



## San Diego Municipal Employees Association

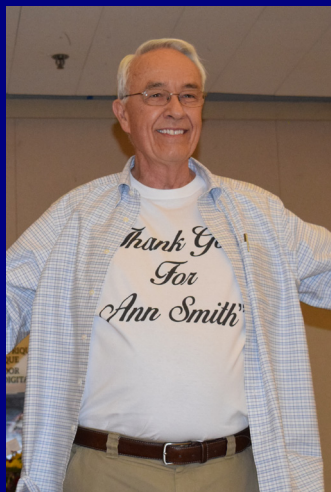
Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2017-2018

viewpoint



**A Second Chance at Justice  
With MEA's Prop B Challenge**



## on the cover

The California Supreme Court announced that it has granted review of MEA's petition challenging a lower Court's ruling on the 2012 Proposition B litigation brought by MEA. The Supreme Court's decision means the Appellate Court's ruling issued earlier this year in favor of the City is stayed.

Please turn to page 5 to read more about the case and how we got to this point. Special thanks and congratulations to MEA attorney Ann Smith, who initiated and litigated this challenge from the very beginning. Thank you and congratulations to Ann and all MEA-represented employees for this second chance at justice in this important case!

## inside

- 3 President's Message
- 4 General Manager's Report
- 5 Legal Report
- 7 MEA is Working for You
- 8 Boardmember Spotlight: Candi Mitchell
- 10 Benefit Open House
- 14 Recognizing Our Dispatchers
- 15 Overtime Litigation
- 16 General Membership Meeting
- 17 Introducing the 2017-2019 Board of Directors
- 19 Retiree Spotlight
- 20 Members Making Us Proud
- 22 Catastrophic and Medical Leave Requests
- 23 Discount Tickets



## President's Message

afforded the seven-figure legal bills that have been necessary to fight the City on Prop B for more than five years all the way to the California Supreme Court. But together, our Union has done just that and everyone stands to gain if justice is ultimately delivered in that case.

And you may have heard about MEA's funding of a lawsuit to recover overtime pay that the City miscalculated and likely owes many of us (see page 15). Acting individually, litigation like this is simply not affordable or possible. But working collectively, MEA is funding the work of attorney Ann Smith to hold the City accountable for what it owes each of you who worked overtime in the last few years, and hopefully that work will result in the recovery of substantial back pay for a large number of our members.

The following advocates were recognized at the General Membership Meeting for their extraordinary contributions to MEA over the past year.

John Torres Champions of Labor Award: Mike Zucchet and Ann Smith

Board Member of the Year: Sara Erazo

Volunteer of the Year: Thomas Battaglia

Steward of the Year: Kathryn Campbell

Thank you is also due to my fellow MEA Officers, Executive Committee Members, Board of Directors, Negotiating Team Members and Stewards. They are all volunteers and they give their time, energy and stake their reputations on the idea that MEA members have a right to a fair wage, fair benefits and a harassment free work environment.

Collective action works. Well run Unions work. MEA works and I am proud to be a part of the efforts that benefit all of us. Stay strong and stay together, and see you soon in the workplace...or on the dance floor!

I want to thank everyone who attended the MEA General Membership Meeting in October in Balboa Park. We had dinner, received praise for our collective contributions to the city and shared some humorous moments with guest speakers, former San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy and City Councilmember Barbara Bry. We recognized some deserving advocates within our Union ranks, and enjoyed a chance to win some amazing raffle prizes.

But what's most important is that we had the chance to be together with our colleagues and friends and family and that is what has always made our annual meeting a tremendous success. Fellowship and camaraderie may not be the most important things that MEA facilitates, but they certainly are a critical part of enriching our lives and our community.

With that in mind, we are also looking forward to another great MEA Holiday Party in December. This year the tickets were sold out within one week of going on sale. The good news is that the party has become a fantastic event and a hot ticket. The bad news is that we have become a victim of our own success. Even increasing the size of the event to 350 members and guests hasn't meaningfully changed how quickly members need to buy their tickets once they go on sale. We will continue to look for ideas to improve access to the event while keeping the quality of the party at a standard that keeps the ticket hot!

