



Alive!



REC AND PARKS

Mission Accomplished



The legendary Belinda Jackson envisioned building the country's best rec center, and then did it — the EXPO Center. As she retires, we pay tribute.

— PAGE 12



Celebrating the work and lives of public employees.

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



A Legend Who Built a Landmark



From left: Trish Delgado, Executive Director, EXPO Center, Club Member; Belinda Jackson, Retired, Assistant General Manager, Rec and Parks; and Association CEO Robert Larios.

You know that when a Retiring employee has too many people wanting to talk to her before she leaves, she's a legend.

That is what happened after **Rose Watson** at Rec and Parks called to suggest we should interview **Belinda Jackson**. Facing postponements due to her schedule, we decided to wait until after Belinda retired in March. Finally things slowed down for her, but just barely!

Belinda Jackson built the EXPO Center. By vision, mission and sheer will, she found people to help her and partners to pitch in, and together they created a rec center that energized a community and resurrected a neighborhood. Our excellent feature this month proves that difficult things can be done. That dreams can come true. That challenging childhoods can be made meaningful.

I will now think of Belinda whenever the Club hosts a sports tournament at EXPO Center, and be reminded once again that public service is immensely worthy of our celebration and honor.

We thank Club Members **Rose Watson** for reaching out to us, and **Trish Delgado**, who replaced Belinda leading the EXPO Center, for arranging our tour.

Honoring Your Career

Retired Club Members, please sign up to receive your handsome and impressive Retirement Plaque. We love honoring you in this way! Frankly no one honors you as meaningfully as the Club does. Sign up if you are eligible. See page 11.

Also, I note the retirement of **Laura Island**, Rec and Parks, 36 years of City service. Laura was instrumental in establishing the groundbreaking PlayLA, which transformed youth sports in LA. She was on our August 2022 cover, and deservedly so. Congratulations, Laura!

Honoring You

Club Members – and all public employees – work hard, raise families, contribute to their communities and are the foundation that makes cities and states run. Civilizations would not be possible without you. You work for the people. That is why the Club works for you, to celebrate you and say out loud what often goes unmentioned: you matter. Honoring you is why the Club works hard every day to provide you with specially priced insurance products, tens of thousands of deals for your family, a claims service that takes care of you in your difficult moments, and so on. You deserve it; you deserve the Club.

Happy Summer!

¡Gracias por leer!



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!



<p>Monthly Anchors</p> <p>North Central Sanitation 452 N. San Fernando Rd., 6 – 11 a.m. The first Monday of every month: Mon., July 1 Mon., Aug. 5</p> <p>Harbor 100 W. Fifth St., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The first Wednesday of every month: Wed., July 3 Wed., Aug. 7</p> <p>West Valley StreetsLA 9324 Topanga Canyon Blvd., 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. The first Thursday of the month: Thurs., Aug. 8 Thurs., Sept. 5</p>	<p>Additional Visits</p> <p>LAWA Admin Office 7301 World Way West, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Wed., July 10</p> <p>Harbor Animal Services 957 N. Gaffey St., 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Thurs., July 11</p> <p>McArthur Dist. Rec & Parks 2230 W 6th St., 8 – 10 a.m. Wed., July 24</p>	<p>Oxnard Street Services 15145 Oxnard St., 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Fri., July 26</p> <p>Livability Services 2649 W. Washington Blvd., 6 – 8 a.m. Tues., July 30</p>
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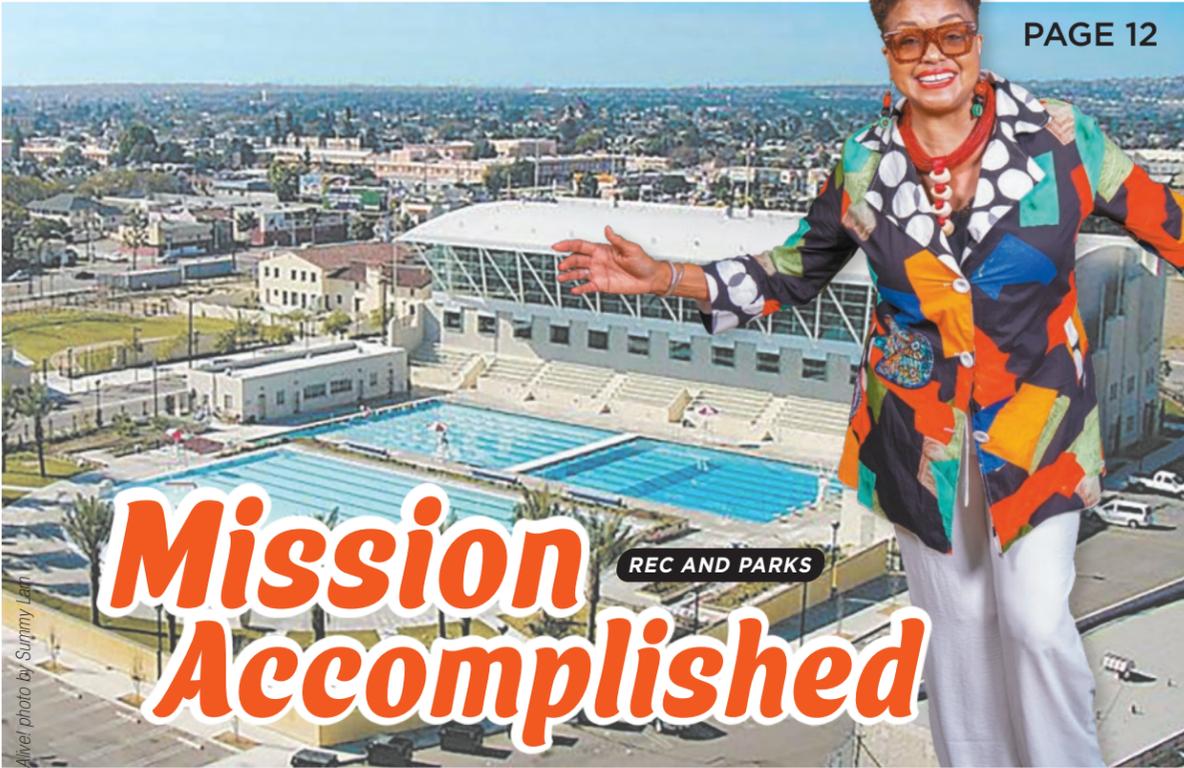
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Mission Accomplished

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Belinda Jackson set out to build the country's best rec center. Did she ever.

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alive.employeesclub.com/grown-up-coloring-contest



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The Club
Honors Our
Members

Checking In

EXEC. DIRECTOR GENE SEROKA SHARES MONTHLY UPDATES WITH C&M.

HARBOR: On March 29, Harbor Executive Director Gene Seroka, Club Member, held the quarterly Town Hall gathering for Construction and Maintenance employees. The regular events update the C&M staff on Harbor news updates and recognize employees for their strong safety records and present service dedication awards. With more than 200 employees, C&M supports the maintenance, repair, alteration and reconstruction of Harbor-owned facilities and infrastructure.

The gathering was held at Banning's Landing Community Center. ●

Special thanks to the Harbor's Rachel Campbell, Club Member, for her assistance.



Executive Director Gene Seroka and the regular C&M check-in gathering.

Honored for their years of service to the City were:

10 Years

Jasmine Castro
Frank Alvarez

15 Years

Rafael Diaz
Willie Brown
Angel Avila
Stephen James
Marco Santa Cruz
Ricky Duttalles
Robert Bustamante
Mikquel Jamerson

20 Years

Luis Daniel Ruiz
Tony Maxwell
Tina Lizada
Thuong Le
Martin Lovato
Sam Meek
David Comer
Sher Sha
Jamie Smith

25 Years

Omero Guzman
Alfred Vasquez
Daniel Hughes

30 Years

Michael Dinius
Jesse Gonzales

35 Years

Ramon Estrada

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Guiding Principles Returns

LACERS HONORS ITS BEST EMPLOYEES AS EVENT RETURNS POST-PANDEMIC.

Story and photos courtesy
Amelia Herrera-Robles, LACERS



LACERS: On May 9, LACERS held its seventh Employee Appreciation Week and Guiding Principles event to award employees who best represent the principle categories of professionalism, innovation, respect, kindness and caring, and teamwork. It was the first Guiding Principles event in person since the pandemic, although honors were presented virtually in the interim.

LACERS hosts Employee Appreciation and the Guiding Principles Awards to highlight and promote the outstanding achievements of the public servants who work tirelessly every day and consistently exhibit the LACERS guiding principles.

Employee Appreciation Week was held May 7-9, in conjunction with National Public Works Week.

Employees who were voted and selected by their peers for the honor collected certificates. What a way to congratulate and acknowledge those employees who work hard every day and make sure those they are serving are treated with respect and professionalism.

The event, was held in the LACERS Board Room in its new headquarters building.

Hosts acknowledged all those nominated for each award and then the awardee.

The Club thanks Neil Guglielmo, General Manager, Club Member, and the LACERS staff for their assistance in producing this story.



Kindness and Caring Team Awardees – the Survivor Benefit Unit: Brittany Cotton, Marilyn Hernandez, Evelyn Sanchez, Ursula Ruiz, Adrienne Hobbs, Nancy Mirano and Rachelle Ramiento. Not pictured: Brittany Cotton, Ursula Ruiz and Adrienne Hobbs. (Pictured with executives Rod June, Neil Guglielmo and Todd Bouey.)



The Guiding Principles awards were presented by LACERS Board Members and staff, from left: Michael R. Wilkinson, Club Member; Gaylord "Rusty" Roten, President; Annie Chao, Club Member; Neil Guglielmo, General Manager, Club Member; and Todd Bouey, Assistant General Manager.



Teamwork Team Awardees – Systems and HRP Integration Transition Team: Cliff Lim, Tracy Beloin and Zoie Nguyen. (Pictured with executives Rod June, Neil Guglielmo and Todd Bouey.)



Innovation Team Awardees – the Member Processing Unit: Kevin Hirose, Jamie Roberts, Felix Lewis, Pauline Pelagio and Roxana Haro.

Teamwork Team Awardees – the HRP Integration Transition Team: Kevin Hirose, Lisa Li, Andy Chiu, Lillian Cao, Lauren McCall, Brian Cha, Ryan Intal, Sevan Simonian, Alex Lombardo, Karina Coimbra, Kimmy Kwan, Lian MacDonough and Linda Huynh. Not pictured: Andy Chiu, Lauren McCall, Brian Cha, Ryan Intal, Sevan Simonian, Alex Lombardo, Karina Coimbra, Kimmy Kwan, Lian MacDonough and Linda Huynh. (Pictured with executives Rod June, Neil Guglielmo and Todd Bouey.)

Guiding Principles Awards

2024 Honorees: The Guiding Principles Awards are presented to individuals and teams nominated and voted upon by their peers. These individuals and teams champion the LACERS Guiding Principles and incorporate these values into their daily work.

