



Alive!

Vol. 6 ■ No. 3 Mar. 2007 City Employees Club

CITY EMPLOYEES IN ACTION

Protecting the Port

Come along with *Alive!* as the Port Police Dive Team executes a real-life dive operation to keep our harbor safe. See page 24.

Dive Team Member Ryan Mullany checks the horizon as the Port Police vessel leaves Los Angeles Harbor.

The Club Raises Fees Just Slightly

■ Vastly enhanced services, inflation lead to first fee increase in more than four years. Increase amounts to 25 cents per pay period.

CLUB HEADQUARTERS — Due to ever-expanding service, inflation, and a continuing commitment to be the best employees club in the City, The Club has raised its fees.

The increase amounts to 50 cents per month, or 25 cents per pay period. That's a 12 percent increase. But, spread over four years (when the Club was created), it's less than three percent per year. The increase applies to all Club Members.

Why the increase? First, sales through the Club's ticket service — which sells discounted tickets directly to members, with no added cost — have increased five-fold since the Club began. Secondly, the price of printing and mailing this newspaper has gone up; you tell us we're the best paper in the City, and we're honored. So we want to keep that quality coming. And third — as you certainly know, the price of everything else has gone up, too.

You are the best Club Members in the world, and we thank you for understanding.

Please go to page 9 to read an interview with Brian Trent, the Club's Chief Financial Officer, for more information.

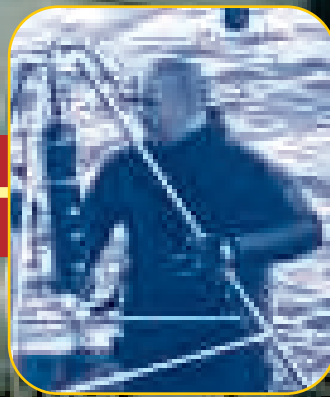
Librarian Wins Big Award for Children's Book

■ Congratulations to Susan Patron, author and L.A. Librarian, who was awarded the 2007 Newbery Medal, among most prestigious children's book awards in the world.

REC AND PARKS — The American Library Association announced the award of its prestigious John Newbery Medal for 2007 to author and Los Angeles Public Library children's librarian Susan Patron for her book *The Higher Power of Lucky*.

"The Newbery Medal is a tremendous honor, and I feel grateful to be part of the distinguished group of authors who have received it," Susan said. "I'm pleased that this award focuses attention on children's literature and

— See Newbery Winner, Page 10



PHOTOS: *Alive!* staff.



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St. Pat's in the City

St. Patrick makes his annual LA stop! Read about the annual parade, the party in Pershing Square, and the St. Baldrick buzz, starting on page 13.

CITY EMPLOYEES IN ACTION

In the Long Beach Harbor, the Port of LA Dive Team goes through a final briefing before taking to the water and inspecting the bottom of a cargo ship. Getting ready for the "go" order are, from left: Dave Clements, Ryan Mullany, Rosario Ferrara (operating the boat), Jerome Niles, Michael Belo (back to the camera), Brandon Smith, James Nua, Dan Dayton, Dave Yoacham, Carl Abajian and Ralph Edwards (back to camera, seated). A Long Beach Dive Team boat is in the distance.



LOS ANGELES PORT POLICE

Into the

Deep

Alive! goes along with the Port Police Dive team on an underwater hazardous device hull inspection, to check a cargo ship for contraband. The Dive Team was built for just such potentially dangerous operations.



PHOTOS: *Alive!* staff.

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW

LOS ANGELES PORT POLICE

As part of a feature on the Port Police Dive Team that *Alive!* was working on, Lt. Mike Graychik, leader of the Dive Team, invited *Alive!* to accompany them on several dive operations. These photos depict one of those operations on Feb. 6.

One week later, *Alive!* met with Lt. Graychik to talk about his Dive Team and the operation that we witnessed. Ultimately, no illegal contraband was discovered. The Port was safe that day.

We thank Lt. Graychik and his extraordinarily professional team for their cooperation.

— Ed.



HISTORY OF THE DIVE TEAM

Alive!: How did the dive team come about? Why was it established?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Originally the concept was for drug interdiction, and the main focus was with DEA and Customs doing hull searches on the big ships, looking for drugs. That was the original idea behind the dive team.



