



Alive!



Ticket Guy Buys Ticket To Move On

Favorite Club staffer Navin Cotton leaves for other opportunities.

THE CLUB — The face and sunny outlook so familiar to thousands of Club Store shoppers has moved on. One of the Club's best-known staff members, Navin Cotton, a.k.a. the Ticket Guy, is fulfilling another chapter in his life and has left his employment at the Club to pursue other opportunities.

His last day was March 12. Club Members and staffers wished him well.

"I give my thanks to the Club staff and the members, who've made my experience here so good," Ticket Guy said in an *Alive!* interview before he left.

"We thank Ticket Guy for all he has done, and we're going to miss him," said Club CEO John Hawkins.

For more on Ticket Guy, see the story on page 9.

Leaving the City? You Can Still Have Great Club Benefits

Take the great Club benefits with you as you retire or leave.

THE CLUB — If you're soon to be leaving the City - perhaps a regular retirement, an early retirement, or other reason - you can keep your Club benefits! (An exception: long-term disability insurance). And if you've never been part of the Club, now is the best reason to join as you leave employment with the City.

"You can keep your Club Membership and most other plans when you retire or leave City service," said Club CEO John Hawkins. "Most of the great benefits with the Club are portable - that is you can take them with you. Do you love our awesome ticket discounts with no markups? Or great Club events? Are you a big fan of *Alive!*? Then keep getting them. And if you have never been part of the Club, be sure to join the Club family before you leave!"

Those who leave the city will need to set up an alternate method of sending in membership dues. Those retiring receive all Club benefits at a discounted membership rate of \$2.50 a month.

Don't miss any great Club events. Don't pay walk-up prices for tickets and keep getting the discounts you deserve for your fine service to this great City.

Don't leave the Club! You belong here. If you're leaving the City, call (800) 464-0452 and ask for Tiffany. She'll keep you connected.

Paul Blount, Operations Manager over the City's mulch/compost program, holding raw mulch.



Thank You Very

Public Works

Mulch

Paul Blount and Sanitation's Solid Resources Processing and Construction Division are turning the City's green waste into gold.

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Alive! photo by Tom Hawkins



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120 West 2nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Club Scholarships

Applications now available.

SEE PAGE 42

Public Works



▶ Thank You Very Mulch

How your yard cuttings become rich mulch.



Ever wonder where your green yard trimmings go, after you've cut your lawn and filled the green bin outside your residence? Well, Paul Blount and Sanitation's Solid Resources Processing and Construction Division take it from there, turn it into compost, and return it for use by any City resident.

Here, Club CEO John Hawkins follows the process of turning the City's green waste into gold.

Alive! Feature



Paul Blount, Operations Manager over the City's mulch program, explains the details of grinding to Club CEO John Hawkins.

Alive! photo by Tom Hawkins

Alive! Feature

Waste Not, Want Not

The City's mulching and composting dept. recycles the City's yard trimmings, producing a very popular product.

Photos by Tom Hawkins, Club photographer

Ever wonder where your yard waste – the trimmings you put into the green bins – goes? The answer is, it comes back to the City, in a very usable form, thanks to Public Works/Sanitation's Solid Resources Processing and Construction Division.

One of the largest single components of the City's waste stream is green waste (grass and tree trimmings, leaves, garden waste and other vegetable material). Currently, the City recycles more than 380 tons of yard trimmings per day.

Public Works/Sanitation operates three mulching/composting facilities: the Harbor Yard Trimmings Facility in San Pedro, which uses the contents of the Bureau-collected residential green bins in the Harbor area; the Griffith Park Composting Facility, which uses green waste from Griffith Park, biosolids from the Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant and animal waste from the Los Angeles Zoo; and the Lopez Canyon Environmental Center, which uses green waste collected by the Bureau of Sanitation and tree trimmings generated by private contractors to mix with horse manure collected from nearby residents. The mulch and compost produced by these three facilities is a high-quality product, and is given away free to community gardens, City residents, businesses and farmers.

