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THE **40** HOUR

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Ann Smith M.E.A. Lead

1987

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ORGANIZE ORGANIZED LABOR

kers Joi Workers Join our Ranks

# inside



#### on the cover

MEA is proud to celebrate 90 years as an independent Union fighting for the rights of City of San Diego employees. The past nine decades have brought about a great deal of change through the struggles and legal fights that have demonstrated our commitment for doing what is right. It hasn't always been easy, but we have grown stronger with each trial and tribulation that has come our way!

We invite you to attend the General Membership Meeting on October 6th (more information is on page 6) where we will come together as a Union family to celebrate 90 years of accomplishments.



#### inside

- 4 General Manager's Report
- 6 General Membership Meeting Reminder
- 8 Boardmember Spotlight: Michele Chicarelli
- 11 Labor Representative Overview
- 12 Honoring our Dispatchers



10	Denefit	0	
10	Benefit	Open	Houses

- 18 Retiree Spotlights
- 20 Members Making Us Proud
- 22 Catastrophic and Medical Leave Requests
- 23 Discount Tickets

# President's Message



I often follow the struggles facing labor unions across our country. I recently found myself breathing a sigh of relief as I thought to myself, "it's a good time to be a MEA member."

Many labor unions are faced with battling the same regressive demands on their salaries and benefits that we are all too familiar with. While all City employees are nowhere near where we should be, we're also not where we were. This year marks MEA's 90<sup>th</sup> year of existence and like many of you, I have seen my share of the good and bad highs and lows.

I've been active in MEA for more than 25 of those 90 years and I'm proud to say that I've never seen our Union any stronger than it is today. Membership is steadily increasing and members are proudly displaying the MEA logo on their clothing, hats, cups and bags.

We have smart and dedicated members who make up our Union's leadership as Officers, Stewards and on our Board of Directors and Negotiating Team. The MEA staff is made up of loyal, caring and highly skilled professionals.

Together, we are a formidable team! I guess it would be accurate to say that we're 90 proof! Yet there is more work to be done. I am concerned about members who are apprehensive about reaching out to MEA for assistance or those who may have reservations as a result of a past experience.

We want to hear from you and we're stepping up efforts to make it as convenient as possible. We're doing this by coming to your workplace for site visits during the lunch hour. You may also receive a phone call to simply ask how things are going and to get your thoughts on what MEA is doing right and where we can improve. You can also log on to the MEA website to ask a question or to share your thoughts.

Member communication and support is important to me and I assure you that we will continue to find more ways to make ourselves available to you.

Our new contract became effective on July 1. 2016. MEA members received a \$1,500 flex benefit increase which will be followed by an additional increase of \$1,650 on July 1, 2017. This will be followed by 3.3% pay increases in both 2018 and 2019. Members also received 24 hours of discretionary leave and became eligible for four weeks of paid parental leave. In addition, tuition reimbursement increased to \$2,000 annually. Those who pay to park downtown (Concourse Parkade, CCP and Library) will enjoy an increase in the City's subsidy from 50% to 75%, reducing the amount employees have to pay for downtown parking by half (about \$500 a year). Also, the dollar amount of each uniform allowance currently being paid will increase by 5% each year - for a total of 20% over the 4-year term of our contract.

One of the things I am most proud of is the return of the annual Special Salary Adjustment (SSA) application process which hasn't been available since 2008. MEA staff is doing everything in their power to provide a strong case to City Personnel for the many classifications who submitted SSA paperwork. If you have any feedback that you would like to share, please let me know; I would love to hear from you. Thank you for your support of our Union and let's continue to work together to move us all forward!

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#### Officers

Greg Woods Jan Lord Candi Mitchell Sam Cerrato President 2nd Vice President Treasurer Acting Secretary

#### **Executive Committee**

Mary Enyeart Francine Howell Pete Lynch Joe Miesner Steve Ramirez Police City Attorney Development Services Library Environmental Services our legdersh

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Park & Recreation Public Works Financial Management Public Works Library Park & Recreation Police Park & Recreation Library City Clerk Public Utilities Citv Attornev Public Works Environmental Services Human Resources **Development Services** Library Public Utilities Police Library Public Utilities Planning Environmental Services Transportation & Storm Water Police Communications **Development Services** Public Utilities Public Utilities Treasurer Fire Rescue

Chief Steward Library Public Utilities Police Library Library Park and Recreation **Environmental Services** Library Police Comptroller Public Utilities City Clerk Public Works Human Resources Police Environmental Services **Environmental Services Development Services** Public Utilities Transportation & Storm Water City Attorney Planning Public Utilities Economic Development Treasurer



As you may have read in the article written by MEA President Greg Woods, 2016 marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MEA's representation of employees who work for the City of San Diego. MEA began organically in 1926, with a handful of City employees organizing together hoping to improve the working conditions of their fellow City employees.

Over the next few decades, the leaders of MEA achieved various worker protections and other forward progress for City employees. Notably, early in its existence, MEA helped establish the City's first pension benefit offerings and retirement system.

Everything changed in 1968, when then California Governor Ronald Reagan signed the ground breaking Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA), which gave public sector employees in California the right to bargain collectively.

You may recall that Reagan was a former Union president himself, directing the Screen Actors Guild for six terms during his acting days. Reagan was a staunch supporter of collective bargaining and the right to organize, calling it "one of the most elemental human rights." Reagan's signature on the MMBA made California only the second state in the nation to allow public sector collective bargaining. Of course, Reagan would later become the only former "Union boss" to ever be elected President of the United States.

Along with establishing the right of public employees to organize, the MMBA's purpose is "to promote full communication between public employers and their employees by providing a reasonable method of resolving disputes regarding wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment."

Nearly 50 years since the MMBA was enacted, MEA continues to push the City of San Diego to do right by its employees and to live up to the full spirit and purpose of the MMBA. Sometimes we do that very well, and other times, the City forgets that following the MMBA is not only the best way to get things done on behalf of the employees and citizens of this City, but is also the law. (Sorry, I couldn't resist just one Prop B reference...)