We also did recovery dives looking for evidence: When cars would go under the water, we would recover the vehicles; we would recover drowning victims; we would recover evidence that might have been thrown in the water, like weapons or drugs, those types of investigations. We've had a few homicides where bodies have been dumped in the harbor and we've had quite a few accidents where vehicles or fishermen have gone into the water and drowned. And so we've been instrumental in assisting to recover numerous types of vehicles and victims and evidence throughout the harbor.

Alive!: How many officers are there in the Port Police?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Right now there are 102.

Alive!: How many on the dive team?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Diving is a collateral duty for the officers, and currently we have about 15 divers.

Alive!: Why do officers become part of the dive team? What are the reasons behind it; what are their motivations?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Most of the lure for the Port Police is the maritime environment, and some officers are interested in the boating aspects. Some are interested in the dive team aspect. Some are interested in working for a department that has a priority of Homeland

Security, which one of the Port Police's; one of our fundamental priorities is Homeland Security and terrorism. The port is an asset for the City, the region and the nation. So a primary focus for the Port Police officers is interdiction of terrorism.

Alive!: What was your motivation?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Definitely the maritime component. I've always been interested in boating and diving. I've been diving since I was 11 years old and I was a lifeguard with the City.

Alive!: Where?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Up in the valley, Sylmar, and the other one was in the Devonshire area. I've been diving and always involved in boating and body surfing and beach activities, so definitely the water was a draw for me.

Alive!: How much of the schedule during the work week does the dive team spend diving?

Lt. Michael Graychik: That's a tough question to answer. There are a lot of variables that come into play. Currently, the dive team assignment is a collateral duty, so some of it depends on time availability for the officers, some depends on if we get called out or not. So each officer who's assigned to the team is focused on dedicating time to the dive team throughout the workweek, but it varies on an individual basis from day to day. If there's a call out, then that's our focus for that week or for that day. And it changes, but the Port Police is in the process of dedicating a full time dive team to the Port. Once that takes place, there's going to be divers out there every single day.

TOWARD FULL-TIME DIVING

Alive!: Talk about working toward a full-time dive team. That's a new development. What's the process or the schedule for that? How long is this going to take?

Lt. Michael Graychik: The Port Police is hiring, and we're building up our department to help secure the Port. As the weeks and months progress, we're going to begin initiating a full time maritime unit, which will include a full time



LT. MICHAEL GRAYCHIK

About Lt. Michael Graychik, Special Operations Section, Port Police

HOMETOWN: Los Angeles

MARRIED TO: Danielle Graychik

City Career:

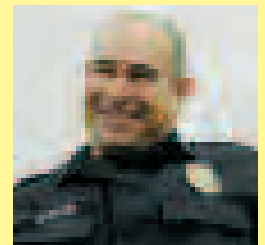
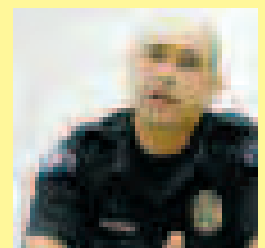
1981: Lifeguard, Rec and Parks

1982: Electrical Craft Helper, DWP

1982: Officer, Airport Police

1986: Port Police Officer

1989: Original member of the Port Police Dive Team





The actual dive begins as Dave Clements jumps in. Watching him are Mike Belo, Ralph Edwards and Rosario Ferrara, operating the boat.

dive team as part of that. There's going to be officers who are trained for a higher level of security checks on other boats – working with the Coast Guard, the Sheriff's Department, the Long Beach Police Department and the LAPD, doing inspections on boats. They're going to have more advanced training for what we call tactical boardings, so we're getting ready to implement that in the next few months.

Alive!: So, you're building up the department into a full time maritime contingent; that's great. What's the impetus for that; what's driving that?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Prior to 9-11, there wasn't a focus on maritime security that there is now. And post- 9-11, the Port has taken seriously the maritime threat and is dedicated to increasing our numbers waterside to help mitigate any threats to the Port that could be from waterside.

MEMORABLE OPERATIONS

Alive!: Tell us some of the more memorable operations with the dive team.

Lt. Michael Graychik: There was one about two or three years ago now where a female and her daughter were murdered and wrapped up in a diver's weight belt and thrown into the harbor. When the bodies began to decay, they bloated and floated up under a fishing boat, and we recovered the mother and her four-year-old daughter. So that was memorable.

We've had a few narcotics recoveries that were very rewarding. A couple of different recoveries of bodies, of victims that have drowned in the Port or driven off a dock and ended up in harbor waters, and those are all memorable to me.

