

** A Message From the CEO **

City Employees Do A Whale of a Job

by John Hawkins
President and CEO, The Club

When's the last time you were around a hundred or so kids, and you heard a great explosion of cheers and applause – for an animal? No, not a video game animal, or an IMAX 3-D creature. I mean, a real animal.

That's what happened more than once when *Alive!* hopped aboard and went along on a whale-watch excursion with City Employee **Larry Fukuhara** of the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.

I wasn't expecting to hear much enthusiasm from the young kids – who I figured might be jaded because of all the over stimulation they receive every day, with texting, and video game consoles, and the Internet, and so forth. Could a sea animal really mean that much to them?

Oh, yeah! And it was awesome.

Awesome, too, was watching Larry interact with the kids, explaining what they might see, and pointing out other cool creatures along the way, and getting excited over the P.A. system himself as the boat approached the area where whales had been seen from the shore. He built up the anticipation beautifully. And then, when we spotted the whales, the excitement went over the top.



Larry Fukuhara (left) and John Hawkins, on the dock in Redondo Beach.

The City is lucky to have a guy like Larry teaching more than a hundred thousand students each year about the joys of the ocean, and why it's important to take care of it. Thanks for the ride, Larry. And thanks for your enthusiasm. You are building a love of the sea for generations to come.

Well, okay, back to shore, but just barely. I want to congratulate two great friends of the Club, Port Police Sgts. **Rosario Ferrara** and **Daniel Cobos**, for their amazing bravery. What could have been a very sad story – a man, for whatever reason, deciding apparently to end it all by jumping off the Vincent Thomas Bridge – is instead filled with hope for our world. These two great men risked their own lives to save his. If only we could see just how risky it was – with Sgt. Cobos grabbing the man's pants leg, and Sgt. Ferrara grabbing Sgt. Cobos, so he didn't perish along with the despondent man. I mean, have you seen how *high* that bridge is? Whoa! But they didn't let that stop them. I have met them, and I suspect they would probably say that they were just doing their duty. Well, yes, they were. But that duty asked them to risk their own lives, and they came through. Bravo, gentlemen. Bravo.

And I want to congratulate the six City Employee Trailblazers honored at a reception last month by the Los Angeles Association of Black Personnel. The six are: **Detrich Brown Allen**, Environmental Affairs; **Cheryl Chisolm**, Building and Safety; **Michael Holmes**, Public Works/Street Services; **Miriam Scott Long**, Mayor's Office; **Rashad Mfume**, IIA; and **Jeffery Whitmore**, Finance. Thank you for your leadership and your excellence.

Come to think of it, we had a month full of outstanding examples of what it means to be a City Employee, didn't we! The tough economy has affected us all, but it hasn't affected City excellence one bit. Congratulations to all.

JOHN

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Features

Alive! March 2009
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City Employees Club of Los Angeles



Page 32

32 A Whale of a Program

City Employee Larry Fukuhara runs the outreach programs at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, which include the popular whale-watching excursions.



Page 43

21 Saving a Life

Two Port Police Sergeants save the life of a man apparently attempting to jump off the Vincent Thomas Bridge.

25 Get in Shape in 2009!

The Club's newest benefit – great discounts on memberships to 24 Hour Fitness – is off to a fast start. Get all the details!

42 Bone Marrow Donor

Ontario Safety Officer Matthew Patrick saves the life of a cancer victim in New York.

43 St. Patrick's Day Festivities

The City presents three events for St. Patrick's Day – a parade, a party in Pershing Square, and the annual St. Baldrick's fundraiser to fight children's cancers.



Page 58

48 Women Leaders

LAPD hosts Women's Leadership Conference.

50 The City Parties!

Alive! continues its look at your 2008 holiday parties.

58 African-American Trailblazers

Los Angeles Association of Black Personnel honors six City Employee Trailblazers.

Other City Department Coverage:

The City

Important City Election, March 3 11

Club Headquarters

Club Holds Annual Meeting 24

Club Headquarters Has Moved 57

E-Tickets Available 40

New Club Employee, Rachael Brecher 41

Convention Center

Greg Lissow Retires 23

DWP

Louis Castillo Retires 31

Finance

Tax Auditor's Race for Fun 22

Library

Acting Company Performs the *Iliad* 52

Photography Exhibit at Central Library 7

Personnel

Future City Leaders Graduate 56

Rec & Parks

Cabrillo Aquarium Celebrates Earth Day 13

Sections & Columns:

Adventures With Hal 18-19

Alive! Around the World 8-9

Be *Alive!* 28-29

Best Years 17-20

Car Club 11

CEO Column 3

Claims Monthly 4

Classifieds 64

Club Store 66-71

Club Store This Month 24

Club Team and Counselors 4

Coloring Contest Winners 10

Cooking With the Club 61

Everyday Heroes 26-27, 44-45

History Comes *Alive!* 14-15

Letters 5

Life's Important Moments 54-55

People We See 60

Pet Club 57

Picture Perfect 12

Question of the Month 5

Rest Insured 52

Reviews: Movie, DVD, Book, Theatre 62-63

Ticket and Gift Order Form 65

NEW Thought of the Month 23

Tuned In 49

Word on the Street 4

Advertiser's Index

Blind Children's Center 41

Brinks Home Security 6

Cityside Federal Credit Union 48

Disneyland 30

DBD Elegant Watch and Jewelry Sales 40

DWP Federal Credit Union 2

LAPD Recruitment 40

Rec. & Parks – St. Patrick's Day Events 30

Rosebud Marketing Group 23

United Agencies Inc. Insurance 22

Universal Studios 63