Through it all, the San Diego Municipal Employees Association has remained independent and focused exclusively on representing the interests of City of San Diego employees. Together, through the power of collective bargaining and resource pooling into one strong voice, we have accomplished tremendous gains for City employees and fought against those who would want to go back on promises.

New opportunities and threats always seem to be around the corner. But hopefully (at least in San Diego) we have entered a renewed period where the former will outnumber the latter. Over the last several years, we have fought against and survived a number of political and legal attacks. We will continue to fight those negatives but will also continue our forward progress and pounce on new opportunities to help City employees thrive. That forward progress is not possible without your involvement, and we very much appreciate your continued support of your Union.

Finally, and speaking of celebrating MEA's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, don't miss MEA's General Membership Meeting this year. It will be held on Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at the Balboa Park Club. Free to all MEA active and retiree members, the event is a great place to come and see old friends and to meet new ones... all while enjoying a nice meal, great speakers and some amazing raffle prizes. For more information about the event, please see page 6.

I hope everyone had a great summer and, as always, don't hesitate to contact me or your MEA representative if you ever need anything from your Union.

Save the Date!

THE MEA ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY WILL BE DECEMBER 10, 2016.

WATCH FOR UPCOMING EMAIL BLASTS WITH MORE DETAILS AND TICKET INFORMATION!

# egal report ann m. smith

#### Prob B - Getting Closer...But the End is Not in Sight Yet

The Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) issued its decision last December agreeing with the Administrative Law Judge's determination that, in connection with the implementation of a "transformative" concept to eliminate defined benefit pensions for all new employees hired after July 20, 2012, except sworn police officers, the City violated its meet and confer duties under the state's collective bargaining law because the City failed and refused to meet and confer over the Mayor's 401(k) pension reform initiative (Prop B).

In response to PERB's Decision, both the City Attorney's Office and attorneys for the three "official ballot proponents" (led by April Boling), filed separate Petitions for Writ of Extraordinary Relief with the Fourth District Court of Appeal. These Petitions are identical in their quest to have the Court order PERB to set aside its Decision and then dismiss MEA's (and the other three unions') unfair practice charge in their entirety with the result that Prop B would remain Charter law and the City's conduct in flagrantly thwarting statewide bargaining law would be left entirely unremedied.

The City Attorney's Office and counsel for the Boling Proponents both filed separate opening briefs in support of their Petitions; PERB and the four Unions (as real parties in interest) filed separate briefs in opposition; and the City and Boling Proponents filed briefs in reply.

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, four applications were filed seeking permission from the Court of Appeal to file "amicus" or "friend of the court" briefs in the case. One was filed by the San Diego

Police Officers Association in support of PERB and the four Unions; the other three were filed in support of the City's Petition: San Diego Taxpayers Educational Foundation (the alleged "research arm" of the San Diego County Taxpayers Association); League of California Cities; and Pacific Legal Foundation, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, and National Tax Limitation Committee.

If the Court grants these "amicus brief" applications, PERB and the four unions will be given time to respond. Once any needed additional briefing is complete, oral argument will take place before the three-judge panel assigned to the case and then we will wait for a written decision. That decision itself has the potential to spawn a Petition for Re-Hearing before the same Court and/or a Petition for Review to the California Supreme Court. It also appears that the City Attorney's Office, directly and through its "amicus" support, is attempting to posture this case as one the United States Supreme Court should eventually want to hear - arguing that PERB's Decision enforcing the statewide collective bargaining law against the City as a public employer constitutes an impermissible burden on the First Amendment rights of elected officials.

So . . . there will be an end to this fight someday but that end is not quite in sight yet.

#### Never Assume An SDCERS-Proposed "Correction" of Your Benefit is Correct!

The recent experiences of a few MEA active and retired members prompt this reminder:

always call MEA if you get a dreaded "correction" letter from SDCERS advising that a mistake has been discovered in the determination of your retirement benefit and that SDCERS is duty-bound to fix it by "correcting" the amount of your benefit and collecting any overpayment of benefits already paid or any underpayments of contribution, with interest added.

Distressing as this kind of news always is, the first question usually is "can they do this?" Often the answer is that they can – simply because the laws governing the SDCERS trust fund – and the applicable IRS regulations as well – dictate that errors must be corrected when discovered so that the SDCERS trust funds are used only for the stated purposes according to the terms of the plan. For its part, the City refuses to pay the interest charges because City Attorney Goldsmith argues that Prop B prohibits it.

<u>But SDCERS is not always right when</u> <u>determining that a correction is needed</u>. At MEA's request, I have come to the aid of two retired employees whose "correction/ repayment demands" were rescinded by SDCERS after we were able to show that SDCERS was misinterpreting plan language established in 2002 related to the 90% cap. In two other situations involving active employees, we overcame the obstacles preventing recognition of their valuable reciprocity rights with other pension systems. The lesson is this: always call MEA – even if we can't make it better, we will sure try!



# Helping Our Members Achieve Their Academic Goals



Congratulations to Amor Estrada who was one of several members who took advantage of MEA's Supplemental Tuition Reimbursement Program. After exhausting the City's tuition reimbursement,

Amor was awarded an additional \$500 from MEA to cover a portion of her tuition and textbooks.

Amor works in the City Attorney's Office and is enrolled in the paralegal program at University of San Diego (USD). She chose USD because it was one of only two paralegal programs in San Diego that is American Bar Association approved.

The paralegal program interests Amor because it gives her satisfaction to know that she can work on and contribute to important cases in the office without having to actually go to trial.

One class that she has found both interesting and extremely challenging has

been civil litigation. Although it wasn't an easy class, it helped that her instructor had many interesting stories to share about the field.

Although it has been a challenge to balance her career, education and personal life, Amor has been able to succeed by staying focused and prioritizing. According to Amor, "Working for the city and having the opportunity to go to school and to be reimbursed is a great help and a huge motivator to keep improving professionally." Congratulations Amor and keep up the good work!

MEA's Supplemental Tuition Reimbursement Plan was created to augment the City's current tuition reimbursement program which currently limits reimbursement to \$2,000 per fiscal year for tuition or for job-related training and certification. If you have educational expenses above the City's \$2,000 limit, you might qualify for another \$500 in reimbursement from MEA.

