

**SPECIAL EDITION**

# Alive!

# 100

## Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> issue of Alive!

- SEE PAGE 7



City Employees Club of Los Angeles  
120 West 2nd Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 288  
ANAHEIM, CA

*Club Signature Event*

### Club Cruise!

The greatest Club event ever. Act now!

See back page



# LETTERS To the Editor

Tell us what you think! [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com)

## The Letters Roll In On Our 100<sup>th</sup> Issue!

Congratulations on your 100th issue. What a milestone!

I faithfully read *Alive!* every month for the latest on our great City of Los Angeles and all the people that keep the City of Angels the best place to live in the world.

I look forward to another 100 issues!

PS: I'm glad to be a member, too!

– **Tom LaBonge, Councilmember, Fourth District, and Club Member**

Congratulations to *Alive!* and its hard-working staff on the publication of your 100th issue.

Each month, thousands of City Employees benefit from the thorough and entertaining product that is produced. *Alive!* gives us a better appreciation of our diverse and talented workforce. In a city as large and sprawling as Los Angeles, *Alive!* does a remarkable job touching on all corners of the City and sharing a wealth of useful information that brings us a little bit closer together.

Here at the Harbor Department, we are grateful for the wonderful coverage we have received from *Alive!* The newspaper has featured the Port's centennial celebration, the Port Police dive and canine teams as well as our Lobster Festival, internship program and many other events and programs. On a personal note, as a history aficionado, I look forward to reading the "History Comes Alive" feature each month.

Thank you for your efforts and your commitment to the employees of the City of Los Angeles.

– **Geraldine Knatz, Ph.D., Executive Director and Club Member**

Thank you, *Alive!*, for being an important part of our City family and covering all those L.A. City employee stories. You have put face on who we are. My wife, Ann, and I have gone online numerous times purchasing great deals on movie tickets, amusement park tickets, and more recently See's Candy gift certificates. Such a sweet deal! Ann and I wish you and your staff a prosperous and healthy New Year.

– **Ken Kochakji, Retired, Transportation, Club Member**



Ken Kochakji

On behalf of the Department of Recreation and Parks, I would like to sincerely congratulate you on the 100th issue of *Alive!*

*Alive!* has served as a wonderful resource for all City employees since inception in 2002. The information provided highlights the City's and City Departments' assets. I especially appreciated the issues the Department of Recreation and Parks was featured in. *Alive!* has done a great job of presenting both the Department's assets and staff members. Thank you for your support and continued recognition.

I look forward to reading the next 100 issues of *Alive!*

– **Jon Kirk Mukri, General Manager, Rec and Parks**

One hundred is one of those great numbers. It's enough to mean something significant but not too large to make you lose touch. I have enjoyed a hundred different spotlights on the City of Los Angeles and on the intriguing people that make it work. *Alive!* shows just how exotic and rich even the most fundamental elements of the City really are and puts the human face on Los Angeles. We should all live to a 100 with such style.

Astronomically appreciative,

– **E.C. Krupp, Director, Griffith Observatory, Rec and Parks, and Club Member**

The *Alive!* team continues to amaze me each and every month. I look forward to reading the well-written and interesting articles, which cover the diverse work fields within the City. I also think that the photographs used to describe the City people and their jobs are excellent in both composition and power. My favorite recurring elements of *Alive!* issues are, of course, the cover stories, as well as Angel's "Be *Alive!*," "History Comes *Alive!*," "*Alive!* Around the World," "Cooking with the Club" and "John's Picture Perfect." Recently, I purchased several tickets to Universal Studios through the Club Store. The customer service that I received made me smile all day.

The Ocean Assessments Unit and Environmental Monitoring Division were featured as the November 2008 cover story. I had the extreme pleasure in working with John Hawkins, Angel Gomez and John Burnes. I felt obligated to join the Club after being involved in that story. Once I received and read my first issue, I knew it was and always will be money well spent.

Thank you, *Alive!*, and congratulations on the 100th issue! Keep up the excellent work. (And being an animal, especially pet, advocate, I think the "Pet Club" concept is a great idea.)