Kindness and Caring

Individual Award:
Christopherson Ilano
Felix Lewis
Lin Lin
Jeremiah Paras
Amelia Herrera-Robles

Team Award:
Survivor Benefit Unit:
Brittany Cotton
Marilyn Hernandez
Evelyn Sanchez
Ursula Ruiz
Adrienne Hobbs
Nancy Mirano
Rachelle Ramiento

Respect

Individual Award:
Aurora Binder
James Kawashima
Khia Moore
Lucy Fu
Rainbow Sun

Professionalism

Individual Award:
Ada Lok
Aleli Capati
Ani Ghokassian
Audrey Dymally
Carol Rembert
Margaret Drenk
Heather Ramirez
John Koontz

Team Award:
Fiscal Management Division:
Jo Ann Peralta
Selina Wong
Nancy Obiacoro
Lolita Badar
Candice Urbano
Bassant Saad
Justin Lam
Aurora Binder
Stacey Garcia
Teresita Dauigoy
Elsa Lam
Carmelita Klingbeil
Clarence Ou

Teamwork

Individual Award:
Chhintana Kurimoto
Estella Priebe
Isaias Cantu
Kevin Hirose
Lisa Li
Anni Quach
Thomas Ma

Team Award:
Systems/HRP Integration Transition Team:
Cliff Lim
Tracy Beloin
Zoie Nguyen

Team Award:
HRP Integration Transition Team:
Kevin Hirose

Lisa Li
Andy Chiu
Lillian Cao
Lauren McCall
Brian Cha
Ryan Intal
Sevan Simonian
Alex Lombardo
Karina Coimbra
Kimmy Kwan
Lian MacDonough
Linda Huynh

Team Award:
Move-In and HRP Integration Transition Team:
Thomas Ma
Ed Leh
Christopher Yip

Christopherson Ilano
Jason Leung
Aleli Capati

Team Award:
Administrative Services Office:
Edwin Avanesian
Isaias Cantu
Horacio Arroyo
Kristen Szanto
Julie Guan.
John Koontz
Alfredo Munguia

Innovation

Individual Award:
Julia Guan
Marcel Nguyen
Taneda Larios
Vikram Jadhav
Ellen Chen

Team Award:
Member Processing Unit:
Kevin Hirose
Jamie Roberts
Felix Lewis
Pauline Pelagio
Roxana Haro

Congratulations to all the awardees, and all employees who uphold LACERS' highest ideals.



Fun times at the Guiding Principles award event.



LACERS executives and staff serve the lunch to employees.



Teamwork Individual Awardees: Chhintana Kurimoto, Estella Priebe, Isaias Cantu, Kevin Hirose and Lisa Li. Not pictured: Anni Quach and Thomas Ma. (Pictured with executives Rod June, Neil Guglielmo and Todd Bouey.)



Professionalism Individual Awardees: Ada Lok, Aleli Capati, Ani Ghokassian, Audrey Dymally, Carol Rembert, Margaret Drenk, Heather Ramirez and John Koontz. Not pictured: Ada Lok, Carol Rembert, and John Koontz. (Pictured with executives Rod June, Neil Guglielmo and Todd Bouey.)



Teamwork Team Awardees were Julie Guan, Alfredo Munguia, Edwin Avanesian, Kristen Szanto and Isaias Cantu. Not pictured: John Koontz and Alfredo Munguia. (Pictured with executives Neil Guglielmo and Rod June.)

More pics on
Web Alive!
alive.employeesclub.com



READY FOR RETIREMENT



Resources for Those About to Retire and Club Retirees



by Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

"The best way to predict the future is to create it." - Peter Drucker

CA LICENSE NO: 0H45598

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO RETIRE

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

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

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

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

Attend a Retirement Planning Party!

Date: Last Thursday of each month
(Choose one: Jul. 25, Aug. 29, or Sep. 26)

Time: 1 – 2 p.m.

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

Parking: Validated parking provided.

RSVP today!

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

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



Meet Your Club Counselors



Cheryl Martin
Member Services
Counselor



Cynthia Ha
Member Services
Counselor



Dylan Noel
Member Services
Counselor



Dalila Vielma
Member Services
Counselor

Protect Yourself and Your Family with These Benefits Available Through the Club:

Life Insurance:
Take the burden off your loved ones

Critical Illness and Cancer Insurance:
Provide financial security

Accident Insurance:
Ensure your peace of mind

MetLife Legal Insurance:
Access legal help when you need it

Pet Insurance:
Cover your furry friend's health

CLUB CHECK-IN FOR RETIREES

It's time to check in, Club Retirees, to make sure you're taking advantage of all the Club offers!

1. Are you on pension deductions for your Club Membership and insurances?

If you are not, please call (800) 464-0452 or email help@employeesclub.com and let us know that you are a Retiree and need to complete a pension form.

2. Do you have Life Insurance for you and your spouse so that your loved ones are protected in the future?

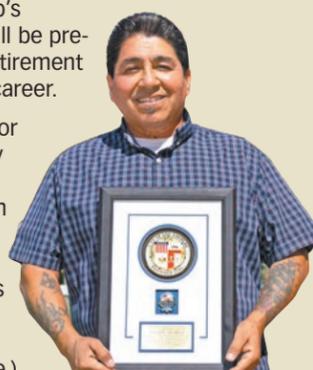
- A life insurance policy can provide an income for your spouse as they wait for your retirement benefits to transfer; cover funeral and burial expenses; and provide for any loved ones who rely on your income.
- Coverage is available for Members, spouses, and dependent children.
- Benefits range from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

3. Have you received your retirement plaque from the Club?

The Club wants to recognize and acknowledge the hard work and dedication you put in each day to make our City and state better places to live and work.

It doesn't matter if you have been Retired for some time, newly Retired, or plan to retire soon, Retired Club Members are eligible to take part in the Club's Retirement Ceremony, where you'll be presented with a customized Club Retirement Plaque as we pay tribute to your career.

We will also feature you in *Alive!* for your friends, coworkers and family to celebrate. Begin the process by emailing help@employeesclub.com and let us know you would like a retirement plaque and a Club representative will get the process started for you! (You have to have been a Club Member for at least five continuous years to be eligible.)



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



Retired or Retiring Soon?

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



Cheryl Martin
(800) 464-0452, EXT. 136
Work cell: (213) 819-0794
23 years of insurance experience
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2024 Events

LARFPA

Sept. 4
General Membership Meeting
San Antonio Winery
737 Lamar St., Los Angeles
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Reservation information:

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

Contact Information

Employees Club of California
Club contact:
help@employeesclub.com

Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) (City Dept.)
(800) 779-8328
lacers.services@lacers.org

LADWP Retirees Association
Dolores Foley, *President*
(213) 367-3146
vincedolores@gmail.com

Fire and Police Pensions (City Dept.)
(844) 885-2377
pensions@lafpp.com

LA Retired Fire and Police Association (LARFPA)
(888) 288-5073
membership@larfpa.org

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)
See page 16

Images courtesy LaBonge family



“Schedule the Club Truck for a visit! It’s good for employees. It’s good for morale!”

— Pete Gomez, Street Services Supervisor I, Public Works, Club Member



Tom Among the Stars

GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY NAMES SEAT IN HONOR OF THE LATE TOM LABONGE.

Tom’s daughter, Mary-Cate, and widow Brigid LaBonge at Griffith Observatory.

REC AND PARKS: Before he tragically passed away, former Councilman and proud Club Member Tom LaBonge had visited every corner of the City.

Now he’s among the stars.

In May, the Griffith Observatory named seat F17 in its planetarium for Tom, who passed away in 2021. He was a passionate supporter of all elements of Griffith Park, including the Observatory.

“Tom has taken a place among the stars at Griffith Observatory,” Tom’s family wrote on its Instagram page. “Thank you to Dr. Ed Krupp and the Griffith Observatory Foundation.” ●



Tom LaBonge

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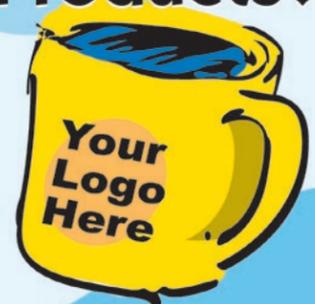
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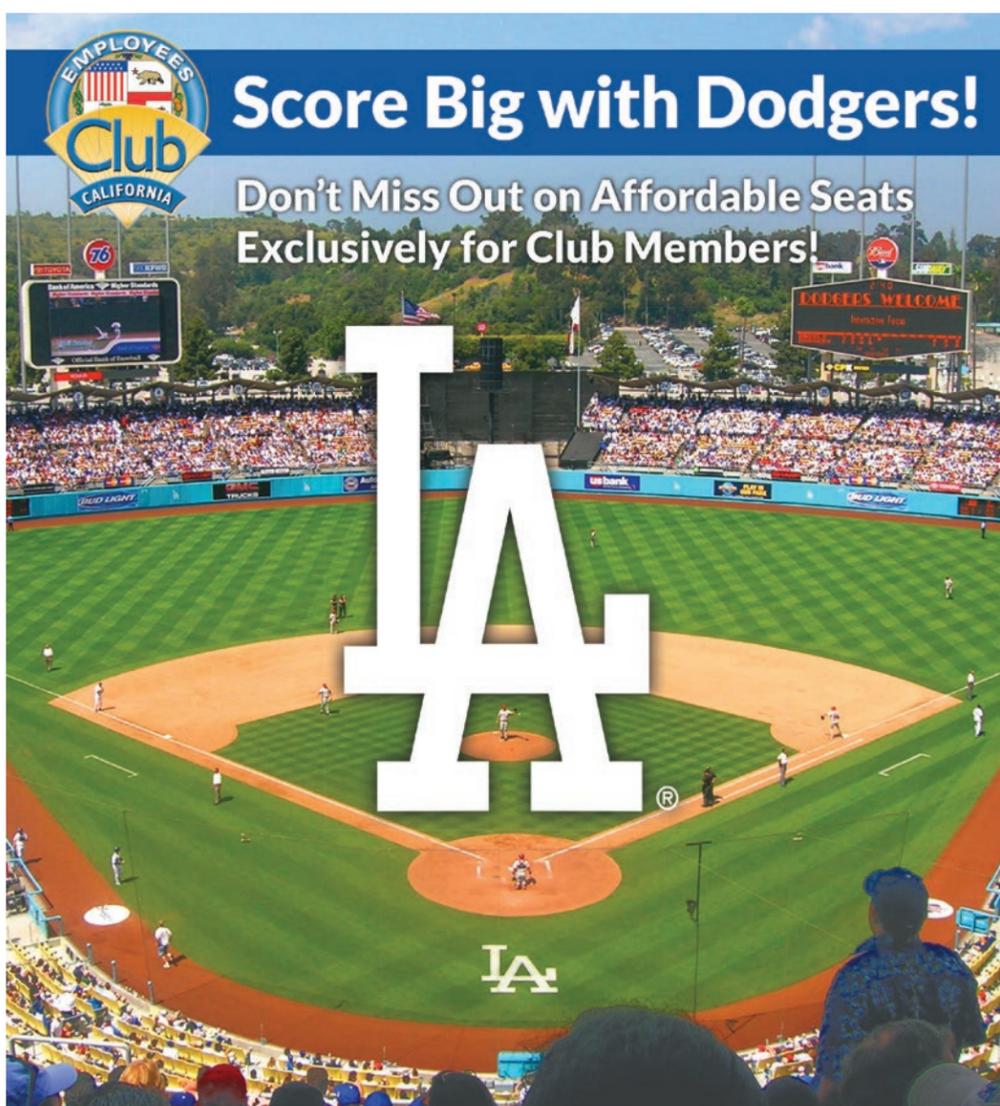


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For More Information
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 213-225-1790

NOTE: The promotional photo is just a glimpse—the seats offered by the Club are often better and closer than pictured! For the best experience, please confirm the exact location before making your purchase.

RESULTS OF THE BIG RACE

Story and photos by Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development, and Daniel Wang



CITYWIDE

BAKER to VEGAS

SAVE THE DATE:
The 2025 B2V Race will take place
April 5-6, 2025.

RACE DAY



Team 105 LAPD Communications Division/SECS D Leg 1 runner Cristina Rios, Club Member.



Team 124 Los Angeles City Attorney Team (from left) Chief Deputy Valerie Flores, 21 years of City service; Victor Martin, Investigator, Leg 1 runner and 14-year race participant, 21 years, Club Member; and Assistant City Attorney Adrienne Khorasaneh, 20 years.



Team 197 LADOT Leg 1 runner George Moran, Club Member.



