

A Message From the CEO

Summer Fun Is By Design

by John Hawkins,
President and CEO, The Club

Summer is the most carefree of seasons, right? I can take it for granted. Oh sure, I make plans, like a lot of you do. But I don't plan everything. Summer comes, I have fun with my family, and I try not to over-think it.

But with Echo Park Lake, I found that I didn't appreciate it until it was closed for renovation.

My path from home to Club Headquarters downtown and back often takes me right by Echo Park Lake, so I see it all the time. The park was a big part of my growing up, too. As a kid, I loved the pedal boats and hanging out near the water. My mom, who grew up in Echo Park, tells her own stories: She would walk to the park and fish in the lake, using bread on a safety pin as bait.

But I mostly took the park for granted until a few years ago, when suddenly there was a big green tarp around it. Echo Park Lake was closed for renovations, and the easy fun I associated with it was gone.

It got me really curious. What were they doing to my lake? We here at *Alive!* did some digging and got the scoop. We featured the renovated boathouse, and its renovation manager **Ohaji Abdallah**, Public Works, more than a year ago on our cover. So far so good ... but what about the rest? What was happening under the ground and under the water would take longer to fix.

As you can see by this month's cover story, Public Works and project managers **Julie Allen** and **Katherine Doherty** did an awesome job bringing the park back to life. It's impossible not to notice how many people are using it now, and what a great facility it is again. Suddenly I'm seeing it all over the place – in the *LA Times*, on Facebook (people I hardly know are posting pictures of their day at the park), and so forth. Echo Park Lake is the hit of the summer.

There's nothing easy about that success. Echo Park Lake now works better than it ever has, and it's more beautiful than ever, too. That's because our City (and its voters) have taken care of it. They did the hard work so we can have the fun.



Summer at Echo Park Lake.

What seems casual is often anything but. Usually, it's due to someone's hard work. At *Alive!*, we celebrate those people. So waste no more time this summer and visit Echo Park Lake, if you haven't already. And appreciate those who made it happen.

Moving on ... I don't want to get too far into this before I send a special congratulations to our Club Counselor, **Noelle Kauffman**, who graduated from UCLA just a month or so ago. I know how much hard work went into that, Noelle. Nice job!

I also want to send a "nice job!" to the hard-working people at the Bureau of Sanitation. We're running stories this month of the final Sanitation Open Houses for the year. They might not seem like that big a deal until you actually go to one. They are well run, fun, and incredibly popular with each yard's neighbors. Thousands of people attend them every year, and they leave knowing a lot more about how hard the City works to serve its citizens, and how hard it strives to be earth-friendly at the same time. Nice going! We'll see you all next year.

I'm enjoying the photos our editor, **John Burnes**, took of the Tom Bradley Terminal's brand new west wing. It's the most expensive public works project in our City's history, and at first glance it looks great. I want to see it for myself, so expect something in the future when the new terminal opens fully to the public.

Changing the tone just a little bit, I'm delighted that a newish feature in *Alive!*, "Tell Us Their Story," is connecting with many of you, and you're sharing with us your memories of a City Employee or two who has passed away. This idea came not from us but from a reader, and it's a good one. Keep those memories coming; they tell us a little bit about someone most of us didn't know.

Well, that's my time for this month. I'm heading outside to enjoy our Los Angeles summer with my family. I encourage you to do the same. If you don't have a family, I'm sure there are seniors around you who would appreciate a visit. So make a plan or two, and enjoy.

JOHN

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Alive! Behind the Scenes

Here's Tom Hawkins, *Alive!* photographer, snapping a version of the cover shot of Julie Allen, Sr. Construction Engineer, Public Works, and manager of the Echo Park Lake refurbishment project, at the Echo Park Lake.