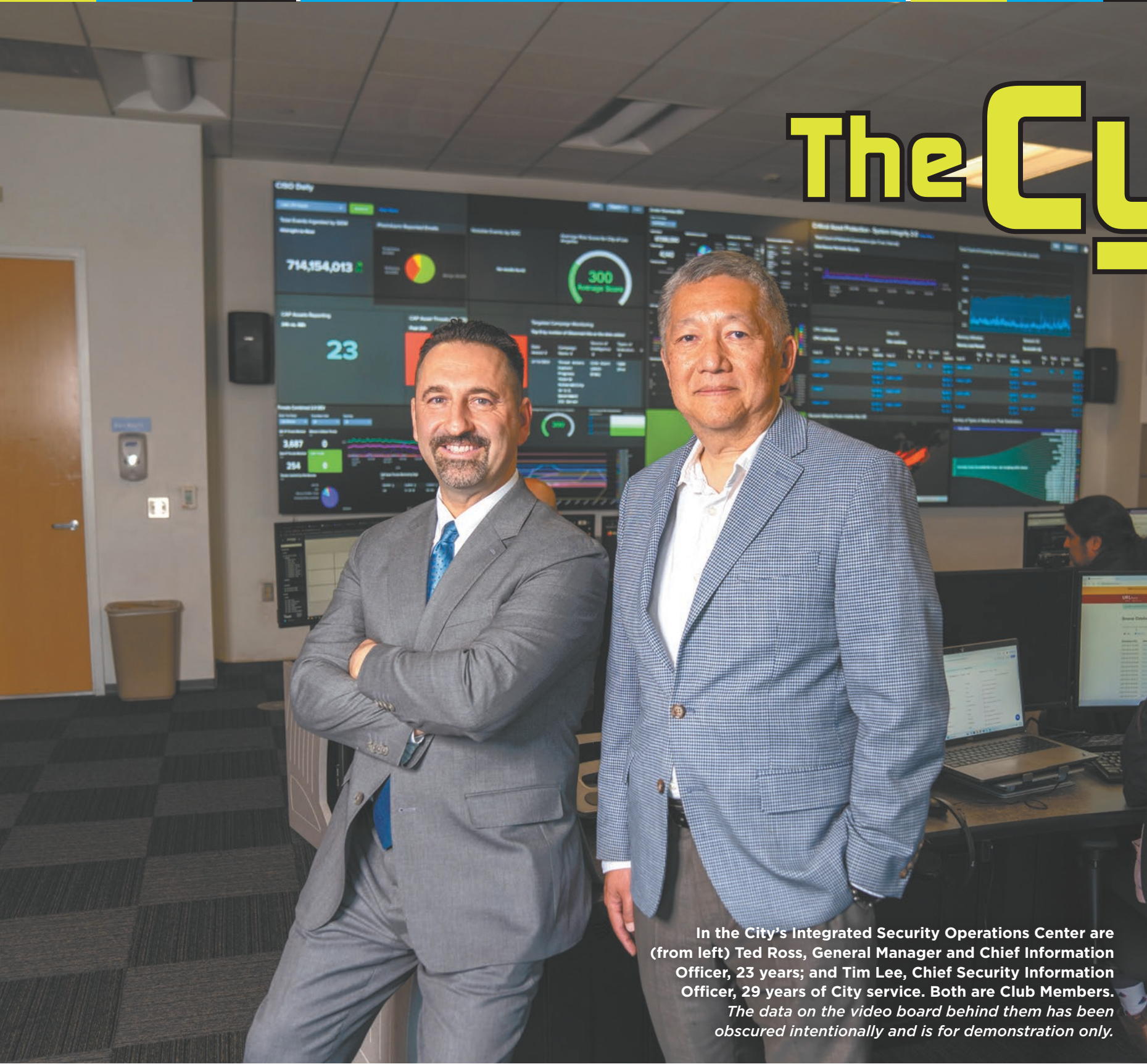
Be ready for anything!
This towel and umbrella featuring the L.A. City Seal are your perfect partners.

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ITA: CYBERTHREAT PREVENTION PROGRAM



In the City’s Integrated Security Operations Center are (from left) Ted Ross, General Manager and Chief Information Officer, 23 years; and Tim Lee, Chief Security Information Officer, 29 years of City service. Both are Club Members. The data on the video board behind them has been obscured intentionally and is for demonstration only.

Cat and Cyber Mouse THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW

On April 3, Club CEO Robert Larios and Alive! editor John Burnes interviewed the "We Secure LA" team that manages ITA's cybersecurity threat defense division – Ted Ross, General Manager and Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Agency (ITA), 21 years of City service, Club Member; Tim Lee, Chief Information Security Officer, ITA, 29 years, Club Member; and Dean Victoria, Sr. Systems Analyst I, ITA, 5 years. Separately, Alive! interviewed Cesar Alvarado, Sr. Systems Analyst II, Governance Manager, ITA, 9 years of City service, Club Member, and wove his answers into this interview.

Alive!: Thanks for joining us today to talk about this very important subject – LA City cybersecurity. First, give us a brief summary of the path you took to get to your current position.



Ted Ross

Ted Ross: I joined the City shortly after 9/11 from the private sector. I was passionate about working in government – I thought it could be a way to give back to my city and have a work/life balance. I started at Airports. I helped run their financial systems there. I then joined the Controller's Office in 2008 to manage the \$55 million financial management system project. And then I came to ITA in 2012 as an Assistant General Manager. It brought me to my current position.

I grew up in an engineering and technology family. I tried to be the black sheep and became an accountant! Next thing you know, I went from accounting to accounting software to enterprise software (HR, payroll, accounting, purchasing, etc.). Here I am, even more into technology than the rest of them!



Tim Lee

Tim Lee: I started my career with the City at the Housing Dept. shortly after the Northridge Earthquake. The department had received a grant for post-earthquake rebuilding, and I was brought on as a Server Administrator.

Back then, we wore many hats—handling everything from servers to desktop support.

From there, I moved to the Office of the City Attorney, then transitioned to the Information Technology Agency as a Network Engineer. Later, I took on a role at the Harbor Dept., and eventually returned to ITA, where I now serve as the City's Chief Information Security Officer. It's been a rewarding journey through several departments, each step building toward where I am today.



Dean Victoria

Dean Victoria: I started at ITA in 2019 as a volunteer intern. I was able to self-study and get hired as an Applications Programmer, and then I was promoted to Systems Analyst in 2023. Last year I became a Sr. Systems Analyst by emergency appointment and then completed my permanent appointment this past January. I got a lot of support and a great team of managers who encourage me to keep growing, keep learning and keep building out my

skill set here with the City of Los Angeles. I want to give a major shout out to Yukari Iwai and Madeline Dia. They have helped model the way to be an effective and efficient leader of technology here as well as laid the foundation for the future We Secure LA Team.

Cesar Alvarado: I worked for the Library Dept. for six years as a contractor doing desktop support. I had to leave



Cesar Alvarado

the City because positions were frozen at that time, but I knew I wanted to work for the City then. I came back after two years as an Applications Programmer and Security Operations Center Analyst in the Integrated Security Operations Center (ISOC). While in this position, I was promoted to Systems Analyst, then to Systems Programmer. After being a Sr. SOC Analyst for a while, I was promoted to my current position as the Governance Manager.

How did you direct your career toward cyber security and We Secure LA? Where did your path lead you toward doing security work?

Dean: I graduated from college in 2018. I was looking for different information technology positions, and I was very interested in cybersecurity as a profession because of the things you hear in the news. I have a business background from the University of California, Riverside. From there, I realized my passion really lies in this service. And because I have family members who work for the City, they recommended me to apply for this internship and see how I like it. I could have gone into private industry, but I learned very quickly that as a civil servant, it's a privilege to serve. ITA is a supportive environment to grow as a professional.

Ted: Chief Information Officers (CIOs) are commonly asked the question, what keeps you up at night? The most common answer is cybersecurity. We're in a world that's increasingly digital. We use digital tools to do just about everything, so the importance of securing those tools is always top of mind. We need to cyber secure L.A. City technology so that these tools help employees protect our residents. Everyone at ITA understands the importance of cybersecurity. I even earned a CISSP credential, the highest U.S. cybersecurity certification, due to its importance. This topic is so important, even the General Manager is part of the team.

Cybersecurity is a game of cat and mouse. Criminals try to take advantage of large organizations and hurt our residents. We can't let that happen. Even other countries try to take advantage.

ALIVE! FEATURE

Photos by Summy Lam, Club COO; Alive! editor John Burnes; and courtesy ITA

Cyber-Guardians

Zero trust. Full diligence.

That’s the game plan of the City’s comprehensive Cyberthreat Prevention Program, a combination of technology, personnel, training and nonstop vigilance to thwart an incredible one billion cyberattacks against the City every day, just as they have also menaced the rest of the world.

Unwanted and deceptive online cyberattacks – targeted, usually automated and often guided by artificial intelligence – are becoming one of the biggest threats to the City’s financial and administrative health.

The City of Los Angeles, recognized nationally for excellence in cybersecurity, has established a comprehensive Cyber Threat Prevention Program under the Information Technology Agency (ITA). Based on the industry-standard NIST Cybersecurity Framework, this program uses a Zero Trust security model to rigorously secure City assets—including users, endpoints, networks, applications and critical data.

Central to the City’s cybersecurity approach is the award-winning Integrated Security Operations Center (SOC), which processes more than one billion security events daily and proactively blocks approximately four million cyber-attacks on City websites each month. These proactive efforts have earned ITA’s security team recognition as the “Best Cybersecurity Team” by SC Magazine, highlighting their role in safeguarding essential municipal services and sensitive citizen information.

Additionally, ITA leads a robust Security Awareness Program that has educated and trained more than 40,000 City employees and Retirees, empowering them to actively contribute to a secure digital environment.

