

A Message From the CEO

Getting It Right The Second Time

by John Hawkins,
President and CEO, The Club

People ask me all the time how we come up with our cover story ideas. They come to life in about as many ways as there are stories, but generally, it works like this.

First, the cracking *Alive!* staff develops them. Or second, the stories are recommended to us. We know a lot about the City, but of course we can't know everything. So keep sending in your ideas! Is your department or bureau or team doing something cool, interesting and visual? Let me know! (My email address is at the bottom of the column.)

But then you have all sorts of other ways. Take, for instance, this month's cover story on the Los Angeles Animal Services' SMART animal rescue team. Here's how it came down.

Last August, we ran a dramatic photo of a team of City Employees rescuing a horse in the Hansen Dam Recreation Center. The photo was taken by **Juan Guerra**, a civilian who documents a lot of the activities of the LAFD and LAPD. In the photo caption, we mentioned the LAFD, the Rec and Parks staff, the General Service Police, and only a passing mention of something we called the DART team. We didn't even mention Animal Services.



From August 2012: A horse is rescued.

After the paper was published, I got a call from the awesome General Manager of Personnel, **Maggie Whelan**, Club Member, who told us we missed a big part of the story. That's when we got started researching and making phone calls, resulting in this month's cover story on Los Angeles Animal Services' SMART animal rescue team. And what a story it is.

Every City deserves a self-starter like Acting Lt. **Armando Navarrete**, who began the department's specialized animal rescue squad and paid for it out of his own pocket for nearly a decade (we're talking tens of thousands of dollars) until new management came in – namely, General Manager **Brenda Barnette** and Director of Field Operations **Mark Salazar**, Club Member – and funded and supported the team properly.

The SMART Team's eventual funding – and our putting it on our cover – are both a story of getting it right the second time. I believe in second chances, and this story is proof. So thanks, **Maggie Whelan** and **Armando Navarrete**, for setting us straight.

I was saddened this month at the news that **Jack Mathews**, longtime City Employee and director of the other major City association, the All City Employees Benefits Service Association (ACEBSA), had passed away. A brief bio appears in this issue of *Alive!*, in the Best Years section.

I had, and still have, tons of respect for Jack. He pioneered the affinity group concept in the City of Los Angeles, and many of the principles with which I operate are directly related to what he did at ACEBSA. I watched him, got to know him a little, and I learned. And for that, I am grateful. I send my condolences to his family and those who knew him well.

Speaking of those who have passed on, we're adding a new feature in the Life's Important Moments section, tied to In Memoriam: Tell Their Story. Did you know or work with any of those on our list of deceased City Employees? If so, send in a few sentences about him or her, and help us to remember them. See the details on page 32.

But enough about that – it's spring, and time to enjoy life. Who's going to the Club-exclusive Magic Mountain event May 3? Tickets were going fast, so act quickly if you want to go. It's an amazing bargain, and you don't have to fight the huge crowds. It's just your fellow Club Members! You know I'll be there, doing my best to avoid the roller coasters. Wish me luck. I'll see you there!

Don't forget to apply for the 2013 **Joannie Mukai** Club Scholarships; the applications are available now. I'm amazed every year of the quality of the families we have here in the Club. So send in those apps.

JOHN

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Alive! Behind the Scenes

Here's Tom Hawkins, *Alive!* photographer, in the dirt in Elysian Park as he snaps Acting Lt. Armando Navarrete of Animal Services' SMART animal rescue team.