

Political Forum



José Huizar, Councilman, District 14



Herb Wesson, Councilman, District 10

# New Councilmembers

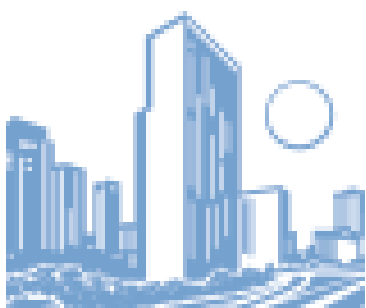
■ José Huizar and Herb Wesson join the City Council.

**COUNCIL** — José Huizar and Herb Wesson, two veteran politicians, were elected to fill the vacant Council District seats in the election held Nov. 8. Huizar takes over in the 14th District, and Wesson takes over in the 10th.

Huizar is the former president of the Los Angeles Unified School District board and ran against former Councilman Nick Pacheco. Huizar had served on the school board during a time of rising student scores and had the endorsement of 10 of the current 13 City Council members and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

Huizar captured approximately 54 percent of the vote. He replaces Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa, who is now mayor.

In the 10th District, Wesson takes



over the seat held by Martin Ludlow, who resigned the Council to become a county labor leader. Wesson, former California State Assembly Speaker, easily defeated two political novices, photographer Barry Levine and security firm owner Robert Serrano.

A former chief of staff to Councilman Nate Holden and Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Wesson served in the state Assembly between 1998 and 2004. For the last year, he has been a deputy to Burke.

The Club welcomes José and Herb to the City.



# Tale of Reggie, a Gator Among Us

By Janice Hahn, Councilwoman, District 15, Club Member

Back in August, most of you probably heard that there was an alligator in Lake Machado in Harbor City. Well, Reggie the Alligator is still there. In fact, this alligator, with a brain the size of a walnut, has managed to outsmart three different groups of gator wranglers.

Reggie is currently in a pseudo-hibernation state. Basically, during the colder months, he doesn't move around or eat much, making him that much more difficult to catch in our 53-acre lake. So, we have all decided that we will wait until the spring, when Reggie gets hungry again, to try to capture him—and I think that this time we might be successful. Why? Because the Crocodile Hunter himself, Steve Irwin, has committed to returning to the Lake in April or May to catch Reggie.

Some people have suggested that we just leave Reggie in the lake. But I believe that we need to capture him because it is dangerous, both for Reggie and for park visitors, for him to stay. Lake Machado at Harbor Regional Park is essentially a run-off basin, meaning that a lot of the oil and trash that washes down our storm drains ends up in the lake, and I am not comfortable leaving Reggie in this unhealthy environment. Veterinarians have told me in no uncertain terms that it could be harmful for Reggie to be eating the trash found inside the lake.

I am also concerned about his safety as well as the safety of visitors to the park. While alligator attacks may be

“rare,” no one can predict how Reggie will behave, especially if he is sick or injured.

Until we do catch him, we need to make sure everyone is safe, so we will be keeping the lakeshore closed—which is unfortunate to our visitors who enjoy walking or picnicking along the water. All the more reason why we need to catch Reggie as soon as the weather warms up.

Once we do capture Reggie, we are going to move him to the our world famous Los Angeles Zoo, where I hope he will stay for years so that residents from Harbor City, and all over Los Angeles, can visit him. He has really become LA's alligator. The Zoo is getting a Reggie Exhibit ready, and our Zoo Herpetologists stand ready and willing to attempt to capture Reggie if the Crocodile Hunter is unsuccessful.

I have said it before, but our City employees have been great while we have tried to figure out how to deal with an alligator in a City park. Our lifeguards, park rangers and maintenance officers, animal control officers, and Zoo reptile experts have spent countless hours making sure that Reggie and visitors to the park are safe. They have all gone above and beyond, as we have come to expect from City of LA employees.

Reggie has continuously outsmarted us all. And while I am hoping for the best this spring, to be honest, my money is on the alligator.

**Council District 15 includes these communities:**

- Watts
- Wilmington
- San Pedro
- Harbor City
- Harbor Gateway
- Athens on the Hill

*Occasionally, Alive! invites political leaders to speak directly to City and DWP employees and retirees. Alive! brings you these views as a public service. The opinions of those on this monthly column are independent of Alive! and the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.*

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