As I said, our friendship and fellowship as City employees is important. More importantly, sticking together in a professional sense is how we will continue to move forward. As public employees who occasionally find ourselves in the political or legal cross hairs, we are strongest when we act collectively. For instance, none of us individually could have

### Officers

|                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Greg Woods      | President          |
| Steve Ramirez   | 1st Vice President |
| Francine Howell | 2nd Vice President |
| Candi Mitchell  | Treasurer          |
| Sam Cerrato     | Secretary          |

### Executive Committee

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Mary Enyeart     | Police                 |
| Pete Lynch       | Development Services   |
| Joe Miesner      | Library                |
| Arnie Reyes      | Environmental Services |
| Catherine Rivera | Public Utilities       |
| Cody Wilkinson   | Public Utilities       |

### Board of Directors

|                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Brian Anthony        | Park & Recreation            |
| Beverly Asbill-Gumbs | Purchasing & Contracting     |
| Juan Baligad         | Public Works                 |
| Joseph Bantum        | Risk Management              |
| Thomas Battaglia     | Financial Management         |
| Jennifer Becker      | Public Utilities             |
| Isabelle Camacho     | Public Works                 |
| Kathryn Campbell     | Library                      |
| Sam Cerrato          | Library                      |
| Michele Chicarella   | Park & Recreation            |
| Mary Enyeart         | Police                       |
| Sarah Erazo          | Park & Recreation            |
| Patricia Foss        | Economic Development         |
| Jennifer Geran       | Library                      |
| Ryan Hay             | Development Services         |
| Stephanie Hoover     | Public Utilities             |
| Francine Howell      | City Attorney                |
| Graham Hufford       | Public Works                 |
| Rene Kaprielian      | Environmental Services       |
| Pete Lynch           | Development Services         |
| Dominic Marostica    | Library                      |
| Erika McNeill        | Public Utilities             |
| Gabrielle Mead       | Police                       |
| Joe Miesner          | Library                      |
| Candi Mitchell       | Public Utilities             |
| Teresa Morse         | Real Estate Assets           |
| Michael Prinz        | Planning                     |
| Steve Ramirez        | Environmental Services       |
| Pete Razo            | Police                       |
| Anthony Rea          | Public Utilities             |
| Arnie Reyes          | Environmental Services       |
| Catherine Rivera     | Public Utilities             |
| Scott Robinson       | Communications               |
| Jeff Robles          | Development Services         |
| Ty Rogers            | Retiree Representative       |
| Israel Rueda         | Transportation & Storm Water |
| Elizabeth Serrano    | Police                       |
| Janice Stevenson     | City Attorney                |
| Sammie Taylor        | Public Utilities             |
| Daniel Weiss         | Police                       |
| Cody Wilkinson       | Public Utilities             |
| Greg Woods           | Treasurer                    |

### MEA Stewards

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Leon Sauls         | Chief Steward          |
| Karina Balinda     | Library                |
| Terrell Breau      | Public Utilities       |
| Kathryn Campbell   | Library                |
| Sam Cerrato        | Library                |
| Michele Chicarella | Park and Recreation    |
| Albert Elguira     | Library                |
| Mary Enyeart       | Police                 |
| Patricia Foss      | Comptroller            |
| Chris Gehrki       | Public Utilities       |
| Atur Gilou         | City Clerk             |
| Francine Howell    | City Attorney          |
| Graham Hufford     | Public Works           |
| Jan Lord           | Human Resources        |
| Yaulande Miller    | Police                 |
| Kirk Momon         | Environmental Services |
| Steve Ramirez      | Environmental Services |
| Catherine Rivera   | Public Utilities       |
| Janice Stevenson   | City Attorney          |
| Sammie Taylor      | Public Utilities       |
| Greg Woods         | Treasurer              |





## Legal Landscape

Just when we thought things on the litigation front would be slowing down, the California Supreme Court delivered good news by agreeing to review MEA's Prop B litigation (see article on page 5). We also have new litigation sponsored by MEA on your behalf related to underpaid overtime by the City (see page 15).

So after a decade of litigation fights initiated by City Attorneys Mike Aguirre and Jan Goldsmith, we thought we were in for a breather. But the good news is that for both Prop B and our overtime lawsuit against the City, these are actions that represent the possibility of getting something back from the City rather than defending the City's attempt to take something away from employees. Offense is definitely better than defense.

And don't get me wrong...working with MEA attorney Ann Smith is one of the highlights of my job – I just thought we were going to be seeing less of each other than we have been over the years but apparently not. See you again soon Ann!

## General Membership Meeting

We had another great General Membership Meeting in October. I want to thank all of the members and MEA

partners who volunteered their time and resources to make the event special. MEA's Stewards, as always, came early and stayed late, helping with everything from check-in to clean up. MEA's Membership Committee and Board of Directors also were there to set up and clean up. MEA Secretary Sam Cerrato and Boardmember Dominic Maristoca supplied the music and technology. And MEA's staff worked with MEA President (and Membership Committee chair) Greg Woods for weeks in advance of the meeting through the big night to make sure everything was just right.