I don't want to give out too much information, but we check the large ships for drugs that could be stowed away underneath, contraband that's hidden underneath the ships.

ALIVE! GOES ON A MISSION

Here, Lt. Graychik details the actual Homeland Security operation that Alive! has documented with photos on the cover and on these pages. —Ed.

Alive!: Take us through that day. Narrate our photos a little bit if you can.

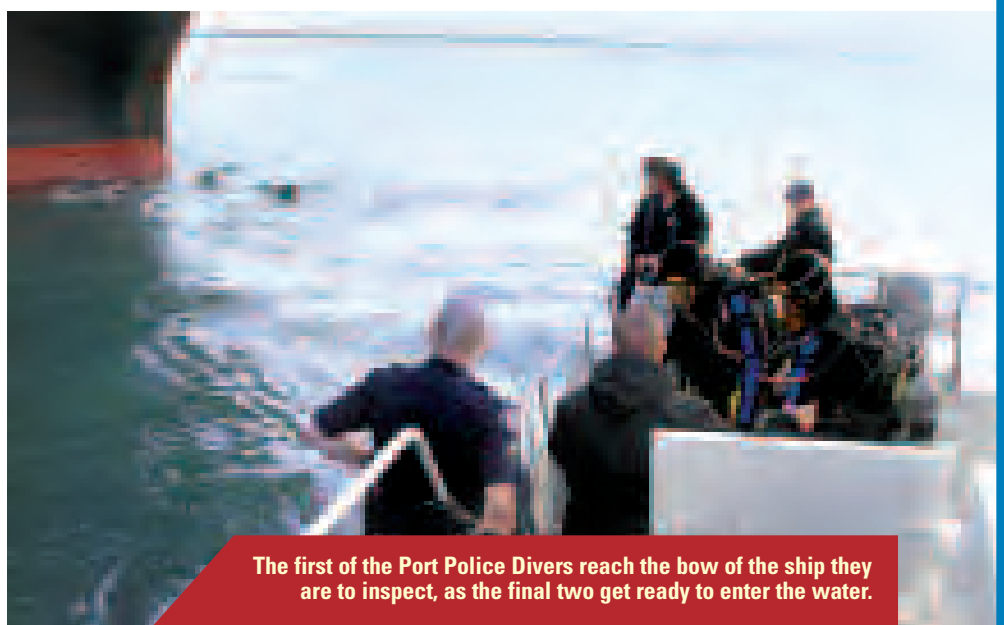
Lt. Michael Graychik: Sure. That day originated with the United States Coast Guard. They had received information about possible contraband onboard a ship, so they activated a dive call out with the P-DOG, the Port Dive Operations Group. They had briefings.

Alive!: P-DOG?

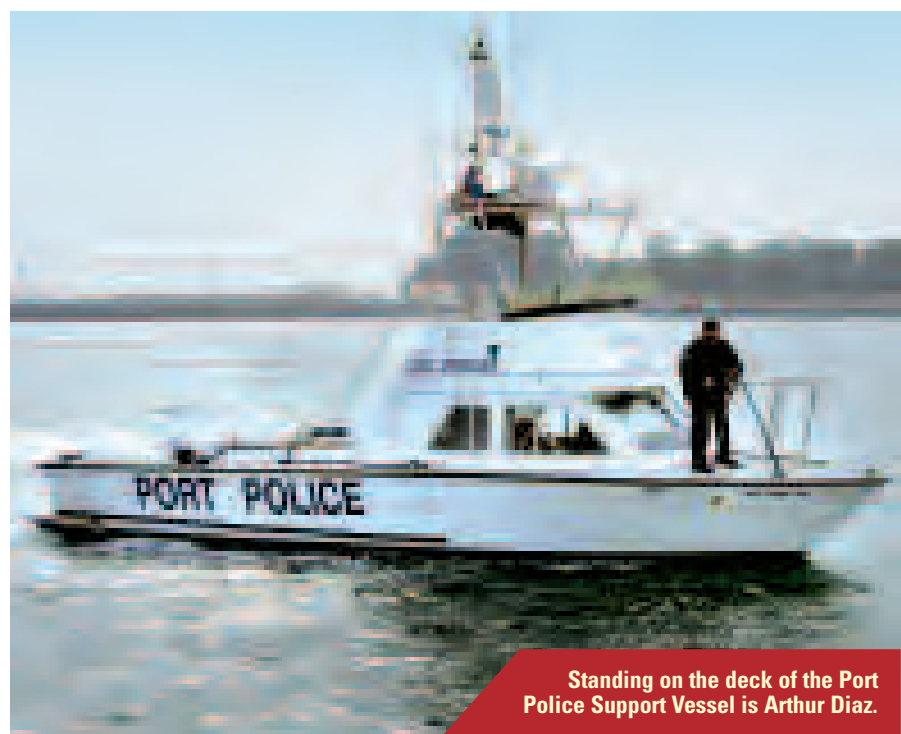
Lt. Michael Graychik: P-DOG. The acronym: Port Dive Operations Group. And they met with the port stakeholder, public safety dive agencies, which included the Port Police, LAPD, LA Fire, Long Beach Police, Long Beach Fire and the U.S. Coast Guard. And then we discussed our diving operations as a group, and then we went back to our own teams and prepared our own team's concept of operations. We agreed on a meet time for the dive call out on the day of operations. We went and had a team briefing.

