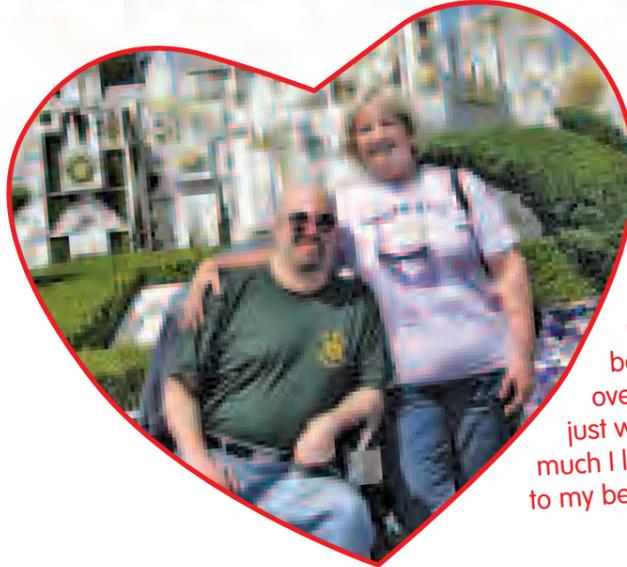


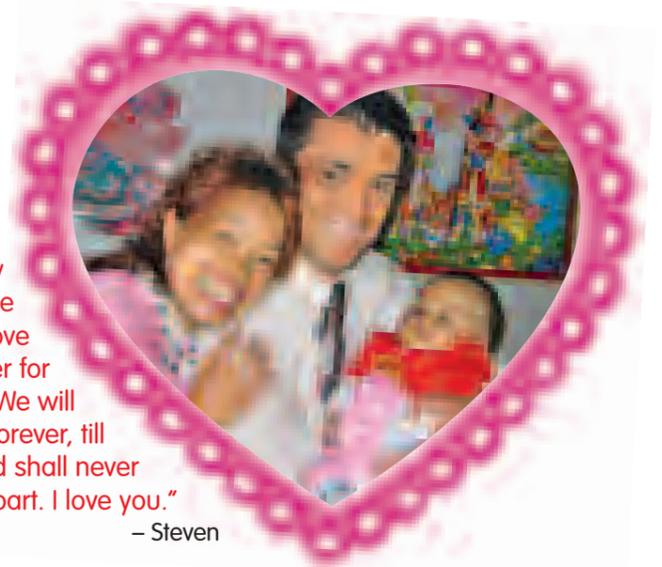
"Theresa, you are my stage. I love you!"
- Bryan Jackson, Airports



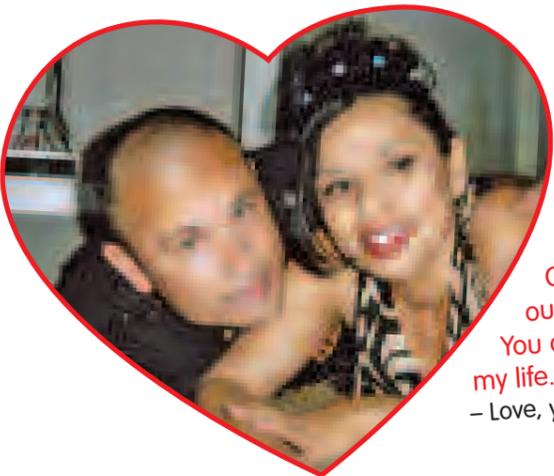
"Ron and I met online before the Internet came to life. We've supported each other through good and some pretty rough times. We've been married for over 15 years, and I just wanted to say how much I love being married to my best friend!"
- Jean Sarfaty, LAPD, Club Rep

Be My

"My wife and I went to the same high school but didn't meet for 10 more years. We both survived two terrible marriages each. We have been together now for 24 years, and I'm more in love with her every day. Laurel, you truly are my Valentine. I love you."
- Russell Harris