LAPD Devonshire Capt. Eric Eppolito



Team 130 LA County Probation Team (from left) David Tsushima, SDPO, 36 years of City service and a 20-year participant, Club Member, takes on Leg 1 for the team alongside Sandra Fernandez and Rebecca Rios, DSO, 7 years, who would be running Leg 4, and Elizabeth Gonzales, DPO, 17 years. They ran to honor Sr. DSO Stanley Guyness, EOW 09/07/2023.



Team 130 LA County Probation's Daniel Rivera, Club Member, on Leg 6



Team 116 LAPD Harbor Division, running in honor of Police Officer II Austin Cronkrite, who was 29 years old with 6 years of City service when he passed away from cancer, were (from left) Ray Nonora, P.III, Club Member, 32 years of City service, and Jon Batongmalaque, P II, 6 years of service. Jon was a third-year participant.



Arlene Herrero, Club VP of Business Development, on the racecourse with LAPD Chief Dominic Choi and Capt. Amira Eppolito, Club Member.

LAPD overall winner as Club celebrates 20 years of sponsoring teams in this popular desert footrace.

The 40th annual Baker to Vegas Challenge Cup Relay grew in its third year after a hiatus during the pandemic, and the Club was there for all the action!

The race was held from the desert to Las Vegas March 23-24. This amazing footrace is an annual event for public safety organizations throughout the world. The relay race is a 120-mile, 20-stage footrace between Baker, California, and Las Vegas and is considered the "Super Bowl" of law enforcement; the champions are the best, in terms of physical fitness and logistics the police world has to offer. The race was created by and is managed by the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club, and the Employees Club is grateful for their leadership.

The 2024 edition of Baker to Vegas – marking the Club's 20th year sponsoring individual teams – was another outstanding year, with 258 teams participating (up from 230 teams last year, approximately). The New York Police Dept, won the overall race with 12:19:44 taking the title away from LAPD Citywide who took the title in 2023. New York came in second place in 2023. In second place was CHP Elite (12:27:11), followed by LAPD Elite (12:35:36).

The Club once again was on the racecourse to capture much of what unfolded. Runners enjoyed exceptional weather, a stark contrast to the harsh conditions often associated with the Baker to Vegas race. It was a beautiful 65 degrees during the 11:30 a.m. start time with 21%-26% humidity, 18 mph wind gusts and certainly the most ideal weather conditions in the many years that I have seen.

The Club sponsored nine teams from different agencies:

- Team 124 Los Angeles City Attorney (16:57:12)
- Team 22 Los Angeles Airport Police (15:36:31, which took third place in the overall Mixed category, bringing home a trophy mug);
- Team 88 Los Angeles Port Police (16:18:47, taking home a trophy mug) placed sixth out of 27 teams;
- Team 195 LADOT (17:50:16 with 10-minute penalty) placed 19th of 31 teams and shaved an amazing four hours off their final time last year;
- Team 105 LAPD Communications Division/LAPD SECS D (17:50:19);
- Team 130 LA County Probation (17:29:40);
- Team 241 DHCS ID (20:14:37);
- Team 45 LAPD Mission (17:19:08);
- Team 43 LAPD Newton (15:08:22) took third place in their overall Station category and brought home a trophy mug).

Team Reports

Here are some notable takeaways from a few of the Club's sponsored team:

LA City Attorney

LA City Attorney Team co-captains were David Michaelson and Valerie Flores with Robbie Britton as their support captain. "We are pretty well organized after all of these years, but fundraising is always a challenge every year, and that is why we are so grateful for the Club's support," David reported.

LAXPD

LAXPD Team co-captains were: Roxanna Carlos, Daniel Gardea and Greg Iwamiya. "We have around 36 volunteers, and new members meshed very well with our senior runners and they all seemed to have a great time," Roxanna reported. "Challenges often step in from last-minute injuries, cancellations and making sure our overall equipment and supplies are ready. This year with new last-minute runners added, everyone did an outstanding job, injury free, and we successfully reached the podium for the sec-

ond year in a row. We plan to organize more training throughout the year to train and prepare new runners for 2025. Having support from our department has allowed us to become successful as we are a very competitive team."

LADOT

LADOT Team running captain was Officer Antonio Cordoba, and Sgt. LaTisha Vargas is the Support Team Captain. "Our team was four hours faster than last year," LaTisha reported. "Special thanks to Team Captain Cordoba for the running regimes that helped the team improve. We also extend an invitation for all LADOT employees to participate in next year's race, both runners and support."

LAPD Communications/SECS D

LAPD Communications/SECS D Team co-captains were Frank Sarabia, Yvette Castillo and Rick Montoya. "We are very grateful for the Club's support year after year." Frank reported. "Our team went out there and gave it their all, which is precisely what we as captains could hope for. We're proud of the team and are eager to return next year to do it all over again."

CA DHCS ID

Team DHCS ID team captain was Brandon Butler, and co-captains were David Perinati and Larry Lising. Brent Kaneyuki, an Auditor with DHCS, dominated his 6.6-mile leg with an impressive 5:57-minute average mile pace. He finished first out of all 258 teams in that leg. "Brent ran like a gazelle, passing any and all runners he came across – our follow van even had a hard time keeping up with him," Brandon reported. "Brent now sets the record for the fastest Leg 8 time out of all 39 years B2V has been around!"

"Despite difficult terrain, extreme desert wind and brutal hills, fluctuating heat during the day and freezing temperatures at night, the CA DHCS ID team successfully completed the Baker to Vegas 2024 race. Many team members stepped out of their comfort zone training for this race despite no prior competitive running experience. Their drive and determination turned into amazing average mile times. Our department Chief even took part, starting the team off strong completing the first leg of the race to set the tone for what was to come. One team member got sick during their run and still finished; another runner finished their leg despite suffering from severe food poisoning the night before and celebrated their victory in the urgent care directly after crossing the finish line – nothing stopped us! Most teams generally had five to 10 alternate runners, while we only had one, a testament to all runners' drive to complete the race and do their part.

"We plan to have an even bigger team for 2025, holding team training sessions and time trials to compete with the best teams in the race. We look forward to what 2025 has in store for the CA DHCS ID team!"

LA Port Police

LA Port Police Team captains were Officer Jose Verbera and Officer Garbe. Support captain: Christine Pina.

"Our team raced in the Mixed Category and placed sixth out of 27 teams with a time of 16:18:47, our fastest record time in Port Police history," Officer Verbera reported. "Overall, we ranked 81 out of 256 teams with an average team pace of 8:10 m/s, bringing back home the treasured Baker to Vegas mug.

"Our team represented Port Police well, beating LAPD Harbor Division for the second year in a row in a friendly competition for the Baker to Vegas Bridge Trophy. This trophy is awarded to the fastest B2V team between Port Police and LAPD Harbor Division. LAPD Harbor Division finished the race with an overall time of 16:33:13.

"We look forward to Baker to Vegas 2025, with goals to be top three in our category and sub-50th place in the overall race."



THANK YOU!

The Club couldn't produce this comprehensive Baker to Vegas review without the big help of the following: Sgt. Latisha Vargas, LADOT; Officer Jose Verbera, Harbor; DPO II Paul Chavez, LA County Probation; Sgt. Roxana Carlos and Officer Daniel Gardea, Los Angeles Airport Police; Rick Montoya and Francisco Sarabia, LAPD Communications/SECS D; Brandon Butler from CA State; Sgt. Anna Marie Izzo, LAPD Mission; Officer Cathy Emestica, LAPD Mission; and Valerie Flores and David Michaelson, LA City Attorney.

And the Club acknowledges the Los Angeles Police Revolver and Athletic Club, which created and manages Baker to Vegas. The Employees Club is grateful for their leadership.

BAKER TO VEGAS 2024



The Race Is On!



Team 22 LAX (from left) team captain Daniel Gardea; Sgt. Myrna Carbajo; Officer Claudia Nufio, Leg 1 runner; Madeleine Flanagan, Sr. Management Analyst II; and Officer Cheryl Dickson. All are Club Members.



Longtime volunteer KNX Reporter Pete Demetriou goes over last-minute road conditions with the runners.



Team 43 LAPD Newton (from left) P3+1 Tony Hurtado, team captain, 19 years of City service; with Leg 1 runner Det. I Brendy Ponce, 20 years.



Team 45 LAPD Mission (from left): Erick Werner, PII, 4 years of City service, Club Member; Hayley Alvarez, PII, 2 years, Club Member; Officer Anyanna Lara, 1 year and first-time participant, Club Member; Melissa Vasquez, P II, 2 years; and Marcos Ramirez, P II, 5 years, Club Member.



The Team 130 LA County Probation follow vehicle closely monitors Leg 1 Runner David Tsu-shima, Club Member, on the racecourse.



Team 241 DHCS ID's Suzan Clemmensen.



Crossing the finish line is Team 105 LAPD Communications Division/SECSD's Marco Munoz, Club Member.



Team 22 LAX Police's Chief Cecil Rhambo, Club Member.



It's always a pleasure to see familiar faces each year, with Retired Sgt. Vince Aguirre and his son, Justin.



At the finish line, from left: Assistant City Attorney Adrienne Khorasane; Deputy City Attorney Tamar Galatzan; and Chief Deputy Valerie Flores.



Winning the station category was Team 13 LAPD Southeast Division at 14:32:30.



Winning the 800 Category was Team 32 CA Game Wardens at 15:14:48.



Team 43 LAPD Newton's Nathaniel Lugo, Club Member.



Team 197 LADOT's Arturo Medina, Club Member, on Leg 6.



Team 88 LA Port PD's Officer Il Hinojosa, Club Member, on Leg 7.



Team 22 LAX's Sgt. Pedro Preciado, Club Member, on Leg 2.



Team 105 LAPD Communications Division/SECSD's Emilio Zacarias, Club Member, on Leg 8.



Team 241 DHCS ID Leg 9 runner Deanna Nelson



Team 237 Gardena PD's Officer Xochi Martinez, 2 years of service.



Team 43 Newton's Sgt. Mario Marquez.



Team 124 Los Angeles City Attorney's K. Duflner.



Team 130 LA County Probation's Roseanne Villasenor.

More than 60 Great Photos on Web Alive!



Team 124 LA City Attorney at the finish line.



Finishing first in the women's category was Team 34 LASD Women at 15:15:06, even with a 10-minute penalty.



Winning the mixed category was Team 24 San Diego Sheriff's Dept. at 15:05:22.



Winning the open category was Team 2 NYPD Men's team at 12:19:43. They were the overall winner.

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Denmark



Alive! editor **John Burnes** stands on Højbro Pladson among the big walking streets in Old Town Copenhagen. Behind him are the statue of the warrior Bishop of Absalon, the founder of modern Copenhagen, and the spire of St. Nicholas Church, now a contemporary arts center. **John used the Club's discount to save on long-term parking at LAX. Take advantage!**

CLUB MEMBER TRAVEL DEALS

Traveling somewhere fun like Capt. Barnes? Save money with thousands of awesome Club deals!



EMPLOYEESCLUB.COM

Letter From Argentina, Pt. 2

Grass-Fed Beef and Intense Malbec.

Flying to Argentina via Chile enabled us to take a local flight to Buenos Aires's smaller city airport, closer to our Airbnb base in Palermo, and to explore the city. Like most visitors to Buenos Aires, we immediately fell in love with the town and wanted to stay forever. Its friendly people, great food and unbelievable Malbec wines, all at a third of the cost of Los Angeles, made it like a dream come true.



Arriving at Jorge Newbery Airport Buenos Aires city Airport

In Buenos Aires, "buenos aires" is Spanish for "fair winds" or "good airs." You'll find time-warp cafes and no-frills parrillas (steakhouses), most of which serve the same dishes: steak of varying cuts, potato fries, slightly overcooked pasta, juicy empanadas, and simple salads.

Avoid the guidebook or cruise ship recommendations of Don This or Don That restaurants, as they are overpriced and full of loud tourists. Some offer a free drink for standing in line without a reservation, but they hope to fill a rare no-show reservation, so it's to keep you waiting.

