

ALL IN A Day's Work

Living History

■ Club member Vicki Chan is still going strong after 41 years with the City.



Vicki Chan, City Attorney's office, 41 years.

Story and photo by Robert Larios, Club Operations Manager

"City employees have it easy today," laughs Vicki Chan, still employed after 41 years with the department where she started: the City Attorney.

"I remember when everything was typed by typewriter, not computer," she explains from her desk in City Hall East. "Letters had to be perfect. If we made any mistakes, we'd have to start over."

"And no one does dictation like it was done before. It's a lost art."

A lot has changed since Vicki started under then-City Attorney Roger Armberg. She is thought to be the only City Attorney employee still working, who worked during his tenure. She has worked for five different City Attorneys.

She started as a secretary in the liability division. She then transferred into the tax and permit division, later renamed General Counsel. She stayed there for 39 years.

One of Vicki's most admired supervisors was Tom Bonaventura, who was head of the Tax Permit/General Counsel section before retiring about six years ago. Vicki worked approxi-

mately 20 years under Bonaventura. One the biggest projects working with Bonaventura was the 1984 Olympics; she was involved with the City contracts and the Coliseum with the Olympic Committee.

She is now in the Economic Development section.

Although she believes the invention of the computer is wonderful, "People have lost the personal contact with email communication," she laments. "Communication was done by telephone, and paper letters and voice mail existed only in the form of someone writing down a message for the recipient."

"And people no longer call each other as Mister or Missus. We go by a person's first name in most cases. It has become less formal and more casual in our mannerisms."

She also feels that people were friendlier. "It seems that everyone is in a rush to get nowhere and everywhere," she says.

And the Angelino accent has changed in the last 41 years, she adds.

She also notes that the City has more female attorneys today than when she started.

Though she is the party planner at the office, bringing her home recipes for the staff like her famous potato chip cookies, she also helps plan retirement parties and going-away events.

She loves modern jazz and Latin music, along with all kinds of foods. She likes to experiment with new foods.

She travels quite a bit and loves cruises. And she often goes to the Far East and Europe. Her husband is retired from Caltrans. She has two children, Vincent and Jennier.

Any thoughts on retiring soon? "Who knows," she says. "I'm one of the last of the very experienced City employees because many of my friends have retired already. But working makes me feel young, and I love to work. People are nice and the benefits are great."

"Life as a city employee has been incredible. It has always been fun to deal with City business. It helps to know what is going in City Hall."

In her career with the City Attorney's Office, she was involved in countless lawsuits for the city. "Even in the most difficult of time, I loved it because I got a chance to learn about the people around me."

Any wisdom you could give to city employees? "In the City, unlike in private industry, all you have to do to make your career last is go with the flow and do your best."

Seaton Interim GM

The Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners Sept. 29 unanimously approved the appointment of Bruce E. Seaton to the position of interim executive director for the Port of Los Angeles while a search is being conducted to fill the chief executive vacancy.

Seaton will oversee the day-to-day operations and internal management of the nation's number one container port following the resignation of Larry A. Keller on Sept. 17. Seaton most recently served as Port chief operating officer, a position he held since December 1998.

"The Board applauds Mr. Bruce E. Seaton

for stepping up and taking the helm while the Port repositions itself during this transition period," said Harbor Commission President Nicholas Tonsich. "He's a natural leader."



A 25-year veteran at the Port of Los Angeles, Seaton rose through the engineering ranks, ultimately becoming chief harbor engineer and director of construction management in 1989.

Seaton is a Wilmington native and is a registered engineer in the State of California. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from California State University, Long Beach.



Ice Time Is Nice Time Downtown

Thanks to Rec and Parks and Councilwoman Jan Perry, the Southland's largest outdoor skating rink, Downtown on Ice, opens for its seventh stellar holiday season Nov. 17, for skating through Jan. 17 at Pershing Square, 532 South Olive St. Nestled among the City's towering skyscrapers and historic landmarks with revelers gliding under the sun and stars, it serves as the City of Angels' own Rockefeller Center of the West coast.

Offering a low admission price of just \$6 per skating session and \$2 for skate rental, the rink is open seven days a week (including holidays), and made possible by sponsorship from Rec and Parks, and Councilmember Jan Perry (9th District).

Downtown on Ice also boasts a free holiday musical concert series and numerous special events, including "Lazers on Ice" Dec. 3-5, the "Winter Holiday Festival" Dec. 10-12, a special "Disney On Ice" sneak preview performance Jan. 11, and more.

The facility is easily accessible via the Golden State 5, Hollywood 101 and Harbor 110 Freeways, or by bus (5th and Olive), and the Metro Red Line (Pershing Square Station at Hill Street). Discounted rates for convenient underground parking with validation make it the downtown destination for winter fun.

For more information, call (213) 847-4970 or log on to www.laparks.org and go to Directory of Services, then click on Pershing Square. Or call (888) LA-PARKS (527-2757).

Downtown on Ice at Pershing Square

Nov. 17 through Jan. 17
532 South Olive St.

(across from the Millennium Biltmore Hotel)

Hours:

General schedule: Mon - Thurs, noon - 9 p.m.
Fri - Sun, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Dec. 17-Jan. 9: 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
(every day)

(Open all holidays; special hours apply)

Admission: One hour sessions: \$6
Skate rental: \$2

Family/group discounts are available.

Parking: Pershing Square validated underground parking Monday through Friday before 5 p.m. is \$6. After 5 p.m. is \$5. Weekends \$4.

INVITE THE CLUB



It's Holiday Time!

Alive! wants to go to your office holiday party!

Is your office having a holiday party? Let us know, and we'll do our best to publish a small story and photos from your celebration!

We know there are many, many parties already scheduled, and we'll do our best to get to as many as we can. So please let us know.

Contact your Club Counselor. Look on the back page of this issue of Alive! to identify your Counselor.

See you at the party!

City Employees Club of Los Angeles.

Your City. Your club.