To qualify for MEA's supplemental plan, you must:

1. Meet the requirements set forth in AR 70.30 (the City's tuition

reimbursement plan), including approval of an educational plan by the appointing authority.

- 2. Have exhausted the City's tuition reimbursement limit.
- Be a MEA member for at least one year at the time of request for reimbursement.

To apply, please submit a cover letter detailing the request for reimbursement, accompanied by copies of relevant documents, including proof of reimbursement up to the City-sponsored limit and proof of payment above that limit by the employee.

Applications for MEA's program will be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis. Qualifying applications will be accepted and funded until the annual budget is exhausted.

For more information, please don't hesitate to call MEA at 619-264-6632.



# MEA's Annual <u>General Membership Meeting</u>

Thursday, October 6th 5:00pm to 8:00pm Balboa Park Club

More information is available on MEA's website calendar at www.sdmea.org

# MEA Is Working For You...



General Manager Mike Zucchet debates April Boling regarding the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) ruling in MEA's favor regarding Proposition B.



Labor Relations Representative Marin Mejia meets with Public Works electrical engineers to discuss the Special Salary Adjustment process.



Stewards Sam Cerrato and Alice Daniels work on a mock appeal draft.



Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz meets with field representatives from PUD to discuss a special salary adjustment request.



General Manager Mike Zucchet debates Carl DeMaio (yes, he's still around...) about Proposition B and discredits DeMaio's claim that all City employees retire with goldplated pensions.



# Michele Chicarelli Park and Recreation Department

Please provide a brief history of yourself-where you were born, where you went to school, some jobs you had before working for the City, stories about your siblings and family, etc.

I was born in Upland California but my mother had an itch, or as she calls it "Gypsy blood" to move every 2-3 years. So when the time came to move, my younger brother and older sister would pack up our bedrooms to move; we became little professional movers. We lived in Upland, Ontario, Pomona, Montclair, San Clemente, Oceanside, Del Mar, Paradise Hills, Santee, El Cajon, Lakeside, Mira Mesa, Spring Valley, Alpine and we finally ended up in San Diego (thankfully we never left!).

You can guess my family is Italian with a name like "Chicarelli." I went to Mira Mesa High School where they called me "Chic." I was a gymnast for four years so staying active in sports was where I felt most comfortable.

After high school, I got a job in the neighborhood dry cleaners as a silk presser which provided good money and bad hair days! Between the steam and iron burns, it was time to move on.

One of my favorite jobs was with the Federal Government as a GS-3 Clerk Typist, but I called myself a "secretary" in the U.S. Army Recruiting Headquarters. I stayed with the government for 13 years while I attended college. I graduated with a degree in Recreation Systems Management and I knew even then that it was going to be my career.

I became a part time Recreation Leader I for the Park and Recreation Department in 1989. Throughout the years, I've worked at several recreation centers throughout San Diego. I'm now an Area Manger II for North Park, Adams and Presidio Recreation Centers. Best job ever! Not to brag, but our department is the best.

#### What is one childhood memory that can still make you smile to this day?

I have many childhood memories that make me smile, but here are two. I remember in elementary school my mom making dinner and we didn't have anything to drink, no soda, so my mother opened a can of beer and gave each of us a small glass to drink with dinner. I remember thinking how grown up she must think we were... Unfortunately, it was gross and we didn't drink it. To this day, I don't drink beer.

Another memory was every weekend we would pack up the car and drive to the beach. One time I was carrying the baked chicken in a Tupperware container upside down and yes, I dropped the chicken in the sand. To this day, I remember my mother saying, "That's ok, chicken can be gritty" and I thought, yes it can.

#### When you were in high school, which singer or band could you recite all of their song lyrics to?

Madonna was my girl! I could sing all of her songs word for word and I even had the attitude. I wanted to sing and look like her (don't forget that she was hot in the 80's).

# What is something that you don't mind buying used?

I use to be a huge antique collector. I used to love finding treasures like furniture, dishes, perfume bottles, jewelry, dolls and teddy bears. This year, I've actually started selling my items to antique stores and collectors. I figured it was time to let someone else enjoy them. What is one hobby or pastime that you wish you could dedicate more time to doing? I took a pottery class in high school and I absolutely loved it. I continued with pottery classes in college and at the recreation centers I worked at. Unfortunately, I don't put the time aside for this hobby. This is on my bucket list though.

# Have you ever met anyone famous?

I met Junior Seau in the 90's. At the time, he lived close to Grossmont Center and my then husband was a tree trimmer. Junior had a huge yard filled with trees that needed to be thinned out. We both worked at his house for a month and Junior would come outside to talk and visit. At the end of each day, he would give us signed Charger memorabilia including hats, football cards and game gloves. It was really special.

Another great famous person was Tony Gwynn. Whenever Tony would have autograph signings, we would be there! It got to the point where he would recognize us and greet us by name (he probably thought that we were stalkers).

A couple of years ago Adrian Gonzalez was downtown at Donavan's Steakhouse. We noticed him while we were eating dinner and I was so giddy and felt like I was in high school. The next thing I know, I'm getting introduced to Adrian Gonzalez and I'm taking a picture with him! That was my dessert for the evening...

# How old is the oldest pair of shoes in your closet?

I love my shoes and I can't get rid of them! I tell myself that if I buy a new pair of shoes, I need to donate an old pair. It never works though and I have shoes over 7 years old.

#### What would you most regret not having done by the end of your life?

Travel. I really love to travel. This world is amazing to explore! We have so much history in each country, and to actually have the freedom to travel and to stand in the same space where history took place is astounding. I know there's a lot of bad out there but there is also so much good.

# What is the best vacation that you have ever taken?

My best vacation was taken three years ago when I went to northern France by myself. At the time, my cousin was living near Lille so I stayed with her for 3 weeks. I rented a small Fiat and a GPS navigation system called TomTom, and each day, I would input the destination and just go. I drove on the northern country roads and stopped at cities like Dunkerque, Arras, Abbeville, Dieppe, Rouen, and on and on. I even took the train to Paris. It was a wonderful experience and I felt like a big girl who was all grown up.