To enjoy the actual city, leave the new hotel district with its high-end shops, restaurants and bars, like the speakeasy Floreria Atlántico, whose entrance is hidden in a flower shop refrigerator door and seems to attract only the young and beautiful people. Even though Uber is not supposed to exist, it's a thriving business in Buenos Aires, fast and usable with your home account; the average fare anywhere in the city is between \$3 and \$6. Head for the Palermo neighborhood, with its abundance of casual restaurants, including many parrillas that don't take reservations, like Carneros, which is reasonably priced, serves generous portions, and has a good wine list and friendly servers, so start with a cocktail and work your way into dinner.

Palermo is where most of the city's nightlife is concentrated, from drinking Cynar juleps on the rooftop at the eclectically stylish Rey de Copas to passing through a local bookstore to its backroom bar and the small club in the rear that was playing Latin American jazz on the night we visited.

Weekend markets are held in Plaza Serrano and nearby Plaza Francia. In Recoleta, you can find artwork and hand-

Captain's Log

Traveling with Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor



stitched leather bags. Most tourists usually eat before nine, while locals live to party, eating from 9 p.m. until after midnight. You'll spot local older diners sharing a bottle or two of Malbec while watching young children play. As for clubs, they wind down only in the predawn hours. The secret is to sneak an afternoon nap.

Locals rise late (most shops open at 10 a.m., and museums rarely stir before midday). Skip your hotel breakfast and enjoy some medialunas (Argentine croissants) sitting outside a sidewalk café sipping a coffee before taking off to explore the city.

Take a hop-on-hop-off bus on your first day to get oriented. The tour takes three hours, so if you intend to visit any sites, start early and make a day of it. From the pink-walled Casa Rosada (allegedly painted with cow's blood), where the President of Argentina lives, the renowned white-walled Recoleta Cemetery, with its elaborate tombs and Sunday artists market, to the gallic neighborhood of Retiro, where with its tree-lined streets, early 1900s palaces, and mansions on a fall afternoon – it is like a quiet Paris neighborhood. Finally, it ends with the English Tower, now called the Torre Monumental, from whose top is a view of the Río de la Plata.

For those who have more time, we recommend a free walking tour of the city center. The tour starts at the Teatro Colon and weaves down grand avenues, passing the Pope's huge million-dollar palace—never used but empty, just in case he wants to visit! It also passes the Israeli embassy that was destroyed by a bomb and the memorial to the Falkland Islands skirmish guarded by two uniformed sailors.

Argentina is one of the most carnivorous countries in the world, so if you're not a meat eater, drink lots of Malbec with your salad.

Cheers!

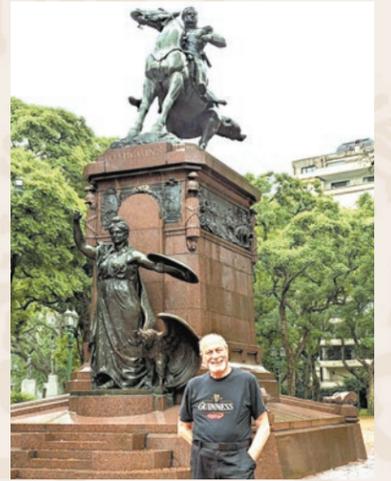
— The Captain

More pictures on Web Alive!



Send in a travel picture holding Alive!

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



Statue of Bernardo O'Higgins in Buenos Aires

Arlene on the Scene

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



Arlene Herrero
Vice President of Business Development

June 10 & 12

On June 12, Arlene and the Club Mobile Team attended the employees appreciation day at LAX, sponsored by the Association of Airport Employees. Arlene ran into Airport Police Officer II Sofia Gallegos, 21 years of City service, Club Member.

On June 10 in San Diego, Arlene ran into Airport Police Capt. Anthony Boisselle at the United States Police and Fire Championships in San Diego. The Club exhibited at the event and co-sponsored it.



Arlene with Airport Police Officer II Sofia Gallegos, 21 years of City service, Club Member.



Arlene with Airport Police Capt. Anthony Boisselle.

CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE PRESENTATIONS

We Honor Your Service!

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



Laura Island
Rec and Parks,
Retired after 36
years of City
service.



Lorenzo Campos
LADWP, Retired after
36 years of City service.



LAFD Firefighters representing those who saved a man's business were recognized at an LAFD Fire Commission meeting for saving a citizen's business. Fox 11 image

Thanks, Firefighters

OWNER THANKS LAFD FIREFIGHTERS FOR SAVING HIS BUSINESS.

LAFD: On May 7, the Los Angeles City Board of Fire Commissioners recognized a group of firefighters after a business owner penned a letter to the Fire Chief extending his gratitude for saving his business.

Firefighters responded to a call on East 59th Street Dec. 16 to find heavy fire showing from a one-story commercial building in the Florence area. More than 80 LAFD firefighters battled flames for more than an hour to protect businesses on either side of the fire unit and extinguish the flames.

Business owner Harrison Karabel wrote a letter to Fire Chief Kristin Crowley to express his appreciation. The letter read:

Fire Chief Crowley,

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the first responders to the warehouse mentioned above where a structural fire was in progress on Sat. 12/16/2023, which is right next door to my property.

I must commend those courageous men and women, those heroic 80 or more firefighters for responding so quickly. Just to watch those true professionals spring into action without hesitation at the obvious danger of a warehouse fully engulfed in flames at the possibility of putting their own lives in danger to contain the fire and possibly rescue anyone that may have been inside.

With the help of the RS3 Robotic Firefighting Vehicle, the fire department was able to contain the fire to where there was minimal damage to my property. They saved my manufacturing warehouse, where I employ longtime employees who will be able to return to work after the holidays. That alone will always have our unmeasurable gratitude and unwavering highest esteem for a job beyond well done.

My family has been operating in the construction industry in the city of Los Angeles since 1944. This is why I was compelled to write this letter of thanks to you and your Los Angeles and neighboring fire departments that helped contain that fire that could have been so much worse. I must again commend them for doing a job well done. Under your continued leadership I am confident that they will be even more exemplary men and women firefighter as they are now.

Sincerely,
Harrison Karabel

Chief Crowley was moved by the kind words and effort of Mr. Karabel and shared this with the highest authority in the Fire Dept. – the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Firefighters who were the first to respond to this incident were invited to the May Board of Fire Commissioners meeting to be recognized for their efforts and meet Mr. Karabel, who expressed his gratitude. Certificates of Appreciation were issued to each member, which read:

"In recognition and sincere gratitude of your heroic courage, diligent efforts, personal initiative and expedient firefighting efforts to save multiple commercial buildings, performed during dangerous conditions at 911 E. 59th Street, in South Los Angeles, California, on Dec. 16, 2023. The Los Angeles Fire Dept. commends you for your extraordinary property-saving efforts to the citizens of the City of Los Angeles."

THE FOLLOWING LAFD MEMBERS WERE RECOGNIZED:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Firefighter Andrew Johnson | Apparatus Operator Trevor Insley |
| Firefighter Steven Avedissian | Apparatus Operator Ryan Thompson |
| Firefighter Christopher Johnson | Engineer Cody Crippen |
| Firefighter Steven Canchola | Engineer Scott Kwasigroch |
| Firefighter Dylan Casey | Engineer Steven Jones |
| Firefighter Keith Castillo | Engineer Gregory Sanders II |
| Firefighter Timothy Coulombe | Capt. Claudio Fluxa |
| Firefighter Jose Gomez | Capt. Jared Cooper |
| Firefighter/Paramedic Alexander Nehrich | Capt. Trevor Cooper |
| Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Tapia | Capt. Frank Macias |
| Apparatus Operator Erin James | Battalion Chief Patrick Leonard |
| Apparatus Operator Preston Newman | |

To all those who helped save the citizen's business, the Club says well done and thank you!

FREE! *CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE
Retired or Retiring Soon? Get started here:

Receive your own personalized Club Retirement Plaque, free! (Must be a Club Member for at least five consecutive years.)
* a \$499 value!



Photos courtesy Cabrillo Marine Aquarium/Shark Week



Sharks like these are the focus of CMA's Shark Week 2024.



Jawsome!

CABRILLO MARINE AQUARIUM HOSTS SHARK WEEK FEATURING THE FEARED SEA CREATURES.

Shark Week
July 14-19

2 – 5 p.m.

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium
3720 Stephen M White Dr,
San Pedro, CA 90731

REC AND PARKS: Coinciding with TV's week of sharks, Cabrillo Marine Aquarium presents its own Shark Week from 2 to 5 p.m. July 14-19. Shark Week features special shark crafts and activities each day.

The Exploration Center invites kids of all ages to participate in an exciting shark egg case craft that they can take home. Plus, learn why sharks are so important for our marine ecosystem and how we can help protect them from extinction.

The Marine Research Library at the Aquarium will have special shark videos, Shark Week books, and exciting shark word searches and puzzles to solve.

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium Collections will also have a shark specimen display, featuring real shark egg cases, sharkskin and shark jaws.

Other daily activities in the past have included a Shark Week fact scavenger hunt, special Shark Week photo opportunities and a special Shark Week auditorium presentation about the different sharks that live in our oceans and how humans are impacting their populations and environments.

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is at 3720 Stephen M. White Dr. in San Pedro on the shores of Cabrillo Beach and is a Rec and Parks facility with support from Friends of Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. Public hours are Tuesday through Friday from noon to 5 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Mondays. For Shark Week program schedule or further information, please call (310) 548-7562 or visit www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org.



You Are Appreciated At the Club

ALIVE! FEATURE



Mission Accomplished

REC AND PARKS

Photos by Summy Lam, Club COO, and courtesy Rec and Parks

The legendary Belinda Jackson envisioned building the country’s best rec center, and then did it – the EXPO Center. As she retires, we pay tribute.

A City powerhouse has retired. Without Belinda Jackson, there would be no EXPO Center, maybe the finest public recreation center in the country. Maybe the tens of thousands of City lives of all ages wouldn't have been made as good as they were. Maybe the 2028 Olympics wouldn't have an LA City place to come back to.

But all of those things happened because of the hard work she, her partners and her staff contributed.

Belinda Jackson retired in March. It's time to pay tribute to a career dedicated to building incredible resources for the communities in which Angelenos live.

"There are individuals whose dedication and passion truly shape the fabric of commu-

nities," Councilman Curren Price said at her City Council ceremony marking her retirement.

"Belinda Jackson is one prime example."

Believe it or not, that's not all she accomplished. As Assistant General Manager, she oversaw the operations of more than 500 parks and more than 123 recreational centers throughout the City. And she played a pivotal role in securing the critical funds for PlayLA, a groundbreaking \$160 million initiative which offers every child in the City an opportunity to engage in sports activities in their own neighborhoods. (*Alive!* covered PlayLA

extensively in August 2022.)

"As we celebrate her retirement, Ms. Jackson's commitment to the City of Los Angeles over the past 23 years of service has left an imprint through her innovation, and her extraordinary contributions in building stronger, healthier and more equitable communities," Councilman Price continued.

In this issue, we honor Belinda for her amazing career, her incredible hard work and her passion for giving back to communities. ●



Alive! covered PlayLA extensively in August 2022

THANK YOU!

The Club thanks Warren Young and Rec and Parks' Rose Watson, Trish Delgado and Aryssa Durrell for their assistance in producing this tribute.



Belinda Jackson (far left) and EXPO Center staff.



Belinda Jackson and then-Chair of the Friends of EXPO Center, Steve Soboroff, were honored at a gala fundraiser in 2019.



The City Council paid tribute to Belinda Jackson in March before her retirement. Honoring her included Councilman Curren Price and Rec and Parks General Manager Jimmy Kim, Club Member.