Composting is a natural process, which transforms decomposable organic material into carbon dioxide, water and stabilized organic matter (compost). In nature, compost forms slowly, depending on ambient conditions. Although composting utilizes a natural process, successful operation of a compost site does not happen automatically. Composting requires daily



THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW

'A Very Environmentally Sound Product'

On March 3, Club CEO John Hawkins and Alive! editor John Burnes sat down with Club Member Paul Blount, Solid Resources Manager I and Operations Manager, Solid Resources Processing and Construction Division, Public Works/Sanitation. We talked about the benefits and long-term plans for the City's mulching and composting functions. – Ed.

Alive! Thanks for meeting us today and giving us a tour of the processing facilities.

Paul Blount: Sure.

What things are you responsible for other than the mulch and compost function?

Paul: In addition to mulch and compost, I'm in charge of all landfill operations. We have five closed landfills, meaning that they're not accepting trash. And [I'm responsible for] any of what we consider offsite projects – where we might be asked to assist in debris base and cleanup.

Let's start with a really basic question. What is mulch?

Paul: Mulch is ground-up plant material.

So you process the green yard trimmings and pile it up and turn it, and slowly it becomes compost. Talk about the plant science and what's happening when a pile of yard trimmings becomes compost.

Paul: I would call it simply microbial action. The microbes break down the material. If you overheat the material, then it kills those so that

microbial action is stopped. It's the activity of the microbes working in that moist environment to break it down.

And why is mulch valuable?

Paul: Well, our customers use mulch for several different reasons: weed abatement, erosion control, soil amendment and water retention. It's a very environmentally sound product.

Who are your customers?

Paul: Our main customers are the citizens of the City of Los Angeles. We operate nine giveaway sites where people can come and get mulch for free. All they have to have is a shovel and a container. And we support the Mayor's Million Tree Program. Various and sundry civic groups use it; and a lot of schools, colleges, and universities use it. Some of the elementary schools with their gardening programs have used our mulch. Just about anybody who wants it, and needs it can be our customers.

And we give some away to farmers in Ventura County, too. That's the raw mulch.

So they don't have to live in the City?

Paul: Not really.

There's no verification.

Paul: We don't require verification. Our sites are unmanned, so generally there's no way that we could check on it, anyway. We're part of the environmental community. I like to think we're part of the solution, and the solution is to provide mulch to somebody who needs it. We're going to put it to a good beneficial reuse.

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Alan Davis, Equipment Operator, comes to pick up the trimmings after they have been picked clean of solid contaminants. Operations Manager Paul Blount and Club CEO John Hawkins look on.



Club CEO John Hawkins chats with Eric Wesson, Equipment Supervisor, at the Lopez Canyon facility.

Paul Blount in his office at the Lopez Canyon facility.

Thank You Very **Public Works** Mulch

Mulch can be cultivated for up to 90 days before it becomes full compost.

management. Operators must intervene with specific control measures to establish and maintain the composting process. The composting process should progress at a predictable rate under ideal microbial conditions so that a high quality product is produced in the minimum amount of time to meet applicable standards.

Composting Education Center

An education center, located near the Griffith Park composting facility, teaches the public more about various composting techniques, many of which can be done at home. Once a significant number of Los Angeles residents become compost-friendly, millions of tons of recyclable organic "wastes" will be diverted away from collection trucks and put to beneficial use at home. The savings in municipal sanitation budgets will add up to millions of dollars annually, and be available to fund other public services.

The facility currently processes around 7000 cubic yards of green waste per year. Rec and Parks receives half of the produced compost, Topgro®, while the remainder is sold to private entities, such as landscape companies.

The materials used in the compost are mixed in an aerated pile for 15 days at a temperature of 135°F - 145°F.