Alive!: We were there, after your official briefing.

Lt. Michael Graychik: So you saw how we prepared our own teams, and then we met as a group and had a group briefing. Group assignments were doled out, so each dive unit had an assignment and some groups were responsible for rescue in case there's a diving emergency within our groups.



The first of the Port Police Divers reach the bow of the ship they are to inspect, as the final two get ready to enter the water.



Standing on the deck of the Port Police Support Vessel is Arthur Diaz.



THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW



Getting ready for the "go" order are, from left: Carl Abajian, James Nua and Dan Dayton.

WORKING TOGETHER AND SHARKS

Lt. Michael Graychik: Drug interdiction is a priority for us, and we work with other agencies like the Coast Guard, the DEA and Customs ... and also now we have other dive team partners that we work with like the LAPD, the Long Beach Fire Department, the Long Beach lifeguards. All of us together are called the Port Dive Operations Group.

Like the operation [that Alive! documented on these pages], that was with the Port Dive Operations Group, the five other public safety agencies. That's a big part of diving in the Port now, the multi-agency diving. And it's a partnership where, if one agency has a dive call out, they can call up this Port Dive Operations Group, and the partner agencies will come to their assistance and act as a force multiplier for a large-scale diving operation. Where you might have had six or eight divers before, now you have at your fingertips, you have 25, 30 divers at your disposal.

Alive!: A few years back we did a story on City employees who took the diving training for the L.A. Zoo. They do all the work in the tanks, and they get in the water with their scuba gear. I was just wondering if you —



Lt. Michael Graychik: [Laughing] They don't have sharks there, do they?

Not those employees, but we dive with Rec and Parks, with the lifeguards; we dive with the LAPD and the LAFD.

And we dive with the County Sheriff's office, with the Long Beach Police and Fire, and with the United States Coast Guard. And on some occasions we've dove with other agencies for training, or we've gone to call outs in other areas with some other agencies.

Alive!: So you're not going to go diving in tanks with sharks?

Lt. Michael Graychik: I don't think so; that's not my first option.

Alive!: Have you seen any sharks?

Lt. Michael Graychik: I've seen quite a few sharks. Not real big ones, luckily.



Then, we commenced with the diving operation. At the conclusion we reported back to our meeting place, and we had a group debrief. That concluded our operation.

Alive!: Do these call outs come very often?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Probably several times a month. A couple times a month at least.

Alive!: Sometimes you're the lead agency, and sometimes you're called on to assist?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Right. The dynamic of the group is that whichever group originates the call is the lead agency, or if there's a certain responsibility or jurisdiction, then the group with the jurisdiction and responsibility would by default be the lead agency. But generally speaking, the originating agency is the leader, the incident commander. And then they request the other agencies to support their operation.

Alive!: Our day on the mission with you was pretty typical of how it happens?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Very typical.

Alive!: These guys have done this before; they're all pros, to say the least?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Right. We've been doing this for a few years now; the Port Dive Operations Group is part of the Area Maritime Security Committee, which is an authority of the Coast Guard.

Alive!: And sometimes the crew of the ship isn't even aware of potential contraband issues?

Lt. Michael Graychik: It's fair to say that some smuggling operations can hide contraband underneath the ship without the ship knowing it. You can say that.

Alive!: It's possible.