#### What was the first week like at the City? Any good "transition" stories?

My first week with the city was a learning experience in working with the community. At the time, Skyline Hills was heavily populated with gangs, and the "Bloods" were at Skyline. One day, I was sitting in the gym waiting for the basketball players to clear the courts when all of a sudden a guy runs into the gym, sits next to me, and puts his hand behind me. Moments later, a police officer comes into the gym, looks around then leaves. The guy next to me says, "What's your name", then says, "If you need anything come to me, my name is Tank". From then on, Tank and I were buddies. I even named my second puppy after him.

# What is something that you would like MEA members to know about you?

I want members to know that I'm dedicated to my family and to work. Italian families have a bond where we can argue, yell and tell each other's secrets. But at the end of the day, there's no doubt that we will support each other.

Work is another place where I feel a family connection. The people I work with care about their jobs and they care about the communities that they work in. This is a bond that we will always share.



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#### Labor Representative Overview January - July 2016

A total of 119 cases were opened in the first half of the year.

MEA-represented employees received representation on a wide variety of issues including fact findings, written warnings, performance reports, workplace conflicts and grievances.

MEA has participated in several Labor Management Committees (LMCs). In the Public Works Article 73 LMC, the list has been finalized which identifies the projects and scope of work that can be performed by private contractors while ensuring that the City maintains control and oversight throughout the process. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be in place for one year as the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) process continues.

The Police Department LMC continues to meet to discuss the new agreed upon schedule in order to address staffing issues. They have also reviewed an update on the efficiencies identified through the performance and analytics audit.

The DSD/Planning/Code Enforcement LMC has met to discuss the presentation on the new DSD Fee Proposal at the Budget and Government Efficiency Committee. As part of the Fee Proposal, 13% of the proposed fees will cover the cost of moving staff out of COB, and will provide for ongoing revenue for renting a new building and revenue for development and maintenance for Accela, the new project tracking system. Accela is ahead of schedule and the department's target implementation date is May 2017. Employee training should begin as early as this fall. The City Council approved the proposed fees for the department and DSD is moving forward with finalizing the lease agreement on a new location.

The Fleet LMC continues to meet to discuss the shop reports, the status of vacancies and training and parts and tools issues.

Marin Mejia will be the new Labor Representative for Fire Rescue. There was a kickoff Fire Dispatch LMC in June and they continue to meet. The committee agreed that the department would send the policies that they want to discuss (staffing and mandatory overtime policies) to the group.

MEA's Labor Representatives have also been very busy reviewing the Special Salary Adjustment (SSA) request packages received from represented employees. The Labor Representatives will continue to work with each group in advance of MEA's submission to the Civil Service Commission.

As always, we want to acknowledge our MEA Stewards who dedicate a great deal of their personal and professional time in order to effectively represent their fellow Union colleagues.



Stewards Michele Chicarelli, Albert Elguira and Steve Ramirez draft an appeal outline for a "Meets Standard" Performance Report at a recent Steward meeting.

#### Know Your Rights: What is in Your Personnel File?

Your MEA Labor Representatives encourage you to check your personnel file once a year in order to be aware of its content. Your right to do so is enumerated in Article 10, Section A1 of MEA's MOU which states, "An employee, or an MEA representative with the written consent of the employee, may inspect the employee's personnel files.

The request to inspect files shall be granted at a time that is convenient to both Management and the employee. The inspection shall be made in the presence of an appropriate supervisor. If requested by the employee, copies of the record, or any portion thereof, may be provided to the employee, or anyone designated by the employee. Charges for these copies may be made in accordance with A.R. 95.20, Pricing and Furnishing City Documents."

To start the process of checking your personnel file, simply contact your payroll specialist and schedule an appointment. If you experience any difficulties in scheduling the appointment, or if you discover any personnel file discrepancies, please do not hesitate to contact your MEA Labor Representative. We are here to protect and enforce your rights!

# Celebrating our Incredible Dispatchers

Many people have experienced reporting an emergency that they have witnessed or have been a part of. Unfortunately, they probably didn't have the good fortune of meeting the person behind the comforting voice during the urgent situation. Celebrating National Dispatchers' Week is a way to show our gratitude and appreciation to dispatchers in Fire, Police, Environmental Services and Station 38 who do so much, often as anonymous heroes, throughout the year.

Dispatchers serve as the first and most critical link between the public and emergency services. Those who respond to an emergency rely on a dispatcher's succinct and precise assessment in order to provide the appropriate level of emergency services. If it weren't for the dispatcher fielding the calls, there would be a significant disconnect between the caller and emergency service responders.

There is a great deal of stress associated with the daily demands of the job, and yet our dispatchers perform their duties with an uncanny ability to stay focused and dedicated to the acute needs of the caller. Hour after hour, and day after day, dispatchers provide a high level of service to callers, all while working long and often irregular hours.

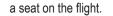
During the week that has come to be known as National Dispatchers' Week, we honor all hard working dispatchers. On behalf of the callers that you have helped during an emergency situation, thank you to all dispatchers who are there when we need you the most!



## Leadership and Teamwork at its Finest

Congratulations to the Police Department Communications team who was awarded with the Communications Center of the Year Award. Also, kudos to PD dispatch supervisors Marie Cuvadar and Mary Davis who were recognized with the Supervisor Leadership Award. Just like their emergency dispatcher counterparts, this is a team who works under very tense and unpredictable conditions. Yet even with the constant demands, this is a group who finds the time to support and encourage one another on a daily basis. started calling various airlines to get Frank on the next flight to Hawaii. There was only a small window of time to get Frank on a flight that would leave that night.

While talking to Delta Airlines, the reservation agent explained that the only airline that could get Frank out of San Diego that evening was Alaska Airlines. Mary immediately called Alaska and confirmed that there was





Mary, Frank & Marie

That is exactly what dispatcher Frank Sigston experienced one evening as he was driving in to work. Frank received a call from a doctor in Hawaii stating that his father was critically ill and he wasn't expected to live. When Frank got to work, he told his supervisor, Mary Davis, and explained the situation. It was apparent to Mary that Frank was not doing well and that he needed to be with his father before he passed.