When ready for use, compost helps soil and plants in numerous ways, including:

- Increasing organic matter and microbial activity in the soil. Compost "feeds the soil," making it easier for plants to get the nutrients they need by releasing them slowly and in small doses, the way nature does.
- Improving the soil's water-holding capacity, which helps soil retain moisture longer. This stimulates healthy root development.
- Loosening and aerating clay soils to make it easier for roots to establish themselves.

Tree trimmings collected from Griffith Park by Rec and Parks are grinded at their recycling plant and given to the composting facility. More than 3,500 tons of organic material becomes compost at the Griffith Park Composting facility. This facility and the recycling plant are the first of their kind in the United States.

Compost is donated to nonprofit organizations and

schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District; it is also used in the garden areas at the Los Angeles Zoo and in park landscaping projects throughout the City.

Seal of Testing Assurance

Public Works/Sanitation strives to provide the highest-quality compost and adhere to standards adopted by agricultural organizations. Learn more about the Seal of Testing Assurance for the City's compost at san.lacity.org/srped/sta_info.htm. Copies of the most current quarterly lab STA data sheets alongside instructions on the recommended use of the STA compost products produced by the City can be obtained for the respective products.



The Lopez Canyon mulch processing facility.



A chute collects the solid contaminants – bottles, paper, etc. – from the yard trimmings before the grinding begins.



Alive! Feature

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW, – continued

When the giveaway stations are empty, people call you and request more.

Paul: Yes. When a giveaway site is empty, we do receive phone calls. That's how popular the program is.

Wow. It's a valuable commodity it sounds like.

Paul: It is. It is valued.

The Three Facilities

Tell us about the differences between the three facilities that you have.

Paul: Okay. The first place where we initially began our operation was in at the Harbor facility, and that is a small operation. We take in approximately 80 tons [of yard waste] a day. That's considerably smaller than we do here at Lopez Canyon. We do grinding there, but we don't have any windrows in that area. We did at one time have a place on Terminal Island where we could do windrows and cure the material, but that was borrowed territory. It belonged to the Harbor Department and they needed the land for something else, so we closed that down.

The primary site became Lopez Canyon, and we have agreements [relating to] environmental issues with the community. We've tried to limit the number of trucks coming in, the amount

of noise, hours of operation, that sort of thing, but even within those parameters, we are producing a significant amount of material here.

The other site that I have is the Griffith Park Composting Facility, and this is a unique operation that started entirely separately. The Griffith Park Composting Facility is comprised of trimmings from the park; "zoo doo," a manure from the zoo; and biosolids from Hyperion Treatment Plant. [The Griffith Park facility] originally began as a pilot program to see the feasibility of doing it.

And at Griffith Park, in addition to the different feedstock, we also have the concept of aerated stockpiles. We have channels underneath the piles, and we have a vacuum line and a turbine that draw air through the piles from below and provide the same service as if we were turning it with a turner. We're still drawing air and we're making a high-grade compost with the feedstock we have. Half of that we're giving back to the park because it originated in their area and they can use it. And the other half, we sell. We have people who buy it by the truckload.

Why do you need the biosolids?

Paul: It's part of a pilot program and it's a biological product that augments the other material we're using. There are strict controls on the formula and testing and monitoring. We keep records of that.

I see. And Lopez Canyon ...

Paul: The third one is Lopez Canyon. The products we produce here are full compost, that's the material with the manure in it, and that [cures for] over 90 days. Then there's our what we call mini-composted material or the mulch, the partially composted mulch; I know for that our minimum is 21 days. We like it to go 50. We like the idea of making it as close to compost as he possibly can.

And the third product that we produce out of Lopez is what we call raw mulch, and farmers use that material primarily for weed abatement and erosion control, soil amendment, that sort of thing. They put it down in large quantities. We just bring them an 18-wheeler load or several, and they spread it with their own tractors. The farmers have known for a long time the value of using this because those who have used the material have cut their water usage tremendously. We live in a Mediterranean climate here in Southern California, which means that we're just one small step above a desert, and water retention or wise water use is a very, very important endeavor that we all ought to be involved in.