Extra thanks goes to MEA attorney Ann Smith and MEA benefits director Jonathan Hayes for their incredibly generous donations of cash raffle prizes. Both Ann and Jon dug DEEP into their own pockets again this year to make the raffle especially lucrative for dozens of MEA members! Thank you both for your generosity and for all you do for MEA members.

Thanks to all for another great event, and we look forward to next year.

## Scholarship Award Congratulations

Congratulations to MEA member Danielle Schule, a 15-year City employee and currently a Police Dispatch Supervisor. Danielle was recently awarded the 2017 City of San Diego/ National University Professional Development

Scholarship after going through a rigorous competition and interview process.

Danielle won the "grand prize," which is a full tuition scholarship worth a significant amount of money! (See photo below of Danielle accepting her award from the Mayor and City Council) Danielle plans to pursue a degree in organizational leadership and wants to help her fellow City employees by creating professional development resources to help others advance and become leaders in their division or department. Danielle feels that helping colleagues acquire the tools needed to succeed is good for both them and the overall team.

Congratulations Danielle and thank you for your service to the citizens and your fellow employees!

And while all employees may not be able to win a full scholarship, all City employees are eligible for a 15% reduction in tuition costs at National University, a private non-profit partner of the City of San Diego. In addition, under MEA's current contract, all MEA-represented employees are eligible for \$2,000 in annual tuition reimbursement from the City. MEA members are also eligible for an additional \$500 reimbursement from MEA's supplemental tuition reimbursement program. For more information on any of these programs, don't hesitate to call MEA.

Hope everyone has a great and safe Holiday season and see you soon in the workplace.





# California Supreme Court To Hear Prop B Case

## Lightning Strikes – Review Granted!

It's a rare occasion when the California Supreme Court grants review in a civil case. Once a litigant has been heard by a court of appeal – win or lose – there is no *right* to be heard by the California Supreme Court. Instead, a litigant *petitions* the high court urging it to *grant review* – offering reasons why the opinion filed by the court of appeal is not only wrong *but also* undermines the proper development of the law in California which threatens to impact a substantial number of Californians. Estimates suggest that review is granted in response to only 5% of all requests annually. On July 26, 2017 in response to MEA's (and the Public Employment Relations Board/"PERB") petitions, the California Supreme Court granted review in the Prop B/401(k) pension case which the Fourth District Court of Appeal decided against us earlier this year.

## Does A Grant of Review Mean We WILL Win?

While a grant of review must not be confused with *final* victory, it is clear that the grant of review in our case is a HUGE opportunity to fight for that *final* victory because denial of our petition would have been the end of the road. The defeat handed to us in April by the Fourth District Court of Appeal (4<sup>th</sup> DCA) would have been final and binding to the detriment of *all public sector* employees and Unions in California whose rights are guaranteed by the state's collective bargaining law.

A grant of review breathes new life into our case and we FIGHT ON! The Supreme Court *does* occasionally grant review in a civil case only to file a decision at the end of a long process which *agrees* with

the Court of Appeal and affirms the result. We prefer to assume, however, that the Supreme Court granted review in our case because it *disagrees* with the Court of Appeal's decision – and there is certainly plenty to disagree with based on nearly 50 years of jurisprudence related to the state's public sector bargaining law.

## When Is A Decision Expected?

MEA (joined by the three other City employee unions who have been with MEA in the case since the hearing before PERB in 2012) and PERB itself have filed opening briefs on the merits. The City and the three ballot proponents have filed their answering briefs, and the Unions and PERB have now filed Reply Briefs. *Amicus* – "friend of the court" briefs – are expected from many public sector unions in California in support of our arguments, and *amicus* briefs in support of the City/ ballot proponents are also likely.

There is no certain time-line for the Supreme Court's decision-making but the history of other cases suggests that a decision **may come late next year** – after the parties appear in person before the high court for oral argument.

## What's At Stake – What Are We Fighting For?

**Much is at stake** in this Prop B case – well beyond our legitimate local concerns about the City's refusal to bargain over Mayor Sanders' decision to accomplish 401(k) pension reform by citizens initiative to bypass City employee unions and avoid the duty to bargain. In fact, if this case didn't have a statewide impact, the Supreme Court would likely not have granted review and public sector unions around the state

would likely not have sent *amicus* letters in support of our petition for review.

When the 4<sup>th</sup> DCA *annulled* PERB's decision and *directed* PERB to *dismiss* our unfair practice charges against the City, the court used a goal-oriented analysis to save the Prop B citizens' initiative at all costs. Doing so meant the Court would have to "tear up" decades of precedent related to what the state's public sector bargaining law (the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act or MMBA) means, who it obligates to "meet and confer in good faith," and what role PERB should have as the state's quasi-judicial expert agency charged with enforcing this and other labor relations laws on a uniform, statewide basis. The 4<sup>th</sup> DCA did just that.