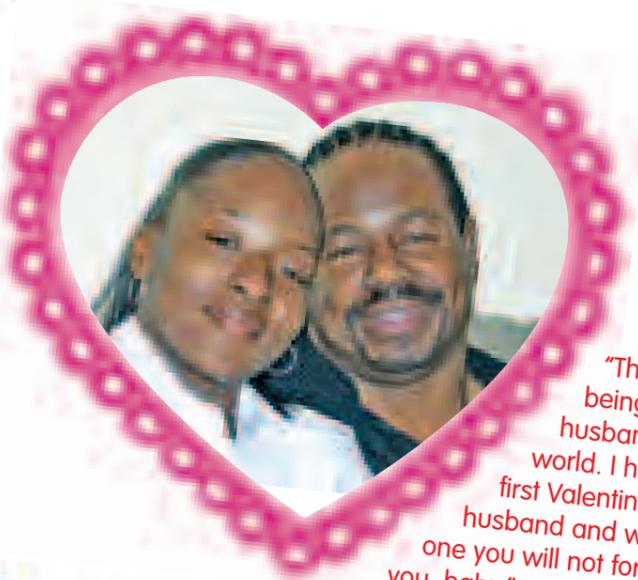
"So far away, and yet, every minute of the day, our love grows stronger for one another. We will be together, forever, till eternity, and shall never be apart. I love you."
- Steven



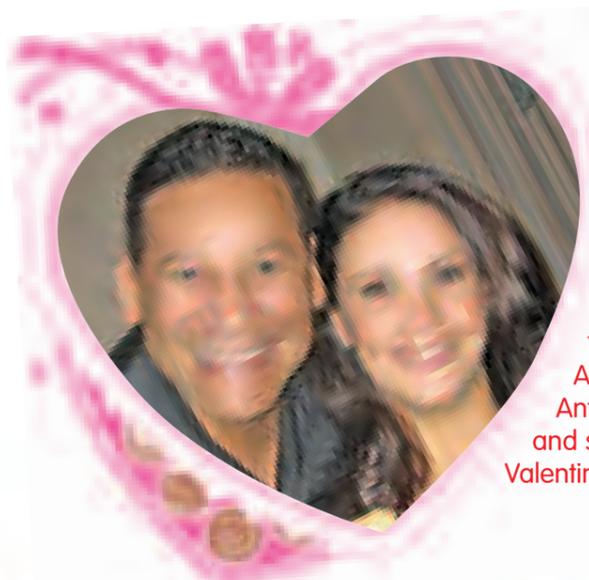
"Robert, thank you for being dedicated to God, me and our daughters. You are the love of my life."
- Love, your wife, Denice



"David, you are the best thing that has ever happened to me. I am so thankful to have you in my life. I love you."
- Maria Gambino, LAPD

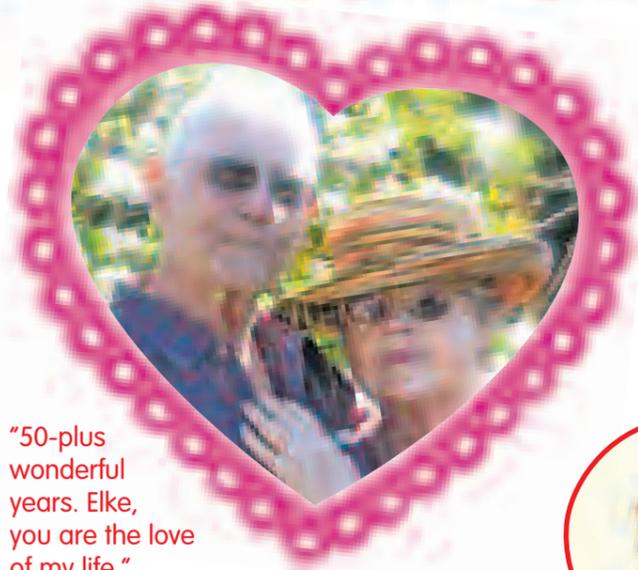


"Thank you for being the best husband in the world. I hope our first Valentine's Day as husband and wife will be one you will not forget. I love you, baby."
- Mrs. Ronique Jazmine Barker



Lisa (Customer Service Rep., DWP) and her husband Johnny Wiley, have been married for 10 years and have two children, Aleena and Anthony. "Ten years and still glowing! Happy Valentines' Day."
- Lisa Wiley, DWP

"To the two Valentines in my life –
I will love you forever."
– John Hawkins, Club CEO



"50-plus wonderful years. Elke, you are the love of my life."