– **Curtis Cash, Ocean Assessments Unit, Public Works, Club Member**

Congratulations on your 100th issue!

I remember the story you had detailing the Griffith Park fire. What I enjoyed more was the story done one year later on the recovery of the wildlife and plants. Thank you for sharing the loss



and the recovery of this Los Angeles landmark that we frequent as a family.

I also want to thank you for accepting my contributions to this newspaper. In 2004, my co-worker, Ivan Gerson, Management Analyst II, Public Works/Engineering, and I started the Public Works Pioneers Toastmasters Club. We started submitting stories about speech contests and anniversary events to you and you were always welcoming and encouraging. Due to *Alive!*, City Employees we didn't know were congratulating us and greeting us by sight. *Alive!* made our Toastmasters club members feel like local celebrities.

Since 2004, I've been privileged to write about City employees' lives. I've written about City employees' work life, loves, marriages and even a couple of obituaries of folks who left us suddenly. Now that my husband found a job in Chicago and we're leaving Los Angeles, I will miss being part of City employees' lives through *Alive!* I appreciate the friendships and relationships that I was able to establish by my participation in this worthy magazine.

Thank you for the opportunity you gave me to celebrate City employees' lives.

– **Yvonne Liu, Office of Finance, Club Member**

Congratulations on your 100th issue of the *Alive!* newspaper. This is certainly a great achievement for your staff to proud of. I think your newspaper is awesome, especially when you do special interest story on just regular folks.

Thanks again.

– **Rey Castro, Chief Engineer, Convention Center, Club Member**

Congratulations on the 100th issue of *Alive!* This is one periodical I always read from start to finish! Your staff brings personalization to all City Employees, including covering parties, retirements and other special occasions. I also enjoy seeing in depth what fellow City Employees do during their workday, such as the Search and Rescue dog story. Another reason *Alive!* stands out is the personal touch of the "People We See" sec-

tion, which really puts a face on those less fortunate. "Life's Important Moments" also helps us to share those special moments with fellow employees, as well as "*Alive!* Around the World," seeing the exciting places people travel to. And of course I cannot forget Robert Larios in his "Cooking with the Club" section! He sure whips up some pretty yummy stuff.

Thank you so much for all you do, and congratulations again on this milestone! Best regards to everyone on the *Alive!* staff.

– **Jean Sarfaty, LAPD Communications, Club Member**

Wow! The 100th issue of *Alive!* Congratulations on achieving such a milestone. What began modestly has become an eagerly anticipated "must read" in our home. Each issue seems better than the previous one (although my personal favorite is the April 2010 issue). *Alive!* is reflective of the overall excellence of the City Employees Club. I am proud to be a member.

– **Paul Blount, Public Works, Club Member**

So, a little bird told me that your next issue is your 100th... Land O Goshen! That is just simply amazing; and I think I've read every single one of them cover to cover. Of course I always like reading what I wrote in the Letters to the Editor column first, and then I move on to the rest of the paper. In all seriousness, though, you have made me proud to be a City Employee. You have done what no other city in the country has been able to do – join all its departments from the LAPD, to the DWP to General Services in a morale-boosting conglomeration of love. I know the mayor must be so proud of you guys, I hope he has a special proclamation in mind. All of you should be so proud of yourselves, and I look forward to another 100 issues.

– **Mary Rose Wilkens, Retired, Club Member, "at your service!"**



# 1000

SPECIAL SECTION

## 100<sup>th</sup> Alive! Issue

### Being Alive! The First 100 Issues

**Congratulations to Alive!, which marks its 100th edition. Enjoy!**

You're holding your copy of the 100th issue of *Alive!*, the newspaper of the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.

From the creation of the Club in October 2002, through fires, elections, budget cutbacks, holiday parties, City honors, and the introduction of popular *Alive!* features including "Alive! Around the World" and "People We See," *Alive!* has been there through it all. Celebrating the Lives of City Employees has been what it's all about, and *Alive!* stays as true to that concept with this 100th issue as with the first.

