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Alive! Behind the Scenes

The Club's Summy Lam (left) photographs members of Rec and Parks/Aquatics Division's Open Water Lifeguard Program for this month's cover. The photo was taken at lifeguard tower 3 at Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro.



Alive! Cover Picture



A Message From the CEO

Summer Fun Is No Accident

by John Hawkins,
President and CEO, The Club

How serious is the business of ocean lifeguarding? For a month or so we'd been planning our annual look at how the City spends its summers, and we decided this year to focus on Cabrillo, the only ocean beach, protected by the City's time-honored open water Lifeguards. We looked forward to taking great photos of open sand and a beautiful beach, and an interesting interview about how Rec and Parks protects us. Then Newport Beach Lifeguard Ben Carlson died in the line of duty. And a week after we produced our feature, a freak lightning bolt or two hit on the City's crowded Venice Beach, killing one and injuring a dozen others. (Neither of those involved our City Lifeguards, although other City departments were involved in both, in greater or lesser degrees.) We were reminded immediately just how serious this business can be, and why we're glad the Aquatics Division's **Trisha Delgado**, **Rogelio Fernandez**, **Jon Kopitzke** and **Zach Millett** spend so many hours dedicated to public service. For some great perspective on this topic, read this month's *Alive!* interview. I recommend it.



From left: Capt. Rogelio Fernandez, Aquatic Facility Manager III, 30 years of City service; Zach Millett, Aquatic Facility Manager III, 15 years; Jon Kopitzke, Aquatic Director, 28 years; and Robert Larios, Club Vice President of Operations.

I also didn't know how long the City has been protecting City beaches (since 1923, in Venice), and that the first City ocean Lifeguard was an LAPD officer. And I also appreciated Rogelio's tip for safe swimming – before you do anything, talk to your Lifeguard. Ask about the conditions of the water. Ask about the best places to swim. That's great advice. So now we know, and courtesy of *Alive!* Moving on (quite literally) ... I want to personally thank three great Club Members and friends who have recently retired: **Maggie Whelan** in Personnel; **Paul Blount** in Public Works, and **Cora Jackson-Fossett**, also Public Works. I added it up: Can you believe that these three City legends are retiring with more than 129 years of City service? That's incredible. The City is losing a ton of awesome experience here. But the rest of their lives are waiting for them now. I thank Maggie, Paul and Cora for all they've done for the Club, and I wish them all the best in their retirements. I also want to note the passing of **James Hollis**, who was 100 at his passing in June. James was a City pioneer, the first black security guard at the Central Library downtown. He was a man of great character and charm when we interviewed him for our August 2009 cover story on the City's past. Rest in peace, James. And we send our condolences to his family and friends.



The late James Hollis (left) with Club CEO John Hawkins, from an *Alive!* cover story, August 2009.

It might be summer, but here at the Club we work hard for you all year. We're working on an awesome new Club Webstore feature that we'll tell you about soon enough. I promise it will be worth it! So it's August; I invite you to spend lots of family time, as I'm doing. When you spend these last remaining weeks of summer at a City pool or at Cabrillo Beach, Hanson Dam or Lake Balboa, thank your City Lifeguards for all the work they do behind the scenes to make sure your day is fun and memorable – for the right reasons. Go out there and make some summer memories! See you next month.

JOHN

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