Without even a nod to five decades of case law related to these important issues, the 4<sup>th</sup> DCA declared a brand new interpretation of the MMBA to "justify" the City's failure and refusal to bargain over Mayor Sanders' policy decision to transform City employee pensions without bargaining by crafting and leading the Prop B citizens' initiative effort. The 4<sup>th</sup> DCA didn't even offer an explanation, let alone the type of scholarly legal analysis expected of our appellate courts, as to how the new interpretation of the MMBA it was announcing actually squares with the statutory language, the legislative goals for this law when it was passed in 1968, or the decades of case law since then which has interpreted and applied the MMBA to assure those goals are accomplished.

*Continued on page 6*



Ann M. Smith, Esq.

SMITH | STEINER | VANDERPOOL & WAX, APC



Metro Tier 1 San Diego for: Employment Law Individuals and Labor Law - Unions

# Coming to a Workplace Near You!

MEA site visits with General Manager Mike Zucchet and your Union leadership have been a big success this year. Thank you to all of the members who have taken time out of their busy days to attend and participate in a MEA workplace visit. This year, MEA has facilitated site visits in numerous departments including Public Utilities, City Attorney's Office, Police, Risk Management, Central Library, City Clerk's Office, Financial Management, Storm Water, Communications, Planning and many more.

Site visits provide an opportunity for our members to speak directly to MEA staff and your elected officers. Members are encouraged to provide their feedback on what is working well in their departments and areas that could be improved. Additionally, members get to hear first hand from Mike Zucchet with up to date information on legal proceedings, Council actions, our ratified contract and how to get more involved in your Union.

Thank you again for helping to make these site visits so effective and useful. We look forward to speaking to you and hearing your thoughts on what both the City and MEA are doing right and where we could serve you better. Keep an eye out for a site visit near you!



## California Supreme Court To Hear Prop B Case

*continued from page 5*

Our hope on review is to persuade the Supreme Court to **reverse** the 4<sup>th</sup> DCA, reinstate the long-established “standards of review” applicable to PERB’s Decisions, reaffirm the duties established by the MMBA, and, on this basis, uphold PERB’s conclusion that the City of San Diego violated the MMBA – and that the City’s violation must be effectively remedied by ordering the City to “make affected employees whole” for their losses.

In short, we are now trying the “save the MMBA” for the sake of every public employee and public sector Union in the state because the City of San Diego’s scofflaw approach to this decades-old collective bargaining law has not only hurt its own employees, it has now wreaked havoc around the state thanks to the bad law created by the 4<sup>th</sup> DCA when bending over backwards to cater to this local citizens’ initiative effort – crafted and led by the City’s Mayor!

### If We Prevail Before the Supreme Court, What Will the Remedy Be For MEA-Represented Employees?

If the Supreme Court reverses the 4<sup>th</sup> DCA and upholds PERB’s Decision and the “make whole” remedy PERB ordered, then the City will owe every affected employee (whether still employed or not) – those hired on or after July 20, 2012, who are represented by one of the four Unions covered by the Decision (MEA, Firefighters Local 145, AFSCME Local 127, and Deputy City Employees Association) - the difference between the benefits they have been paid under the unilaterally-imposed new 401(k) plan and the benefits they would have enjoyed under the SDCERS defined benefit pension plan. However, since only the *courts* and not PERB have the power to invalidate voter-approved initiatives certified by the Secretary of State after an election, PERB’s “make-whole” remedy would continue as long

as Prop B remains in effect as applied to these represented bargaining units. *If* the Supreme Court – or a subsequent court on remand after a reversal of the 4<sup>th</sup> DCA – were to take the additional remedial step of invalidating Prop B (in its entirety or as applied to employees represented by the four Unions involved in this unfair labor practice case), then the status quo before the City’s unfair practice conduct in this case would be fully restored. This means that these affected employees would become participants in the SDCERS defined benefit pension plan – just as would have happened if Prop B had never been passed – and the need for a “make whole” remedy against the City would end.

Some of you may be scratching your heads . . . but don’t worry right now about the remedy. Let’s focus on winning the case before the California Supreme Court so that we have the luxury of worrying about a remedy *at all*.



# *MEA Is Working For You...*



Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz met with City Clerk staff to discuss issues and improvements to the Passport Acceptance Facility.



Legal Counsel Ann Smith discussed the Proposition B case with MEA's leadership after being heard before the 4<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals.



Fire Dispatch Supervisor Nick Wright and Mike Zucchet spoke with Mayor Faulconer to discuss Fire Communications operations.