This milestone is to be celebrated – as *Alive!* has created a new way for associ-

ations to communicate with their members beyond what has been done before. We've always felt that City Employees deserve all the dignity we can provide, and *Alive!* proves that to be true.

With this issue, the Club sincerely thanks all those, who surely number in the thousands, who have contributed material, stories, photos, letters and/or comments on the paper. You have made it a success! So, thanks!

Here's to our next 100. As long as there are City Employees to be celebrated, we'll be there, doing the celebrating.



## THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW

‘Everything the Club Does ... Is in *Alive!*’

Club CEO John Hawkins talks about the origins and impact of *Alive!*, and some of its turning points and successes.

Interview photos by Angel Gomez, Club Member Services Manager, and Summy Lam, Club Director of Marketing

On Nov. 4, John Hawkins, Club President and CEO, sat down with *Alive!* editor John Burnes to celebrate *Alive!*'s achievement of reaching its 100th issue. The interview took place at the Club's administrative headquarters on Spring Street downtown. – Ed.

History Comes *Alive!*

– June 2008



## Adventures With Hal

– Sept. 2005



## Rey Castro talks about the Convention Center's LEED certification.

– Sept. 2004



**Alive!** As you know, we're celebrating our 100th issue this month. That's pretty amazing. Does it feel like we've done a hundred of these?

**John Hawkins:** Actually, it doesn't. Time has gone by pretty fast, but I find it amazing that we were able to produce a hundred. When you think about all the material that went in to it, I can't believe that we just kept going. That's a lot of material. The enthusiasm is just as great as it was in the beginning, which is amazing to me.

We've definitely hit our stride.

**John:** We have!

## The Contributors

We have generated a lot of content, but we've also received a lot of contributions from Club members who have really enjoyed this paper.

**John:** Absolutely. Like Hynda Rudd, for example. It was maybe six years ago that we ran in to Hynda at an RLACEI retirement luncheon. Out of the blue, someone mentioned that she writes articles and is a history buff, and so we simply just asked her, "Would you like to contribute to *Alive!*?" and voila, the "History Comes *Alive!*" section was created!

"Adventures with Hal," same thing. We've had his column for well, at least five years or so, and every month both of them contribute really good articles and photographs.

There are so many other people who believe in the Club and believe in *Alive!* and what we do, and they want to be a part of it, too. We're grateful.

**John:** Absolutely. Whenever we ask for assistance – when we get an idea for a story, we start calling around and asking people to help us produce it, whether it's by setting up a photo shoot or an interview, everybody – every single time hands down – has wanted to help us, whether it's the PR public relations with the DWP or LAPD or any other department in the City –

Like the Convention Center –

**John:** The Convention Center has been great. We couldn't ask for more enthusiasm or more support from City Employees. They have to go out of their way to dig up information or to arrange meetings for us.

## Origins

Talk about the paper's origins. How did the newspaper fit in to your Club strategy?

**John:** The Club is the Los Angeles City Employees Association, which has been around for 83 years. In 2002, we created the Club concept, which is just a manifestation of the Los Angeles City Employees Association. But we wanted to add a newspaper, *Alive!* It was prompted by our desire to build a connection among City Employees and to celebrate their lives.

*Alive!* had existed before –

**John:** Right ...

– but it was a very different thing, and it didn't have nearly the commitment or the imagination or the management that it has now.

**John:** *Alive!* was in existence in one form or another. It was a newsletter for the most part. But it all revolved around marketing our insurance products, and what we decided when we created the new *Alive!* is to not do that, because I think people can see that. We wanted to celebrate the lives of City Employees.

It's so multifaceted now. The whole focus turned when you decided to re-create the paper. It has a dual purpose now, to tell people about what's going on with the Club but also to make everyone who works for the City and who are Club members feel like they are all the same.

**John:** Right. Exactly. When people ask, "Well, what do you do, John? What does the Los Angeles City Employees Association do? What does the Club do?" I tell them, "Just pick up the *Alive!* newspaper, and you will see everything that the Club does. Everything is in there, everything that we do, whether it's the insurance products, whether it's celebrating the lives of City Employees, whether it's selling discount theme park tickets or movie tickets. It's all there.