ALIVE! INTERVIEW WITH BELINDA JACKSON

‘The Dream Job’

On May 20, Association CEO Robert Larios and *Alive!* editor John Burnes interviewed Belinda Jackson, Retired, Assistant General Manager over Recreation Services, Rec and Parks, 22 years of City service. Belinda retired in March. The interview took place via Zoom.

Hi Belinda! It’s great to finally catch up with you. Your life was very busy around your retirement a few weeks ago.

Belinda Jackson: It was! Good to talk to you, too.

First, I would like to thank you for all that you have done for the City. We want to honor you with this feature.

Belinda: Thank you.

What was your career path?

Belinda: Prior to working for Rec and Parks, I was the Executive Director of the Harbor City Boys and Girls Club where I built the first club in Harbor City, the Harbor Gateway. In 2001, I saw this amazing job in the paper for the Executive Director of the EXPO Center. At the time, it was called the Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center (EPIC). We ended up changing the name to EXPO Center to make it more relatable to Exposition Park.

What was the interview process like?

Belinda: I was found through a national search from City Personnel and the nonprofit Board of Directors of EPIC. The hiring committee, which was made up of Councilman [Mark] Ridley-Thomas, the EPIC Board Director; the Chair of the Weingart Foundation; a rep from Cultural Affairs; and the General Manager of Rec and Parks. They were looking for a candidate who had a background in nonprofit management because there was a nonprofit board tied to the EXPO project.

My three interviews were very intense; I really had to make a big impression upon this very high-end hiring committee. On my second interview, I just flat out told the committee, “I am the person for this position. I’m feeling it. I’m ready.” I had prepared a PowerPoint presentation of what type of programs and services I could implement if hired. I know they thought I was crazy, but I could feel it in my spirit that this was my dream job. I know there were more than 150 applicants, and the committee interviewed five candidates. Boy I was glad they ended up hiring me.

This became very personal to you, a personal mission.

Belinda: Yes, very personal. I grew up in very humble beginnings. My dad passed away when I was seven, and I have six siblings. My mom worked two jobs – it was hard. Growing up, my family benefited from free programs and services at our local community centers. These types of programs, grants and scholarships for summer camp and other programming helped shape my life. I knew that I wanted to work in community service. As I looked at the impressive and well-connected EXPO Board of Directors, I felt confident that EXPO Center would be successful in providing unparalleled programs beyond Rec and Parks programs – our programs and services, which serve all ages 2 to seniors, have such a positive impact because of the grants and other fundraising by the Board. We could offer many of our amazing programs for free.

I served as the Executive Director for 20 years. Because of the City’s early retirement opportunity, our department lost lots of staff to include executive staff. In 2022, the General Manager asked if I would apply for the Assistant General Manager position for the recreation branch. I interviewed for the position and was hired. I served as the Assistant General Manager for a short time – two years, as I had planned to retire in 2024.



Belinda Jackson and Association CEO Robert Larios.

The Beginning of EXPO

What was the status of the EXPO Center when you came in? How did it get started?

Belinda: The recreation building was called the LA Swim Stadium, which is noted on the building as it was the site of the 1932 Olympics, so it’s a historic building. It was closed for years because of earthquake damage. There was lots of crime in the area – well more than 20,000 gang members within a three-mile radius of the center, and the department had no plans or funds to renovate the swim stadium. Roy Anderson, who at the time was the CEO of Lockheed Corporation and the Chair of the Weingart Foundation, had a vision to build a state of the art recreational center, so he reached out to Rec and Parks and asked if they were interested in a partnership to renovate the swim stadium and build new facilities that would have a positive impact on the surrounding community. Mr. Anderson said, “I believe we can raise the money, and I will develop a nonprofit board to get the project going.” The department agreed to partner with the nonprofit, and the project got started in 1999. The nonprofit Board was developed and they raised more than \$20 million to get the project started. The City, through Councilman Ridley-Thomas, raised more than \$13 million through public grants.

This is very important – this agreement, i.e. the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for this particular project, was unique. There’s never been another one like it; it’s an original. Normally when public funds are used for any construction project, the City would have to manage the public grant funds, but in this case the Board was able to manage all the funds and had priority over the entire renovation project. Public grant funds included: Prop K, Prop A, Prop 12 and CDBG all managed by the nonprofit. Rec and Parks was jointly involved in the selection of the contractor and I served project manager for the City to assist with

REC AND PARKS *Mission Accomplished* — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13



Her "dream job." Belinda Jackson as the Executive Director of EXPO Center.



Belinda Jackson at the Rose Awards, 2016.

'This was the dream job. [Building the EXPO Center] was a lot of work, but I was glad that they ended up hiring me.'

— Belinda Jackson



Belinda with the students in the Junior Lifeguard Program.



At the cutting of the ribbon for the EXPO Center: Belinda Jackson (top center), Bernard Parks, James Hahn and Mark Ridley-Thomas



Tending to the EXPO Center's Rose Garden included Belinda Jackson (top row, right), Wendy Greuel, Janice Hahn and Jan Perry.

The *Alive!* Interview — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

managing the City public funds. I believe that's another reason why I was hired because of my nonprofit experience and I had experience in a major construction project as I had built the Boys and Girls Club in Harbor City. Mr. Anderson had created a dream board made up of who's who in the Foundation world. They were very passionate about revitalizing the area and turning it into a state-of-the-art complex, which it is today. EXPO is the largest recreational center in the State of California and the second largest in the nation built through a public/private nonprofit partnership. It was an amazing opportunity for me that I will never forget. At that time, I served as both the Executive Director for the Rec and Parks, and the Executive Director for that nonprofit Board. I had a dual role, which was very unique and challenging; normally the Director would not have a dual leadership role. That was my role for two and a half years. We opened the facility in phases, because the community was anxiously waiting for the facility to open. We did lots of outreach and marketing through many of the nonprofits in the area.

How bad was the area? How much did the area need a revived recreation center?

Belinda: Roy Anderson grew up in the area and a graduated from USC, so he was very familiar with the area. He saw all the crime and boarded-up buildings, and he commissioned a study. The study revealed that there was no outlet for all the thousands of people who lived in the area. There was no park they could go to. That's when Mr. Anderson developed his vision to revitalize the area. Mr. Anderson had some health problems and passed away before the Center opened. But, months before he passed his doctor allowed him to visit the facility – mind you; we were not open but we were able to give him a tour of the Swim Stadium. And I will never forget, when we were on the third floor of the building, I communicated to Mr. Anderson his vision plan to offer a host of programs and services that we were going to be offered to the community. He could not speak but he had tears in his eyes – I knew he was pleased with what I was saying. His vision was becoming a reality!

What opened first, the swimming pools, the basketball courts, or something else?

Belinda: As mentioned, the community waiting for the center to open, especially the pools. I called Anita DeFrantz, President of the LA84 Foundation, and Anita also served as Chair for EXPO Center Board of Directors, to request funds to open the pools before the Center was completed. Again, the facility was not completed, as we had not completed the locker rooms and many other requirements from the County of LA to open the pools. I was afraid if we did not open soon people would jump over the fence and get in the pools anyway. Anita was instrumental in giving me a \$50,000 grant to install temporary showers on the deck and other requirements from the County to open the pools. The pools opened first in 2002, and the childcare center, senior center and recreation center in 2003. The entire project was completed in 2004. The sports fields opened in 2005.

A Family Center

The EXPO Center is sometimes thought of primarily as a sports center. But it's so much more than that.

Belinda: We offer much more than sports. It's an intergenerational center. Yes it's a sports complex with aquatics, basketball, weights, adult fitness center, outdoor sports fields and much more. We have a senior center with technology programs and gathering spaces; a teen center for tutoring, technology/media, career/leadership programs and services; a licensed preschool; music and arts programming, after-school enrichment program for youth ages five to 15, and so much more. We provide programs and services for every member of the family. We also have nonprofit partners that provide a host of free programs.

Transformational

Belinda, share some stories of how the EXPO Center has transformed people's lives.

Belinda: Oh my God, I don't even know where to start. Sometimes I get chills because when I

am out shopping or at an event or wherever, I will hear someone say, "Hi. Ms. Jackson, do you remember me?" Sometimes I recognize the person, but they will always share with me how the programs and opportunities have made such a positive impact on them. I would say thousands of youths have participated in our programs. We raised millions of dollars in grant funding to support our leadership program, which includes, upon completion of the program, a paid internship opportunity with EXPO and the Natural History Museum as partner. Early on, our youths learn the importance of being leaders in the community, as there are requirements for community service built in the program. When we opened the Center, we did have a few major instances related to safety, so we created a membership program, with photo IDs, and it created a sense of ownership for our patrons. That changed the nature of the area – our patrons could feel safe again.

Ask me about the orchestral!

Don't let us stop you!

Belinda: When [LA Philharmonic conductor] Gustavo Dudamel came to Los Angeles, the Phil reached out to me to explore an opportunity to offer classical music classes to inner City youths. I loved the idea! "Let's do this." Initially, the program was just classical music lessons. The Phil partnered with The Harmony Project to provide all the music lessons, and the Phil provided all the free instruments, music books and more. EXPO Center provided the program space and assisted with the outreach of the program. After a year of lessons, the kids didn't sound so bad. The Phil said, "What about putting together a little orchestra?" I'm not kidding, this is how it happened. We started out with 45 youths from the community and now there are 314 in the orchestra. We have a beginning, intermediate, and advanced orchestra. These kids turned out to be really good. Gustavo has been to EXPO so many times, and the kids have performed at Hollywood Bowl. They performed in London and had an opportunity to perform with in the Super Bowl with Beyoncé and Coldplay. It's blossomed into something way bigger than what I thought it would be.

You talked so much about how the EXPO Center has changed other people's lives. Has it changed yours?

Belinda: Yes, it did, in a lot of different ways. I didn't know that I could work that hard for something that I was so passionate about. During the construction phase, I really worked pretty much 14 or 15 hours a day. I've raised well more than \$30 million for programming and \$2 million for the renovation project. I'm always looking for partnership opportunities so that we can expand and enhance whatever we do. What does the community need and want – that's the question!

I don't take things for granted. I have a better understanding that hard work really pays off. I also have a better understanding of the devastation of poverty in our community. For example, we partnered with an organization that works with teens to produce documentary projects. Our teens were tasked with producing a documentary of their daily lives. The teens were taught how to film and produce video/film. One of our teens filmed his one-bedroom apartment where he lived with five other family members. I couldn't believe it. He filmed his portion of a shared closet that was used by the entire family. There was a stipend for the teens that participated in this program. This teen was asked, "What are you going to do with your money?" The teen replied "I am going to buy my mother a stove – she always wanted one." That was very humbling for me. We take so much for granted.

Power of Partnerships

Talk about the public-private partnership that got EXPO built. It was unique at the time, and it remains unique now.

Belinda: Our partnerships are the key to the success of EXPO. I realized quickly that the City could not provide all of the needed services and programs, so I sought out partners that have great program and service to fill our program gaps. In many cases, we did lots of joined grants together, which was a huge benefit to EXPO. It's much easier spending grant funds than City funds – less paperwork and you don't need five approvals to make a purchase. To name a few partners – The LA Philharmonic was one, the

ALIVE! FEATURE



Club CEO Robert Larios with Belinda Jackson at EXPO Center's LA84 Foundation/John C. Argue Swim Stadium.

Brotherhood Crusade was another. We partner with several other organizations that provide a host of cultural programs for all ages. We have a partnership with Best Buy, which supports our technology centers. We have a huge partnership with Angel City Football, LAFC, and LA84 Foundation – they provided more than 40,000 free swim lessons for youths. Our best partner in the park has been the Natural History Museum, which provides programming with our seniors and preschool, and hires our teens during the summer months. We are excited about our relationship with the Lucas Educational Museum [the George Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, set to open in the next few years]. There are so many partners that support EXPO, and I am grateful for that!

Can other City departments follow your lead and do partnerships? Can it grow?

Belinda: Yes, it can grow. I have recommended that. EXPO Center has been a great example of how to partner effectively.