Mary enlisted the help of Marie Cuvadar who is a peer support supervisor. Jennifer Duffy, who is a member of Peer Support, also offered her assistance. Jennifer, along with dispatcher Aminah Hall stayed with Frank as Mary and Marie



Frank's furnished & decorated new place that he came home to

The only problem was that the flight was due to take off in 90 minutes! Understanding that he would be flying to Hawaii with only the clothes on his back, Frank agreed to catch the flight to be with his father.

Just over an hour after Frank had walked into the office with the news about his father, Frank's supervisors had received word that he had

made it through the airport and was at his gate to board the flight to Hawaii.

While Jennifer and Aminah were comforting Frank while Mary and Marie were making the flight arrangements, they learned that Frank was due to move from one residence to another. Jen and Aminah enlisted the help of Jorge Zingaretti and the three took it upon themselves to move all of Frank's belongings for him. Three days later, the trio spent the

> day cleaning his old apartment and packing and moving his belongings and furniture from one place to another.

> The following day, they unpacked Frank's items and set up his new place so that he would come back to a furnished and comfortable new home. Jennifer, Aminah and Jorge did all of this on their own personal time using their own funds.

While Frank was with his father, Marie Cuvadar maintained contact with him



Jennifer & Aminah to check in and to see if there was anything that the team could do to support him.

Frank has since returned to San Diego and has talked about what the team's support has meant to him. "I cannot even begin to explain the appreciation that I have for everyone. I want to thank you all for the love, support, and counsel that each one of you has extended toward me and my family in this very tragic time."

Clearly this close knit team and their reaction to their fellow dispatcher's heartache epitomizes team work, compassion and selflessness. Although the constant stress and



Frank & his dad

demands of being a dispatcher will inevitably remain, the comfort and support that the team provides one another gives each dispatcher the strength to serve. Congratulations to the Police Department Communications team for being awarded with both the Communications Center of the Year and Supervisor Leadership awards.



MEA often gets calls from City employees who are not quite sure who they should contact regarding a specific issue.

The following list will hopefully point you in the right direction of who can best answer your question or address your concern.

And when in doubt, please feel free to call MEA's main line (619-264-6632) so we can direct you to the right person.

We're always here to help!

#### Who do I call if I need representation or if I have some questions or concerns about a workplace situation?

Please call your department's MEA Labor Representative at 619-264-6632.

# Who do I call if I have a question about my health, dental, vision or any other

#### MEA administered benefit?

Please contact MEA's Benefit Department at <u>benefits@sdmea.</u> <u>org</u> or 888.217.9175

#### Who do I call to let MEA know about milestones in the workplace including promotions, retirements and baby and wedding announcements?

Please contact Nichole Johnson at <u>njohnson@sdmea.org</u> or 619-264-6632

#### Who do I call about generalized, ongoing issues with management which could be addressed through a Labor Management Committee (LMC)?

Please contact Cathleen Higgins at <u>chiggins@sdmea.org</u> or 619-264-6632, ext. 117

#### Who do I call about scheduling a MEA site visit in my workplace?

Please contact Lora Fleming at <u>Ifleming@sdmea.org</u> or 619-264-6632, ext. 118

#### Who do I call if I have questions about retiree health, DROP, 401k, pension or Proposition B litigation?

Please contact MEA General Manager Mike Zucchet at <u>mzucchet@sdmea.org</u> or 619-264-6632, ext. 108

Please don't ever hesitate to contact MEA if you have any questions or concerns that you need assistance with. MEA's dedicated and knowledgeable staff is here to serve you and your colleagues.

So who do you call? You call us!



Mike Zucchet



Nichole Johnson



Cathleen Cummings



Lora Fleming

Some of you might have noticed that a few of our esteemed Board members' photos were upside down in the last edition. We apologize and have re-printed the Board roster below. As one Board member put it, it just shows that MEA's Board "will stand on our heads for our members!"





**Greg Woods** President Treasurer



Jan Lord 2nd Vice President Human Resources



**Candi Mitchell** Treasurer **Public Utilities** 



Sam Cerrato Acting Secretary Library



Mary Enyeart Executive Board Police



Francine Howell Executive Board City Attorney



Pete Lynch Executive Board **Development Services** 



Joseph Miesner Executive Board Library



Steve Ramirez Executive Board **Environmental Services** 



**Brian Anthony** Park & Recreation



Juan Baligad Public Works



Tom Battaglia

Financial

Management

Scott Robinson

Communications

Issy Camacho Public Works



Michele Chicharelli Sarah Erazo Park & Recreation Park & Recreation



Jennifer Geran Library



Amy Hill City Clerk



Stephanie Hoover **Public Utilities** 



Graham Hufford Public Works





**Catherine Rivera** Public Utilities



Jeff Robles

Development

Services





Erika McNeill **Public Utilities** 

Sammie Taylor

**Public Utilities** 



Gabrielle Mead





Public Utilities



Michael Prinz

Planning





Arnie Reyes Environmental Services



Nick Wright Fire-Rescue

# 2016 Benefit Open Houses

MEA would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy work schedule to attend one of our benefit open houses. We understand that City employees have diverse schedules and work locations. With that in mind, our open houses always take place at several different City locations and at various times to ensure that all employees can come out to one of our benefit events.

The open enrollment process can sometimes be a little confusing and overwhelming (especially for new City employees). We hope that these benefit open houses provide you with an opportunity to speak directly to the plan representatives and that you walk away with a better understanding of the open enrollment process and the many benefits being offered.

Hopefully, you also grabbed some of the goodies that our vendors provided and that you had one of the many lucky raffle tickets that won you some great prizes! Even if you didn't win in the raffle, we hope that you took home some free MEA swag, ate an ice cream or two and enjoyed the various activities including the U-Jam fitness dancing.

These open houses wouldn't be possible without the tireless efforts of Jon Hayes, Will Stover, Connie Martinez and everyone who works in MEA's Benefits Department. If you have any benefit or enrollment questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Benefit staff at (888) 217-9175 or benefits@sdmea.org. We look forward to seeing you at next year's benefit open houses!