The City also collaborates extensively with federal, state and local agencies, and private-sector partners to

enhance cybersecurity measures for critical infrastructure, especially in preparation for major international events including the LA28 Olympics and the 2026 World Cup.

Through strategic leadership, proactive collaboration and continuous innovation, the City remains steadfastly committed to digital resilience and the safety of its communities.

The more our lives have become digital, the more we have needed to secure those digital services. Despite damaging cyberattacks reported in the general media nearly every week, millions of companies and governments are protected from these incidents through talented cybersecurity teams. This month, we spotlight LA’s cybersecurity team, the ITA Information Security Office.

PERSONNEL

ITA’s Information Security Office (ITA-ISO) is led by Chief Information Security Officer Timothy Lee, Club Member. ITA-ISO’s mission is to provide advanced information security services and expert security guidance to ensure the availability, integrity and confidentiality of the City’s information assets and resources. The ITA-ISO is recognized by stakeholders as a leader in cybersecurity by demonstrating technical expertise and operational excellence.

The ITA-ISO does this through four dedicated sections:

Integrated Security Operations Center (ISOC) – maintains the City’s cybersecurity posture with three teams: Cybersecurity Intelligence (handles threat awareness), Risk and Vulnerability Management (works for proactive risk identification), and Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) Administration (real-time monitoring and analysis).

- Manager: Daniel Clark Lee
- Sr SOC Analysts: Eric Lee, Aren Tahmasian

- SOC Analysts: Joanne Scott, Jaime Hernandez
- SOC Analyst Assistant: Sydney Duong

Governance – Cybersecurity Awareness and Training Program (We Secure LA), Policy and standard management, Pathway Internship Program

- Manager: Cesar Alvarado,
- Program Manager: Dean Victoria
- Student Interns: Sean Bickety, Steven Sosa, Caroline De La Cruz, Daniel Ramos, David Moya, Payman Kavousi, Yahyaa Parise

Security Admin and Project Management Office – Administration (budget, purchasing, personnel, contract, grants), ITA-ISO project management, compliance administration

- Manager: Yukari Iwai
- Grant Management Specialist: Kellye Ross

Special Project Coordinator

- Manager: Madeline Dia

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

While the teams listed above work full-time on cybersecurity, the reality is, all City employees are part of the Cyberthreat Prevention Program. Every City employee plays a critical role in preventing and responding to a cyberattack. The cybersecurity team requests that City employees complete their annual Cybersecurity Awareness Training and notify the ITA-ISO team if you see anything suspicious.

THANK YOU

The Club thanks Maryam Abbassi, Assistant General Manager, Club Member; Daniel Clark Lee, Manager, Integrated Security Operations Center; and Madeline Dia, Special Project Coordinator, for their incredible assistance in setting up this important feature story. ●

Fortunately, we can defend ourselves. By equipping L.A. City employees, implementing the right kinds of tools, and building a culture of cybersecurity, we can protect employees and the public.

Tim: I’ve observed technology evolve from networking via modem to dialup to the T1 for the entire City of LA. Now it’s fiber optic to move the massive amount of data the City is handling. How do you secure it? When I was the Network Manager at the Harbor Dept., I had an opportunity to get deeper into security to not only build the infrastructure, but also protect that infrastructure from cyberattacks. That was the first time I got into security. I started looking into cybersecurity for the entire City, with a strategy to coordinate security between all City departments to protect City assets and critical infrastructure. That vision eventually became We Secure LA.

We’re all increasingly online, as you said, Ted, and so is government. Citizens increasingly access our government online. I would think that accessing our own government is going to require an increased focus on cybersecurity just to make sure that that connection to government is secure.

Ted: Absolutely. In 2018, I had the honor of being in Yinchuan, China, to discuss smart cities (cities that use technology). They showed a building that they were proud of because it could serve 15,000 residents in one day. In Los Angeles, we are doing the opposite. We are using apps and websites to keep residents from having to go to a government building whenever possible! Our job is to get everything online, highly accessible, and easy to use. That requires cyber security. It’s old-fashioned government to require people to travel to government buildings. Modern government says, “Don’t come to our building, let’s make secure digital tools available to residents on a smartphone or computer so that they can get what they need to get done when they need to get it done.” And that’s the modern digital experience the City of Los Angeles endeavors to provide every day.

Yes, different perspectives on where government is going.

Ted: Yes.

Frameworks for Cybersecurity

Describe ITA’s cyberthreat protection and security blanket that you put around all electronics and communications. What is the current cybersecurity threat prevention program that ITA has in place?

Tim: Our cyber strategy is based on the NIST cybersecurity framework. NIST – the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a federal framework for cybersecurity – is based on five core functions. Number one is to identify. We identify the City’s critical assets and infrastructure that we need to protect. Number two is determining the best ways to safeguard that infrastructure and sensitive data. Number three is detecting the threats when they come in – implement tools and processes to detect threats and unusual activities as early as possible. Number four is how to respond quickly and effectively when cyberattacks come in. And last but not least is the recovery. If you experience a breach, how do you recover and restore services efficiently from the destruction? Those guide us at ITA.

Then we build and follow Zero Trust architecture, which addresses human interaction. Human nature is one of the key pillars for cybersecurity. We identify the users with privileged access and critical data, to ensure their identities are verified and their access is limited to only what’s necessary. And after that, we assess the City’s endpoint devices, systems and computers – these are the things we need to protect with a zero-trust architecture. We make sure that when a user is trying to access the data, that every access request is legit.

So, in short, the foundation of our cybersecurity program is a combination of the NIST Framework and Zero Trust principles. Together, they guide how we protect the City’s digital infrastructure from evolving threats.

Ted: It’s a globally recognized approach, and you’ll find very specific tactics within each of those categories. Awareness and training fit under those categories. Our security operations center

and all of its technical tools are in there. We focus on protecting the software applications, the network, the data, and the human. L.A. City employees have seen our quarterly email phishing exercises where we try to trick you into clicking a link inside a suspicious email or our annual cybersecurity training. Within all of the categories Tim mentioned, we have many specific efforts to improve the cybersecurity of the City of Los Angeles, including some efforts that we can’t even mention.

Dean: We need to protect the networks we use. We need to protect the software we use. We need to protect the data we have, and we need to protect the people who use those items. Within all of that, we have hardware and software that perform very specific cybersecurity functions. But most importantly, we have training and employees who help manage this whole operation. So we have very specific technical tools all the way to human beings just trying not to click on a link on an email.

Ted: It’s comprehensive. We have to protect applications that are hosted in the cloud. We have to protect applications that are hosted in a data center physically at the City of Los Angeles. We have hundreds of pieces of software that are accessible over the Internet. All of them need to be protected. We’ve got websites, we’ve got sensitive data, we’ve got 911 systems and public safety communications. There’s a long list of physical and digital items that require cyberprotection. And while some of the tactics can cross apply between them, some digital services require extra levels of defense since they are the most critical of software applications or data sources.

Tim: An attacker can use any one of those things to attack us. We must protect them all.

Growth

How much has the need for cyber protection grown?

Ted: It’s growing across a number of areas. It’s growing in the types of tools we need to use and maintain. It’s growing in the amount of data we need to analyze to find cyberattacks.

ITA: CYBERTHREAT PREVENTION PROGRAM

THE *ALIVE!* INTERVIEW — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Cybersecurity is sometimes like finding a needle in a digital haystack. The City generates almost 1 billion records every 24 hours, and we're looking for cyberattacks within those records. In that way, every technology professional plays a role and is part of the cybersecurity team. Our programmers, our network professionals, our data center employees, and even our users who are just using email must be aware. When we start a new IT project, we always ask the question: What does it take to secure this? Everything and everyone is tied to cybersecurity in one way, shape or form. This has grown tremendously in the last 10 years.

Tim: The bad guys are evolving and growing too. They're relying on generated AI to craft all these phishing and automated attacks; they are more and more coordinated. If you look at all these recent data breaches to the public service sector, they're all coordinated and AI-powered attacks. That means we also have to evolve to make sure we can cover all these things too.

Ted: Cybersecurity used to mean antivirus software on every computer and running a centralized firewall. That was sufficient. Now, cybercriminals are spoofing managers using AI to try and get employees to wire transfer them money. Last year, we even ran an AI workshop with the US Secret Service for all City employees called Preventing AI Financial Fraud. That topic had nothing to do with firewalls or email phishing. It shows you just how much this topic has evolved and will continue to do so every year.

It sounds to me like every department within the City has to be increasingly aware of cybersecurity protections.

Ted: Yes. Cybercriminals often look for the easiest way in. When the tools and the firewalls and the technologies got better and better, then they started to target people. And so yes, the average employee at Building and Safety, at the Office of Finance, at the Department of Disability, as examples, are the ones being targeted. They're actually also our greatest strength because if they're cyber aware, if they remember their training, and if they're attentive, they actually sniff out the scam and protect us as well as any of the fancy technology tools do.

Working Together

Is ITA responsible for the cyberprotections at all City departments, or do some departments cover their own?

Ted: We're responsible for all Council-controlled departments. That means all of them except for Airports, LADWP and Harbor. However, we have very close relationships with our proprietary department colleagues and share real-time cyberattack data between us.

Tim: We also formed a cybersecurity governance body called Cyber Intrusion Command Center, CICC. Ted and the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety co-chair that group. We coordinate that group with all Council-controlled departments. That group sets the vision strategy and roadmap for cybersecurity strategy for the City of LA as a whole. When we have a critical incident or critical attack Citywide, this group will come in to coordinate the cyberdefense. In getting ready for the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, we need this group to coordinate across all City departments and with our federal partners. We take leadership on setting up the strategy and then the roadmap for overall City cybersecurity.

