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A Message From the CEO

The Journey Out Is the Journey In

by John Hawkins,
President and CEO, The Club

During normal process of creating *Alive!* each month, we sometimes have a few final questions for our cover story subject. In wanting to get things right, that's par for the course and a piece of cake, right? Well, this month was different.

This time, for the first time, we sent a final email to our subject, and he was in another country! In China, for the next six months. And frankly, I wasn't surprised. We should have expected him to be nowhere else but somewhere else. That's the kind of guy **Steve Newcomer**, Retired, Library, is.

Steve wrote us a few months before Christmas with a photo or two of his travels. Here at *Alive!*, we get lots of awesome travel photos. But this was different. In his email, Steve said he had completed his 34-year task of visiting every country on earth.

What?

Our biggest challenge was figuring out how to handle this amazing story. We first thought to reprint one photo of his every month. But that would take more than 20 years! Then, we thought, well, maybe a few per month. That's when our chief designer, **David Jamgotchian**, suggested that Steve deserved a cover story – not just because of his remarkable feat, but why he chose to do it. David was right – Steve Newcomer travels not to check boxes, but to learn and grow and understand. So it's no great surprise that, even though he's accomplished his goal of visiting every nation on earth, Steve hasn't stopped exploring.

Over the years, we've had incredible submissions to our popular monthly feature, *Alive! Around the World*, everything from Mt. Everest and Antarctica, to under water vantages and witnessing the grandeur of the Grand Canyon. But we've never had one person go *everywhere*. We salute you, Steve,

for the adventure you have been on – the adventure around the world, and the adventure inside of yourself. Thanks for sharing.



Here's Steve Newcomer (right), Library, Retired, and John Hawkins, Club CEO, at the Club Headquarters downtown.

Speaking of sharing, it's February, and that means it's time to bring you one of our most popular annual features – Club Valentines! Ever since December, when the paper requested submissions for the Valentine feature, and

since our Director of Marketing **Summy Lam** put the word out electronically, they started coming in by the bundle. I love it! When it comes down to it, the most important thing we have is each other. It's awesome.

It's all down hill from there, though ... and I mean that in the best way. Downhill skiing, of course! The only thing you'll regret is not using one of the impressive Club discounts that **Mariana Guevara** at the Club Store has put together for Club Members. So pick up your discounted lift tickets today, and let's hear some *swooshing*.

In other news, let me repeat this from last month: Please welcome our two new Club Counselors, **Isabel Marquez** and **Dailia Vielma**. I'm happy for you to meet them because I know they will continue the Club's reputation for great customer service. Keep your eye out, and make sure to say hello.

I want to pass along our best Club congratulations to **Frank Borden**, whom we have featured many times here in *Alive!* — on the cover (twice, maybe the only person to have accomplished that feat), and nearly every year as part of the moving ceremony to honor the LAFD's fallen firefighters. It's not that we love Frank so much – we do, of course – but in his retirement he just keeps doing meaningful things (raising money for the Fallen Firefighters Memorial, and restoring the historic *Ralph J. Scott* fireboat). He's testament to what a retirement should be all about. And we're glad to include news of his latest honor. Great going, Frank. We'll see you here in our pages again soon, I'm sure.

And speaking of the LAFD, more congratulations are due for those who have been honored with Fire Marshal Awards. See the story later in this issue.

I can't sign off here without mentioning one of my favorite *Alive!* contests, and not just because it was my idea – the grown-up coloring contest. We love the coloring contest for kids that we run four times a year, but it's incredible to see the true works of art we receive from the adults when they get in on the fun, too. So get out your crayons and glitter, and get going!

And finally, as we hit these winter months, please help us remember those who live on our streets, and need a hand. Consider contributing to Blanket the City. It's an official part of our Club Angels charity program, so it's a straightforward, legit and responsible way to help those who have so little. I thank you in advance.

JOHN



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Alive! Behind the Scenes



Here's Steve Newcomer (right), Library, Retired, being photographed at the Club Headquarters downtown by the Club's Director of Marketing, Summy Lam (left).

