

# Members Speak Out

## ■ Fellow DWP Employees Came Through at Tough Time

I want to thank the whole Accounting and Financial services section [of the DWP]. In my time of need they fully supported me. My house that I was renting burned down January 16, and all my family had was the clothes on our back.

My supervisor, LaSandra Akesson, got a call from me and soon coordinated a department-wide memo for financial assistance. I was so touched by the love demonstrated by DWP employees. Not only did FSO contribute, but Bridget Young coordinated Human Resources and Customer Services here and at the AOB, and with some of the ITS and Stationery Stores personnel, too.

I want to say that the DWP is a great place to work, and it has wonderful, precious people with great big hearts. 📧

— Darlene Mack  
DWP

## ■ Why Can't Retirement System Tell Us Earlier of its Plans to Extend Window?

For the benefit of City employees, I wish the City of Los Angeles Retirement System would notify the employees (well in advance) as to whether or not they plan to extend the 50/30 window and not wait until the last possible moment. In other words, let us know by mid summer and not September 30, 2003.

I believe the City waited until the last possible moment in 2002 to see how many employees would or would not take advantage of the 50/30 window. However, in fairness to all employees who dedicated years of loyal service to the City, the City should give ample notice so employees can make retirement plans. The City should recognize the adjustments employees must make after retirement, including monetary adjustments, and therefore, have the professional decency to make a decision on this matter long before the deadline of September 30, 2003. 📧

— Cathy Lozano  
Port of Los Angeles

## ■ Vanpool Fares Should Be Either Subsidized or Tax-Deductible

I have been a "volunteer" vanpool coordinator and primary driver for the past five years. The City of Los Angeles Vanpool Van is leased from the City vendor VPSI. The monthly fares collected from City passengers are made from automatic payroll deductions, which means that the funds are first taxed and then deducted from the earned wages of City of Los Angeles personnel.

The monthly fares are then paid to the City of Los Angeles to cover the monthly lease on the van. Fuel is provided by the City of Los Angeles at various City of Los Angeles designated fuel sites. Non-city passengers pay fares using personal funds; for Federal employees, the use of



vouchers issued from the Department of Transportation to cover 100 percent (\$100 toward the \$99.87 monthly fare, as vouchers are issued in \$30 and \$35 denominations from the DOT) of the monthly fare based upon daily round trip mileage.

Furthermore, our van is subsidized by the City of Los Angeles and the County of San Diego (SANDAG Rideline) to lower the monthly fares to approximately \$100 per month or \$5 round trip (220 miles round trip) per day. This provides a tremendous incentive to vanpool rather than drive one's personal vehicle to and from work.

An additional incentive would be to completely subsidize the vanpool van passengers or allow the fares to be a tax deduction. The City of Los Angeles and the County of San Diego provide subsidies and qualify for increased Federal Aid from the Department of Transportation for taking action in reducing traffic across roads, streets, highways, etc. This makes sense when you consider that traffic reduction extends the usable life of a road surface and the infrastructure (gas, water, sewer, telecommunications lines etc.) that lie directly beneath. This results in a reduction in traffic accidents, and fewer vehicles are on the roads each day, which in turn reduces demands upon emergency responders including paramedics, firemen, police, life flights and emergency rooms.

The additional Federal funds can be used for road improvements, resurfacing and maintenance. For every dollar spent by the City of Los Angeles for vanpool subsidies, thousands of dollars of Federal funds are made available that would otherwise not be possible. So vanpooling becomes a successful "win win" outcome for the City of Los Angeles, County of San Diego, and all of the "volunteer" coordinators, drivers and passengers alike.

Since the vanpool van is a City of Los Angeles leased vehicle and the City of Los Angeles provides refueling at City of Los Angeles fuel sites, the collected monthly fares are used to make the lease payments. However, the monthly fares are not an allowable tax deduction. It seems that businesses lease vehicles as opposed to purchasing them to qualify for the tax deduction. The City of Los Angeles leases vehicles for this reason as well, I am assuming. It seems only logical that the monthly vanpool fares collected from each vanpool passenger be tax deductible as well.

Maybe additional Federal vouchers should be made available for City passengers from the Department of Transportation. 📧

— Robert James Lavelle  
Hyperion Treatment Plant

P.S. The entire Lavelle family wishes to express its sincerest thanks and deepest appreciation for printing the eulogy for Rita Adelle Lavelle Miller, who passed away November 15. She was 87. I will always miss her and pray that I can be half the person she was.

## Buy Tickets Cheap With the Club

### Discount Tickets

*Continued from Page 1*

pay your membership dues for."

Hey, Ticket Guy. Summer's coming up. What do you recommend?

"Well, Club members should really check out our discounts on Raging Waters and Wild River. They're water parks, and they're better than going to the beach.

"And Six Flags Magic Mountain – our tickets are almost half off. Have you seen the prices at the gate? You don't have to pay those prices when you buy through the Club.

"But if you're after something that you might not have heard of, I recommend taking your family to the Wild Bill Show, near Knott's Berry Farm in Orange County. It's a country and western show for the family, with good food and a comedian who's hilarious. I really recommend it."

You might as well take advantage. He certainly is.

"Last weekend was just great," he said. "I went to the movies, and saved \$10 there. Then we walked down the street and ate at Acapulco, and saved another \$10 using the Club card. That's \$20 I can spend next weekend!"

But whatever ticket you want to buy, get in touch with the Ticket Guy.

"People usually know what they want when they contact me," he said. "But not always.

"Whether they know or they're looking for a recommendation, I'm here. I'm ready for them."

Turn to the inside back cover, page 19, for a full list of ticket discounts, the rules, and the ways to contact the Ticket Guy. 📧

### Wanna be heard?

Have you bought tickets through the Ticket Guy? Tell us what your experience was like: [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com)



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Announcing a fantastic deal on a fantastic sandwich:

buy any regular or large meal at its regular price, and get  
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between 10 and 11:30 a.m.,  
or between 2 and 5 p.m.

But there's more: if you visit these five stores at any other time, you'll get 10 percent off. And they deliver! Call the store for details.

### Club discount good at these five locations:

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(323) 512-2115.

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Rancho Dominguez  
(310) 763-5000

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134 S. Central Ave.  
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