There's not an issue of *Alive!* that we do that doesn't encapsulate everything that the Club is supposed to be about.

**John:** Right.

What were the mechanics of re-creating *Alive!*? What was the chronology of re-creating the paper?

**John:** We had the idea that we wanted to create a newspaper that brought the departments together and that raised the morale. Initially, staff of the association came to the board and said, "We'd like to create the Club." I was Chief Operations Officer. The board okayed it, and we began development of the Club concept, which included *Alive!*

What's interesting is that it was not believed that we could fill 16 pages with information.

I remember that.

**John:** But the production team knew we could because we knew that this was just the tip of the iceberg. There is tons of good information out there and stories to be told of the great things that City Employees are doing.

We launched the Club along with the very first issue of *Alive!* Many of our readers might remember the Club event at the L.A. Zoo, where we had I think 12,000 people come.

Blocking up the freeway exits.

**John:** Right. It took off from there. But a lot of people had doubt about whether or not we could fill even 16 pages with information. Well, as you know, the paper has at times grown up to 96 pages, and we had to cut things out even with that, so there's no lack of stories to be told. There's no lack of celebration that can occur for the City Employees.



The first revamped *Alive!* – Oct. 2002



Club CEO John Hawkins (left) reminisces with Alive! editor John Burnes.

### Proof of the Club Concept

Why is Alive! so important to the Club concept?

**John:** It's the proof in the pudding. You can talk a lot, but it's a little harder to walk the walk. When it comes to actually putting things together and taking pictures, researching stories, talking to one person after another trying to formulate a story, that's different, and that's very, very difficult. I can't tell you how many hours of work we put in to that, but we do it because we believe in that celebration factor. It's important because it's our calling card. It's proof that we are what we say we are. There's no two ways about it. It's oozing with celebration. Every issue we do is as though it's our first.

Talk about the Zoo story. That's when we knew we were on to something.

**John:** Absolutely. That was a crowning moment. In our first year, I think, we had done a "Dept of the Month" on the L.A. Zoo. When [Club Counselor] Arlene [Herrero] went back to the Zoo to deliver the newspapers to the staff, they started signing each other's copies of Alive! where their pictures were, kind of like a yearbook signing. That's when we realized, wow, we really have done something that is a morale booster, that has made a connection amongst employees. When they start signing Alive! because they're so proud to be in it, that says a lot; that speaks volumes.

### Game Changers

Let's talk about some of those moments where we modified our direction to better serve our readers. I remember that we were covering some wildfires and we used the word "fire" on the cover with a helicopter coming through. That changed our covers very graphically from being text-driven to strong photos. Do you remember that moment?

**John:** Absolutely. That was David Jamgotchian, our art director at JJLA Associates. When he sent the draft of the cover to both you and I, our jaws dropped because this was the first time that we took the front page and made it dramatic. It struck a chord in all of us; if we can do that in this issue why can't we achieve something that dramatic in every issue? And that was a turning point in terms of upgrading our photography overall, and on our covers.



- Dec. 2003

Even after a hundred issues we are still just as driven, with no less enthusiasm to get that perfect front cover; we go to great lengths to get the best photography. We do it in house, as you know.

We haven't bought a single photo on the cover. A few times City

Employees, Club members, have taken them, but it is another source of pride that all of these covers are produced and sourced by the Club.

**John:** Right. What comes to mind is Jay Leno on the cover. For our annual holiday party issue.

**John:** It was the LAPD Communications party. They took that shot, and it was excellent. But we want to do it ourselves. We know what we want and we're smart enough to be able to figure that out.

It's all created by us; it's organic. We're not going the easy way. We're creating exactly what we want.

**John:** Exactly. One of the things that I did when I took over as Club President is fill the office with Club art on the walls. So we took down all the modern art and we put up posters of our Alive! covers. We blow up just about every issue of Alive!, and we frame it and put it in our headquarters office at Spring Street. And we also put them in the store. We need to keep seeing them. The employees need to be reminded that this is what we're creating. This is awesome. This is great. This is how we celebrate the lives of City Employees.