#### Coming to a Workplace Near You!

Thank you to all of those members who have attended a department site visit with MEA General Manager Mike Zucchet and President Greg Woods. MEA has facilitated site visits in numerous departments including Public Utilities, Storm Water, Financial Management, Police, Planning, Communications, Development Services, Library, Environmental Services, Real Estate Assets and many more.

Site visits give members an opportunity to talk to MEA's leadership and to provide their feedback on what is, and is not working in their department. Members also get to hear firsthand from Mike Zucchet with timely information on Council actions, City happenings, litigation and how to get more involved in your Union.

The site visits are generally scheduled around the lunch hour to ensure that members don't have to take time off from their busy day in order to attend. If you and your co-workers would like a site visit scheduled for your department, please email Lora Fleming at lfleming@sdmea. org. Whether you have a group of 5 or 50, MEA would be happy to schedule a site visit to talk with you and your colleagues.









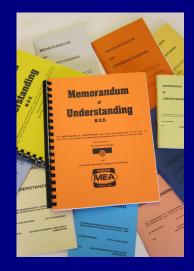


#### Electronic and Hardcopies of MEA's New Labor Contract/MOU are Now Available!

MEA is happy to announce that both electronic and hardcopies of our new four year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (labor contract) are now available. The new MOU took effect on July 1, 2016.

Hopefully you noticed the \$1,500 flex benefit increase during open enrollment in June and in your most paychecks. There will be an additional flex benefit increase of \$1,650 next July 1 as well. Please go to MEA's website (www.sdmea.org) to access the MOU and to read more about the increases and enhancements to flex (\$3,150 total increase) and salary/pensionable pay (3.3% increase in 2018 and another 3.3% increase in 2019 for all MEA-represented employees, with additional increases for some classifications).

In addition, a number of other contract improvements also took effect in July: increased discretionary leave (24 hours annually), increased tuition reimbursement and job related training reimbursement (\$2,000 annually), bereavement leave improvements (additional family members now included in coverage), increased uniform allowance (20% increase over the next 4 years), reduced downtown parking costs (employee share of parking cost cut in half) and a new 4-week Citypaid parental leave benefit and more. Please note that you must log in on MEA's website to view the current MOU. Once you have logged in, the MOU will be available on the right hand side under "My Union." For a hardcopy of the MOU, please call MEA at (619) 264-6632.



### **Reflecting Back and Looking Forward**

MEA would like to acknowledge the many contributions and years of service of recently retired MEA-represented City employees. We wish you all the best as you embark on the next chapter of your life!



#### **Dwayne** Clayton

I recently retired from the City of San Diego as an Account Clerk in the Environmental Services Department. In my 23 years as a City employee, I have worked for Development Services, the Comptroller, Public Utilities and most recently for Environmental Services.

I've had some memorable experiences in just over two decades with the City. I was both nervous and excited when I had to do large wire transfers. These wire transfer payments absolutely couldn't be late and were often for \$7 to \$15 million. I would always breathe a sigh of relief once the wire transfers were successfully sent!

I worked alongside some incredible colleagues. I also had some great supervisors that helped us all reach our top potential as employees. During my time with the Comptroller, we had more

than 1,000 documents that needed to get processed and approved Citywide. We came in on the weekends and we all worked incredibly hard to get everything posted in time. We were a winning team that was a force to be reckoned with!

Retirement will bring more opportunities to travel and the freedom to try new things. I would love to go to New York and to explore new places. Even so, I will miss my colleagues and the satisfaction of being able to help those around me. I will also miss participating in the Stewards program. I learned a great deal from MEA Labor Representative Kelly Cruz who was a fantastic and patient teacher.



#### Pam Glover

I worked as a Procurement Specialist for the Purchasing & Contracting Department throughout my 15 years with the City of San Diego. I have shared both laughs and tears with my amazing co-workers. I owe a great deal of gratitude to my dear colleagues Sandra Amavizca, Beka Portillo and Celeste Skates who have always been there for me. This was especially true in 2008 when my beloved husband Gary died, and again in 2013 when I was diagnosed with cancer. They never hesitated to do whatever was needed to provide their help and support. They are, and always will be part of my family.

Some memories that stand out to me include the wild fires of 2003 and 2007. Employees from all over the City pulled together to do whatever was needed to handle the emergencies throughout the region. In Purchasing & Contracting, we were working so many hours that some of us slept on cots in the office. During the wild fires, we worked on everything from finding wheelchairs, toilets, cots and food for the Qualcomm Stadium relief center to figuring out how to get food and drinks (especially water) to the firemen on the front lines. The entire experience brought our staff even closer and it helped us to understand the tasks and responsibilities of other City Department employees. This was teamwork at its best!

Another memory was when Purchasing Agent Tammy Rimes established the "Tony the Fish" award. Tony (named by Walter Stucy) was awarded to a member of Purchasing & Contracting by their fellow employees. Tony was awarded to



someone who had helped you or who had made a difference in your life that week. Tony only stayed with a recipient for three days before it was awarded to another employee. The Tony award created a wonderful atmosphere and working environment in our department. Such a small thing made our staff feel so important and worthy.

Retirement brings the opportunity to teach Laughing Yoga and to play the ukulele. I have always volunteered for activities that impact seniors in our community. Now that I have more time, I will be visiting rehab and convalescent facilities, as well as the chemo cancer clinic at Kaiser, to entertain patients with the ukulele and to hopefully make people laugh. My attempt at playing the ukulele will definitely bring a few laughs. We all know laughter is the best medicine and I hope to impact a few lives.



#### **Ronald Wiggins**

I was with the City of San Diego for a total of 40 years and retired as a Senior Plant Technician Supervisor in the Public Utilities Department. Even after all of these years, I'll never forget the first time that I was lowered into a digester in a one person basket. Whether I liked it or not, there was only one way in and one way out. The baskets weren't inspected and the guys up top would spin the basket to make it even more frightening than it already was.