Ted: It used to be that if a cybercriminal attacked Airports or Harbor, it was all separate attacks. They

could attack one at a time. But we now have an integrated security operations center and a shared mindset of "attack one, attack all." Now, if you cyberattack one of us, we're sharing that data in an automated fashion between each other so that we are truly operating like one City. While there may be different governance at Civic Center departments and Airports and Water and Power and Harbor, and they report to different people, there is a very close coordination and communication between cybersecurity teams across all these four groups.

Tim: The Integrated Security Operations Center is run by ITA. It functions much like the Emergency Operations Center for cybersecurity. It acts as a centralized "war room" for the entire City, providing real-time situational awareness – what's going on, who's attacking us and how do we coordinate to respond to that attack. That's the role of the Integrated Security Operation.

Ted: With the 44 City departments, ITA is responsible for 41 of them.

History

When did cybersecurity start to become an issue? What's the general history of LA's cyberdefenses?

Tim: When I started at Housing 29 years ago, there were no firewalls on the desktop computers. Not even every computer had antivirus software. From then to today, you can see all the demands and threats are increasing in parallel. Activity is moving up.

Ted: Some of us remember an era when we had to dial up to get to the Internet, right?

I remember those days.

Ted: Exactly. Because people weren't on the Internet continuously, criminals couldn't get to our computers very easily. They had to try to get to us through virus-infected floppy disks or USB drives. As Tim said, when we started our careers, we had separated computers with little remote access. When they started to get connected to the Internet, that's when cyberattacks really started to take off. Fast forward to today, with work from home, mobile devices, online shopping, social media, online banking, digital government services, artificial intelligence, etc. You can see why there was an exponential growth in cyberattacks and LA City cyberdefenses.

Tim: Absolutely. Today, our Integrated Security Operations Center, operated by the ITA security team, analyzes more than one billion security events every day and blocks around four million cyberattacks within a 24-hour period.

Each month, we also detect and stop approximately 1,000 advanced malware attacks. These aren't the kind of threats that traditional antivirus software can catch—these are persistent, highly sophisticated threats that require advanced detection and response capabilities. That's the scale of the attacks we're facing, and the level of protection we've built over the years from my early days at the Housing Dept. to now.

When you look at the data, it's clear why human protection is just as critical. More than 90 percent of major data breaches stem from human error—someone clicks on a malicious link or opens a compromised attachment, and it triggers a ransomware attack. That's why one of the core pillars of our security strategy is building a strong "human firewall"—empowering our workforce to be the first line of defense through awareness, training, and proactive engagement.

Members of the Cybersecurity Intelligence, Risk and Vulnerability Management and Security Information and Event Management teams inside the Integrated Security Operations Center, top row, from left: Sue Taing, System Administrator I, 1 year of City service; Jaime Hernandez, System Administrator I, six years; Ted Ross, General Manager and Chief Information Officer, 21 years, Club Member; Tim Lee, Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), 29 years, Club Member; Daniel Clark Lee, Information System Manager I, 6 years; and Yukari Iwai, Sr. System Analyst II, 23 years. Bottom: Joanne Scott, System Administrator II, 10 years; Aren Tahmasian, System Administrator III, 6 years; and Eric Lee, System Administrator III, 11 years, Club Member.



In the Integrated Security Operations Center: ITA General Manager Ted Ross, Club Member, (left) and Club CEO Robert Larios chat with Joanne Scott, System Administrator II.

Ted: Imagine City employees in the 1990s starting to get computers. Then in the late '90s to the early 2000s, they're getting on the Internet. We started to add additional layers of security to protect ourselves from cybercriminals who were trying to access us.

One of the biggest issues for the City was that the 2008 Great Recession caused a tremendous reduction in staffing. ITA had around 850 staff members before 2008, but after the Great Recession, we were down to about 465. Areas like cybersecurity ended up getting cut. From 2008 through 2011, we had dramatically fewer people. To Tim's credit and to the credit of other ITA staff, starting in 2012 through 2014, we started to get cybersecurity back at the top of the priority list. We replaced our firewall, our Security Incident and Event Management (SIEM) software that detects cyberthreats, installed endpoint protection and response software on every computer, and isolated critical assets. Then, there was the Sony Pictures hack [external to the City] that required us to start email phishing exercises, launch annual cybertraining for employees, etc. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees were working from home and we started to add tools like Multi Factor Authentication, where you need to use your smartphone to confirm you are who you say you are. Each year, we add more tools to our toolkit to stay ahead of the cybercriminals. This evolution has been wild to watch, but it has become extremely important. Of course, we could never do this without the vigilance and mindfulness of all LA City employees.

Relentless Attacks, Relentless Defense

Talk a little more about the number of attacks you're defending against. It's incredible.

Tim: Yes, today, ITA's Integrated Security Operations Center analyzes roughly one billion security events every 24 hours.

Ted: It's a mind-blowing statistic. We have to consume around one billion digital events every day and find cybercriminal activity within it. Our tools scan network logs, system logs, user authentications, interface activity, et cetera. Through those billion events, we are looking for malware and cybersecurity attacks. Tim, within those one billion, what's that number of automated attacks that we're shutting down every day?

Tim: We actively block between four to seven million automated attacks each day.

Ted: Four to seven million every 24 hours. Watching TV, you would assume a hacker is a young person wearing a hoodie and using a laptop at a Starbucks. But that's not how most hacking occurs. Most hacking is automated. They use automated bots that scour the Internet. Tim uses the analogy they're checking your door lock. So, imagine millions of automated bots walking up and down your street and checking your front door to see if it is unlocked. If the door is unlocked, they will come in and do something terrible that would impact City employees or the public. Our team is blocking four to seven million of these automated attacks a day. Thank God.

Tim: And those numbers only reflect the targeted, filtered attacks. We're not even counting the random noise—if we included those, the number would be in the hundreds of millions.

Regarding those one billion events: For example, if a user mistypes their password three times, that would count as just one event in our system. So these are real, meaningful signals we're monitoring continuously.

Ted: It's growing, too. More apps, more websites, and more digital tools create more "attack vectors" for cyberattacks. However, the answer is not to go backwards and create fewer digital tools. We need to keep creating digital tools to benefit City employees and residents, but we must secure them at the same time.

Tim: Phishing attacks alone have increased by more than 30 percent, and they've become far more sophisticated. We're no longer seeing the obvious scams—we're seeing well-crafted, highly targeted phishing emails, often generated with the help of AI. These emails look legitimate and are customized to the recipient, making them much harder to detect at first glance.

That's why we rely heavily on advanced tools, automation and the expertise of our security team to identify and stop them. It's a constant battle, and our team is working around the clock to stay ahead of these evolving threats.

Ted: Ransomware is still extremely popular.

Tim: Yes, ransomware. We are seeing attackers increasingly

Members of the Cybersecurity Awareness Training Program and Security Administration at teams at their offices in City Hall East, back, from left: Cesar Alvarado, Governance Manager, Club Member; Merlyn Enriquez, Systems Analyst; Daniel Arambulo Jr., Intern; Dean Victoria, Sr. Systems Analyst; and David Hernandez Lopez, Intern. Front: Maria Dominguez, Intern.



ALIVE! FEATURE

Cyber Sleuth Challenge

We Secure LA cybersecurity outreach team sponsors annual Cybersecurity Awareness Citywide contest.

Last November, Information Technology Agency again hosted its Cybersecurity Month, ending with a contest to crown the winners of the annual contest.

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Cybersecurity Awareness Month (CAM) is an international initiative that educates everyone about online safety and empowers individuals and businesses to protect their data from cybercrime. Founded in 2004, Cybersecurity Awareness Month, held each October, is the world’s foremost initiative aimed at promoting cybersecurity awareness and best practices. Cybersecurity Awareness Month is a collaborative effort among businesses, government agencies, colleges and universities, associations, nonprofit organizations, tribal communities, and individuals committed to educating others about online safety.

CYBERSECURITY AT ITA

The We Secure LA program falls under the Governance Group of the ITA Information Security Office. The program is managed by Dean Victoria. Among other things, the program provides cybersecurity training and awareness to the City of LA (except LAPD and the proprietary departments: Airports, Harbor and LADWP). The program trains more than 20,000 employees.

ITA AND CYBERSECURITY MONTH

The We Secure LA Team has been participating in the CAM since 2019. During the month, ITA focuses on changing behaviors for employees to follow to stay secure and keep the City of Los Angeles secure. Last year, the program touched on the following behaviors:

- using strong passwords
- enabling Multi-factor Authentication (MFA)
- identifying phishing emails



ITA General Manager and Chief Information Officer Ted Ross, Club Member, stands with participants in Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2024, managed by ITA's We Secure LA Team. The identities of contest winners and participants are not being named by *Alive!* at their request, due to the sensitivities of their cybersecurity work tasks.

- updating software for employee devices, and
- learning about privacy and security relating to Artificial Intelligence

The program incorporated different types of communications to train and educate City employees during this month, including: newsletters, phishing simulation emails, surveys, presentations, videos, etc. For the presentations, the program brought in presenters from the National Cybersecurity Alliance, Proofpoint, USSS and CISA.

City employee participation in the program in 2024 rose 25 percent over the previous year.

CEREMONY

The CAM month culminated with the CAM Ceremony event, held Wed., Nov. 20. As employees participated in the different activities (presentations, phishing simulation emails, watching videos, etc.), they earned points. Depending on the number of points, they could earn gold, silver or bronze badges. Prizes, bought with donations from ITA managers, were raffled to employees depending on the badge that they earned. If they earned a gold badge, they had a chance to participate in a raffle of big-price items including: laptops, AirPods Pro, and Beats headphones. Lower badges got gift cards.

ITA promoted participation not only from regular employees, but from employees who help the department push its yearly cybersecurity training completion into other departments. Last year, ITA recognized three of these employ-

ees with letters of commendation for going above and beyond of what was required of them. Multiple departments participated, including: Library, Emergency Management, Civil and Human Rights, Personnel, Finance, City Attorney, and of course ITA. General Managers from Civil and Human Rights, ITA, Personnel, and a Principal Librarian from the Library promoted the program and the contest.