Ivan Forbes, Retiree, Club Member and owner of the Greenest House in Los Angeles

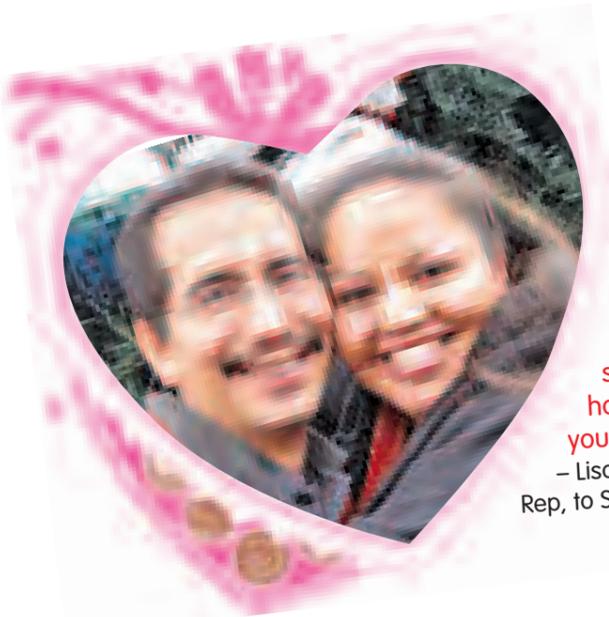
"To Lani and Gary, affirm your love for one another each and every day. Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!"
– With love, Diana



Club Valentine

Love is in the air at the Club! Thanks to all who chose to share their love here in *Alive!*, and happy Valentine's Day to all who are in love, or hope to be soon!

Happy Valentine's Day!



"Fifteen years together, 13 years of marriage and five kids later, you still give me butterflies. You have my heart forever. I love you!"

– Lisa Solis, DWP Customer Service Rep, to Steve Solis, DWP Meter Reader



"Edwina, you're the best thing that ever happened to me."

Love you, Michael

"To my Beautiful Valentine Denice, May God bless our marriage and our love. I will love you like Christ loved the church my love"

– Love, Robert



"Bruce, I love you with all your idiosyncrasies. Happy Valentine's Day!"

– The Mrs



"Thank you for all the good times, and I will always love you."

– Eddie Pree

Love and the City



■ A special Valentine's Day look at seven couples who fell in love while working for the City.

By Yvonne Liu, Office of Finance, Club Member; Photos courtesy of the couples

On this Valentine's Day, some of our co-workers are remembering their Valentine with an extra fondness for a location the rest of us might call "work." For example: Can a bar near the 911 Communications Center be romantic? Can a weighing station at a landfill be a magical place for love at first sight?

These City Employees had the good fortune of meeting and marrying each other while both were employed by the City. They share their stories of how they found love while wearing their City uniforms, and how they found their spouse in their office building, in the next cubicle or across their desktops.

Janie Smith and John Wagoner, who met at Sanitation's Lopez Canyon Landfill.



Not So Down in the Dump

Janie Smith started with the City as a Clerk Typist Dec. 26, 1979. In June 1988, she left the Police Academy to try working outside the City. She had such a bad experience out there that she returned to the City three months later. This time she was appointed by Public Works/Sanitation at Lopez Canyon Landfill, weighing the refuse trucks after they returned from their routes.

Little did she suspect that she would fall for a man in a green uniform. Refuse Truck Officer II John Wagoner came into the scales for his truck to be weighed.

"At first [John] kept asking me out, but I said no - because I did not like to date people I worked with," Janie said. "Finally he stopped asking. I began to wonder why he stopped, so I asked him out."

In December 1988, Janie transferred back to the Police Academy to the same position that she left, and then was promoted and returned to Lopez Canyon Landfill, Administrative Office. Between those two stints, Janie and John got married in Las Vegas in 1995.

In 2001, John transferred out of the same work location to Van Norman Mulching Facility, which, at that time, was a subsidiary of Lopez Canyon. Last year, Van Norman Mulching Facility closed, and John returned to Lopez Canyon Landfill. Janie and John are reunited at the workplace and drive to work together.

Janie and John will both retire next year, Janie with more than 30 years of City service and John with more than 20 years.

"My husband and I met at the dump and will retire at the dump," Janie said. "I like to think that my husband found his diamond at the dump — me!"