MEA Vice President Steve Ramirez and Benefits team members Jon Hayes and Yesenia Miranda greeted members at the Concourse Benefit Open House event.



General Manager Mike Zucchet attended the quarterly, City-wide payroll specialist meeting and thanked the group for all that they do to keep the City's payroll system running smoothly.

# Candi Mitchell

## Public Utilities

**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 am a native Californian but not San Diegan. I was born in Santa Rosa (Sonoma County). When I was 2 years old, my father became a firefighter with the Santa Rosa Fire Department. When my aunt, uncle and 3 cousins moved to San Diego, my dad applied to the San Diego Fire Department and we moved south when I was 9 years old. We lived in the East County and I went to Catholic School and graduated high school from the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

I am an only child of an only child (my mom) and I have an only child, my beautiful daughter Melissa. Weird, huh? I can't remember when I didn't work which included babysitting, cleaning houses, Baskin Robbins in high school, the La Mesa Life newspaper, a pest control company and Deans photo booth (all of which don't exist anymore which tells you that I'm old!). I started with the City of San Diego when I was 27 years old.

**If you were in a witness protection program, what would be your new name and where would you go?**

My name would have to start with "M" (for my maiden name Mitchell). Obviously I chose "Melissa" for my daughter and Mallory is my step-daughter's name (notice both are 7 letter doubles starting with M). And traditionally Ann is the middle name so I'd have to stick with that - maybe Melanee Ann? Where I would live? If I could choose, it would be somewhere with little to no humidity that had decent Mexican food. If not, my husband Patrick is a great cook so we would survive!

**What is one thing you refuse to share?**

Generally my life has been an open book. Employees tell me their personal business when they are selecting benefits, when they have a support withholding from their

check or other things of that nature which often times makes them embarrassed. I usually share my own experiences so hopefully they feel more comfortable. However, the one thing that I won't share is something that I will continue not to share – ha!

**Would you rather be stuck on an island alone or with someone who talks incessantly?**

Most definitely someone who talks incessantly in order to keep it interesting and entertaining. Plus, you can always separate yourself if you need a break. To have no one to talk to would be quite lonely and boring.

**What is one thing women do that grosses you out? And men?**

Women's public restrooms are usually quite disgusting! And men that spit. It's just gross...

**If you could go on a cross country road trip with a famous person, dead or alive, who would it be?**

This is a tough question for me. My husband could think of several people in 2 minutes (JFK was one who we both agreed on). Strangely, I've always been fascinated with Wyatt Earp. Amelia Earhart also comes to mind. I think for all of them I would have questions as to why or what happened... I'd also enjoy seeing their reactions to the modern day.

**Would you rather go into the past and meet your ancestors or go into the future and meet your great, great grandchildren?**

The future for sure! I would love to see what legacy (if any) Patrick and I left for our great grandchildren. I would also love to see what becomes of our children, how our grandchildren Ryder, Stella and Parker grew up and lived their lives, and what their futures held for them with their own families.

**What is your guilty pleasure?**

I did mention that I went to parochial school, didn't I? I have "Catholic guilt" over just about everything!

**Would you rather spend the next year exempt from all**

**taxes or have one month paid vacation?**

Paid vacation. That would be so enjoyable to not have to worry about paying for anything – double relaxing! I would always be afraid that the exempt from taxes offer would come back to bite me. That somehow, I would have to pay it back at some point (most likely with interest) or go to jail or something! The vacation option seems like a much better deal in the long run.

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

You do know that that was 31 years ago, right? My first job was as an Intermediate Typist (now called CAII) for Water Utilities downtown. I don't have any interesting or gory stories, however, I can say that I was very unfamiliar with downtown and I was afraid that I was going to get lost. To this day (as a joke and memory now), I tell myself "F" Street is for "From home" and "G" Street is for "Go home" (in reference to highway 94 in and out of downtown). It may be silly but I never got lost!

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

As my time with the City and MEA is winding down, I would say that I have immensely enjoyed my service to both. I have been very thankful over the years for the supervisors and managers that had faith in me and gave me the opportunity to serve and to grow. I have truly loved my payroll life and I will genuinely miss working with the employees and the great payroll staff in PUD when I retire. I have met some wonderful people along the way, and even a few crabby ones that will never be forgotten. I have made forever friends of whom I will enjoy retirement life with.

My volunteer service with MEA began so long ago with the Negotiating Team and then I was hooked! I have evolved within the organization, serving on the Board which led to the Executive Committee then becoming an Officer. I have been proud of the work that we've done and the accomplishments that we have made over the past twenty something years. This is a pretty sappy response, but it's true! In closing, I would encourage all members to step up and get involved. It is very rewarding and you will never be sorry!