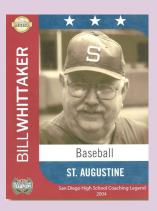
Even with good natured pranks like that, I am proud to say that I worked alongside a really hard working, loyal and knowledgeable group. They had a strong work ethic with a sense of humor that made the job fun. They made me proud

to be in charge of such an awesome crew. I definitely miss that group and the many stories that they would tell, some true, others not.



One thing that I don't miss about the job is going in to work at night for shut downs. This is when we would perform repairs on pumps, valves, screens and would remove grit and debris from the channels and wet wells. Basically, the work needed to be done during the night and very early morning because the facilities could only be shut down for a few hours to avoid wastewater spills.

Yet even with those long repair nights, we somehow found ways to get the work done while entertaining ourselves, often with stories about Red Fred Howell. You would have to know "Red Fred" to appreciate the stories. And the more that I think about it, some of the stories are better left untold...



I owe a lot of gratitude to the many people that I have had the pleasure of working alongside during my 40 year tenure at the City. I would also like to sincerely thank and acknowledge Coach Bill Whitaker for recommending me for my first City job four decades ago. Coach is the longest-term employee in the history of San Diego (more than 60 years), a career spent entirely in the Park and Recreation Department. He also has two baseball fields in San

Diego named after him, one in Balboa Park and one in Clairemont. Rumor has it that Coach married his wife of more than 60 years, Jacquie, because she could hit a baseball. I met Coach when I was in the eighth grade while playing baseball for St. Rita's Parochial School. He was also my coach at Saint Augustine High School. I owe a lot to Coach who has done so much for me, including recommending me for my first job at the City that has brought me so many good memories throughout the years.





#### **Praise for Paulette Crawford**

This note is to commend Paulette Crawford for being so helpful in her job. She is professional, yet personable, and always interested in assisting those who visit her office. I have had several occasions of interacting with Paulette and she has ALWAYS been responsive to my requests, in a very positive fashion. I just wanted to express my appreciation for her good work.

Sincerely, Joel Meriwether

#### **Kudos to Aja Fitch**

I called today about my water being wrongfully shut off, which I was admittedly pretty upset about. I spoke to Aja and she was so kind even though I was being short with her. Her positivity



and helpfulness not only made the situation better, but also turned my mood around. I'd like to thank Aja and her supervisor for their patience and assistance. Aja could have easily returned the attitude I was giving her, but she instead continued to provide excellent customer service throughout the duration of our conversation. Thanks again, Aja!

Kendall Quan

#### **Acknowledging Branden Hall**



The Long-Range Planning & Water Resources Division recently recognized Branden Hall for exemplifying quality, value, reliability and customer service. Branden has been

a City employee for over 5 years with the Recycled Water section. As a Senior Backflow and Cross Connection Control Specialist, he has daily contact with many customers and is always willing to go the extra mile to help in any way possible. He is recognized by his coworkers for following the strict regulatory guidelines associated with his work in order to ensure that public safety is not compromised. Branden's eagerness to learn and positive attitude is infectious throughout the division!

#### **Thanks to Deloris Allen**

I would like to compliment Deloris with whom I have spoken with before. She is courteous, quick, efficient, warm, kind, and has a great sense of humor. Deloris is a wonderful "front" for the Public Utilities Department. Please provide her with my highest compliments.

Theresa (City of San Diego water customer)



Since Deloris and her colleagues couldn't attend opening day at the Del Mar Racetrack, Deloris brought the festivities to the office with fun hats for everyone.

#### Kudos to Dianna Di Giulio

I would like to recognize one of your outstanding employees, Dianna Di Giulio, from Mount Hope Cemetery. We recently experienced an issue with my mother in law's grave stone and Dianna was



very responsive and professional in handling the situation. She needs to be commended on

how quickly she resolved our issue and her exemplary level of customer service. We so appreciate her help.

Sincerely, Lisa Nokes

#### Special Balboa Park patron for Park and Recreation staff

Members Charlie Daniels, Paul Jacob, Debbie Marcotte and Shamli Tarbell were pleasantly surprised to encounter former President Bill Clinton at Balboa Park.



#### **Acknowledging Hengameh Maher**

Congratulations to "Living the Brand" award recipient Hengameh Maher. Hengameh was selected to receive the award for her willingness to take on new challenges. Recently, she volunteered to take the lead for the development of the five year O&M projections for the Rates and Finance section. She did an excellent job and even completed the task before the due date! Hengameh is the ultimate team player and she is a valued member of the Rates and Finances section!

#### **Recognizing Tracy Mangum**

Congratulations to MEA member Tracy Mangum who was recently named the 2016 Transportation & Storm Water Department Outstanding Employee of the Year! Tracy is known for her strong work ethic and her can do attitude.



# **SHOW US YOUR VIEWPOINT**

The Viewpoint features a section of MEA members photographed with their Viewpoint in different locations throughout the world. So on your next trip, don't forget to pack your Viewpoint and take a picture. If your photograph is featured, you will receive a pair of movie tickets.



Librarian Liz Tarnove took her Viewpoint to the Mercer-Williams House in Savannah, Georgia.



Member Phet Guiney remembered her Viewpoint on her European vacation. Phet rode the gondolas in Venice, experienced the Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany and went to Mount Pilatus in Switzerland.

# Welcome to the MEA Family!

Congratulations to MEA member Jeff Wallace and his wife Sarah who welcomed their first baby, Caroline Rebecca Wallace on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both parents are sleep deprived but couldn't be more proud of their little Sweet Caroline!





MEA member Tim Manion and his wife Katie are the proud parents of their second child, Titus Robert Manion who was born on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Big Brother Amos is also happy about the family's new addition and he actually won't let anyone call him anything other than "Big Brother." Congratulations to the whole family!



Congratulations to newer member Andrew Penzel and his wife Elisia. On August 10, 2016, they welcomed their first baby, Izabella Kathryn Penzel who weighed 8 lbs., 15 oz. and was 21 inches long.



#### Catastrophic and Medical Leave Requests

The following MEA members have established catastrophic leave accounts and request your generosity in helping donate annual leave in their time of need. If you are able to help, please contact your Payroll Specialist for the proper paperwork. Every hour helps!