Good for the City

When did the concept of mulch and processing it, when did it really grow? Was it like five years ago, ten years ago, 20 years ago? Take us through that.

Get Your Free Mulch Here!

Public Works hosts nine sites where you can get free near-compost (cured for 21 days). On occasion, full compost (90 days) is distributed at these locations, too.

INFORMATION:
san.lacity.org/srpcd/mulch_giveaway.htm



Club CEO John Hawkins grabs a handful of raw mulch.

FREE MULCH PICK-UP LOCATIONS:

- 1 Lake View Terrace**
11950 Lopez Canyon Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 91342
7 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day
- 2 Sheldon-Arleta**
12455 Wicks St.
Los Angeles, CA 91352
7 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day
- 3 West Valley**
16600 Roscoe Pl.
Los Angeles, CA 91343
7 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day
- 4 Donald C. Tillman**
15800 Victory Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 91406
Enter south of the Densmore Avenue intersection
7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon. – Fri.;
8 a.m. to noon Sat.
- 5 West L.A.**
6000 W. Jefferson Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90016
7 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day
- 6 East L.A.**
2649 E. Washington Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90023
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Fri. – Sun.
- 7 Elysian Valley**
3000 Gilroy St.
Los Angeles, CA 90039
7 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day
- 8 San Pedro**
1400 N Gaffey St.
Los Angeles, CA 90731
6 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Mon. – Fri.
- 9 N. Mission Road**
850 N. Mission Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90033
10 a.m. – 1 p.m., 2 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays

Thank You Very **Public Works** Mulch

Paul: Our program began maybe 15 years ago or so, and we've refined it considerably.

In the early '90s we began seriously taking care of the mulch program. We started off assisting the Harbor Department with dust control and weed abatement. We found out that we had some problems – pumpkins and tomatoes and squash began growing in the areas that we had mulched. Left alone and just thrown out there, apparently the seeds and whatever would germinate on their own, and this was not what the Harbor Department wanted. And so one of our employees, who had quite a bit of experience in farming, said that we ought to begin to compost it a bit. We didn't have to run a full compost process, but [we had to] water it and turn it long enough to kill weed seeds, and it'll begin to break down, and it will make a much better material. We found that by doing that, we wouldn't have squash and tomatoes and corn and things growing. We got better and better at making a product that people wanted. For a while we were even providing material to Caltrans to use along the freeway right-of-way. We produced more when we lost Caltrans because they only wanted a certain amount. We began looking around for somebody to take it because it was too good to throw away. And that was the birth of our giveaway sites. We would get complaints that the material at the giveaway sites had more contaminants than

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Paul Blount, Operations Manager (right), describes how solid contaminants (bottles, paper, etc.) are picked by hand from the raw mulch, along a conveyor belt.



Compost Processing Facilities

Griffith Park Composting Facility

The Griffith Park Composting Facility began operations in January 1996. It is designed to compost the organic matter produced in the regional park. Maintenance crews collect dropped leaves, lawn clippings and trimmings from acres of landscaping. Zoo doo (collected from herbivores such as elephants and zebras) and biosolids are blended with chipped park greenery and composted. Topgro, the final compost product, is then used in Griffith Park, thus completing the full cycle of recycling. It is also available for retail sale to Los Angeles residents for their own urban landscaping projects.

The Griffith Park Composting Facility reuses Zoo manure, Griffith park green trimmings and a small amount of City biosolids to produce a compost product that will enhance City parks and build healthy soils without creating any negative environmental

impact to Griffith Park patrons and local residents.

Topgro is a registered, trademarked product owned and produced by the City of Los Angeles. The product is a natural organic product derived from pesticide-free yard clippings, animal manure from the Los Angeles Zoo and anaerobically digested Class A biosolids from the City's Hyperion Waste Water Treatment Plant. The product is non-hazardous, non-toxic and not subject to hazardous waste regulations.