ITA General Manager and Chief Information Officer Ted Ross, Club Member, hosted the ceremony. Other leaders at the ceremony included Capri Maddox, General Manager, Civil and Human Rights, Club Member; Grayce Liu, Interim General Manager, Personnel; and Anne Bowman, Principal Librarian, Library. Special thanks were given to the ITA Managers who donated for the CAM prizes, and to all participants for demonstrating the value of teamwork and community.

The identities of contest winners and participants are not being named by *Alive!* at their request, due to the sensitivities of their cybersecurity work tasks.

MOVING FORWARD

Since Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2024, the ITA We Secure LA Team has been holding ongoing and productive discussions on how to push the Human Firewall forward in this age as the City continues to face evolving cybersecurity threats head-on. Suggestions from CAM 2024 are being considered. ●

The Club thanks Cesar Alvarado, ITA, for contributing this valuable information and photos.

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

target small and mid-size local governments. A lot of recent data breaches in the public sectors are local governments.

Ted: And a lot of email attacks.

Tim: Email attacks, ransomware attacks, you name it. If you look around at the public sectors being breached, it's all local. Attackers know these agencies manage critical infrastructure and sensitive data, but don't have enough resources to protect these assets. Attackers change their tactics and strategies. That's why we're also constantly adapting with more coordinated defense strategies to match their tactics and techniques. It's a neck and neck race between the attackers and defenders.

Where are the threats coming from?

Ted: Most of it is from organized crime because it's become lucrative. Then you have a small percentage of young folks who download something from the Internet and are just experimenting with it. They are called "Script Kiddies" and they are not sophisticated, but can still be a threat. Sometimes world events create a surge of Hacktivists. They are not trying to defraud the City of Los Angeles, but are trying to send a political message based on local, national or world events.

And then you have sophisticated nation-state attacks from different regions of the world. These are full-time employees working for rogue nations. Sometimes they are trying to steal money for their nation, sometimes they're trying to steal secrets that their government can use, and sometimes they are just probing our defenses to gain an advantage if they have a future conflict with the United States.

The ITA has worked with the CIA, the FBI, the Dept. of Homeland Security, the US Secret Service, and others. We don't share personal information about employees or residents, but we do share information about the cyberattacks we see.

Tim: It doesn't matter who the attackers are. They either want to steal your data or disrupt your service or business operations, or they want to destroy your brand or your image. Or just for the financial gains.

Do you find these attacks as mostly indiscriminate, or more targeted?

Ted: Plenty of both, I would say. Kind of a mix. The more sophisticated ones tend to specialize.

Tim: Yes, the more sophisticated attacks are definitely targeted and persistent. We call them advanced persistent threats or APTs.

Ted: They try the front door, they try the back door, they try the window, they try to get a ladder. Thankfully, our actions over the last ten years have been effective. The fact that we have not been in the news is a good sign we have been doing something right. However, we take this day by day. I'm extremely thankful to the work that Tim and the ITA cybersecurity team has been doing. I'm thankful for the leadership of our Mayor and City Council. And, I thankful to all technology professionals at the City of Los Angeles.

This isn't just some game; if we get this wrong it has huge consequences for City employees and the public.

Team Approach Vs. Burnout

With the growth of cyberattacks and the relentlessness of them, is staff burnout an issue?

Ted: Yes, it's a very persistent job that never seems to end. It's not just one opponent, but there are thousands of different threats. We have to monitor our teams to avoid staff burnout. Teamwork is key. Like a relay race, one team member is running while another team member needs to rest and vice versa. Only this relay race is also a marathon with no foreseeable end. So, we need to count on each other. We have to pace ourselves because we need to protect not only today, but next week and a month after, and three years from now. That takes stamina and vigilance. But, this team is up for the challenge.

Dean: We have certain deadlines that we set for ourselves. But what I like the most in the Information Security Office is that it's a team effort. We balance things with each other. Can we take on this question, or can we set aside time to plan for this initiative? What's really great is that with that teamwork, we have leadership that's also very supportive and gets us what we need in terms of timing, support and communications across different departments. A lot of that comes down to good management and making sure that we have a team that's really working together.

Every City Employee Plays a Role

You're critically important in the City. But are you well known?

Ted: I believe the ITA Security Office is well known, but people don't necessarily recognize it. For example, everyone gets our suspicious emails, known as email phishing exercises, and we try to get them to click on a link. If they click through the suspicious email, we warn them to avoid this and the harm it can do. But they may not always realize that these come from us. We do mandatory annual cybersecurity training, we do monthly email newsletters, we do virtual presentations with special guests. One time I was down at the Harbor and an employee was staring at me and said, "You look familiar." And I said, "Was it the annual cybersecurity training video?" And they said, that's it!



Standing in the Integrated Security Operations Center: Tim Lee, Chief Security Officer, Club Member (left), chats with Club CEO Robert Larios. Background (seated): Joanne Scott, System Administrator II. Foreground (seated): Sue Taing, System Administrator I and Aren Tahmasian, System Administrator III. Standing (right background) is Ted Ross, ITA General Manager, Club Member.

With that said, we always want more visibility and more attention for this message. Living in a digital age, cybersecurity has become a critical issue for our time. We are not looking for credit, we just want City employees to be prepared for cyber criminals both at work and at home. We're like the old Vidal Sassoon commercial: We don't look good if they don't look good. We just want them all to be cyber safe.

Tim: I totally agree with Ted. Users know and trust the We Secure LA Team. They take our communications very seriously. We can tell by the amount they report back before the training sessions, and then after. Their trust level is improving. The behavior change is noticeable.

Do City employees play a role in protecting the City from cyberthreats?

Cesar: This is a resounding yes! Every City employee plays a role in cybersecurity, including the ones who do not use computer devices, such as gardeners or truck drivers. These employees need to be trained on social engineering tactics, such as: what to do if they receive a fraudulent call (vishing) or text message (smishing); recognize if someone is trying to trick them into...

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW
CONTINUES ON Page 26



APPLY NOW!

\$750 Club Scholarships

Club Scholarship Deadline Next Month

DEADLINE TO
APPLY FOR CLUB
SCHOLARSHIP IS
3 P.M. JUNE 27, 2025.



Mariana Guevara
Chair, Joannie Mukai
Club Scholarship
Selection Committee

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

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

Those eligible include Club Members; their spouses; their children, grandchildren, step-children, and foster children; and nieces/nephews who are in college or will be attending an accredited college or university in Fall 2024. There is no age limit for Member or spouse, but all others must be under 25.

All materials must be completed on

**APPLY
TODAY**

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



DEADLINE

3 p.m., June 27, 2025

QUESTIONS

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

the *Alive!* Website and submitted electronically by 3:00 p.m. June 27, 2025. Winners will be notified by July 31 before school starts.

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

“With college costs rising, the Club honors public employees in California with the Mukai Scholarship,” says Association CEO Robert Larios. “We want to help develop the next generation of smart, dedicated Club Members with this financial assistance.”

**INTERESTED CANDIDATES
MAY BEGIN THE PROCESS DIRECTLY
ON THE *ALIVE!* WEBSITE AT:
alive.employeesclub.com/scholarship**



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.”

CLUB SCHOLARSHIP 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.



Put your graduation photo in *Alive!*

Club members: Have you had a family member graduate from elementary school... high school...or college? Send us a photo, and we’ll publish it in *Alive!*

Make sure you tell us:

- The name of the graduate.
- The school from which they graduated. If a college, tell us their major.
- Their future plans (briefly)
- The name and department of the Club member they’re related to, and how they are related



To send a digital
photo and your
message, go to:

alive.employeesclub.com/graduations



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**
8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday – Friday

Phone Hours
7 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday
7 a.m. – 3 p.m., Tuesday

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Did you know that nearly one in five adults in the US have a mental health condition? But that one person has family, friends, and others whose lives are touched by their condition, even if they don’t themselves suffer from one. There are many opportunities for fundraising, community outreach, and awareness events during Mental Health Awareness Month. Many national organizations like Mental Health America (MHA), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the National Institute of Mental Health hold events and fundraisers.

If there is someone in your life struggling with their mental health, the best thing you can do is reach out and start a conversation. Educate yourself on the realities of living with mental health issues and the stigma it often brings. Just supporting those in your life can spread the message of awareness and acceptance. For more information on Mental Health Awareness month, visit nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/mental-health-awareness-month/.

Keep Your Contact Info Updated With LACERS

If your contact information is out of date and we are unable to reach you, LACERS may withhold your retirement allowance until the information is updated. Fill out a Change of Address form found at lacers.org/forms with your new information and submit it through the Secure Document Upload at lacers.org/secureupload.

Malaika Billups Is New GM

SHE RETURNS TO PERSONNEL FROM CAO'S OFFICE.

PERSONNEL: Malaika Billups has been named the new General Manager of Personnel. She takes the top position after serving as the Assistant City Administrative Officer. She brings decades of experience in the public and private sectors, and will direct the Personnel Dept. with strategic leadership to support the City workforce, implement strategies to reduce the City's liability payments and improve City hiring practices, Mayor Karen Bass said in a written statement.



Malaika Billups

"I am honored to be appointed by Mayor Bass as the next General Manager of the Department of Personnel," Malaika Billups said in a statement. "I'm ready to hit the ground running, working collaboratively to ensure that hiring practices for the City are streamlined, ensuring that we hire only the best because that is what Angelenos deserve."

The modernization of the City's hiring practices is paramount to Mayor Bass' efforts to change the status quo and deliver on the essential needs of Angelenos, the Mayor said. Currently, it takes months for someone to be hired by the City of Los Angeles. In that time, qualified individuals receive offers from neighboring cities, reducing the City's talent pool. That timeline is unacceptable to the Mayor, and the appointment of Malaika Billups is an important step to transforming, streamlining and creating a modernized approach to the City's hiring practices.