Talk about Kenny Fox. I love when you went for a day with Kenny Fox. Kenny Fox is a Sanitation Refuse Truck Operator.

**John:** Right. That was another milestone, because we decided again that the proof is in the pudding. It's one thing to do a story on Sanitation or the refuse collector. It'd be easy just to take a story or the sanitation website, but we turned a corner at that point and we said, "No. We're going to do a real story. We're going to interview the person ourselves." I actually rode along in a trash truck for ten hours or so and learned firsthand how hard it is to be a refuse collector with all the things they have to deal with - knocked over trash cans, smelly fish, rats, cockroaches all over the place, and the sheer bumpiness of that trash truck moving along through the streets of L.A. That was a turning point for us.

How about Larry Keller? Larry was the General Manager of the Port. We sat down like we're doing now, and we did the "Alive! Interview," and as far as I understand, that was the first one we'd ever done of these long, detailed but always interesting interviews. That was another turning point.

**John:** Right. I'll never forget that. It wasn't just e-mailing questions. A lot of publications will just e-mail questions to the person and then they'll e-mail them back. That's not how we do it at Alive! We go out with the tape recorder. It's a real interview.

- continued next page

- Jan. 2005



Club CEO John Hawkins (left) and Alive! editor John Burnes look over the covers on display at the Club's administrative offices.

Alive! spent a day and rode along with RCTO Kenny Fox.

- May 2005





May 2007

**THE ALIVE! INTERVIEW, –continued**

Right, and that's one of the reasons why we run pictures like we're going to run here, taken by Angel Gomez of the Club staff.

**John:** Let me tell you about Angel Gomez. You'll see him every month in his "Be Alive!" feature, hiking or enjoying the outdoors with his family. And he has taken quite a few of the cover shots for *Alive!* Angel is a sales manager with the Club. He does the "Be Alive!" out of his own time and energy and skill set. That's indicative of our staff in general. We all wear 15 different hats. As soon as the first *Alive!* was published, we all had to become photojournalists overnight. So we got a bunch of cameras and we just started to go out and take pictures from the sales staff to myself to Robert "Chef" Larios. Everybody got involved on a staff level.

Everybody at the Club is passionate and dedicated about this paper. It is a product of everybody's love of what the Club is all about. Angel's cover of the DWP Lineman's Rodeo was spectacular.

**John:** I remember that, and I remember you actually recommending we use the cherry picker. We were down there on the ground, and we were discussing the perfect shot for the front cover. I've got to be honest with you. When you mentioned using the cherry picker, my first instinct was, "Are you crazy?," but I didn't say anything because I figured they would say no. The next thing you know, Angel is in a cherry picker. I don't know how many feet in the air he was. It was very high.

He was above the pole.

**John:** Yes, taking that dramatic shot of the worker on the top of the pole. It's a great picture. Everything's in focus. It was really phenomenal, a phenomenal shot by Angel.

Safe but daring. We really love producing great photography because the City Employees deserve it.

**John:** Right. Exactly.

The best double-page photo we've ever done is that double-page shot of Geraldine Knatz, Executive Director, Port of L.A., sitting on the dock with you interviewing her.

**John:** That was another Angel photo shoot. What you don't realize is Geraldine is just fractions of an inch away from falling down 50 feet into the water, but we kept rearranging her to get the perfect shot. She knew what she was doing, but I remember that. We pushed that one to the limit.

The DWP's wind farm.

**John:** That might have been one of my favorite stories because, number one, I enjoy looking for alternative forms of energy. That's a hobby of mine, so the wind farm was fascinating from that standpoint. But also because it was probably the most intensely visual shoot we ever had to do – these windmills were so big. They were challenging to photograph, but to think that the DWP City Employees were responsible for these windmills is awesome. It's on DWP property. The DWP is generating electricity from them. It just made me so proud. It was all City. It was the City who was doing this. It was the City first to last.

**Fun Times**

We're going to talk now about some features that we do every month. But the first one has to be the one where I had to eat humble pie – the Grown-Up Coloring Contest.