911: Help! I'm in Love

Three years ago, Police Service Representative II Christina Najjar had a really rough day at work. After work, she was looking for her trusty friend, Paul, to go have a drink with her. That night she couldn't find him, but she found a husband instead.

John Craig, 41, is also a Police Service Representative II working for LAPD Valley Communications Dispatch Center in West Hills (VDCD). At the time they started dating, he had already worked with Christina in the same office for two years. She had been working there for five. They are still working in the same office together.

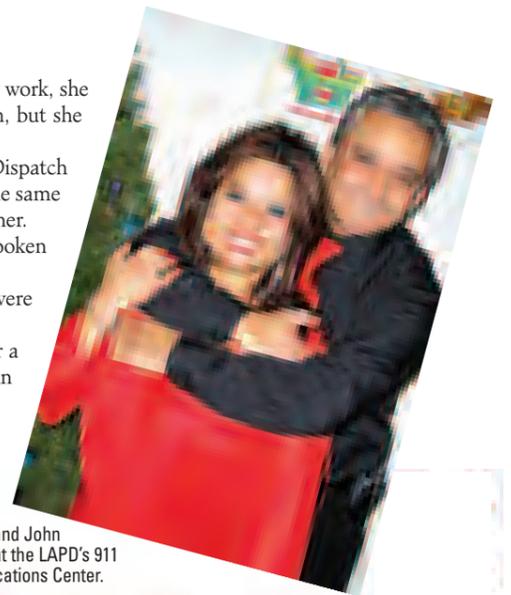
"I was surprised that Christina asked me if I wanted to go have a drink because we had never really spoken prior to this," John said, "I am very glad that I did not decline the offer."

"We kept our relationship quiet [from the office] for a couple of months until a coworker asked if we were dating after noticing us walk to our trucks before and after our shift," Christina said.

Christina and John were engaged in Maui July 24, 2006. They saved up the cost of a big wedding for a down payment on a house. They were married in a civil ceremony at a small beach backdrop in Ventura in August of the same year.

They have been married for 17 months.

"People who work together stay together," Christina believes.



Christina Najjar and John Craig, who met at the LAPD's 911 Valley Communications Center.



Swept Off the Carpet



Sheree Herts and Nick Adams met when Nick installed carpet in the office of then-Councilman Joel Wachs, Sheree's boss.

In 1990, Sheree Herts, Field Deputy and Senior Citizen Specialist for former Councilmember Joel Wachs in the Van Nuys City Hall office, contacted General Services to coordinate installation of new carpet.

Nick Adams of General Services/Building Maintenance arrived with samples of the new carpet to show her. She was impressed with both the carpet samples and the man who brought them. Nick and Sheree felt something special and became good friends from working on the project.

When asked what was the most memorable event during their first year together, Sheree said, "We won the Daily News contest for describing the most romantic date. Our answer, dinner at Geoffrey's off the cliff-side of Malibu, was published in the Daily News on Valentine's Day."

Bejeweled by a collection of drawings of hearts by movie stars, Geoffrey's décor sent Sheree's heart aflutter.

"My sister and I always loved hearts," she said. "In fact, the reporter made a remark that my maiden name should have been Heart, not Herts."

Nick and Sheree were awarded with a dinner at Geoffrey's and a photo op to celebrate their first Valentine's Day together.

A year and a half later, in November 1992, Sheree and Nick were married at the Woodland Hills Marriott Hotel. Unusual as it may be, Sheree was given away by not one, but two important men in her life— her brother, presiding Worker's Comp Judge Larry Greenblatt, and former Councilmember Wachs.

"Without Councilman Wachs, we would never have met," Sheree and Nick recalled graciously.

Nick retired in September from General Services after 23 years of City service. Sheree Adams, who is the Senior and Clergy Liaison to Councilman Dennis P. Zine of the Third District, is starting on her 41st year of City service.

Together Sheree and Nick are blessed with three children from Nick's previous marriage, four grandchildren (not counting another baby grandson on the way), two Shetland sheep dogs, and one cat.

Once From Piper Tech, and Again

"If the love is still there, you have a chance with each other no matter how much time you were separated," Debbie Rettig said.

Debbie, a Communication Information Representative II with ITA's 3-1-1 Center, met her husband roughly halfway in her City career of 25 years.