Lt. Michael Graychik: Absolutely. Some smugglers are capable of inserting narcotics into the ship without the ship being aware of it.

Alive!: That also must mean that you are aware of people who are diving into the Port who you don't recognize? Some bad guys would have to go out to that boat before anybody else does, surreptitiously, and under water. So you're on the prowl not only underneath the boat but on the shore, for people who might be going out there to grab that contraband?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Correct. But we don't know if it the ports of L.A. and Long Beach are the destinations for that contraband; the ship has many ports of call before it comes here and many ports of call after it leaves here. So it could be in transition from one place to another place and we just happen to be on the route. So it is possible that we're able to intercept it mid-route, midstream.



LOS ANGELES PORT POLICE



“We’re modeling public safety diving for the rest of the nation here in the Port.” – Lt. Graychik

NATIONAL MODEL OF TEAMWORK

Alive! It was amazing to watch how coordinated all the teams were. Not only your own team -- you guys were really coordinated, you knew exactly what you were doing, it was like clockwork, it was so professionally done -- but that's just one bit of it. You were coordinating with all these other agencies.

Lt. Michael Graychik: Right, right.

Alive! How long has it taken all these agencies to work together to produce that kind of organization and efficiency?

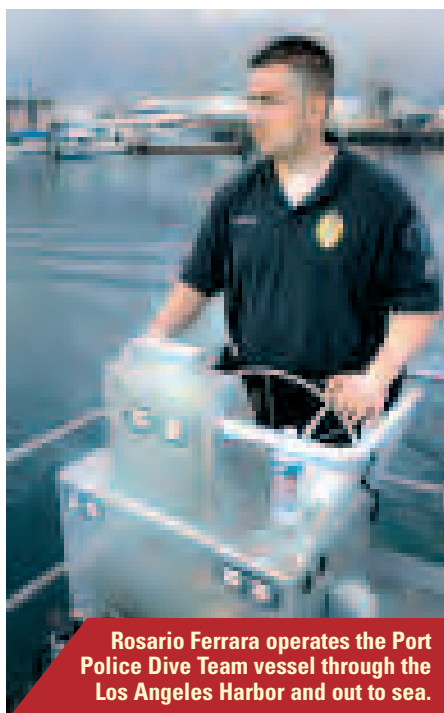
Lt. Michael Graychik: We've been working together like that for a few years now, so it's been a lot of meetings, a lot of talking, a lot of planning, and we continue to evolve as a dive group. We have meetings that we go to, and we discuss ways to improve our operation and ways to make it safer. We're always dealing and talking. We don't get into a rut where we're not able to change it. We talk about issues, we discuss them, and then we modify the way we do things. Remaining flexible and having an open line of communication with the other agencies is key to making it that successful.

Alive! We hear a lot about one of the problems in securing our nation is sort of territorialism amongst different agencies. But it couldn't have been less that.

Lt. Michael Graychik: Right.

Alive! Was that a concerted effort to make sure that territorialism didn't get in the way of doing a great job?

Lt. Michael Graychik: It is a concerted effort, and within the Port community here we all are very aware of each other's jurisdictions



Rosario Ferrara operates the Port Police Dive Team vessel through the Los Angeles Harbor and out to sea.

and each other's duties. We meet and discuss things so often, that I think the lines are pretty clear on what types of incidents fall within each agency's scope of responsibility. So the lines for us are pretty clear, and we don't have a lot of confusion as to who does what. Communicating a lot, talking about things, and letting everybody know what's going on are instrumental in making sure that the public safety runs smoothly in the Port.

Alive! The FBI and some other national organizations use you guys as models?

Lt. Michael Graychik: That's correct. The Ports of L.A. and Long Beach are models for the nation in terms of diving operations by local public safety agencies.

Alive! What do they like about it? Your organization? Your efficiency? Your cooperation?

Lt. Michael Graychik: All of those things. All of those things are critical to running a big dive operation like that.

Alive! Public agencies all around the country are coming to you for help on how to put together their programs?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Yes. We're modeling public safety diving for the rest of the nation here in the Port.

PRIDE: PROFESSIONAL PROTECTION

Alive! It was obvious and evident that you love what you're doing: what you're doing is efficient and well run and is a great service to our country. There must be a lot of pride in being part of this team.