**John:** Occasionally I'll have a crazy idea, and this happened to be one. I thought, well, grown-ups color and draw. Why not do a coloring contest that adults can enter, too, and I remember telling you and David, our art director, at one of our meetings. You looked at me like I was crazy, and I think you gave in just to see, "Well, we'll let him fail on this one." But it actually turned out pretty good. People really get in to it of all ages and of all genders, of all occupations.

We received 80, 90 responses, something like that.



May 2009



April 2006



June 2005



August 2007

Club staffer Angel Gomez's "Be Alive!" has been a hit since it first appeared in May 2007.

This opening-spread photo of Port Executive Director Geraldine Knatz, Ph.D. (left), was one of the more memorable *Alive!* photos by Club staffer Angel Gomez.



**Our greatest moment**

**Hurricane Katrina**

Let's talk now about Hurricane Katrina. That seems to be our greatest moment of the first hundred issues.

**John:** There's a perfect example of City Employees doing remarkable things that didn't get a lot of press. Here we have the LAFD's Urban Search and Rescue team. Nationally, these teams are comprised of medical professionals, law enforcement and firemen from all across the country, and we have a couple teams here in L.A. that will, at a moment's notice, go anywhere in the country or the world. They happened to be called out to New Orleans and Mississippi after Katrina. We started investigating it to see if could we get the pictures that

some of the firemen or Building and Safety employees had taken. Well, we saw first-hand what they had done. It was phenomenal, it was amazing, and to think that these are our guys, was pretty incredible. This is the City of L.A. It's not somewhere in Arizona or Nevada. These were City of L.A. firemen and Building and Safety individuals going over there risking their lives and trying to help other people. That was phenomenal, and the amount of pictures that we got and published was phenomenal as well.

And we interviewed dozens of people who were there. We sat down with all of them and we transcribed all those interviews. It was a special pullout section. We knew we were capable of it.

**John:** Right. We took that to another level.

November 2005



Oct. 2005



November 2005

**John:** Right. Another special feature, John, is "People We See," where we interview street people around downtown within walking distance of City Hall. That has had a lot of interest and enthusiasm. I hear stories about people sending the newspaper back east because their kids and parents want to see this feature.

It's so powerful. Of all the things that we do, that one has to be the most dignified. I can't now imagine doing *Alive!* without it.

"Adventures with Hal."

**John:** Hal [Danowitz] is awesome. His stories are great. They're down home. He writes like he's talking to you at a restaurant, telling you about his adventures. The pictures are good. He's on time. He and Hynda are the perfect contributors to the paper.

Talk about the retirees for a second. We run a retiree section. Why is that important to the mission?

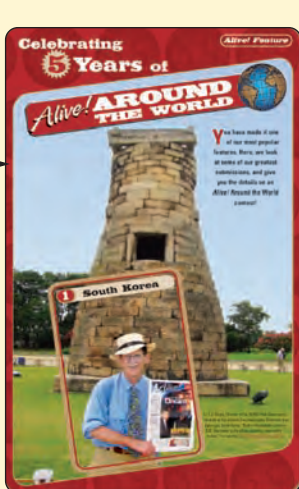
**John:** We decided early on that we wanted to make sure that the retirees had a voice as well, so we have "The Best Years" section. Every month the RLACEI [Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.] contribute stories, updates- legislative updates, what's going on with their association, although all of the retiree associations are welcome to submit. We also go to the retiree events, their annual Christmas party, their picnics, their annual meetings. We give prizes. We contribute. We take lots of pictures because we want to give the retirees something as well, because once you leave the City and you retire, we want you to stay connected, not only to the active employees but your own peer group, your own retiree group.

Picture Perfect: I've been a communications professional for a long time. I am astounded with the quality of photos that our Club members send in.

**John:** Absolutely. It's amazing, and there's no lack of great photos. Many, many times I have to cut photos because I get too many.

My favorite feature has to be "Alive! Around the World."

**John:** It's amazing. I know I am honored that people like our paper so much that they have to intentionally pack it when they're packing their clothes and their shoes and everything else. They intentionally have to remember to pack the newspaper with them. What are your favorite locations where people took their *Alive!*?