Olympics, Again

Will the EXPO Center play a role in the Olympics?

Belinda: Oh, yes. Our whole department is involved with our PlayLA Program

Sure, we did a whole story on PlayLA a few years ago.

Belinda: Right. There was an opportunity through the 2028 Olympic Board to apply for a grant to offer Olympic-type sports to usher in the excitement of the 2028 Olympics. That grant was \$169 million. Rec and Parks was successful and received the grant. It made sense for us because we have the ball diamonds, professional staff, facilities and a great relationship with the community. PlayLA is going on right now – it's free for youths ages five to 16 all over the City. Check out www.LAparks.org for a list of programs.

I have heard rumors that the EXPO Center facilities will be heavily involved in some way. *[[Readers – see the last-minute sidebar in this issue of Alive! – Ed.]]*

Not Just EXPO

The EXPO Center was just part of your City career. As the Assistant General Manager, you were involved in a lot of things. Talk about that.

Belinda: Well, one of the things I focused on as the Assistant General Manager was efficiency. The City has so many rules and regulations for everything; it sometimes prohibits you from being creative. I'm a troubleshooter, so I was able to troubleshoot a number of procurement procedures with the City Attorney. I was able to develop with my team a more equitable and inclusive process for minority small businesses to obtain contracts with Rec and Parks. And I was also instrumental in getting a lot of grants during my tenure – \$3 million; we talked about that. Normally, securing grants would not be a responsibility of an Assistant General Manager.

And that was system-wide, not just EXPO Center.

Belinda: Yes, it was system-wide. Yes, it benefited the whole department.

A Passion

Belinda, what did you love about working in Recreation and Parks and public service?

Belinda: Let me say this: I love working with all the staff. I'm not from Los Angeles. I've worked in a lot of places. I have never met a group as passionate as the staff at Rec and Parks. I was so taken by the passion of the employees. [General Manager] Jimmy Kim started as a locker room attendant in Aquatics. That's amazing!

We know Jimmy well. He's a Club Member.

Belinda: You can find people with great leadership skills anywhere, but it's hard to find people with passion – you can't buy that. I'm in awe that I had the opportunity to work with this group of people. They're good at what they do and it's disappointing that they continue to experience budget cuts. Their services are so vital to our communities. Another thing – our facilities are located in the heart of many communities, which gives us an opportunity to develop good relationships. Patrons come to our parks to have fun at many levels, sometimes for programs or just leisure, passive time etc. We also have some many other park assets – our museums and other special facilities. There is just so much to like about Rec and Parks! We keep our citizens' hearts healthy. How can you not be passionate about that?

What's the future look like for you?

Belinda: The Friends of EXPO Center, the non-profit board, dissolved right after the pandemic. That almost killed me. I don't know what happened. They just closed down. This facility still needs a nonprofit board because of the magnitude of the programs and services that we provide. With that being said, I am looking forward to working the staff at EXPO to develop a park advisory board for EXPO Center. I love to travel, so that's on the agenda. And of course I plan to spend lots of time with my family in Massachusetts.

Finally, Retirement

What are your plans for life in retirement?

Belinda: I have so many plans! I'm traveling next month to see my mom. She's 96.

Wow.

Belinda: I'm going to write a couple of how-to books, like "Your First Grant," that sort of thing. I will be working with faith-based organizations to help to enhance services and build capacity through grants. And I hope to work with the City on some projects down the road. I'm always going to be involved with the community because I love it so much!

Well, with that, Belinda, on behalf of the Club we want to thank you very much for your time and all you have done for the communities of Los Angeles.

Belinda: Thank you for thinking of me! ●

A vision rendering – not an actual blueprint – of what an EXPO Center refurbishment to include a diving stadium could look like. LA28 Foundation image

AN OLYMPICS RETURN?

At press time: The EXPO Center could return to hosting the Olympics. In LA28 Foundation's newly released assignment plan for venues to be used in the 2028 LA Olympics, the EXPO Center's LA84 Foundation/John C. Argue Swim Stadium, a 1932 Olympic venue, would be updated to host diving in 2028. Plans are preliminary.

Ballroom



The 1932 Olympics' headmaster headquarters now houses a ballroom in the senior center.

Teen Center



With Belinda Jackson (right) in the EXPO Teen Center are (from left) David Armenta, Facility Director, 8 years of City service, Club Member; Georgiamerica Monjarrez, Intern, and Jesus Calderon, Intern. The Teen Center is focusing on robotics at the moment, with its groundbreaking all-female robotics team and coding program.

Youth Orchestra



The EXPO Youth Orchestra.

Senior Computer Tech



The EXPO Center's senior computer technology program now features more than 220 members. With Belinda is LaRonica Southerland, Sr. Recreation Director, 9 years, Club Member.

EXPO Center

Fitness Center



The EXPO Center's fitness room.

Performing Arts Space



Robert Larios and Belinda Jackson in the EXPO Center's performing arts space, which hosts theater and orchestra classes, and more.

Licensed Preschool



The EXPO Center's second feature to open (after aquatics) was its licensed preschool. With Belinda Jackson (second from left) are Robin Dale, Rec Assistant, 20-plus years; Micha Mims, Child Care Director, 31 years of City service, Club Member; and Club CEO Robert Larios.

Belinda at the EXPO Center's licensed preschool.

Basketball Courts



The EXPO Center's basketball courts.

Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

RLACEI

For Retired Club Members

CONTACT INFORMATION

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



Beverly J. Clark

Send in your Interesting News Contributions!

Contact: **Beverly J. Clark**, Publicity Director
Email: Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org or
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RETIREE EVENTS

Sept. 12, Summer Fiesta 2024
Friendship Auditorium
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Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.



Beverly J. Clark

RETIREES ON THE MOVE

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

Meet Leslie Smith

Meet Leslie Smith, a Retiree on the Move. Leslie began her City career in 1989 as a Police Service Representative (PSR) with LAPD and retired in 2019 as a Sr. PSR after 30 years and three months of City service. Leslie enjoyed her time with the City and says, "As I reflect on my career with the City, I would have changed only one thing: to have diversified my experience by working in various City departments, therefore gaining a broader understanding of the City's operations."

In retirement, Leslie says she enjoys walking, traveling and gardening in her yard. "One thing I have always wanted to do was to become a flight attendant and travel the world. So, six months after retirement, I applied, was hired, and attended flight attendant training. Unfortunately, it was short lived. I was laid off due to the pandemic."

"Traveling is one of my favorite hobbies," she continued. "Since retiring I have enjoyed visiting Hawaii, Washington D.C., New York, Texas, the Dominican Republic and visiting family in Ohio. I plan to do much more traveling soon."

"One of my greatest passions is to be healthy and stay healthy. I started walking and exercising years ago to enhance and maintain my own physical and mental health. Because of all the benefits I have reaped from walking, it was put on my heart to help others learn to be consistent in their journey to pursue daily exercise, not only for physical health but for mental health as well."

"So, in retirement, I started a walking group called P.E.A.C.E. (Physical

Empowerment Achieved through Consistent Exercise). Our mission is to attain, sustain, and nurture physical and mental health through physical activity. P.E.A.C.E. serves as a reliable source of inspiration and encouragement for maintaining a regular exercise routine. If anyone is interested in more information, they may email me at leslie@peacesb.com or check us out on Facebook at PEACE/Physical Empowerment Achieved through Consistent Exercise.

"I'm active in my church, Shackelford Miracle Temple, where I am blessed to be able to volunteer helping with the food bank, the welcome desk and serving as a volunteer on the Scripture Memorization Team."

"I also volunteer for Assured Lifestyle Housing as a guide and beacon of support for those in need. My role involves offering hope and practical assistance to enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of individuals within the community, whether it's lending a listening ear, organizing activities, or providing essential aid."

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

"Retirement is a different season of life, so you must be ready for it. Enjoy your newfound freedom and do the things you've always dreamed of doing. Do what makes you happy. If that's doing nothing, then do nothing and enjoy doing it. You have earned this season of life."

"For those planning to retire soon, plan and prepare for it so that you will be able to enjoy



Leslie Smith

Leslie Smith



doing the things you love and the things you weren't able to do while working."

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

"Financial planning. This included keeping my debt to a minimum and participating in the deferred compensation plan. I sacrificed while working so I wouldn't have to sacrifice in retirement."

Is there anything you miss about your years of service?

"I miss some of my co-workers with whom I forged great friendships. I don't miss the structure, the requesting of days off or working holidays."

Now that you're retired, what would you change?

"I would not change anything about my retired life. I have absolutely no regrets. It is all that I anticipated, and it is truly a blessing from God to be able to have retired, to be in good health, and to continue to enjoy life. I am blessed!" ●



Michael R. Wilkinson

LACERS BOARD UPDATE

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

Cyber Security: Why Do We Need It?

As the chair of the LACERS Ad Hoc Cyber Security Committee, I have been involved with this issue since the committee was first formed. Every day we see news reports about another institution that has been victimized by cyberattacks.

Here are some of the latest news headlines: "Cisco Suffers Cyber Attack." "Uber Internal Systems Compromised." "Sensitive NATO Data Leaked." And these are just from my research today!

What can we do? We can implement sophisticated systems both in our network in the office and in the cloud. In addition, staff can be trained to identify and thwart cyberattacks. (The "cloud," in case you've heard the term but don't know what it means, is the network of computers throughout the world that

websites, social media and companies use to store all your data on the Internet.)

The details of LACERS cyber security protections are confidential, but they are extensive, and they are constantly being updated to keep up with new threats.

One of the areas of concern is social engineering, a term that means using deception to gain access to computer systems such as by using emails to get people to unknowingly disclose confidential information. A good example would be a fake giveaway email, such as, "Click here to get a free iPhone." In fact, there is no free iPhone, but rather a link to malware to damage the network or damage your own computer or phone.

Now, that is what LACERS is doing. How can you help? Here are some ideas

from the LACERS website.

Online Safety Tips

- Create strong passwords: Don't use your pet's name, your house number or 12345. Don't laugh; that last one is always high on the most popular password lists.
- Use two-factor identification.
- Avoid free Wi-Fi connections.
- Ignore smartphone charging stations at the airport, which may connect to malware.
- Don't click on links from someone you don't know.
- Create a MyLACERS account so that you can securely communicate with LACERS.

Finally, if you think your information has been hacked, please call LACERS at (800) 779-8328. ●



Arnette Travis

GET HAPPY NOW

By Arnette Travis

Author/Activist/Advocate, RLACEI Contributing Author

Right Relationships

Most of us have heard the saying, “Birds of a feather, fly together.” There is another saying that goes, “If you run with wolves, you will learn how to howl. But if you associate with eagles, you will learn how to soar to great heights.” While these sayings are similar, the second one demonstrates the importance of forging the right relationships.

Knowing who you are is one of the most key factors in your relationships. This simply means that you acknowledge your likes, dislikes, preferences and tolerance levels, so that the likelihood of conflict is minimized. It is important to be nice to others, but it is even more important to be nice to yourself. You must love yourself to be happy in this world, so make sure you do not start seeing yourself through the eyes of those who don't value you. Know your worth, even if they do not. Today, let someone love you just the way you are – as flawed as you might be, as unattractive as you sometimes feel, and as incomplete as you think you are. Yes, let someone love you despite all this, and let that someone be you.

Relationships cover a wide range, with varying degrees of closeness. For the sake of simplicity, I categorize relationships into two main categories: positive and negative.

First the Positive

Positive relationships are characterized by an optimistic outlook, increased self-esteem, empathy, trust, nurture and growth. Furthermore, positive relationships are distinguished by mutual respect, trust, honesty and open communication, all good traits that benefit our mental and physical health and lead to a longer, happier life.

