March 2009

* A Message Grom 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, ITA; 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.







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whale-watching excursions.

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City Employee Larry Fukuhara runs the outreach programs

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The Club's newest benefit - great discounts on memberships

to 24 Hour Fitness - is off to a fast start. Get all the details!

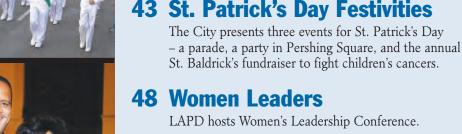
Ontario Safety Officer Matthew Patrick saves the life of

attempting to jump off the Vincent Thomas Bridge.

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