Lt. Michael Graychik: There is a lot of pride. Diving, especially in a port environment, is not something that you can do if you don't have a lot of dedication and determination and conviction. There are so many factors and variables and safety issues that have to be addressed, it's not for the meek or weak-hearted; you have to be very devoted to it. There's a lot of training involved; there's a lot of work involved in running a smooth, safe dive operation. So they are very dedicated and they do take a lot of pride in that. And they do recognize that they're helping detour terrorism in the nation's number one commercial port.

Alive! It's a dangerous job?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Public safety diving is very dangerous.

Alive! Even over and above the training you receive as peace officers, it's probably even more dangerous in some ways.

Lt. Michael Graychik: Sure.

Alive! It seems like an added level or added ingredients for danger there.



Rosario Ferrara, standing, top left, maneuvers the Port Police vessel into the correct position to launch the divers. An LAFD Dive Team boat is in the background.

Lt. Michael Graychik: It's dangerous, but we try and mitigate the danger by taking a lot of safety precautions, by doing a lot of training and employing the latest diving safety features that we have at our disposal. You can always mitigate danger by doing different things, and we work very hard at mitigating the danger as much as possible.

A DIVER, TO THE END

Alive! Do you miss getting in the water?

Lt. Michael Graychik: I do miss it. I get in the water at least a few times a year, and I'm thankful for those days.

Alive! You and your officers, when you're away from the job and vacationing, do you guys decide to go diving for recreation?

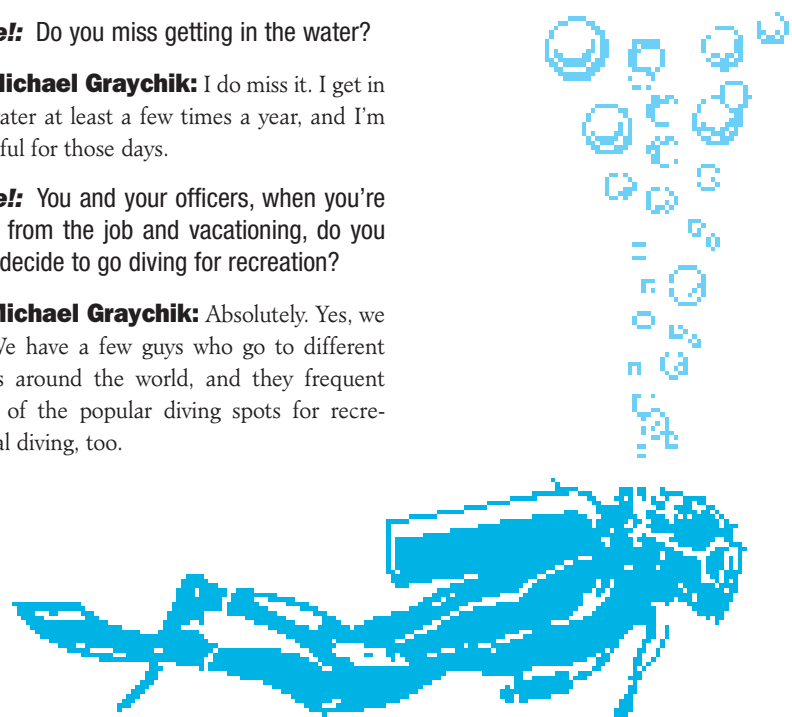
Lt. Michael Graychik: Absolutely. Yes, we do. We have a few guys who go to different places around the world, and they frequent some of the popular diving spots for recreational diving, too.

Alive! What's your favorite place to dive?

Lt. Michael Graychik: Lake Mojave. Lake Mojave's my favorite place because that means I'm waterskiing and relaxing in the boat.

Alive! Thank you very much.

Lt. Michael Graychik: Sure. You're welcome.



City Librarian Wins Prestigious Award for Children's Book

Newbery Winner

Continued from Page 1

connects children to stories, because stories give them a way to figure out the world."

Patron's first children's book, *Burgoo Stew*, was published in 1990. It was followed by three more picture books and the book *Maybe Yes, Maybe No, Maybe Maybe*, which won the 1993 Parent's Choice Award. Patron is a senior librarian at the Los Angeles Public Library, where she began in 1972. She also reviews children's literature, has taught and lectured on the subject, and has served on boards and committees in the field.

The Higher Power of Lucky is the story of 10-year-old aspiring scientist Lucky Trimble. Fearing that her legal guardian plans to abandon her to return to France,

Lucky determines to run away while also continuing to seek the higher power that will bring stability to her life. The Website of Simon and Shuster, the book's publisher, describes the book thusly: "Lucky, age ten, can't wait another day. The meanness gland in her heart and the crevices full of questions in her brain make running away from Hard Pan, Calif (population 43), the rock-bottom only choice she has.