Now for the Negative

On the other side, negative relationships are toxic and are characterized by decreased self-esteem, fear, anxiety, depression, insecurity, paranoia, stress, and hurtful actions toward others. Also, many negative relationships involve gaslighting, which is intended to gain power over and dominate the other person. Self-neglect, pressure to change, worrying about the disapproval of others and ceasing to do what you enjoy are all signs that a relationship is unhealthy. These factors are proven to shorten life and are destructive to your physical and mental health.

You become like those with whom you closely associate – for the good or the bad. This applies to family as well as friends. Love, appreciate and be thankful for

your family, for they will always be your family. But know that they are human first, and though they are family to you, they may be a friend to someone else and fit into the negative or positive relationship category described earlier.

Associate and Improve

The less you associate with some people, the more your life will improve.

- For yourself, and no one else, you must judge the relationships you have and determine whether they are positive or negative.
- You will only ever be as great as the people you surround yourself with, so be brave enough to let go of anyone who keeps bringing you down.
- If you feel emotionally drained after hanging out with them or get a small hint of anxiety when you are reminded of them, listen to your intuition.

Choose Wisely

There are so many “right people” for you, who energize you and inspire you to be your best self. It makes no sense to force a relationship with people who are a wrong match for you. Again, listen to your intuition to make the right choice for you. ●

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Cooking with the Club

with Chef Robert Larios



Photos: Patty M. Larios



Gouda, Prosciutto & Fig Jam Sandwiches with Tomato & Arugula: A Gourmet Delight

The only thing better than a fantastic sandwich is one that's ready in minutes! Channeling a bit of Julia Child's flair, Anthony Bourdain's edge, and Thomas Keller's precision, we've crafted the ultimate quick bite.

Voilà! Quickly assemble this Magnificent Sandwich. It's brimming with sweet fig jam, savory prosciutto worthy of a rhapsody, and mild gouda on a crusty ciabatta bun that would make even Keller nod in approval. Add juicy tomato and peppery arugula for a

fresh zing that makes you feel like a culinary maestro.

If you're working from home, whip it up right before lunch; or, if you're heading to the office, prepare it in the morning. When hunger strikes, you'll be eyeing that brown bag with a grin, knowing you've got a masterpiece inside. Bon appétit!

¡Buen provecho!

Robert Larios

Follow this recipe online:



INGREDIENTS

Serves 2

- 2-unit Ciabatta Bread (Contains Soy, Wheat)
- 1 unit Tomato
- 2-ounce Prosciutto
- 2-ounce Arugula
- 2 tablespoon Mayonnaise (Contains Eggs)
- 1 unit Fig Jam
- 1 teaspoon Chili Flakes
- 2 slice Gouda Cheese (Contains Milk)
- 1 teaspoon Olive Oil
- Salt
- Pepper

Utensils You Will Need

- None

DIRECTIONS Total prep time is 10 minutes



Wash and dry the produce. OPTIONAL: Move the oven rack to the top position and preheat it to 425°F and toast the ciabatta bread 1-2 minutes or until golden brown.



In a medium bowl, toss the arugula with a drizzle of olive oil, along with a pinch of salt and pepper.



Cut the tomato into ¼-inch slices. Tear or slice the prosciutto crosswise into bite-sized pieces.



Spread mayonnaise on the cut sides of the bottom ciabatta halves. On the cut sides of the top ciabatta halves, spread the fig jam and sprinkle with your desired amount of chili flakes. Layer the bottom halves with your preferred amount of dressed arugula, then add prosciutto, gouda, and tomato. Close the sandwiches.



Finish & Serve:

Cut the sandwiches in half diagonally. Divide them between plates and serve with any remaining arugula on the side.

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Food Lover's Dictionary:

Ciabatta [chah-BAH-tah] – Italian for "slipper," describing a long, wide loaf of bread with soft interior and crisp, thin crust..

Bibliography: Herbst, Sharon Tyler, and Ron Herbst. The New Food Lover's Companion. 5th ed., Sourcebooks, 2013, Kindle edition, location 2542.

Recipe: <https://www.hellofresh.com/recipes/gouda-prosciutto-fig-jam-sandwiches-63ec05d94d8baf2c200dd99c>. Accessed May 17, 2024

Cooking Tidbit

Perfectly Toasted Ciabatta: Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly brush ciabatta cut sides with olive oil. Place on oven rack or baking sheet. Toast until golden brown and crisp. Ensures a crunchy exterior, soft interior.

Need more tips? Don't hesitate to reach out to me at alive@employeesclub.com. Let's make magic in the kitchen!

Food Quote:

"Crafting Gouda, Prosciutto & Fig Jam Sandwiches is like orchestrating a flavor symphony—each ingredient plays its part perfectly, but the fig jam takes center stage with an unexpected sweet solo."

– **Chef Robert Larios**

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EMPLOYEES AT WORK



Airport Police Motor Officers Angel (left) and Michael Dear. Both are Club Members.

Catching Up With Angel and Michael

The Club caught up with veteran Airport Police Motor Officers Angel, 28 years of City service; and Michael Dear, 25 years, at a recent Airports event. Both are Club Members. We honor you for your service!



Noelle's Picture Perfect Contest

Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

This month's theme was:
Things You Value.



"Travel: Nothing widens anyone's horizon as much as exploring new destinations and cultures around the world. This picture was taken in the Black Forest, Germany. If you haven't visited this magnificent, serene area yet, do yourself a favor and go!"

– Yves Didier, Airport Police

Noelle's comment: Your use of a compression lens pulls everything together, Yves – should I wander the rock road, or should I stop and tend to the good earth? Good compositions can elicit natural responses, like yours did for me here. (Oh and I caught your pun on the word "widens" for your wide shot. I smiled, but I agree with you, too. Thanks!)

"I plant my raised bed with flowers for the pollinators. I value the bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Our planet needs them. Sunflowers are bee magnets! I value the pollinators. Each year the numbers seem to diminish but I will keep planting."

– John Nance, Retired, LADWP

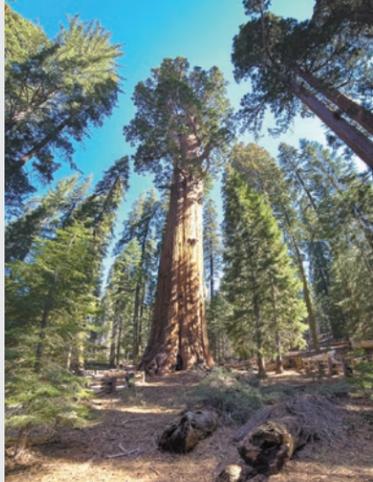
Noelle's comment: I love the sunburst and how you captured the bee more forward than in other similar shots. It's almost like it's coming for us, or at least begging to be taken seriously! Oh, and keep planting, John ... more power to the pollinators.



"I value nature. This photo was taken May 15. Its title: Old General Sherman Tree, Sequoia National Park."

– Alex Andrews, Building and Safety

Noelle's comment: Whoa, amazing shot, Alex. We all reach for the sky in our growth, and so do these amazing trees in our own beautiful state. We are all part of nature. Thanks for submitting!





"One of the things I value most is being able to still see all the beauty and amazing things of nature. On the bucket list, I took a road trip to Yellowstone."

– Karen Kishita, Retired, Public Works

Noelle's comment: Nice bucket list item, Karen! Your image creates more meaning the longer I gaze into it, with its colors, its gently curved waves of dirt (I presume), and the mist. Well spotted!

The next photo contest theme:
The Wonder of Sports
For the next contest, the theme is "the wonder of sports" – send in a photo featuring sports that shows its value.

DEADLINE: July 15



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

ENTER TO WIN
\$50 AMAZON E-GIFT CARD

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



"I love getting up early and going for walks. On this day I chose to walk on the beach, and fortunately there is an estuary across from it. To witness this nature is priceless."

– Rose Serrato, LAPD

Noelle's comment: I love the serenity of your photo, Rose, created by the stillness of the water, both horses doing the same thing (almost like mirrors of each other), and the endless depth with the three layers (stream, brush, mountains). You gave a nice breather today. Thanks!



David Reich, Deputy Executive Director, greets the division's employees.

**More pics on
Web Alive!**
alive.employeesclub.com

Thanks for Your Service

ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS DIV. HOLDS ITS FIRST SERVICE PIN CEREMONY.

AIRPORTS: On June 12, Airports' Environmental Programs Division hosted its first-ever service pin and presentation ceremony. Twenty-five employees received service pins for milestones of 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of City service.

Pins were awarded to the employees by David Reich, Deputy Executive Director; Robert Freeman, Airport Environmental Manager II, Club Member; and Jacob Haik, Airport Environmental Manager II.

Two employees were presented with the department's Gold Star Employee Awards for meritorious service.

Presentations – keeping fellow employees up to date on environmental progress at LAX and Van Nuys Airports – were given by Melissa Molina, Rideshare Program Administrator (Bike Month and AQMD survey); David Reich, Deputy Executive Director, and Jacob Haik, Airport Environmental Manager II (honoring employees); and Ryan Page, Airport Superintendent of Operations, Van Nuys Airport, (EAGLE and unleaded avgas).

Club Mobile Team: The Club's Mobile Team also attended (outside of course), and was a popular attraction all morning. ●

THANK YOU!



Thanks to Robert Freeman, event organizer and Club Member, for inviting the Club to the festive event, and to Karen Rachall, who coordinated the day.



Angelica Thomas, Environmental Specialist II, received the Gold Star Employee Award (presented by David Reich).

GOLD STAR EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Elander Hill, Sr. Management Analyst I
Angelica Thomas, Environmental Specialist II



Elander Hill, Sr. Management Analyst I, received the Gold Star Employee Award (presented by David Reich).



Carter Atkins, Environmental Affairs Officer (presented by Jacob Haik).

SERVICE AWARDS

30 Years

Robert Freeman, Airport Environmental Manager II, Club Member

25 Years

Jose DeLeon, Management Analyst
Veronica Rivera, Management Analyst
Mary Wall, Sr. Administrative Clerk
Dan Yeung, Airport Environmental Manager I

Josephine Serrano, Sr. Administrative Clerk
Loanne Truong, Sr. Management Analyst II

15 Years

David Chan, Environmental Supervisor II
Tammie Crayon, Management Analyst
Elander Hill, Sr. Management Analyst II
Nebu John, Environmental Supervisor II
James Turner, Sr. Management Analyst II

10 Years

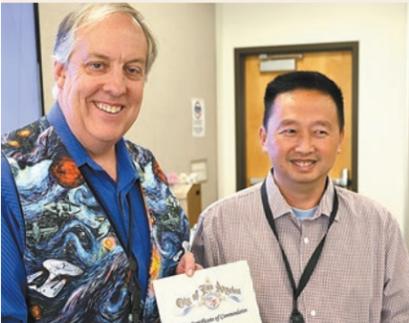
Jacob Haik, Airport Environmental Manager II
Lauren Paladino, Environmental Specialist II



Dan Yeung, Airport Environmental Manager I (presented by Jacob Haik).

Awarded service pins but not present at the ceremony were Amylou Canonizado, 20 years; Charlynn Rachell, 20 years; George Raphael, 20 years; and Joanne Choi, 15 years.

Congratulations to all. from the Club!



David Chan, Environmental Supervisor II (presented by Robert Freeman).



James Turner, Sr. Management Analyst II (presented by Robert Freeman).



Josephine Serrano, Sr. Administrative Clerk (presented by Jacob Haik).



Lisa Doran Dugas, Environmental Affairs Officer (presented by Jacob Haik).



Genevieve Lahey, Environmental Supervisor II (presented by Jacob Haik).



Jose DeLeon, Management Analyst (presented by Jacob Haik).



Lauren Paladino, Environmental Specialist II (presented by Robert Freeman).



Loanne Truong, Sr. Management Analyst II (presented by Jacob Haik).

