

IN THIS ISSUE

Alive! March 2014

24 Cover Story:

Tech on the Rise

Steve Reneker, ITA's new General Manager, has a plan in place.

19 New Flamingoes

Zoo welcomes first new chicks in 10 years.

30 The City Parties!

Alive! continues its annual tradition of covering the City's holiday parties.

38 So Long, Cora

Cora Jackson-Fossett retires from Public Works.

42 Steam Plant Graduates

DWP graduates another class of steam plant assistants.

46 Banning Gala

Banning Museum to host annual gala fundraiser.



City Department Coverage

The Club

- Be My Club Valentine.....35
- Blanket the City helps those in need.....35
- City Parties..... 30-33

Airports

- Police sergeants graduate from leadership academy.....9
- Police graduate two new officers.....10

DWP

- Dept. graduates new Steam Plant Assistants42

LAFD

- Tanzi Cole is promoted, goes to Rec and Parks.....46

LAFD/LAPD

- St. Baldrick's fundraiser against childhood cancer set for March 15.....6

LAPD

- Communications holds annual Halloween costume contest 20-21

Public Works

- Cora Jackson-Fossett retires as City, cultural leader38
- TEAM committee honors excellence in Contract Administration 11

Rec & Parks

- Banning Museum to host lecture on Civil War currency ...23
- Banning Wisteria fundraiser set for March 29.....46
- Cabrillo Marine Aquarium hosts 44th annual Earth Day Celebration.....35

Zoo

- Rare flamingo chicks come to LA19
- Zoo introduces hippos to each other19

Sections & Columns

<i>Alive!</i> In the Military.....	37
Adventures With Hal.....	14
<i>Alive!</i> Around the World.....	22
Be <i>Alive!</i>	18
Classifieds.....	43
Club Store.....	47
Coloring Contest Winners.....	29
Cooking.....	41
Deaths.....	37
History Comes <i>Alive!</i>	17
Letters.....	5
Me and My Pet... NEW	8
Peace of Mind.....	36
Picture Perfect.....	34
Question of the Month.....	5
Retirees Section.....	12-16
Retirements.....	15-16
Reviews: Movies, Books, Theatre & Video Games.....	39
Seen Around Town.....	6
Smart Moves: Dearborn Insurance.....	23
Special Achievements.....	37
Sports.....	40
Tell Us Their Story.....	37
Ticket and Gift Order Form.....	45
United Agencies at the Club.....	5
Weddings.....	37

For Retirees
Best Years.....Pages 12-16

Advertiser's Index

AMC Theatres..... 44	Rosebud Marketing..... 19	Club Featured Businesses
DWP Federal Credit Union..... 2	SeaWorld..... 28	Jennio's On-Site Taco Bars..... 7
Global Rings Jewelry..... 11	Sprint..... 23	Grijalva General Contracting..... 7
Jonathan Butler Music..... 8	T-Mobile..... 42	Mishgienterprises Jewelry & Clothing..... 7
LEGOLAND..... 44	United Agencies..... 40	MJP Clinic Acupuncture..... 7
PetProject LA..... 8		Rosebud Marketing..... 7
		United Agencies..... 7

A Message From the CEO

The Relentless March of Tech

by John Hawkins,
President and CEO, The Club

No matter where on this planet you live, the natives always brag about their resilience by stating, if you don't like the weather, don't worry, it will change in ten minutes. Even here in LA!

I think we're going to have to alter that phrase, to substitute technology instead.

Is there anything moving faster than technology? It seems if you stand around for just a few minutes, you've already fallen behind. What's the latest phone or tablet? What's the newest awesome app?

That's why, here at the Club, we introduced a Web-based state-of-the-art ticket buying and delivery system several years ago, and we keep improving it. That's why we've built Facebook pages and Twitter feeds to keep you in the loop, and our ticket deal e-newsletter is a big hit (sign up now if you haven't already; go to the Club Website). We've developed an iPad app so that our Club Members can receive *Alive!* in the version they prefer, whether it be print or digital. And we're looking into video, too. At the Club, we're on top of technology for our Club Members, and thanks for your feedback that you appreciate it.

But enough about us – I initially started this column to talk about ITA!

To my eyes, the City's technology game plan had fallen behind, and that's no disrespect to the great ITA employees past and present. Tech costs money, as we all know, and the budget crunch of 2008 severely affected ITA. But



Club CEO John Hawkins and ITA GM Steve Reneker in the department's network operations center.

now there's a solid plan, as delineated and managed by the new General Manager, **Steve Reneker**. The plan is bold – you can read all about it, starting on page 24 – and I'm excited about it. The plan includes major infrastructure improvements, which are all smart. But let me talk for just a minute about how one element of the ITA plan directly impacts me.

As a citizen of Los Angeles, I use the 311 calling system to report graffiti on my block, trash bins in need

of repair, sidewalks that have seen better days, and so forth. But it seemed so cumbersome and not available in the off-hours because of the budget crunch. In preparation for this month's article, I downloaded the new MyLA311 app for my iPhone. And now I wonder why I didn't do it earlier, when the app was introduced last year! The thing's amazing. What I love about it most is that it's *connected* – I can report all those things (and it reports back to me!), plus I can check my DWP balance, and do other things. It's City departments working together, sharing data and serving the people of LA in much better and smarter ways. What's not to love? If the rest of Steve's game plan goes as well – and that's a huge challenge – then we're all in for better City experiences. Here at *Alive!*, we love to celebrate the City's successes, and I see a lot more of them coming.

And on a more personal note – congratulations to ITA's **Tony Ighani**, head of Channel 35, who has done great work for many, many years – a look at the lineup of golden Emmy awards in the Channel 35 office attests to that. Tony used to write a monthly column for *Alive!*, when Channel 35 was producing much of its own content. But the budget crunch really did a number on Channel 35. Now I say congratulations because, as part of ITA's game plan, there's a brand new day awaiting Channel 35. It's going digital and high-def, plus it's moving into exciting new digs. And now that Tony has shepherded Channel 35 to a brighter future, he's going to be retiring in a month or so. So here's to you, Tony, bringing the City's media vehicle through some dark days and helping establish it for years to come. Well done.

Speaking of retiring, here's more congratulations – and thanks – to Public Works' **Cora Jackson-Fossett**, who has retired after a strong City career. Cora has worked hard to help *Alive!* cover lots of interesting stories. Enjoy your rewarding retirement, Cora.

Yes, I know we're past Valentine's Day... but I want to give a quick shoutout to fun Club Member **Rodney Bernaldo**, Public Works, who has sent his sweetheart a Club Valentine for four consecutive years. But this year's entry unfortunately was misdirected, and so we're only now printing it, in March. He insisted on keeping the streak, well, alive (and of course he wanted to serenade Isabella, too). To me, that's confirmation of what the Club is all about – us giving Club Members lots of ways to celebrate your lives, and you taking full advantage.

Which reminds me to remind you, our readers, that *Alive!* has a lot of photo submission opportunities for you at the moment. We're preparing for Mother's Day and Father's Day greetings (always very popular)... You and Your Pet... graduations at this time of year... and of course Picture Perfect, one of *Alive!*'s quietest but absolute best monthly features. All these photo submissions really make the Club a family, so keep 'em coming, and don't be shy!

Have a fun and bright March, and if you're Irish, or even if you're not, may the wind be always at your back.

-JOHN

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Alive! Behind the Scenes

Here's Steve Reneker, General Manager, ITA, in the agency's Security Operations Center deep below City Hall East, photographed by the Club's Angel Gomez.