Malaika has been a fixture in City leadership since 2017. As the Assistant City Administrative Officer, she served in a wide range of capacities to support the annual budget process, labor and employee relations as well as developing financial management practices for City departments. Prior to joining the Office of the City Administrative Officer, Billups was the Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer for Personnel, overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive Workplace Equity Policy and developing the City's Culture and Climate Survey.

She began her career at the City as the Deputy City Attorney in the Labor Relations Division where she helped create the Workplace Equity Policy, ensuring the City was in compliance with state employment laws. Furthermore, she provided counsel to more than ten City departments regarding City employment matters. Her experience across various City departments, working directly with City employees will assist in addressing the City's high liability costs by working to ensure that City employees have access to the resources they need.

After graduating from Loyola Law School, Malaika worked for reputable law firms in Los Angeles before joining the City. She began her career as a fourth grade teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District. ●



Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

NOELLE'S ON THE JOB! PHOTO WALL



"Catching up with friends at work." With Freddy Cupen-Ames, Trinity Straw, Narcis Grasu, Jacob Brothers, Jennifer Jones, Jacqueline Cervantes, Dale Kanegawa and Brian Pak.

– **Jacqueline Cervantes, Public Works/Contract Administration**



"Celebrating National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week 2025 with the City's 9-1-1 Dispatchers! Having fun for their Spirit Week." With PSR II Hector Lopez in his Western wear; and PSRs Andrea Esquivel, Diana Montano, Tammy Lindquist, Rosanna Kim, Sinuon Nwosu, Guadalupe De La Cruz, and Debra Guerrero.

– **CT Feng, LAPD/Communications**

"Nothing says 'Welcome to the world of law enforcement' like being tear-gassed at Rio Hondo's Police Academy. Yes, just another day 'on the job.' Pictured: Class 172."

– **Yves Didier, Retired, Airport Police**



First 5 entries receive a...



"My wife Elena Sousa! Just a small snapshot of 'on the job' as an OBGYN nurse!"

– **John Sousa, Airport Police**



Capt. Michael Barnes from Vessel operations joins John Radovich from the Port of LA Construction and Maintenance Yard Boat shop, displaying our copies of *Alive!*, in the Hard Rock Caffe Florence Italy.

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

ON THE JOB! PHOTO WALL DEADLINE: May 20

Celebrate you and your work crew! Submit photos of your City of LA coworkers (with or without you) in action on the job, working or socializing at the office or yard, behind the scenes, routine or even quirky.

We'll give a \$50 gift card to the first five who submit each month.

For rules and to submit your On the Job pictures go here:

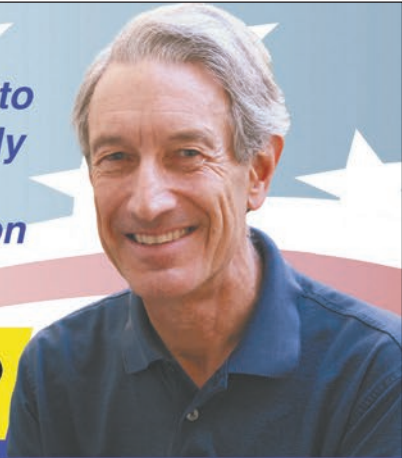
Submit your best photos online at alive.employeesclub.com/onthejob/ Club Members only. Good luck!



RETIRES: You have your own contest now! We want to see you living your best life. See the Club's new "Your Best Life" photo contest on page 5!

★★ VOTE FOR ★★
MIKE WILKINSON
FOR LACERS BOARD

“ I will continue the fight to keep LACERS financially sound. ”
– **Mike Wilkinson**



Email: mikewilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com

VOTE BY MAY 23RD

Notice: The Employees Club of California does not endorse or sponsor this advertisement. The views and content expressed herein are solely those of the advertiser.



Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

RLACEI

CONTACT INFORMATION



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ON THE WEB: www.RLACEI.org

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Mark Blunk, *Second Vice President*
Loucin (Lucy) Artinian, *Treasurer*
Nancy Hammoudian, *Secretary*

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

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

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

MAILING ADDRESS:

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

Change of Address?
Please notify 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 or
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.



RETIREE ON THE MOVE

by Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director

Meet Gary Brown



Gary Brown, a Retiree on the Move. Gary began his career with the City of Los Angeles in 1986 and Retired after 27 years in 2010. His first assignment was with the Airports, Environmental Management Bureau, where he served as an Associate Planner from 1986 to 1990. He served as Environmental Supervisor from 1990 to 1998, and later held the position of Environmental Affairs Officer. In 1998, he was promoted and became responsible for overseeing environmental regulatory compliance for all Airports department facilities, functions, maintenance activities, and operations. Prior to his service with the City, Gary worked in planning for several other municipalities, including Garden Grove, Lynwood, Inglewood, Burbank, and the County of Los Angeles.

Family

Gary met his wife, Brenda, through a family member, and they have been married for 22 years and have two daughters, Brittani and Makaela. His wife is entrepreneurial, creative and is a social butterfly. He loves that he and his family are remarkably close and engage in positive activities. His youngest daughter, Makaela, plans to attend Spelman College in the fall after graduation from high school.

Hobbies

Gary loves retirement because he is able to pursue some of his hobbies, which include real estate, carpentry, music (piano), visiting family and traveling to places like Spain, Rome and Hawaii. He is also engaged with the Dad’s Auxiliary of The Jack and Jill Foundation of America.



Brenda, Makaela, Brittani and Gary

Retirement Recommendations?

- “Enjoy life and embrace free opportunities that bring happiness.”
- “Pursue your travel desires.”
- “Complete your bucket list.”
- “Prioritize health through exercise and nutrition.”
- “Cherish family time and cultivate a happy life.”

Gary’s words of wisdom are to enjoy life; pursue any free opportunities that make you happy; travel if that is your desire; work on completing your bucket list; focus on your health through exercise and nutrition; and most importantly cherish family time and have a happy life.

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

“Having and pursuing a career interest in two different professions was a great growth opportunity for me. As a young man, I developed an interest in real estate. Academically, I studied and followed a career in community development. Working for the City gave me so much exposure through transportation and aviation.”

What do you miss from your time in City service?

“I miss the people I worked with, the people I met and the experiences working at a major transportation facility like the Dept. of Airports.”

As you reflect on your City career, would you have done anything differently?“I initially wanted to go into law; however, I decided to pursue a community development career. Being able to work for a major department and operation like the Dept. of Airports has been a great accomplishment for me.”

Describe how you occupy your time in retirement.

“I have the time to make sure major items on the family agenda are addressed. I also prioritize my time to maintain a productive routine and a healthy balance.” ●



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.

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

JOIN TODAY!

“Protecting Retirement Benefits since 1973”



RLACEI MEMBERS

Not an RLACEI member?

Join and like us on FACEBOOK

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

Join today!

For Retired Club Members



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 _____ Email _____
Address _____
City _____ 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.****

LACERS BOARD
UPDATE

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

LACERS
Reports Gains
In 2024 CY
Investments



Michael R. Wilkinson

Now is the time to look back at last year’s calendar and see how LACERS’ investments performed against its benchmark. The investment results are mixed, with the fund exceeding the benchmark return for three years and five years while trailing the benchmark in other time periods.

The reports, prepared by NEPC, our investment consultant, are accurate as of Dec. 31, 2024. The fund returned minus-2.22 percent net of fees for three months; minus-7.36 percent for one year; 1.73 percent for three years; 6.55 percent for five years; 6.96 percent for 10 years; 6.84 percent for 20 years; and 6.84 percent since inception (July 2001).

Note that for the one-year period, the fund returned more than the seven percent assumed rate of return, while the 20-year and since-inception figures were close to meeting the assumed rate of return.

As you know, LACERS is a long-term investor, and our goal is to meet our long-term assumed rate of return, which is currently seven percent. There will be times when we are over that assumed rate and times when it will be less than the assumed rate. There will be times when the investment returns are negative.

Finally, NEPC reported on the 10-year returns on two private markets asset classes, private equity on an Internal Rate of Return basis and the real estate allocation on a time-weighted return basis. The overall aggregate performance for private equity was 13.0 percent, beating the private equity blended benchmark of 12.9 percent with the core portfolio returning 13.5 percent, while the specialized portfolio returned a negative 1.5 percent. The real estate portfolio returned 5.3 percent, trailing its benchmark of 6.0 percent.



Arnette Travis

GET HAPPY SERIES

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

Live a ‘Boss’ Life



Stress is a common factor in life for everyone, regardless of age, education, abundant or scarce resources, etc. Nothing or no one can remove stress from our lives entirely or permanently. Lately, there seems to be a fresh stress hell every few days that can disturb our inner peace, but only if we allow it to do so.

By now you should know that you only “retired” from your previous work. And that whatever you choose to do now – be it work (paid or unpaid), the pursuit of pleasure via travel or activities you enjoy, or spending time with your tribe regularly – you did not retire from life. This means that as long as you are engaged in life, there is an open door for stress to enter. Again, only if we allow it to.

Not all stress is bad though. The impending birth of a grandchild or prepping for a cruise can bring on “good stress.” Good stress is founded in excitement, even joy over the anticipation of a welcome event or experience.

Conversely, bad stress comes in the form of negativity or problems, usually with finances or relationships. If these turn into ongoing problems such as the daily cost of living, or family issues like substance abuse, and left unmanaged, stress can affect your physical health. Uncontrolled stress contributes to many health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

The American Institute of Stress recommends four steps to help reduce and cope with the stressors of everyday life.