## new MEA members

Alyssa Brooks  
 Amabelle Paquia  
 Amber Payne  
 Ammar Ohan  
 Amy Schmitz  
 Ana Garcia  
 Andrew Webb  
 Angel Morales  
 Anna Vacchi  
 Anthony Bernal  
 Anthony Magallanes  
 Anthony Ross  
 Antoinette Sanfilippo  
 Audrey Glover  
 Azalea Janel Ebbay  
 Benjamin Almario  
 Bennett Macchiarella  
 Bernardino Labiano  
 Bethany Windle  
 Brandie Hanson  
 Bret Castell  
 Brianna Rodriguez  
 Brianna Uy  
 Bridget Thomas Mayhew  
 Briton Rockafellow  
 Bryan Alaynick  
 Cara Brave  
 Carmen Sandoval  
 Casey Martin  
 Catherine Nichols  
 Charles Gardner  
 Chou Fang  
 Chris Soto  
 Christy Barrera  
 Claudia Bidales  
 Cody Grist  
 Coral Ramirez  
 Curtis Kendall  
 Damian Machado  
 Danielle Nourie-Burns  
 David Morales  
 David Racela  
 Dean Heil  
 Denise Cabrera  
 Denise Martinez  
 Donna Loiurio  
 Dora Rude  
 Dylan Cooper  
 Eden Carter  
 Elizabeth Dickson  
 Ellen Heigert  
 Elsa Villegas  
 Emilia Castaneda

Enrique Cortes Bonilla  
 Felipe Vega  
 Fiapito Futialo  
 Fnu Anisi  
 Freddie Bates  
 Gabriel Barbato  
 Gema Uribe-Espindola  
 George Whitney  
 Georgina Medina  
 Gregg Cline  
 Gregory Tice  
 Hannah Chasteene  
 Hannah Reynolds  
 Harrison Pierce  
 Henry Panther  
 Herman Carter  
 Hoda Afshari  
 Hong Khanh Le  
 Icynda Gilbert  
 Jaime Aguiar  
 James O'Connor  
 James Trebes  
 Janel Boragine  
 Jaquelyn Garcia  
 Jarrod Gathman  
 Jason Ridgeway  
 Jason Urgolites  
 Jeanette Kirby  
 Jeffrey Cekander  
 Jeffrey Vance  
 Jennifer Mehlow  
 Jennifer Todd  
 Jerry McCormick  
 Jerry Weston  
 Jocelyn Maggard  
 Joel Alvarez  
 John Kafulides  
 John Nguyen  
 John Joshua Magsino  
 Johnny Cheng  
 Jolanta Danaziene  
 Jorge Casique  
 Joseph Mitchell  
 Jossean Anil Dominguez  
 Justin Byko  
 Kandace Aviles  
 Karen Vera  
 Karen Woodworth-Roman  
 Karen Ann Rincon  
 Kathryn Reinholtz  
 Katrina McDonald  
 Keith Digiulio  
 Kelly Verheyden

Kierstyn Walton  
 Kim Noriega  
 Kitty Burns  
 Kristopher Wott  
 Kyle Nelson  
 Laura Stayer  
 Lauren Ney  
 Leif Kohler  
 Leonard Macchiarella  
 Leslie Conlet  
 Linda Brawley  
 Loraine Lopez  
 Lorenzo Tovar  
 Loretta Williams  
 Luis Azurdia Barrera  
 Luis Mateos  
 Luis Torres-Mayoral  
 Lylynn Villafuerte  
 Mahsa Dehghan  
 Marc Schmeltzer  
 Marcos Enriquez  
 Maria Custodio  
 Maria Iniguez  
 Mariah Cote  
 Maritza Duque  
 Mark Berninger  
 Mark Schaffer  
 Marshall Thomas  
 Martha Espinola  
 Mary Rose Santos  
 Mateo San Miguel  
 Matthew Balan  
 Matthew Mariano  
 Matthew McCreary  
 Matthew Porter  
 Mauro Rodriguez  
 May Zidan  
 Mazen Abugharbieh  
 Melissa Turpin  
 Michael O'Connor  
 Michael Owen  
 Michael Younan  
 Michal Inerowicz  
 Michelle Lara  
 Michelle Meyer  
 Michelle Reents  
 Mike Nguyen  
 Minerva Alejandra Asaro  
 Ming-Lan Wei Cosby  
 Mohit Mehrotra  
 Monica Cordero

continued on page 22



# 2017 Benefit OPEN HOUSES



Thank you to everyone who attended one of the many benefit open houses that MEA hosted this year. These events took place in numerous City workplaces and at various times in order to make it more convenient for our members to be able to attend.