**John:** Well, they're all my favorites – Of course –

**John:** – but I always get a kick when Dr. Ed Krupp from the Griffith Observatory packs his paper and takes it to these very unique places, whether it's an ancient burial ground or the Greenwich Mean Time line. I always get a kick when he sends them in. [He's sent two more in this month. – Ed.]

But they're all good. It's hard to imagine our *Alive!* has gone to China and Africa and more. Plus Antarctica. Underwater. In a glider in the air. We keep track on a map of where all the entries come from, and that's actually a good example of how we take it to the next level.

I like the thought that we are taking the City of L.A. to the world. Now the world knows the quality of work that happens here in the City.

**John:** Exactly. Right.

Tom LaBonge. Remember that story?

**John:** The great thing about that story is that, I've always said that I do not want to be a political paper. I do not want to get involved with the politicians in the City. We want to focus on the employees, and frequently politics can get in the way of that. Politicians like to grandstand. They want their name or their picture to be in the paper, and that's fine, but we don't want that to ever overshadow the employees who are making the City run.

Councilman Tom LaBonge, on the other hand, is an exception to our rule because he is one of the nicest guys working in the City. He was a City Employee at one time until he became councilman, and he's always enthused. He's a cheerleader for L.A. He loves L.A. It's in his blood, and that resonates with us because we feel the same way about the employees of L.A.

As we went to talk to him, we were about ready to sit down for the "Alive! Interview"...

**John:** ...and he was called to the fire in his district. As soon as we sat down, he got a call from one of his constituents or somewhere that an apartment building was on fire in his district. He said, "Sorry, guys. I've got to run to a fire. If you want, you can come along," and we thought, heck, yeah, we'll come along, so we piled in his car.

It was great because we saw him in action. We saw him interacting with the City and his constituents. We saw him interact with City Employees. We saw him interact with the DOT officers, the Fire Department, all City Employees. We saw him interact at a real crisis. This wasn't a joke. It wasn't a drill. This was real, and we were able to take pictures of him in action. On the way back, we rode with him and he talked about his life and family, and it was fantastic.

– continued next page

# 100 SPECIAL SECTION



*Alive!* was literally on the run when covering Councilman and Club Member Tom LaBonge. – Feb. 2008



## Alive! has been around the world

**1 Alive! Goes to Antarctica!**

**1 Prime Meridian, England**

**3 Mongolia**

**4 ... and Testing the Waters!**

**1 Hawaii**

**1 New York**

**Alive! on the Today Show!**

*Alive!* does best what the Club does best, and that's celebrate the lives of City Employees.

# Behind the scenes with *Alive!*

Putting the paper together each month is always a lot of fun.

## *Alive!* photographers

*Alive!* takes great pride in creating nearly every photograph we print – it's very rare that we would use a stock photo. Here, the lens turns to some of the Club photographers.



## *Alive!* editor



As with Club CEO John Hawkins and the JJLA design team, John Burnes has been part of the *Alive!* creative team since the very first issue. A city resident, he produces this and other initiatives for the association.

## *Alive!* designers

JJLA Associates, the Club's designers, have guided *Alive!*'s look and production since the very first issue. The JJLA design team includes from left: Heather Kurlander, David Jamgotchian and Marie Carama.



## THE *ALIVE!* INTERVIEW –continued

### At Our Best

Exactly. What does *Alive!* do best?

**John:** *Alive!* does best what the Club does best, and that's celebrating the lives of City Employees. It's our motto. It's our mission statement. It's our vision. It's everything rolled in to one. We ask ourselves all the time, "Are we celebrating the lives of City Employees?" It could be through life insurance. It could be through disability insurance. It's helping people celebrate life in the worst of times. It could be buying movie tickets so they and their family can go to the movies and not spend \$13 a ticket just to take your family. I don't know how people do it. It's putting pictures of City Employees in the paper so that that City Employee can go home and show their kids, and those kids are going to be so proud of their parents because they were in the paper and they got to see what they did. That's celebrating. It's so simple – the vision, the mission, everything rolled in to one. That's what we've been doing and will continue to do.