Fifteen years ago, Debbie, a Clerk Typist who was working for General Services at the time, met her husband, Printing Press Operator Walter Griffin, while taking a walk during her break. He saw her, they went on a date, and two months later, they were married.

In 1994, Debbie and Walter ran into some troubles and got divorced. She sought a transfer and moved on to another assignment with Building and Safety.

She had not seen nor heard from Walter in 13 years. But last year, he called her and they started dating again.

"We are a bit older now — I'm 50, and he's 54," Debbie reflected. "We are more settled now and understand each other better."

Since they did not have children together, she believes that that made it easier for them to get back into each other's lives.

When asked if they will marry each other again, Debbie said, "Yes, we are talking about it."

Bowled Over

Latrice Jones and Gabriel Boyd met in an LAPD bowling league.



After working for the City for nearly two years, Latrice Jones, Police Service Representative (PSR), decided along with other PSRs to start a bowling league together. They were looking for some exercise to balance out the sedentary duty handling 911 calls.

In November 2003, she and her team went bowling at the Del Rio Lanes in Downey. They bowled with a men's group in the neighboring lane.

Since Latrice has had been bowling since she was in the sixth grade, she felt fairly confident about her positioning and delivery.

"I was bowling and I kept feeling somebody is looking at me," Latrice recalled. "My friend said, 'Latrice, I think you have an admirer.'"

Gabriel Boyd, who has been working for Airports since 1998, was impressed with a woman with a passion for bowling like himself.

They started dating, and a few weeks later they found out that they had a lot more in common besides bowling. They also work for the same employer, the City of Los Angeles.

Latrice and Gabriel bought a house together in August 2006. Gabriel proposed in October 2006, and they had a June wedding in 2007.

"He works graveyard, so I only see him for a few hours each day," said Latrice, who is now a Senior Clerk Typist for another LAPD Division. "It's good because we miss each other."

Love and Fitness at the DWP Gym

Erika Gutierrez-Ascencio also met her husband in the same building. She was starting new at the DWP as a Senior Clerk Typist in a limited position. After work, she went downstairs of the John Ferraro Office Building to sign up at the YMCA gym for employees.

Saul Gutierrez, as her fitness consultant, found that they have great chemistry together.

"She asked me out," said Saul, who was then 20. Erika, who was 23 at the time, had never before considered dating any man under 26. They met in November 2003 and got married three months later, in February 2004.

"Through the gym, we had many mutual friends, so we didn't try to keep [our relationship] a secret," Erika remembered.

Saul was selected as a General Service security officer soon after they met. He enjoys his work patrolling various City buildings and facilities.

Now, in her sixth year of City service, Erika has been promoted to Secretary at Public Works/Sanitation, Solid Resources Recycling Division. Erika and Saul have one daughter.

"My general health and nutrition has improved a great deal since meeting him," Erika said, "[because] we would eat lunch together as often as we could."

Hearts on Fire

In 1980, the City strongly encouraged employees to carpool cut down traffic congestion. Paramedic trainee Lynn McKay approached a fellow trainee, Rex Roth, about carpooling. Rex hesitated to join the carpool group, thinking how much he would hate to give up his freedom of driving alone. Lynn thought, what a jerk!

Eventually Rex realized the convenience of sharing driving and joined the group. Moreover, he found that he and Lynn were even better partners outside of the Fire Tower where they were training.

"Back then, nobody dated a female firefighter," Rex said. "The [Los Angeles] Fire Department didn't accept females until 1977 and in 1980 Lynn graduated from the third class with female paramedics."

It was not hard keeping their dating relationship a secret. Lynn and Rex worked on their separate assignments at the stations and they carpooled on the way home. They were so good at keeping it quiet that when they got married three years later, in 1983, and finally told their colleagues, many of them still couldn't believe it.

With 27 years of City service behind her, Lynn McKay Roth is now a Fire Inspector I in the Filming Division.

It seems that having worked in the same department for years, Rex has developed a deep appreciation for Lynn's professional achievement. "Lynn is quite possibly the fourth highest ranking female in the Los Angeles Fire Department," Rex said, proudly.

Rex left the City on disability in 1997 after 17 years of City service. He now teaches full time at Roosevelt High School under LAUSD. Between the two of them, they've covered some of the busiest fire stations in the City.

They celebrate the 25th year of their marriage with a grown-up daughter who attends Marquette University in Wisconsin.