- 1. Avoid.** Put distance between you and the thing that stresses you. Learn to say no to people and situations that annoy or irritate you, like checking your stock portfolio daily.
- 2. Alter.** Clearly communicate your expectations to people so that they know how you feel about a situation. Use “I” statements, say how you feel, and relay your limitations. For example: “I have only five minutes to talk.”
- 3. Accept.** When you have no control over a stressful situation, acceptance can help ease stress. Speak with someone about your feelings. Call a friend or relative, or schedule an appointment with a therapist. Forgive yourself or others. Forgiveness is vital to acceptance in a stressful situation and permits you to move forward.
- 4. Adapt.** Change and modify your expectations of stressful situations. Don’t expect or strive for perfect-

MY KEY TO DEALING WITH STRESS IS SIMPLE:
JUST STAY COOL AND STAY FOCUSED.

ASHTON EATON

GET THE MOST OUT OF RETIREMENT
Get happy Now
ARNETTETRAVIS.COM



tion. Instead, make reasonable efforts in your daily life to accomplish tasks. Dinner can be a green salad with a protein rather than a three-course meal that takes hours to prepare. Remember to focus on the positive aspects of your life, and express gratitude daily. Things could always be worse.

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men experience it as a whole. Avoiding danger in the long run is no more safer than out-right exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.

- Helen Keller

Keller’s words serve as a reminder that change is constant, and that life isn’t stress free. Think about this: Wouldn’t life be boring if every day, everything and everyone was the same? We just have to learn to manage the bad stuff. Oh, and remember to breathe! ●

Happily yours,
Arnette

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Puerto Rico



"This picture was taken in the San Juan, Puerto Rico airport. We started in Puerto Rico, hopped on a ship, and then stopped at the Dominican Republic, Aruba, Curaçao, St. Lucia and St. Kitts. I thought to myself, 'We are going to be busy, I'd better take the picture now.' We traveled with 118 people, friends and family. Celebrating a friend's 70th birthday."

— Sarita Aguillard, LAPD

Ireland



At the Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland.

— Loreen Soo Hoo, Retired, LAPD

Tuzigoot National Monument and the Crane Petroglyph Site — Verde Valley, Arizona

Intrepid traveler Dr. Ed Krupp, Director of the Griffith Observatory and Club Member, visited Tuzigoot National Monument and the Crane Petroglyph Site in Arizona.

By Dr. E.C. Krupp

On the drive from Phoenix to Flagstaff, Arizona, and back again during a three-day trip to attend a Skystone Foundation board meeting, I returned to a couple of sites I have visited several times in the past: Tuzigoot National Monument and the Crane Petroglyph Site (formerly V-Bar-V Heritage Site). Both are in Sinagua territory in Arizona's Verde Valley, not far from I-17.

Tuzigoot is a hilltop prehistoric pueblo, built of stone in the twelfth century A.D. The Sinagua left the area around 1400, and Tuzigoot fell into ruin. The view here is from the top room and looking down and south. There is no evidence anyone watched the sky—as the Ancestral Pueblo

did—from this location, but it would have been a good place to do so.

The Crane Petroglyph Site is a tall and massive vertical wall of sandstone comprising several major panels of prehistoric Southern Sinagua rock art, which is thought to have been carved into the rock face between 1150 and 1400 A.D. Boulders that were deliberately placed into ledges high on the one end of the wall cast shadows onto the rock art that are believed by some to indicate seasonally important displays of light and shadow.

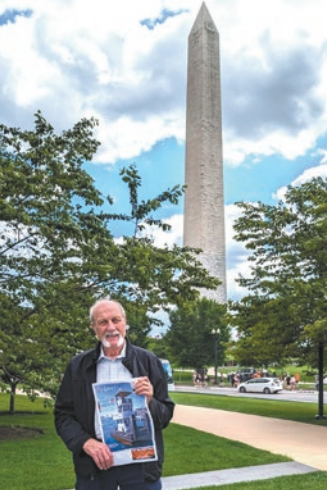
On the Arizona highways,

— Ed



Letter From Washington, D.C.

Lobbyists, School Groups and Tourists



Marine monument at entrance to Arlington Cemetery.

Since the British Empire burned Washington, D.C.'s Presidential White House and assorted government buildings in response for America's acts of destruction on Canada during the War of 1812, the rebuilt capital city has become popular with tourists and schoolchildren alike, as many of its new museums, art galleries and public buildings are free to enter. It's always nice to have friends when visiting a city's popular attractions. So, the private tour of the magnificent Kennedy Center and a visit to the President's box were the highlights of this vacation. Not to say that the African American Museum, opposite the 550-foot granite and marble Washington Monument obelisk, was not interesting, from its bright red Cadillac in the musical arts exhibition on the top floor to the incredible escalator system leading down to the cafeteria in the basement packed with hundreds of loud, excited students.

For a more tranquil place for lunch, try the National Portrait Gallery. It has a beautiful, covered courtyard, lots of seating, and no school groups. Its small cafeteria is an excellent place on a hot day as it is air-conditioned.

While visiting the Capital Building, it seemed every law enforcement officer in the country was in town for a convention, all wearing very differently shaped hats and uniforms. The Capital Building tour is well worth taking as it explains all about its many statues and artwork collection. For example, the bronze female Statue of Freedom, designed by Thomas Crawford, stands on the top of the building and is often mistaken for an Indian figure

because of its helmet with an eagle's head and feathers. In the Crypt, a large circular room with 40 Doric columns supporting the Rotunda, there is a replica of Britain's Magna Carta.

Just around the corner on the same grounds is the United States Botanic Garden, which has a collection of rare and endangered native plants of North America and offers a great view of the Capitol Building.

Urban legend has it that President Ulysses S. Grant coined the word "lobbyist" because he used to sit in the lobby of the Willard Hotel with a cigar and brandy, listening to those who wanted favors. However, the term actually originated in England and dates back to 1837, when it referred to a specific lobby in the House of Commons, where the public could speak to their representatives.

Behind all the lobbyists, agenda-seekers and their part-time staffs is a great collection of fascinating local people who keep the whole city running, from the museum and hotel staffs to dozens of food truck operators selling fried comfort food at popular tourist spots, and street vendors providing fresh-cut coconuts. There are many small local bars with great music just a stone's throw from the city center that never see a tourist, as they are not as trendy as those along the Potomac River.

The parks and gardens of Washington, D.C. provide a breath of fresh air amidst the urban bustle, especially when the cherry tree blossoms, "Sakura," are in full bloom. In 1912 these trees were gifted to the People of the United States from the People of Japan. One of the most popular places to see them in full bloom is the Tidal Basin, which has a three-mile path and views of the Jefferson, Martin Luther King Jr. and Washington Monuments in the background. Visit the U.S. National Arboretum or East Potomac Park for less crowded locations. Both have several paths lined with cherry blossom trees, and for golf enthusiasts, there is also a 19-hole golf course, a driving range and mini golf!

Tip: To take tourist-free cherry blossom photos, you must be an early bird.

Enjoy your capital while it's still mostly free.

— The Captain

More pictures on Web Alive!



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Noelle
Kauffman,
Club Sports
Commissioner



CLUB SPORTS

MAY 2025

Thrilling Softball Showdown!

LADWP, Street Lighting teams battle for championship of Club-sponsored coed softball tournament.



Softball

The Club-sponsored one-day coed softball tournament, held March 30 at the Van Nuys Sherman Oaks Recreation Center, brought high energy and fierce competition! Four dynamic City teams faced off in an exciting day of sportsmanship and camaraderie.

Teams representing Hollywood LADOT, West LADOT, the LADWP and Public Works/Street Lighting battled it out on the field in a series of close, heart-pounding games that kept spectators on the edge of their seats. Every inning delivered impressive plays, solid teamwork and unforgettable moments.

After a string of tightly contested matchups, the team from LADWP claimed the championship title. Tournament MVP Monica Ramorino, a standout female athlete from LADWP, sealed the victory with a clutch, game-winning run that electrified the crowd and secured her place in the spotlight.

This event showcased not only athletic talent but also the spirit of unity among City departments. The Club thanks all teams for participating and invites City employees to join the next upcoming tournaments in softball, soccer, or basketball.

Stay tuned for dates and registration details!



Winner: LADWP!



Runner-up: PW/Street Lighting!



At the recent Club-sponsored coed softball tournament.

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- Military Service
- Tell Their Story