At the Griffith Park facility, about four tons of zoo doo are combined with 20 tons of biosolids and 50 cubic yards of yard trimmings to form static piles through perforated pipes leading to a biofilter. The biofilter is made of natural ingredients – wood chips, limestone, and peat moss – that organically reduce odor-producing contaminants.

After 60 days of composting, curing and screening, 15 tons per day of Topgro organic compost will be ready for use and distribution.



Harbor Yard-Trimmings Facility

This operation is at the Gaffey Street Landfill, which has been reclaimed for recreational and mulching use. It receives Bureau of Sanitation collected yard trimmings (green waste), which are cleaned, processed and spread for purposes of weed and erosion control. The mulching facility is not open to the public.

The facility processes curbside collected green waste delivered by Sanitation's Solid Resources Collection Division. The site is about 2.5 acres in size. On the average, there are 20,000 tons of green waste delivered annually.

The facility utilizes a picking station, a screening machine and a tub grinder to process the material. The resulting product is given away to farmers for use as moisture retention and soil amendment.



Lopez Canyon Environmental Center

Lopez Canyon Environmental Center is the processing site for curbside collected yard trimmings from the East Valley area as well as horse manure collected by the City, into valuable mulch and compost.

History of the facility: In 2002 it became clear to Bureau of Sanitation managers that the three small-scale green trimmings management sites operated by City staff were not enough to accommodate City needs. A task force of Lopez Canyon Landfill neighbors met with Bureau of Sanitation representatives to consider putting a composting facility at the closed landfill. After careful mitigation agreements and production work, the facility became a reality in December 2003.

Over the decade, better environmental changes have been incorporated into the facility, sometimes based on requests by the community, sometimes based on needs identified by the Bureau of Sanitation.

The Lopez Canyon Environmental Center at the closed Lopez Canyon Landfill:

- Provides a much-needed green recycling facility for East Valley residents
- Provides the finished product, free, to the local community (mulch only)
- Increases employment opportunities for nearby residents
- Saves the City money by operating its own mulch and compost facility
- Provides an end product that is very beneficial for the environment

Since 2004, yard trimmings collected from residents in the San Fernando Valley have been processed at this City composting facility. Today, an average of 300 tons per day of yard trimmings are mixed with about 125 tons per day of woody materials to produce high-quality mulch that is given away free to City residents, delivered to farmers and donated to schools, nonprofits and community groups. Another specialized product consists of horse manure and yard trimmings, compost. This horse manure compost is an STA-certified product.

Alive! Feature

[THE PROCESS]

From the Yard, and Back Again

Here's how Public Works turns your yard trimmings into mulch or compost.

Producing a high-quality product (either mulch or compost) involves removing contamination (anything besides organic material) from the raw materials, making piles of the cleaned material, keeping it moist, mixing it and letting it sit and decompose. The finished product looks dark and rich, like the rich soil you see under trees in the woods.

Step 1 Doing Your Part



The process starts when you cut your lawn, trim your hedges, or perform other yard tasks. Here, Noah Hawkins, son of Club CEO John Hawkins, mows the family yard and places the trimmings in their green bin.



Step 2 Sanitation Pickup

The Hawkins family's yard recyclables are picked up early ...



Step 3 At the Plant

The LNG sanitation truck arrives at Lopez Canyon Environmental Center and delivers its payload – yard trimmings from City residents.



THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW, – continued

some people liked, so we got better at cleaning it and we learned as we went how to make a good product. We're at the point now where I would put our giveaway material up against any of the commercially produced mulch materials that you'd get at the home centers.

Very good. Why do you think this department is important to the City?

Paul: It's good on a couple of different levels. One, we can deal with our yard trimmings, a green solid resource. It's important because it is of value, and it conveys to the citizens that we have a product that is not something to be discarded, buried in the ground or otherwise thrown away. It's being put back to immediate reuse by the people who actually generated it, the citizens who cut their yards and trimmed their trees.