Event Team



The event was produced and coordinated by (from left) Aarica King, Management Analyst; Tammie Crayon, Management Analyst; Mallory Martin, Management Assistant; Karen Rachall, Sr. Administrative Clerk; and Lea Rodriguez, Management Analyst.

Club Mobile Team



The Club's Arlene Herrero, Vice President of Business Development (behind table, left) and Dalila Vielma, Club Counselor (right) answered questions and checked benefit status for Club Members.



The Club Mobile Team's famous Club Truck brought apparel, gifts and other services for the Airport employee appreciation day.



Jacob Haik, Airport Environmental Manager II (presented by David Reich).



Robert Freeman, Airport Environmental Manager II, Club Member (left) (presented by David Reich).



James Dunagan, Environmental Specialist II (presented by Jacob Haik).



Tammie Crayon, Management Analyst (presented by Robert Freeman).



Melissa Molina, Rideshare Program Administrator (presented by David Reich).



Veronica Rivera, Management Analyst (presented by Jacob Haik).



Nebu John, Environmental Supervisor II (presented by Robert Freeman).



Mary Wall, Sr. Administrative Clerk (presented by David Reich and Jacob Haik).



At the Lineman's Rodeo regional competition, held May 18 at LADWP's Sun Valley Yard.

Photos courtesy LA Dept. of Water and Power

A Lineman for the Bounty

LADWP CREW MEMBERS MOVE TO NEXT ROUND AS DEPT. HOSTS REGIONAL LINEMAN'S RODEO COMPETITION AMONG 11 WESTERN UTILITIES.

LADWP: The LADWP hosted the annual Lineman's Rodeo May 18, showcasing the skills of electric utility workers who work around the clock to keep the power flowing across their communities. During the competition, Line Worker teams and individual participants throughout the Western United States went head-to-head in grueling challenges designed to test their training, job skills and safety procedures. The event also served as a showcase for those interested in careers as a Line Worker, or Electric Distribution Mechanic (EDM), or other utility careers at LADWP.

Hosted in partnership with the IBEW Local 18, the event featured timed competitions such as pole climbing, hurtman rescue and hot sticking. Competitors faced challenges that mimic those experienced daily by LADWP utility crews and provided a glimpse for onlookers and potential future electric distribution mechanics into what it takes to keep the lights on for LADWP's four million residents.

A traditional winner in years past, LADWP was challenged this year by 30 journeyman teams and 38 apprentice lineman teams from 11 utilities. LADWP crews excelled, with Evan Pierre taking first and Benjamin Chapman taking second place overall in the apprentice category. Evan Pierre also took second place in the written test competition and Tyler Scurria placed third in the hurtman rescue and second place in the pole climb competitions.

The LADWP team of Tom Crevier, Dustin Rose, and Jorge Jimenez placed first in the 4.8KV dead-end change in the journeyman category.

There were plenty of other activities for the crowd of approximately 3,500 to enjoy. LADWP provided career information to attendees interested in working at the Department through a recruitment booth. Also available were vendors selling industry supply and equipment and family friendly activities, including a petting zoo and science center with various activities for school-aged children.

Winners from this event will move on to the International Lineman's Rodeo in Overland Park, Kansas this October.

Good luck, LADWP Line Workers! ●



Alive! featured LADWP Line Workers and the Lineman's Rodeo in our April 2006 issue.



On the Nancy Castles South Coast Botanical Garden Walk.

These Boots Are Made for Walking

GET WALKING ON A LACERS WELL HOSTED WALKING EVENT!

LACERS: LACERS Well participants got walking in April with two fun events!

On April 3, Benjamin Gaetos and others walked in Griffith Park. On April 25, more walkers hiked the Arroyo Seco Trail at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

On May 21, Nancy Castles, Retired, Airports, hosted her monthly South Coast Botanical Garden Walk, held on the third Tuesday of the month. And on May 30, Ben Gaetos led a group on his monthly hike in Griffith Park.

What are you waiting for? These easy and enjoyable walks are a great way to get and stay involved, to look after your health, and to connect with other Retirees.

Register for LACERS Well events through your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.org> or by calling LACERS. If you need assistance, email LacersWell@lacers.org

The Club thanks the participants; we're sharing their Facebook photos in this story. ●



Ben Gaetos led a group on his monthly hike in Griffith Park.



The LACERS Well walk in Griffith Park.



The LACERS Well walk at the Rose Bowl.

Graduations CONGRATS! class of 2024



Ethan Gaddi graduated from Knight High School in Palmdale and plans to continue to college to earn an engineering degree. He hopes to work for Lockheed Martin's aerospace advanced development programs. Ethan is the grandchild of Elizabeth Gaddi, Retired, LAPD.



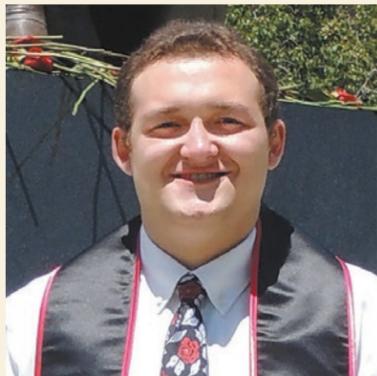
Alliyah Gonzalez graduated from Lawndale High School and plans to attend Cal State University Northridge in the fall, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in kinesiology. She's the daughter of Ruben Gonzalez, Airports.



Justine Jacquet graduated from Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe Springs and plans to attend Cal Poly Pomona in the fall, majoring in electromechanical engineering. Her math teacher chose her for student of the month for her high test scores. Justine is the daughter of Det. Michelle Jacquet, LAPD.



Christian Moreno Jr. graduated from Cal State University Fullerton, earning a degree in sociology. He's the nephew of Juan Rosales, General Services. "So proud of you, my dear nephew. You are a great person, and I know that you will go far in life. You will make us all proud. Congratulations."



Kyle Tulka graduated from Cal State University Northridge with a Bachelor's degree in computer science. He plans to pursue his Master's degree with a goal of teaching at the collegiate level. Kyle is the son of Clifford Tulka, Public Works/StreetsLA.



Hanan Merriweather graduated from Grover Cleveland Charter High School GMS Magnet in Reseda. "Congratulations, Hanan. Everyone is proud of you and look forward as you progress on your journey." Hanan is the son of Officer Shannon Merriweather, Airport Police.



Madison, Mallory and Everett Fink graduated with multiple Associate of science degrees from the College of the Canyons and plan to continue their studies at Cal State University Northridge. Madison earned two Associate degrees in studio arts and fine arts, and graduated magna cum laude. Mallory also earned two Associate degrees, in studio arts and photography, and graduated summa cum laude. Everett earned two Associate degrees in the administration of justice, and law enforcement technology, and graduated magna cum laude. Madison, Mallory and Everett are the twin daughters and son of Ross Fink, Retired, LADWP.



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



CLAIMS MONTHLY

Your Club Insurance Dollars at Work

Claims paid in May: \$593,961

Claims paid since 1992: \$129,269,405

PRODUCT	MAY	TOTAL SINCE 1992
Life/Accidental Death and Dismemberment	\$222,693	\$74,300,540
Disability Insurance	\$153,344	\$35,912,208
Long-Term Care Insurance	\$167,063	\$13,905,969
Cancer/Critical Care Insurance	\$50,300	\$5,014,550
Accident Plan	\$560	\$136,137
Totals	\$593,961	\$129,269,405

CLUB MEMBERS' PRAISE

"My service I received from [the Club's Claims Dept.] was 100 percent. I couldn't have asked for anything more. Mikayla Sprague has a special quality. She was professional along with having a great attitude. She was friendly, caring, comforting and very helpful. I always felt as though I was speaking with a family member of a best friend. I would very much consider giving this book [The Fall of Freddie the Leaf, given by the Club to life insurance policyholders at critical times] to someone in lieu of a sympathy card. Best book ever regarding life."

— Carolyn Garibaldi-Bradford, February 2024



Dulce Lopez
Claims Administrator



Mikayla Sprague
Claims Administrator

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

(800) 464-0452

Information courtesy LADWP/PG&E

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CLUB MEMBER SAVINGS

~~\$12,596~~
\$11,437

Price is per person, based on double-cabin occupancy.

Excludes airfare, hotel accommodation, and airport transfers & fees. Other exclusions apply.

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Experience Trip Leader
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passionateguides@gmail.com

Janisse Tops Water and Power

JANISSE QUIÑONES IS NEW CEO AT LADWP

LADWP: On May 14, the City Council confirmed Janisse Quiñones as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Engineer of the LADWP, one of the City's biggest, most important and most prominent positions. Quiñones took her oath as presided by the City Clerk, officially beginning her tenure as the leader of the nation's largest municipal utility.



Janisse Quiñones

Outgoing LADWP General Manager and Chief Engineer Martin L. Adams, who led the organization since 2019, is retiring after a 40-year career with LADWP. Adams delayed retirement originally planned in early 2024 to allow the completion of the search for his replacement and to support the utility's leadership transition.

"I am honored and ready to serve as the next CEO and Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and I look forward to continue to get to know the LADWP family and supporting those that work so hard to deliver for the people of Los Angeles," Quiñones said in a statement. She brings more than 25 years of leadership experience as a senior executive in utility and engineering industries. Quiñones most recently served as Sr. Vice President of Electric Operations at Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), one of the largest utility companies in the United States providing natural gas and electric service to approximately 16 million people in northern and central California. At PG&E, Quiñones was responsible for the territory's electrical system operations and the power generation fleet as well as the management of electrical assets that support the California Independent System Operator.

Congratulations, Janisse, on your new appointment, and welcome to the City! ●



FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

LACERS Appointment-Based Service Is Now in Operation

In June, LACERS began using 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 new 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 Mon. - Fri. from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., and don't need to speak to anyone. Please note that LACERS' operating hours have changed. **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

Be advised that pre-entry metal detector screening requirements are in place at LACERS' headquarters, and a current government-issued photo identification or

City employee badge is required except when attending public meetings of the LACERS Board of Administration. Parking is not available at the building. Paid parking lots, public transit and street parking are available nearby.

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

Updating a Beneficiary for Your LACERS Benefits

When is the last time you reviewed your beneficiary on file with LACERS? Maybe your situation has changed since you last looked, such as getting married or becoming a child's legal guardian. Be sure to log into

your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org> to view your beneficiaries on file. If you do need to make an update, visit our Forms webpage at lacers.org/forms to access the necessary forms. ●

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS

Cost of Living Adjustment Becomes Effective July

The LACERS Board of Administration has approved the maximum allowable Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for eligible LACERS Retired Members and Beneficiaries at 3.0 percent for Tier 1 and Tier 1 Enhanced Members and 2.0 percent for Tier 3 Members. Tier 1 and Tier 1 Enhanced Members are City employees who became LACERS Members on or before Feb. 20, 2016. Tier 3 Members are City employees who became LACERS Members on or after Feb. 21, 2016.

The COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Los Angeles area, which has been determined to be 3.5 percent for 2024. The maximum COLA is set by the City of Los Angeles Administrative Code at 3.0 percent for Tier 1 and Tier 1 Enhanced Members and is set at 2.0 percent for Tier 3 Members. Tier 1 Retirees who have been

retired for a full year or more will receive a 3.0 percent increase. The remaining .5 percent will be banked and applied in the future when the COLA is less than 3.0 percent. According to LAAC § 4.1080.17, the Tier 3 COLA benefit is capped at 2.0 percent, and there is no banked benefit. Therefore, Tier 3 retirees will receive a COLA of 2.0 percent.

All Tier 1 and Tier 1 Enhanced Members who retired after June 30, 2023, will receive a COLA of 1/12th of the 3.0 percent for each full month of retirement completed by June 30, 2024. Similarly, all Tier 3 Members who retired after June 30, 2023, will receive a COLA of 1/12th of the 2.0 percent for each full month completed by June 30, 2024. The COLA will be included in all eligible Retired Members' and Beneficiaries' July 31, 2024, check or direct deposit. ●