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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
Aastrom, Dale O.	Fleet Services	LADWP	—	Franklin, Adama D.	Police Perf. Auditor	LAPD	18	Ostergard, Jeffrey W.	Water Operations	LADWP	—
Adams, Alice M.	Crossing Guard	LADOT	12	Gallagher, Brian R.	Principal Trans. Eng.	LADOT	35	Owens, Willie C.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	Public Works	21
Alcaino, Ricardo A.	Human Resources	LADWP	—	Gant, Tracy	Park Maint. Supervisor	Rec and Parks	35	Palo, Crisp G.	Materials Testing Eng. Ass.	Gen. Services	35
Alfieri, Christopher	Sr. Construction Insp.	Public Works	21	Garcia, Albino L.	Water Engineering	LADWP	—	Patanawong, Dan P.	Fleet Services	LADWP	—
Amancio, Sandra D.	Asset Management	LADWP	—	Gardner, Allan H.	Metering Services	LADWP	—	Patterson, Dwayne L.	Ptd. Transmission	LADWP	—
Archila, Martha E.	Benefits Analyst	LACERS	31	Gatchalian, Jose Rey B.	Principal Accountant	Controller's Off.	25	Pearl, James	Wastewater Coll. Sup.	Public Works	22
Arellano, Patricia	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	16	Gero, Gary J.	Bre. Executive Office	LADWP	—	Pedrano, Dorotea C.	Accounting	LADWP	—
Attai, Behnam	Environmental Engineer	Public Works	35	Goldstein, Scott D.	Risk Manager	CAO	30	Pham, Deborah H.	Sr. Civil Engineer	Public Works	31
Bara, Richard J.	Bldg. Repairer Sup.	Public Works	19	Hartman, Eric M.	Airport Guide	Airports	8	Potts, Raenel R.	Sr. Adm. Clrk/Supply Chain	Harbor/LADWP	20/—
Barone McKenny, Stephanie	Fire Psychologist	LAFD	34	Hunter, John B.	Water Operations	LADWP	—	Ramos, Manuela G.	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	10
Becerra, Rodolfo	Mechanical Helper	Airports	29	Huynh, Angely Huong Tran	Exec. Admin. Assistant	LAPD	26	Rangel, Peter	Storekeeper/Supply Chain Gen. Serv./LADWP	24/—	
Benedetti, John Paul	Mayoral Aide	Mayor's Office	12	Johnson, Christopher	Security Officer	Airports	30	Reyes Moore, Katherine	Sr. Management Analyst	LAPD	35
Blum, Lloyd	Management Analyst	LADWP	25	Johnson, Louis	Refuse Coll. Truck Op.	Public Works	28	Reyes, Maria I.	Tax Compliance Officer	Finance	20
Bozin, Vincent J.	Advanced Tech	LADWP	—	Jun, Bruce Seongsoo	Security Officer	LAPD	9	Richmond, Rhonda P.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	LAPD	31
Calhoun, Reginald L.	Fleet Services	LADWP	—	Kawachi, Hannah A.	Energy Distribution	LADWP	—	Rivers, Anthony L.	Police Service Rep.	LAPD	17
Cano, Lloyd	Signal Systems Electr.	LADOT	16	Keliher, David E.	Audio Visual Technician	Zoo	20	Robles Urzua, Jose	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	10
Cantu, Mauricio G.	Supply Chain	LADWP	—	Kim, Chol Song	Equipment Mechanic	Gen. Services	23	Robles, Roxana	Management Analyst	Harbor	35
Challita, Pascal Y.	Dep. Sup. of Bldgs.	Bldg. & Safety	33	Klein, George L.	ITS	LADWP	—	Sananikone, Bounsom	Systems Administrator	Public Works	30
Chavez, Arturo	General Manager	El Pueblo Hist.Dist.	16	Landrum, Kevin D.	Metering Services	LADWP	—	Santos, Cristabel	Gardener Caretaker	Rec and Parks	15
Chen, George	Sr. Transportation Eng.	LADOT	35	Lau, Suk C.	Sr. Mgmt. Analyst	CAO	29	Sigler, Lya V.	Administrative Clerk	Library	8
Ciaramitaro, Sandra E.	Council Aide	Council	10	Leitner, Philip J.	Power Executive Office	LADWP	—	Sih, Jimmy L.	Human Resources	LADWP	—
Crittenden, Carol B.	Sr. Mgmt. Analyst	Gen. Services	33	Lennon, Rick M.	Water Distribution	LADWP	—	Sloan, Valerie Y.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	LAPD	25
Dela Parra Contreras, Juan	Maintenance Laborer	Airports	21	Lopez, Eduardo	Water Distribution	LADWP	—	Taylor, Patricia Y.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	LAPD	28
Diaz, Diane	Management Analyst	LAPD	26	Mahoney, Chris J.	Recreation Facility Dir.	Rec and Parks	20	Turner, Esther D.	Energy Support	LADWP	—
Doan, Thieu L.	Power System Eng.	LADWP	—	Maldonado, Edgar O.	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	—	White, Gilbert W.	Painter Supervisor	Public Works	38
Duarte, Adolfo	Administrative Clerk	LAPD	8	Malki, Hani G.	Sr. Fire Protection Eng.	LAFD	32	Wolcott, Holly L.	City Clerk	City Clerk	37
Edgar, David M.	Equipment Mechanic	Gen. Services	5	Marosek, Blane F.	Marketing Director	LADWP	—	Yan, Bobby M.	Info. Systems Manager	Fire/Police Pens.	35
Ellis, James V.	Water Operations	LADWP	—	Meinert Jr., Raymond S.	CRFS	LADWP	—	Yoshida, Nadine K.	Hearing Reporter	LAPD	18
Evans, Rodney	JFB/Facilities	LADWP	—	Mireles, John R.	Sr. Storekeeper	LADOT	24	Zouzounis, Steven E.	Sergeant	Airport Police	24
Fong, Albert R.	Pipefitter	Public Works	35	Montoya, Juan C.	Municipal Police Officer	LAPD	31				
Fong, Kathy M.	Accounting	LADWP	—	Nene, Sanjeev G.	Sr. Mgmt. Analyst	Airports	34				
Forrest, Angela J.	Sr. Admin. Clerk	Airports	33	Nguyen, Tammy	ITS	LADWP	—				

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



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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.



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								
Batres, Miguel A.	Rec and Parks	17	Brown, Robert I.	LADWP	29	Hengen, Judith A.	Airports	10
Bjorseth, James A.	LADWP	8	Campbell, Rhod J.	LADWP	29	Herrmann, Betty Y.	—	—
Ford, Glenis J.	LADWP	—	Ceballos, Joe	—	—	Holmes, Thelma	LAPD	36
Harris, Bruce G.	Public Works	25	Celaya, William M.	—	—	Iida, Florence M.	—	—
Miranda, Yolanda C.	LADWP	21	Chang, Chao C.	Public Works	17	Jamgochian, Paul H.	ITA	30
Ray, Reginald T.	Airports	25	Chew, Wilbur	—	—	Jones, Ozzie L.	—	—
Richer, Trent W.	Public Works	15	Collett, Billy J.	—	—	Keprios, Peter J.	LADWP	22
Skendzie, Stevan	LADWP	4	Cuomo, Raymond J.	LADWP	29	Kochendarfer, Kenneth N.	LADWP	16
Williams, Lavedia L.	LADOT	19	Debase, Sammie R.	LADOT	37	Larson, Judith	—	—
Zavala, Rosemary	LADWP	8	Dolyniuk, Orest L.	—	—	Launius, Sandra K.	Airports	17
RETIRED								
Adagio, Victor	Library	32	Faniel, Jo E.	—	—	Laurence, William R.	LADWP	15
Anderson, Marvin W.	—	—	Feggo, John	Public Works	20	Leatherman, Douglas	Bldg. & Safety	33
Arata, Alton K.	LADWP	40	Flores, Ruben	LADWP	28	Lindsey, Nathaniel	LADWP	40
Armelin, Robert L.	LADWP	27	Galang, Visitacion F.	Public Works	25	Lomsky, Naomi M.	LADOT	30
Arroyo, Antonina	LADWP	30	Galindo, Teresita C.	LADWP	22	Lovelace, Juarine D.	—	—
Batungbakal, Dario V.	LADWP	30	Garrabrant, Ronald S.	Rec and Parks	16	Luttrell, Karen	Library	15
Bhaumik, Tapati	ITA	21	Glover, Robert	—	—	Manaay, Enrico R.	LADWP	25
			Gilliland, Russell A.	LADWP	23	McCrory, Willie H.	—	—
			Glover, Robert	—	—	McMahan, Michael A.	Airports	18
			Hagan, Kenneth	Public Works	9	Nguyen, Chien V.	LADWP	33
			Hamm, James J.	—	—	Paneno, Carl J.	LAPD	40

Cooking with the Club

with Chef Robert Larios



Photos:
Patty M.
Larios

This pasta recipe proves that a simple swap can still deliver extraordinary flavor.

Pasta lovers, get ready to meet your new favorite dish. Picture this: perfectly al dente spaghetti wrapped in a rich, flavorful sauce that tastes like it came straight from an Italian trattoria. This recipe originally called for sun-dried tomatoes, but sometimes the pantry demands a little improvisation. With a quick swap to tomato paste, we've created a dish that's just as hearty, delicious and satisfying as the classic version.

The secret? Tomato paste delivers a concentrated depth of flavor, adding a hint of sweetness and just the right amount of richness to coat every strand of spaghetti. Fresh, juicy grape tomatoes mingle with the paste, creating a luscious, almost jammy texture that feels indulgent yet refreshingly bright.

That's just the beginning, though. Fresh herbs bring a vibrant, aromatic lift to the dish, balancing the richness



"A truly great dish isn't just a recipe—it's a conversation between the ingredients, the cook, and the soul of the one who tastes it." — **Chef Robert Larios**

with pops of brightness. A shower of finely grated Parmesan melts into the warmth of the pasta, giving you that salty, nutty creaminess you can't resist.

And then, the showstopper: golden, toasted almonds scattered over the top. Their crunch and subtle nuttiness add a delightful contrast to the silky strands of spaghetti. Together, every element sings in harmony, creating a meal that's comforting, flavorful and just fancy enough to impress.

Whether you're cooking for yourself, a special someone, or a whole table of guests, this dish is a testament to the beauty of flexibility in the kitchen. Tomato paste may be the substitute, but this recipe proves it's every bit the star.

Grab your fork, prep those ingredients, and get ready to see just how satisfying a little creativity can be. Dinner is about to get delicious.

¡Buen provecho!

Robert Larios

One-Pan Spaghetti with Tomato Paste Twist, Fresh Herbs and Crunchy Almonds

Follow this recipe online:



INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes (substitute tomato paste, 1/4 cup)
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 1 unit Italian parsley
- 4 oz. grape tomatoes
- 6 oz. spaghetti (contains wheat)
- ½ oz. sliced almonds (contains tree nuts)
- 1 unit veggie stock concentrate
- 2 tbsp. cream cheese (contains milk)
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese (contains milk)
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. butter (contains milk)
- Sea salt to taste
- Fresh-cracked pepper to taste
- ½ chicken breast (optional)

UTENSILS

- Large pot
- Small bowl
- Strainer
- Large pan
- Whisk

Food Lover's Dictionary:



Parsley: In ancient times, parsley wreaths were used to ward off drunkenness—though proof of their efficacy in that capacity is scarce. Fresh curly-leaf parsley is widely available year-round, while Italian

parsley must sometimes be searches out in gourmet produce markets. Refrigerate for up to a week.

