

{ *Who are the people you see every day?* }

People We See

in downtown Los Angeles.

No. 14 in a series.
FEBRUARY 2009

Meet Alvard Chambarian.

**AGE:** "I'm 52 years old."**BIRTHPLACE:** "Armenia, now Russia."**WHEN DID YOU MOVE TO LOS ANGELES?**

"I moved from the Soviet Union (Armenia) in 1993. First I went to Moscow, then Alaska, San Francisco and Portland, and then I ended up in Los Angeles."

MARITAL STATUS:

"I was married once, to a man named Larry."

FAMILY: "I have two brothers and two sisters."**DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS?**

"Many, but in particular, Sunny and David."

RELIGION: "I am an Orthodox Baptist."**FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY:**

"The New Year's Festival. Every year I would look forward to it."

EDUCATION: "High school."**WHAT WAS THE LAST JOB YOU HAD?**

"I worked in Pacific Palisades, taking care of an elderly doctor. When he died, my job ended."

TROPHIES: none.**MILITARY:** "No, I wasn't in the military, but my father fought in the Russian Army against Hitler's Germany."**IF YOU COULD WISH FOR ANYTHING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** "I really don't know."**IF YOU HAD A MILLION DOLLARS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH IT?** "Buy a home. It would be so nice to have a bed and refrigerator. I would love to also have my own kitchen."**FAVORITE FOOD:** "I love Armenian dolmas!"**FAVORITE ACTOR:** "Jack Nicholson, Michael Douglas and Steve McQueen."**FAVORITE TV SHOW:**

"I really don't have a favorite, but watching TV taught me how to speak English."

FAVORITE MUSIC:

"I like heavy rock and symphony music."

FAVORITE CANDY: "Chocolate."**FAVORITE SPORTS:** "Running."**WHAT'S THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?**

"The Bible."

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

"Here on the street with my tent."

WHAT WAS THE LAST THING YOU ATE?

"Since last night, all I have had was this coffee. But last night for dinner I had hot dogs, sausage and potato salad."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN THE CITY?

"I enjoy downtown, being around the big buildings."

ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY PEOPLE:

"Be nice and don't fight."

IF YOU WERE THE MAYOR, WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO HELP THE HOMELESS? "I would provide more housing opportunities. I would also separate those who are addicted to alcohol and drugs from those of us who are sober and live a clean life."**WHICH ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST HELP TO YOU?**

"There is an organization that brings food to the homeless here downtown on Monday and Thursday nights. I'm not sure of their name, but it's wonderful!"

The Club gave Alvard a McDonald's gift certificate, some cash, snacks, and a Club tote bag.

This interview took place Dec. 19 on Main Street, between Temple and Aliso Streets.

Newsbriefs

NEW DOWNTOWN PARK:

Councilmember and Club Member Jan Perry, and Rec and Parks announced that the City is currently acquiring a .8 acre of land at 418-438 Spring St. to develop a downtown neighborhood park. The announcement was made Jan. 14.

The parcel at Fourth and Spring Streets is vacant and sits in a prime location in the heart of the Historic Core in downtown. Using Quimby funds, the City has agreed to purchase the land at the fair market value price of \$5.6 million, which is 12.5 percent below the September 2008 appraised value for the parcel. Quimby funds are collected by the City from developers for the purpose of creating park space. Escrow is expected to close in March of this year.

"Downtown Los Angeles is a vibrant place with a growing and thriving residential community," Councilwoman Perry said. "I recognize the need for urban, neighborhood parks and have been working hard with the help of the Quimby task force to make this vision a reality.

"I look forward to developing this park for generations of Los Angelenos to enjoy."

The Quimby task force was convened by Councilwoman Perry's office in the spring of 2008 to address the need for more community-based parks in downtown and is comprised of members from the office of Councilwoman Perry, Rec and Parks, General Services, Chief Legislative Analyst, Planning, the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, and other downtown residents and stakeholders. The task force has been instrumental in helping to identify potential land for parks and will play an important role in helping to implement the vision of the community through this new park.

"A new park is always a cause for celebration," said Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager, Rec and Parks, and Club Member. "Parks enrich our lives in so many ways, and the City has a commitment to healthy parks and increased green space. We're pleased to be able to use Quimby funds to acquire this new downtown park."

MORE REC SPACE, PLEASE:

On Jan. 14, Councilwoman and Club Member Janice Hahn asked that Rec and Parks examine all opportunities for new park acquisitions in the City. The request was a response to a recently completed study of City park needs by the Department. Councilwoman Hahn also asked that the findings of the yearlong survey be presented to the City Council's Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee within 30 days.

The study's findings showed that Los Angeles has four acres of parks per 1,000 residents, which, it found, was inadequate for serving a population of approximately four million residents. By surveying City residents, the study also determined that there is a dearth of adult fitness programs, nature programs, and walking and biking trails throughout the City.

"It comes as no surprise in a City as park-poor as Los Angeles that our residents want more recreational facilities," Councilwoman Hahn said. "And in tough economic times, it becomes even more important that young people and families have opportunities to participate in recreational and sports activities that are affordable and close to their homes."

The Councilwoman further requested that Rec and Parks present a written report of all new park acquisition opportunities to each Council District, as well as an update of the report detailing Quimby Funds available for each Department facility, to be revised and submitted to Council every six months. Quimby funds are state funds collected from developers, which are intended to balance out the pace of development with adequate open space.

"We must always be seeking opportunities to provide more parks for communities in need. And while there are costs involved in owning and maintaining these facilities, the costs of depriving our children of these resources is far greater," the Councilwoman said.



{ In this monthly feature, Club CEO John Hawkins and Director of Member Services Angel Gomez introduce you to people you see every day, but you might not know who they are. The Club reminds you that we all have names and stories to tell. }