Now, I'm not processing the entire green waste stream for the City. I'm getting about 25 percent of it, but that's 25 percent that we're not paying somebody else to process. When we go to outside vendors to take it, the City has to pay for that, and although there are costs associated with my process, it is going back to the citizens in a product that they can use. And I'd like to think that we are keeping the private vendors competitive. The fact that we are there and doing it in a competitive manner keeps the prices low.

Would you like to take more of it in-house?

Paul: Yes, I would. I'd like to be able to capture more of the City's products so that we don't have to pay somebody else to take it. Also we've started making actual compost that we'll run for 90 days [as opposed to "near" compost, which is cured for 21 days – Ed.]. I would like to market that at a competitive price to whoever would like to buy it. I think there's a viable market for it.

Ideally, that other 75 percent [that the City isn't currently processing in-house] would go a long way toward providing feedstock for a viable industry that the City can get into. The City, as such, can't make a profit, but we could certainly defray costs. Avoiding costs is another way of saying that it's a very sound concept economically. And we'd be avoiding the costs that we realize when we have somebody else do this.

And you're writing a business plan for this, right?

Paul: Yes, I am researching a business plan, a marketing plan. Has the dept. always handled about 25 percent of the City's yard trimmings, or has it changed over the years?

Paul: It's changed. We started off probably doing maybe ten percent or less, and we keep increasing the amount we can do. I need people to be able to do it. We are in very trying economic

times in the City right now. It's very labor-intensive, but I think it would pay off and when things ease up a bit, if I could go ahead and add people. The more material I can process, the better the economic result for the City.

So you'd like to see it grow.

Paul: I'd like it to grow, yes. Right now it's sort of stable because we are hindered by a lack of personnel. This is a very labor-intensive endeavor and, with the furloughing of so many people, if I don't have enough people to do it, then I can't produce as much. I will not put out a bad product of low quality. I don't want to jeopardize my certification, and I don't want to give the citizens who have been using the stuff a product that doesn't measure up to what they've been used to getting.

Good for the Environment

Talk about the environmental sensitivity of it.

I know the process that you use is approved. Talk about the environmental sensibility of what you do.

Paul: We are dealing with a product that had not too long ago been considered a waste, so we are returning it to beneficial reuse. So that in a sense is an environmentally sound aspect, its sustainability.

Thank You Very **Public Works** **Mulch**

[T H E P R O C E S S]

Step 4 Cleaning Begins

a) The process begins when City workers remove large contaminants by hand.



Rodolfo Baltierrez picks the pile clean.

b) The cleaned material is then loaded into a trommel screen.



Anceo Francisco, Equipment Operator, dumps raw mulch into the trommel screen machine.

Step 5 The Trommel Screen

In the trommel screen, the material is separated by size into coarse and fine material (less than two inches in size).



Paul Blount, Operations Manager, explains the trommel screen to Club CEO John Hawkins.

Step 6

The Picking Station

a) The coarse material is transported by conveyor belt to a picking station, where workers again remove non-organic materials.



ABOVE: Susan Whitman, William Galicia and Ivan Soriano hand-remove the contaminants from the yard trimmings, while Paul Blount, Operations Manager, and Club CEO John Hawkins observe.



b) The coarse material is then piled at the end of the picking station. At this point, it's called raw mulch.

Are there good ways to process mulch and bad ways to process mulch?

Paul: Yes. If you don't adhere to good processes, your mulch won't be processed properly and it'll be of little or no value. If you don't turn it properly, if you don't water it properly, if you don't cook it long enough; all of those things will keep you from providing a viable product. We've sent people back to school for training on how to properly mulch and compost, and they know the science. We monitor it closely, we keep our temperature reading set so we get optimal return from the amount of work we put into it. So it's environmentally sound.

You have on your Website that you're certified by the American Composting Council. Talk about that.

Paul: It's a certifying agency, and they establish and monitor standards of the material that is produced. You can't get certified by them unless you meet those criteria. They could have anything to do with any lack of pathogens or contaminants, that sort of thing.

How do they certify you?