Bibliography: Herbst, Sharon Tyler, and Ron Herbst. The New Food Lover's Companion. 2nd ed., Sourcebooks, 1995. Source: <https://www.hellofresh.com/recipes/sun-dried-tomato-spaghetti-6231ef8d59a1d65a30536f97> Accessed April 15, 2025

Cooking Tidbit

When toasting almonds (or any nuts), always keep them moving in the pan, and trust your nose as much as your eyes. The moment you smell that warm, nutty aroma, they're ready. Over-toasting happens fast, so remove them from the hot pan immediately to prevent carryover cooking. This simple step ensures they add the perfect crunch and flavor to your dish!

Also, if you are looking for some protein, chicken, shrimp, ground turkey or beef are great additions.

DIRECTIONS

Total prep time is 20 minutes Serves 2



choose whether to mince it into fine pieces or transform it into a fragrant paste using the flat of your knife.

Halve the grape tomatoes lengthwise, keeping their vibrant freshness intact. Place them in a small mixing bowl, then toss them with a drizzle of olive oil, a pinch of salt, and freshly cracked pepper to enhance their flavor. For your parsley, pick the leaves from the sturdy stems and chop them finely until they're bright and uniform. Set everything aside, keeping it within reach to ensure effortless transitions while cooking.



Once fragrant and crisp, transfer the almonds to a small bowl and set them aside. Wipe out the pan with care; it will soon host the heart of your sauce.



Optional chicken breast: Heat a drizzle of oil in pan used for almonds over medium-high heat. Add chicken: season with salt and pepper. Cook stirring frequently, until cooked through, 4-6 minutes until golden brown. Turn off heat: transfer to a plate.



Introduce the halved grape tomatoes into the sauce, letting their freshness mingle with the creamy spaghetti, ensuring its strands fully coat themselves in that luscious sauce. Sprinkle in half of the Parmesan cheese, saving the rest for the finishing touch, and add 1 tablespoon of butter (or 2

tablespoons for a larger portion). Stir everything together until the butter has melted and the cheese melds seamlessly into the sauce. If the sauce feels too thick, drizzle in the reserved pasta water, splash one at a time, until the sauce perfectly clings to the noodles in a creamy harmony. Gently mix in half of the chopped parsley, giving the dish a burst of herbaceous brightness. Taste one final time and adjust the seasoning with a pinch of salt or pepper if needed. Turn off the heat. Stir chicken into sauce.



cup of the cooking water (or ½ cup for a larger portion) just before draining. This starchy liquid will help bind your sauce to the pasta. Drain the spaghetti thoroughly and set it aside, unwashed and ready for its next step.



Return the clean pan to medium heat and add a light drizzle of olive oil. Wait until the oil begins to shimmer. Add the finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes and garlic, stirring gently. (Remember, I skipped the sun-dried tomatoes.) Allow their

flavors to bloom, and infuse the oil, a process that takes 1-2 minutes. Season the mixture lightly with salt and pepper to build the initial layers of flavor. Stir in the veggie stock concentrate along with 1/3 cup of water (or ½ cup for additional servings). Add the tomato paste here! Bring the mixture to a simmer so it gently bubbles as it reduces slightly, about 1-2 minutes. Lower the heat to its lowest setting and gradually whisk in the cream cheese. Watch as it melts and transforms the sauce into a velvety, smooth consistency. Taste and season further if needed to ensure every bite will have deep, balanced flavor.



basil or a sprinkle of dried parsley on the soup for a touch of finesse. Say, "Bon appétit!" as you serve this dish

Step 7: Assemble and Serve with Elegance

Slice the grilled cheese diagonally to reveal its gooey interior and place it artfully beside a bowl of the velvety soup. Here's where plating matters: Add a sprig of fresh

ITA: CYBERTHREAT PREVENTION PROGRAM

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revealing sensitive information (pretexting), or understanding physical security such as not letting someone piggyback into a building after badging in.

Ted: City employees are stewards for the City data they have and for the digital tools they use. We need everyone to understand that they play a critical role. I’m responsible, they’re responsible. What we do at work can affect millions of people in Los Angeles. I can make a bad decision with a suspicious email that can ruin the life of other people I work with or members of the public. We all need to take our annual cybersecurity training seriously. We all need to be vigilant and mindful, especially around suspicious emails, phone calls, websites, downloads, or text messages. Everyone is a frontline defender. Every employee is our eyes and ears. If they see something and it looks out of place, please let your cybersecurity professionals know.

Tim: Cybersecurity is ongoing. It’s not a one-day or one-time thing. Think before they click: When employees open up an email, think about the bigger picture or bigger purpose. All City employees are part of this team.

Ted: IT professionals do a lot to cyber protect us, but they can’t do everything. It’s really important for every employee to know that they play an essential role for securing the City’s digital tools and networks.

Training Programs

Tell us about your cybersecurity training program.

Cesar: Sure. Cybersecurity and Training falls under a program we call “ITA We Secure LA.” This program is designed to create a foundation of cybersecurity consciousness to City employees while at the same time providing them the skills needed to implement secure practices, such as what to do when they receive a suspicious email or accidentally click a phishing link.

We have a full calendar of activities and events during the year. For example: In January, we have a kickoff meeting with cybersecurity training coordinators from the different departments, send an initial newsletter City-wide, and kick off our first activity called Data Privacy Week. It’s a weeklong activity where we teach about safely handling data and safe online privacy. We also invite a speaker from top cybersecurity companies to present on data privacy.

In October, we have a monthlong activity called Cybersecurity Awareness Month (CAM) targeted to online safety. In this month, we touch on different topics and behaviors that we would like to train on. We align our training for this month to the National Cybersecurity Alliance (NCA) and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Each week of the month, we bring well known cybersecurity presenters from NCA, CISA, DHS, FBI, and other agencies; send newsletters; provide information; and motivate employees to be cybersecure. The CAM ends with a ceremony where we provide letters of commendations to cybersecurity training employees who go above and beyond to acquire a high completion rate of the mandatory cybersecurity training, as well

as prizes and recognitions to employees who participate in all our activities during the year.

Ted: We can’t use City funds to pay for that prize, so we take up a collection from our own ITA managers because we feel it’s that important.

Dean: We awarded a laptop and an iPad.

Ted: It was a fast laptop too! We give away some good stuff.

Cesar: Other activities that we offer during the year include: running mandatory cybersecurity training to all non-proprietary departments, send out bi-monthly newsletters, offer bi-monthly presentations called “Cyber Office Hours,” manage quarterly simulation phishing exercises, and produce an end of year report.

Dean: Cybersecurity training is mandatory. Notices are sent out to all City employees. We also offer bonus training to different departments that want to take specific training that caters to them. For example, Personnel wanted anti-phishing training to dive deeper into that topic, so we launched assignments for them.

A Passion for Security

What do you love about what you do?

Dean: The We Secure LA team loves when we hear feedback from people about our newsletters, about our activities that we offer. We want to hear exactly what threats you see. Are there any suspicious emails that you want to report? Do you agree with the topics that we want to train on? Do you have more things you want to see that you want to hear about, for example, the safe use of AI or AI tools, or how to very simply construct a strong password.

But more specifically about my team, everybody’s great and supportive, and it’s always a pleasure to work with people and put out something that people like.

Do you like the fact that you’re protecting people?

Dean: Absolutely. We’re moving in the right direction for our mission, which is to build a more cybersecure culture.

Cesar: I believe that we all love to think that our work and efforts make a difference in the lives of others. I certainly do, but it is receiving feedback like this one that assures me that our group’s efforts make a difference. This feedback was received shortly after we sent one of our newsletters describing Toll Road texts [texts claiming to be from a toll road operator with a fee requested] as a tactic being used to phish users:

“Just wanted to compliment you on the information you send! I got a Toll Road text and it just so happened that I had been in NorCal and had used a Toll Road recently as I was waiting on the bill to come in the mail. I almost clicked on it ... but then I remembered what you all had said about that scam and deleted the text. I waited for the bill and paid it online at the official website. Thank you for all the awesome info!”

Ted: That’s great to hear, and that’s an important message: The lessons we learn at work, we should apply them at home. Pay attention to your training and spread the word to family and friends. Let’s keep cybercriminals from getting rich off of our identity or data. Take care of yourself and take care of the City of Los Angeles at work. It’s a win-win.

Tim: I love two things about this work: First, cybersecurity is science and art. It involves using cutting-edge tools and technologies, which I’m passionate about, and it also requires teamwork and collaborating with people. And the second major thing is being part of the bigger mission. What I do daily protects critical City services for four million residents. That sense of purpose motivates me and keeps me going. I love technology, I love strategy, and I love contributing to something that really matters. That makes me love what I do daily.

Ted: Problem solving. It’s a challenge to understand and outsmart motivated cybercriminals. I joined the City after 9/11 to help give back to Los Angeles. I believe government has an important purpose and role. It’s kept me here for more than 20 years. We have hard working Police Officers and Firefighters for physical public safety. At ITA, we have hard working cybersecurity professionals who provide digital public safety too. In our modern era, that has become increasingly important.

I love the continuous learning and the innovation of this job. There is always something new to learn. The world’s changing, and we have to change with it. That keeps the job interesting.

Very, very good. Tim, Cesar, Ted and Dean, thank you so much for taking the time to share your story and the details about what you’re doing with cybersecurity; it’s a fascinating topic. And thank you on behalf of all of us here at the Employees Club of California for your dedication and service.

Ted: Thank you for recognizing the hard work of our ITA Security Office. And thank you for publishing all of the great work that many different City employees and departments do. *Alive!* plays a very important role in our lives.

Tim: Thanks.

Dean: Thank you.