We know that the open enrollment process can be a bit overwhelming (especially for those of you who are new to the City). Our goal in facilitating these benefit open houses is to provide you with an opportunity to have your questions answered by speaking directly to the plan representatives (including Sharp, MetLife Dental, VSP Vision, Aflac, Liberty Mutual and many other plan providers). We hope that you walked away from the open houses with a better understanding of the open enrollment process and the many benefits that you are entitled to as a MEA member.

Hopefully you also snagged some of the free giveaways that our vendors provided and that you were one of several lucky raffle ticket winners. For those of you who attended one of the larger benefit open house events, we also hope that you enjoyed Aflac's PGA Tour truck and tried your swing out on the golf pro simulator.

These benefit open houses wouldn't be possible without our fantastic MEA Benefit team including Jon Hayes, Will Stover, Yesenia Miranda and Kathryn Hayes. Please do not hesitate to contact the MEA Benefits Department if you have any questions about benefits or the enrollment process. The Benefit staff can be reached at 888-217-9175 or [benefits@sdmea.org](mailto:benefits@sdmea.org).





# Labor Representative Overview

## January - July 2017

A total of 159 cases were opened in the first half of the year.

MEA Labor Representatives worked on a number of cases related to workplace conflicts, performance reports, written warnings, fact findings and grievances.

In the Fleet Division Labor Management Committee (LMC), the group met to discuss shop updates and the needs of the employees. The Streets Division revamped their LMC and kicked it off in July. In Development Services, the LMC continues to confer on the status of the Accela implementation and the additional training which will be provided to employees. The status of the new building at 101 Ash Street also continues to be discussed. MEA wants to make sure that the City follows the Administrative Regulations pertaining to the use of office space.

## Meet MEA's Newest Labor Reps!



Katy Seals joined MEA in 2017 as a Labor Relations Representative.

Katy has over 10 years of experience across a number of Human Resource core functions and fields including Engineering, Aerospace Manufacturing, Legal, and Academia.

Katy graduated from the University of Colorado with a degree in Psychology.



Nick Wright joined MEA in 2008 as a member and in 2017 as a Labor Relations Representative.

Nick has over 15 years experience in the Fire-Rescue department, Emergency Medical Services and was a Negotiating Team, Board Member and Steward in his time as an active member.

## Know Your Rights: Use of City Email

Although your workday is full of meetings, assignments, projects and deadlines, you still have the right to check your City email in order to read updates and information from MEA. Often times, the most efficient method of disseminating crucial Union information to the members we represent is to send an e-blast. A MEA e-blast will include one or more links that you can click on in order to access the crucial information on our website.

Under MEA's contract with the City, employees are explicitly allowed—using City computers and during work hours—to receive emails from MEA and to access MEA's website to read that information. Article 15 of our MOU states, "MEA may use the City's email system to direct employees to information contained on MEA's website. MEA's email message for this purpose may include a link to MEA's website and it will not be a violation of City policies for an employee to click on the link in this email message and access the information to which he or she has been directed. No further use of or access to the City's email system is authorized unless the use pertains directly to the employee-employer relationship. Examples of this relationship include, but are not limited to: communicating with Management or Labor Relations, responding to disciplinary actions or appeals, submitting grievances, scheduling meetings, making requests for information, and communicating a tentative agreement for ratification purposes."

If you encounter any problems or issues when reading or accessing a MEA e-blast, please let us know. We are here to protect and enforce your rights!

# Supporting our Members' Scholastic Endeavors

Congratulations to the following four members (in addition to the many others) who were awarded with up to \$500 through MEA's supplemental tuition reimbursement program, which assists members with the costs of continuing education tuition and training.

In addition to MEA's tuition reimbursement program, members are able to take advantage of the City's tuition reimbursement program. MEA knows that this is an important program for our members which is why we negotiated with the City to double the annual tuition reimbursement allotment from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Similarly, MEA got the City to agree to quadruple eligible job-related training from \$500 to \$2,000 annually.

MEA will continue to identify and pursue additional ways to support our members' higher education and training endeavors. If you would like to apply for MEA's Supplemental Tuition Reimbursement Program, please don't hesitate to contact us at (619-264-6632) for more information.



## Kiariie Broussard

Member Kiariie Broussard is pursuing her Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) and a Master's degree in Business Analytics (MS) at Indiana University Kelley School of

Business. For the past several years, Kiariie had considered pursuing her MBA in order to stay professionally competitive. She was also really inspired after witnessing one of her managers completing a similar program. This manager has a great deal of professional responsibilities and also has a child in elementary school. This really ignited a fire within Kiariie and this manager continues to provide encouragement throughout her scholastic endeavor.