Paul: We give them samples of it over time, and they review it. They have test labs that review our material and tell us how we stand in those critical areas.

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Paul Blount, Operations Manager, at the Lopez Canyon facility.

Alive! Feature

THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW, – continued

I see. And we saw some dust mitigation and odor neutralization processes, too.

Paul: Yes. Mulch is going to create some odor. Some people find it offensive, some don't. But we have begun recently adding odor neutralizer to our process. It actually neutralizes the odor-causing components in it so that it won't be offensive to our neighbors. As far as dust, we have water trucks working in the area constantly. In addition to watering our windrows, they also keep down any dust that may be generated from the operation.

You also mentioned that you also process some horse manure from around the area from the ranches in the Lopez Canyon area.

Paul: We take a percentage of manure and mix it with some of our mulch. I think it's an 80/20 mix, 80 percent mulch to 20 percent manure, because it's regulated. We are approved by the American Composting Council to a set formula, and that's the stuff that we turn into full-blown compost. That is an excellent product and I think a very saleable product.

Living Green

What is the best future for composting? Do you see it growing and being used a lot more by your customers?

Paul: Oh absolutely. A big thing right now is living green, and the byword, and I don't say this lightly, is sustainability. Sustainability means environmentally, socially and culturally sound practices that enable the communities to thrive. And this is just one area. I can see people becoming more and more conscious of the value of it. Mulching and composting prevents erosion and helps water retention. These things are very paramount in everyone's minds now. If a farmer can grow better crops and use less water, it's a benefit. That helps everybody. If someone in the neighborhood can grow better houseplants or keep their lawn from washing into the gutter, there's a benefit there. You're preventing erosion of your soil. Water retention is a very important thing in our environmental consciousness, also.

How long have you been doing this?

Paul: I came over to this division in the mid to late 1990s, and it was already established on a rudimentary basis.

Why did you come over to do this?

Did you have interest in this operation?

Paul: I am interested in waste management. I have spent most of my career in the collection side, and then I had an opportunity to come over to this side. I didn't realize that there was so much more going on than was apparent. Once I saw this, it

became just fascinating to me, and I became more and more interested. It's turned into a passion.

And you teach waste management, right?

Paul: I do. I teach a municipal solid waste management certificate course at LA Trade Tech College, and I guess technically I'm still on the faculty at UCLA Extension, teaching waste management there, although I haven't taught there for a long time.

You're proud of this operation, aren't you?

Paul: It's a wonderful operation. You know, Thoreau said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," indicating that people dread coming to work. I have excellent staff. Jim Kerr's, a wonderful superintendent, and Paul Labelle, my superintendent at the transfer station, is top-notch. With people like this and my staff out there, laborers and equipment operation and all that – with people like that, why wouldn't I want to come to work? And the kind of work they do, why wouldn't I be proud?

Why should people go to the trouble of collecting their yard waste and then putting it in their green bins?

Paul: Our name is Solid Resources, and we like for people to understand that just as the newspapers, bottles and cans are a resource, so is the stuff that goes in the green container.

[T H E P R O C E S S]

Step 7 The Grinder

The cleaned material is now fed into a tub grinder, where it's reduced in size to about two inches or less. When it comes out of the tub grinder, it's very finely ground material.



Step 8 Some to the Farmers

At this point, some of the raw mulch is distributed to farmers in Ventura County.



Step 9 The Windrows

a) This finely ground product is mixed with the other fine material that came from the trommel screen and laid in piles (windrows) on the asphalt pad.



b) Water is added, and the windrow is mixed using a compost turner.



c) Some of the cleaned, fine material is mixed with horse manure and placed in separate windrows. Each windrow is approximately 20 feet wide, eight feet high and 300 feet long. Once placed into windrows, the material is periodically turned, monitored for proper temperature and moisture for approximately 30 days for mulch and 60 days for horse manure compost.