"On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, I want to congratulate Susan Patron for receiving the prestigious John Newbery Medal for 2007, the 'Oscar' for American literature for children, for her book *The Higher Power of Lucky*," said Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa. "I am pleased to acknowledge Ms. Patron for her contribution to the lives of children through her work in the City of Los Angeles and

Susan's book for their inspiration."

The Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest urban population of any library in the country. Its Central Library, 71 branch libraries, over six million books, and state-of-the-art technology provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning. For further information, visit the Library's Web site at www.lapl.org.

The Club congratulates Susan for her fantastic achievement.

"All of us at the Los Angeles Public Library are so proud of Susan... Today's children have Susan's book for their inspiration."

— Fontayne Holmes, City Librarian



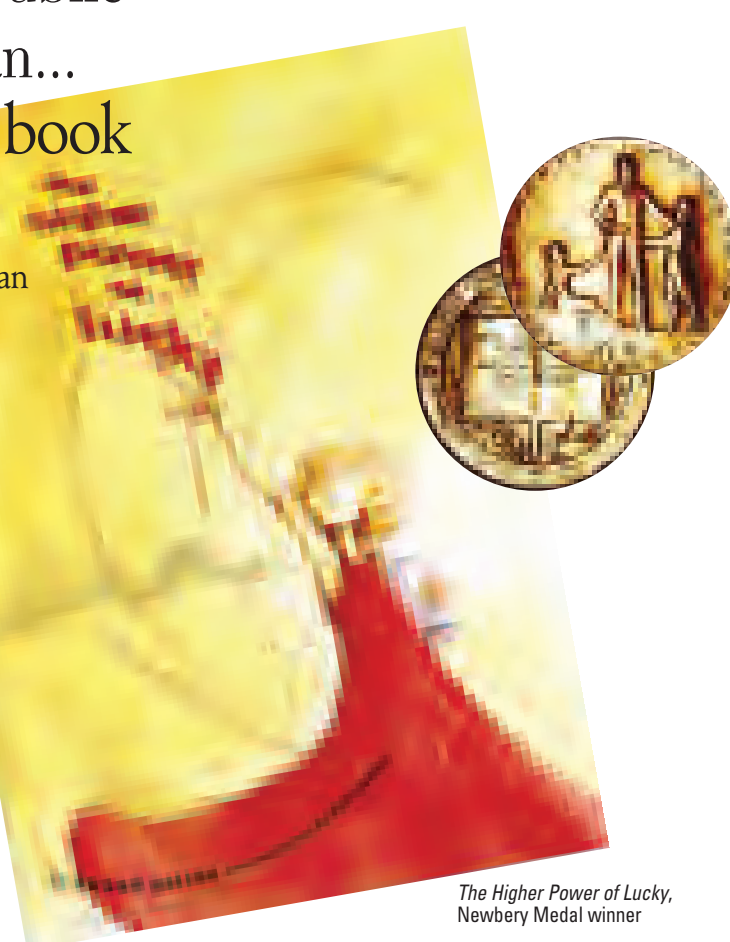
Susan Patron

"It's all Brigitte's fault – for wanting to go back to France. Guardians are supposed to stay put and look after girls in their care! Instead Lucky is sure that she'll be abandoned to some orphanage in Los Angeles where her beloved dog, HMS Beagle, won't be allowed. She'll have to lose her friends Miles, who lives on cookies, and Lincoln, future U.S. president (maybe) and member of the International Guild of Knot Tiers. Just as bad, she'll have to give up eavesdropping on 12-step anonymous programs where the interesting talk is all about Higher Powers. Lucky needs her own – and quick.

"But she hadn't planned on a dust storm. Or needing to lug the world's heaviest survival-kit backpack into the desert."

through her books read by young people and their parents throughout the world."

"All of us at the Los Angeles Public Library are so proud of Susan," said City Librarian Fontayne Holmes. "With this award, she has joined the ranks of other Newbery winners including Scott O'Dell for *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Patricia MacLachlan for *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, and Elizabeth Yates for *Amos Fortune, Free Man*. These are the books that have inspired our children and us for years. Today's children have



The Higher Power of Lucky, Newbery Medal winner

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