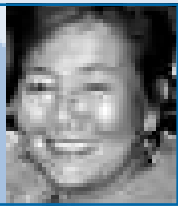


## WORKINGMATTERS

by JACKIE DAVID, Public Information [no word], Public Works



# The Cubicle Existence



The Cubicle: the bane of modern existence. It's been called many names and has been and continues to be described in so many interesting ways:

- Cubicle: systems furniture, cube, box, monolithic insanity.
- Rows of cubicles: cube life, cube farm, bright satanic offices.
- Office worker in cubicle: cube-dweller, cube-animal.
- Cube atrophy: cube body (the result of too much time spent in the cube)

(Look to the Dilbert comic strip for additional and more colorful descriptions of the cubicle and its associations.)

Prior to the cubicle, there was the desk. Old photos will show the open-bullpen office: rows upon rows of desks with zero privacy and an "in" box on the left corner of the desk and an "out" box on the other corner.

Then, in 1968, a Coloradoan named Robert Propst invented the cubicle. This gentleman also happened to work on such projects as tree harvesters and heart pumps.

Julie Schlosser of Fortune magazine (March 2006) writes, "The cubicle was not born evil, or even square. It began, in fact, as a beautiful vision" with Propst designing an "action office" to improve on the open-bullpen office and increase productivity. Economics, however, whittled Propst's idea down to what we have today: the cubicle.

While the cubicle gives the illusion of privacy, it is hardly more than just that. Cube-life means that you can hear and even smell what other cube-dwellers are up to and vice versa. In fact, the proliferation of cube farms across America, to the tune of some \$3 billion a year, has necessitated certain ground rules of etiquette to provide and maintain harmony among cube dwellers.

To those who work with cube-dwellers, here are a few basic rules of etiquette:

- Behave as if cubicles have doors. This makes sense, right? Since we have the illusion of privacy, why not the illusion of a door? Therefore, do not enter someone's cubicle without, at the very least, a perfunctory knock and/or announcement of your presence. (Sneak up behind a dweller in his/her cube and you incur the dweller's terrible wrath!)

- Respect the cube as you would an office (complete with four walls and a door). Do not enter without permission. This also means that you do not help yourself to what is on the cube's desk – however great a temptation it might be: a paper clip here, a piece of paper there, etc. Remember that the cubicle is the dweller's humble abode away from home. Treat it as such.

- Maintaining the illusion of privacy is key to harmony on the cube farm. Therefore, do not loiter around a cube. Never ever read a dweller's computer screen. Do not comment on anything you may have overheard.

Following are some rules of etiquette for cube-dwellers as well:

- Keep all noise levels down. This applies to voices, phones, pagers, radios, etc. No meetings/lengthy conversations, yelling/loud voices, constant giggling/laughter, snorting, slurping and bodily functions allowed. If your phone rings, pick it up immediately if not sooner. In fact, just turn the volume down or off on the ringer. Set pagers and cell phones on vibrate.

- Keep odor levels down, too. This means no hot food and no perfume or cologne in your cube. It also means: do not take your shoes off! (Keeping a neutralizer/air freshener handy may go a long way towards maintaining harmony on the farm.)

- Remember that the illusion of privacy is just that. The truth is that everyone can see you and there will be those watching you. Therefore, be careful about what you say and how you say it. In this case, walls really do have ears.

- Keep you cubicle clean and organized. How your cubicle looks is a reflection on your professional image.

The upside of the illusion of privacy in cubeland is that one can always feed that illusion by cozying up a cube. A few choice photos, plants, a lamp and even a small area rug can make the cube your own and say to the world: This space is owned. This space has my signature on it and it is my home away from home. Walk past that invisible door; peek over that invisible roof and you have just trespassed into this cube-dweller's space.

Paradise is possible and do-able on the cube farm!

# Beverly Simms Retires

■ Beverly Simms retires from Fire Dept. after 35 years of City service.

Story by Beverly Haro, Club Counselor;  
Photos by Summy Lam, Club Tech Guru



From left: Beverly Simms and Battalion Chief Allen Norman.

FIRE DEPT. — Family, friends and co-workers gathered May 18 at the New Otani Hotel downtown at a luncheon May 18 to celebrate the career of Beverly Simms, who's leaving her City service after 35 years. And to wish her a happy birthday!

She retires from the Fire Dept.  
Congratulations from the Club, Beverly!



From left: Firefighter Dan Cypert, Beverly Simms and Elder Robert Johnson.



From left: Carolyn Avery, Retired from Rec and Parks, 33 years; Jean Low, Street Services, 32 years; and Terri Winfield, Bureau of Engineering, 23 years, Club Member.



From left: Batt. Chief Thompson, 31 years, and Capt. William Wells, 33



From left: Beverly Simms and Assistant Chief John Ware.



From left: Tanzi Cole, LAFD, 10 years; Beverly Simms; and Dana Baker, Zoo, 19 years.



From left: Gwen Duyao, LAFD, 37 years; Lori Kwiatkowski, LAFD, 28 years; and Dacia Gonzalez, LAFD 18 years.



Retiree Beverly Simms and her family.



From left: Inspector Williams, 17 years, and Capt. Palmer, 17 years.



From left: Battalion Chief Dan McCarthy, 26 years; Daisy Quan, 18 years; Rey Villorante, 5.5 years; and Pat Redwine, LAPD, 24 years.



From left: Cynthia Jefferson, General Services, 20 years; Inspector Vincent Owens, 20 years; and Katey Zamora, LAFD, 18 years.



From left: Jerry Brakeman, United Firefighters of L.A.; and Dr. Robert Scott, Dept. Psychologist, 8 years.