Thank You Very **Public Works** **Mulch**

Paul Blount, Operations Manager, and John Hawkins, Club CEO, touring the Lopez Canyon facility



The cleaner the residents make their green material, the cheaper it is to produce a better product. So one message I could get to all the citizens, don't contaminate your recyclable containers with trash; don't contaminate your green container with anything but green material. Conversely, don't throw green material that can go in the green bin in your black can, and don't put your recyclable cans and bottles in the black can. Just adhere to the process, and it will simplify our whole waste management program.

And I don't even know, is it a regulation that they have to put the green waste in the green can?

Paul: You know, no. [Not green waste. - Ed.] And this is funny because we have AB-939, the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, and that was the first law of recycling of any consequence in the United States, really. It was so well written and so well designed that other states literally took AB-939 and changed the name on it and adopted it as their own. The basic tenets of AB-939 were that we were to divert 25 percent of waste from the landfill by the year 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000. Los Angeles met those goals, and we have far exceeded them by now.

There are four main reasons that people don't recycle. When I say recycle, I'm talking about not only the blue container but the green container, too. One, they don't know about it. Two, they don't care. Three, it's inconvenient. And four, it's messy. So my mission to you and everybody else would be to show how you can avoid those pratfalls, that it's not really inconvenient. Here's why you should care, because it's an environmentally

sound thing to do. We made it as convenient as possible when we went to single stream recycling.

Do you collect yours?

Paul: Absolutely. If I have some really good material like some plant trimmings and stuff that I use, I have a little compost area set aside in my yard. I use a lot of my own stuff that is really beneficial and rich like coffee grounds, for instance, and banana peels and other organic things that work really well. The problem I have is that I've got this curious dog. It wouldn't go well if he decided to investigate my compost pile so I have to be careful.

So you're basically running a big one here for the City and a small one for yourself?

Paul: And a small one for me, right.

That's great.

Paul: I like what I do and I like the people I do it with, and I like talking about what I do. And I need to apologize because I slipped into my schoolteacher mode there.

No, no. It's very helpful. Thank you for your time today.

Paul: It was my pleasure.

[THE PROCESS]

Step 10 Final Check



Doug Fisher, Equipment Operator, demonstrates the final product to Club CEO John Hawkins.

After the material has cured into near-compost (30 days) or full compost (90 days), it is sent through a final filter to make sure it is finely ground. If so, it is brought to one of the City's nine giveaway sites for free distribution. If not, it is sent back to a windrow for more curing.



The Cleaners

Here are some of the men and women who clean the green matter before it can be turned into mulch or compost. Hats off to them for their hard work!



ABOVE: Monica Cruz and Gerardo BalaDez



ABOVE: Donald Vaughns



William Garcia



Ivan Soriano



ABOVE: Dijohn Bernard (workfare worker)



Raul Ornelas



Susan Wittman

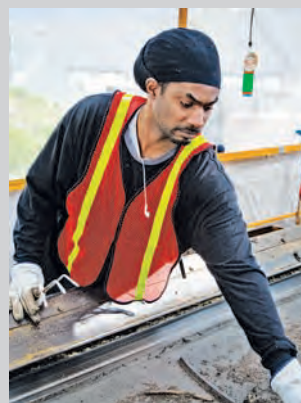


Armando Rodriguez M/L

Step 11 Giveaway to the Public



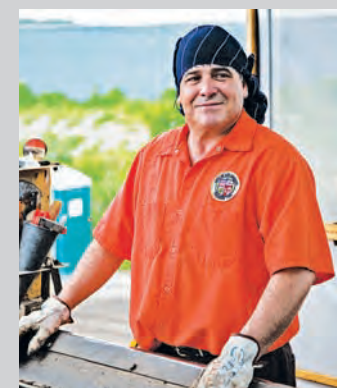
The final near-compost or full compost is then given back to the citizens of Los Angeles, for water conservation and soil enrichment. See page 30 for locations.



ABOVE: Eugene Calloway (workfare worker)



RIGHT: Anthony Quitte (workfare worker)



Juan Gonzales M/L