Do you think *Alive!* has changed the way associations communicate?

**John:** This is the only paper of its kind in the country or the world, for that matter, as far as I know. We can do this paper on a nonprofit basis. We're not part of the City government, which means it can't be cut from the budget; it will always be there. And I think that is a stumbling block for other associations in other cities. Unless you have a group of people really willing to work hard outside of their norm, it isn't going to happen.

And so I'd like to say, yes, people are looking at this paper. Are they duplicating it? It's very difficult to do. There are other cities that are very interested in having their own

## Fun Moments

Producing *Alive!* has created more than a few laughs. Here are a couple of examples.

– Feb. 2008



Tom LaBonge, Councilmember, turns the camera on John Hawkins during a photoshoot for the cover of the Feb. 2008 issue.

BEFORE



Editor John Burnes and CEO John Hawkins set up a test exposure for framing and lighting purposes. Below is the actual photo used.

– Feb. 2010

AFTER







Club CEO John Hawkins reminisces with *Alive!* editor John Burnes.

*Alive!*, but you need a group of people like yourself, John; like David and his design team; like the staff at the Club who are willing to do extra work, go to the "nth" degree, learn new skills like photography and writing that they have never done before. And it's too bad because I think other cities could really benefit in increasing their morale.

We're archived in the Central Library downtown.

**John:** Yes ...

— so that historians 10, 20, 200 years from now can take a look back and say, "This is the way it was really done at this point in time," and that was really important to you.

**John:** Yes, and of all the publications that have been produced in the City, I think this one is going to be the best diary of what was going on, what was happening, who were the people, what did they do, what movies did they like, the "Question of the Month" that we ask them. The quality of the newspaper had to be archival quality so that people would look at this and say, "Wow. We could use this as research" or "Isn't this interesting? This is fascinating. That has given us an entire picture of what it was like back in the day."

### The Future of *Alive!*

Where does *Alive!* go from here? What are your dreams? Do you think there are more stories to tell?

**John:** Every month is a surprise to all of us because something new will come up. We'll think of a new story or a new angle or new photography methods, and so we start fresh every month. We could look in to the future — and we do in a business sense — but as far as *Alive!* goes, it just surprises us each month with what new story develops. Every month is the future, so I guess we'll just have to wait and see what next month brings.

### A Paper to Be Proud Of

Are you proud of this paper?

**John:** Absolutely, John. This paper is my calling card. It's sort of the mark that I've made on the association. We get City Employees praising us constantly about what it's done for families or coworkers. A lot of times you have City Employees working for 30, 35, 40 years and never getting recognition ever, and this is a chance for us to recognize those people that are making this City work. We do it every single month.

How many City Employees do we photograph? Thousands?

**John:** Thousands and thousands.

People who have never been recognized for the good work that they do.

**John:** Right. The main reason that I wanted to do something that celebrated the lives of City Employees is because my Dad was a county employee for 30 years. Every day he'd come home and he'd talk about what he did. Never did the county or any entity recognize what he or the other individuals at his work did. I thought *Alive!* would be a great opportunity for the families to see what their parents and spouses do to make this City work. I thought all those years my dad never got recognition for anything. It's not that he asked for it, but there were stories to be told where he worked and they weren't told. We have that opportunity to tell them.

We like what we do, and [the cover art collection on the Club office walls] is going to keep growing because we just keep getting better and better stories that we find. What we do is never going to be static. It's going to always change.

It's been a great project. We have learned so much. Here's to a hundred more.

**John:** Well, thank you, John, and thanks to the design team at JJLA Associates, too. ■



— March 2009

Club CEO John Hawkins (right) chats with Larry Fukuhara (center) and Bobbie Hedges, both of the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, after a whale-watching expedition in March 2009.

100  
SPECIAL SECTION

The Club thanks all who have enjoyed and contributed to *Alive!* You make *Alive!* possible!

Councilman and Club Member Tom LaBonge sends his congratulations.