#### Danisha Jackett

I am asking for your assistance. I gave birth to my baby in August and the City policy allows for up to 480 hours of unpaid leave within 1 year. Although they will hold your job and continue your benefits, the time is unpaid.

I have used a portion of my time for doctor appointments and will not have enough paid leave to cover this absence. I am asking for your help by donating A/L time to help me enjoy the first months home with my family. Anything you can do to help is appreciated!

#### Barbara Reid

I work in Public Utilities. I had surgery in April to remove tumors from my heart and liver. I am a fighter and I am determined to beat cancer.

Unfortunately, I do not have enough leave time to cover the recuperation period and I would be incredibly grateful for any hours that you might be able to donate. Thank you so much for your consideration and support.

Aaron Leon Abtin Khademollahabadi Aila Al Haja Alan Lawrence Albert Mitchell Sr. Albert Pulido Alberto Perez Jr. Alexa Harvey Ali Al Imari Alishia Ballard Allison Palenske Alyssa Carbone Amin Shabihkhani Amy Campana Angela Reis Angelica Aguilar-Maldonado Angelica Guzman Anna Najeeb Anna Nieto-Peters Anne Miggins Anthony Guzman-Michel Azin Nour Bareaz Piromari **Benjamin Foxhall** Benjamin Nanamaker **Bijar Mohammed Bonnie Mitchell** Brent Peterson Brian Rigg Carlos Parra Carly Gagen-Cheeney Carmen Romo-Diego Catherine Byland Reves **Charles Siegmann** Chris Darguea Christina Awad Craig Johnson **Daniel Collins** Daniel Quinn David Mayo **Debbie Shauger** Denise Blake Devin Cullen **Douglas Arnold** Edgar Lozano Efrain Velela-Mayo Efren Fernandez Medrano Eleanor Troupe Elizabeth Sapla Ephriam Bekele Eric Hunt Eric Pinard

Evan Habib **Evelin Burrett** Frank Hunt George Parenti Gerald Chacon Ghazwan Haboosh Gregg Pirazzini Hamed Dost Hei-Lui Cheung Heidi Leon Hung Doan Ian Brazill Irene George Ismael Chavez Ivan Trujillo Ivette Gonzalez-Mendez James Brown James Hay James Piel III Jason Camacho Diaz Jeanette Flaherty **Jeffrey Barnes** Jensen Martinez-Rivas Jessika Valenzuela Jiaxing Gu Jodi Brown John Cauzza Junmin Pan Justin Garcia Keianni Dela Rosa Kelsey Smith Kristen Trout Kyle Goossens Lauren Donaldson Lindsey Frick Lisa Chatham Lisa Kirk Lizbeth Machuca Sarmiento Loretta Rains Lucero Hermosillo Lukas Fisher Maan Kyeso Mahsima Mohammadi Maria Diego Maria Santana Maribel Rico-Ortiz Mark Berlin Mark Rosplock Max Hoang MD Hossan Megan Hickey

new MEA members

Ethelbert Doble

Melissa Barbour Melissa King Mercy Sangco Michael Favaloro Michael Harrell Jr. Michael Hercbergs Michael Massey Michelle Nunez Michelle Ruiz Miquel Silvas Mirko Lazovic Nahome Mekonnen Naomi Siodmok Nicole Almeda Octavio Barranco Marquez Oscar Minero Pamela Sosa Patricia Herzog Patrick Auch Pedro Melo Rodriguez Phong Hoang Rasha Bahhady Ravin Pacheco Rawan Tobchi Al Daheen Rhea Vida **Roberto Flores** Roberto Franco Mendoza Ronald Elrod Ryan Samson Sameera Rao Sara Solomon Sara Toma Sean Dowling Shaza Nezha Sheia Bell Sondra Holtz Steven Borjeson Suzanne Segur Tania Moshirian Tareg Haidari Teresa Dowell Terrence Moran **Tesfave Tilahun Thomas Rosales** Thomas Sawade Tiba Farahani **Toneth Davis** Vinutha Devara Vladimir Moresca Will Hasapopoulos William Crane Young Dan



Amin Shabihkhani

Sondra Holtz

Ryan Samson

Anna Najeeb



# MEA Discount Tickets for Members

Please call or stop by the MEA office for your discount tickets

Discount Ticket	MEA Price	Regular Price
<b>San Diego Zoo Deluxe Package</b> Adults Children (Ages 3-11)	\$42.50 \$34.00	\$50.00 \$40.00
San Diego Safari Park Deluxe Pa Adults Children (Ages 3-11)	ackage \$42.50 \$34.00	\$50.00 \$40.00
<b>K1 Speedway</b> (Must be 4'11")	\$15.00	\$25.95
AMC Green Reading Regal Unrestricted	\$9.00 \$7.50 \$8.50	

Prices subject to change without notice

# The following tickets are available through MEA's website only:

<b>Sea World</b> Day Pass	\$69.00	\$89.00
<b>Legoland</b> Adult Day Pass	\$71.00	\$85.00
Adult Hopper Child Day Pass Child Hopper	\$76.00 \$66.00 \$71.00	\$109.00 \$79.00 \$103.00
Six Flags Magic Mountain	\$44.99	\$76.99
<b>Knott's Berry Farm</b> Adult Day Pass Child Day Pass	\$39.00 \$34.00	\$72.00 \$49.00

#### October

events

6: MEA General Membership Meeting
12: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
17: Boss's Day
25: Steward meeting
27: Executive Committee meeting
31: Halloween
November

3: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
6: Daylight Savings Time ends
8: Election Day
9: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
11: MEA closed for Veteran's Day
17: Executive Committee meeting
22: Steward meeting
24-25: MEA closed for Thanksgiving
•••

#### December

Finance and Executive Committee meetings
Children's Holiday Party
MEA Holiday Party
Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
MEA closed Christmas through New Year's Day

#### January

New Year's Day
Finance and Executive Committee meetings
Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
Martin Luther King Day
Steward meeting
Executive Committee meeting



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#### **Advertise With Us!**

The Viewpoint is distributed to more than 5,000 readers including MEA members, retirees, business leaders and elected officials.

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To advertise in an upcoming Viewpoint edition, please contact Lora Fleming at (619) 264-6632.



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