Another source of inspiration comes from having twenty nieces and nephews and over twenty five great nieces and nephews. For Kiariie, it is very important to set an example for these special family members that determination and persistence really does pay off.

Kiariie's Quantitative Analysis course has been one of the most interesting classes so far. She has enjoyed it so much because she genuinely likes investigating and resolving issues. As Kiariie explained it, "in a time where information is easily accessible, it is easy to draw inaccurate conclusions. This class provided me with tools to assist in understanding and interpreting data in order to identify and resolve issues."

She has also taken a couple of courses that have had assignments and tasks that are due on a weekly (and sometimes daily) basis. At times, it has been difficult to balance her education with her professional and family responsibilities. Kiariie recalls that there have been a few weekends when she would get home on Friday evening and wouldn't leave her house until Monday morning!

Although it has been challenging at times to balance her career with her scholastic responsibilities, Kiariie is grateful that she has a great deal of support from her family and co-workers. When she's not at

work in the City Treasurer's Office, she loves to spend time with her husband and family. She also enjoys hanging out with her girlfriends and going to concerts, trying new restaurants or doing one of her favorite activities, Zumba!



## Tim Wolcott

Member Tim Wolcott earned his Master's degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (I/O Psychology) last summer. According to Tim, MEA's "tuition reimbursement really helped me through my last semester at San Diego State University."

Tim decided to pursue the I/O degree because he was really interested in the human factor in organizations, and the advantages a firm can gain by leveraging and understanding the people in the organization. More specifically, Tim is interested in the ongoing challenge of measuring and understanding worker engagement, motivation and leadership as they relate to organizational success.

Although there was a barrage of classes that he took and enjoyed, Tim really liked Psychological Testing and Measurement. This class revealed how challenging it is to measure and understand human behavior which was really interesting to Tim.

On the other hand, Tim found his Advanced Statistics course to be difficult because he had to deploy very complicated methods to analyze data that depended on a solid understanding of both math (statistics) as well as psychological theories. Tim quickly discovered how challenging it is to measure and predict human behavior when there are so many individual differences at play.

Tim will admit that it could be exhausting to have to come home after a long day at work and focus on his Master's thesis. He credits his supervisor who was very supportive and would work with him if he needed to take time off to head to campus or to have time to prepare for an important presentation. That being said, he wouldn't recommend working full time while trying to earn a Master's degree!



Tim is a self-proclaimed "space nerd." Without question, if there is a SpaceX rocket launch taking place, Tim will travel there to go watch it if he can. He also plays video games to decompress after work, hikes with his girlfriend and spends time with his friends trying new places around San Diego.

Tim is also a hot sauce connoisseur and he's always on the hunt to find and try new hot sauces to see how much heat that he can handle. He also occasionally hosts hot wing competitions at his house. Although it's a lot of fun, he has lost every hot wing competition that he has hosted!



## René Gehr

Member René Gehr is pursuing her Master of Library and Information Science degree at San Jose State University. Her goal is to use her MLIS coursework to complement her background in visual arts, project management and teaching. In doing so, she hopes to become

a liaison with cultural institutions to develop arts programming for adults and seniors. René has experience in academic, public and preservation libraries and currently holds both a B.A and M.A in Art History. Not only was Information Professions the most challenging class, but it was also the course that she was the most interested in. As the group liaison, René interviewed an academic librarian to create an environmental analysis which culminated in a Strategic Plan.

This project gave her valuable insight into the way successful libraries create a dynamic that meets the expectations of institutional stakeholders, provides quality service and supports a respectful and rewarding work environment for their employees. This experience was invaluable to René as a future arts librarian.

As a half-time City employee, René has found it difficult to fund her education at San Jose State. René credits MEA's tuition reimbursement program in making it possible for her to continue with her classes in order to meet her professional goals.



## Dillon Thinnies

Member Dillon Thinnies is currently attending San Diego State University to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. For Dillon, choosing a major was a natural choice since he has always enjoyed taking thing apart and seeing how things worked. He has also always liked designing mechanical items so a degree in Mechanical Engineering was the perfect fit.

So far, Dillon has enjoyed his Thermodynamics course because it taught him how to identify the efficiencies in an engine system and to see how well it will work. He has also enjoyed a course on heat transfer because it showed him how much we still have to learn. Dillon recalls that "most of the answers to the equations were guesses and sometimes had large factors of error. I found it interesting how little we still know."

Due to the nature of the course, Dillon found his Control Systems class to be really challenging. The problems involved pages and pages of math to solve. The course required a high level of physics, complex math and programing (like Dillon, most of us would have found it incredibly challenging as well!).

When he's not at work or hitting the books, Dillon enjoys camping and hiking. He actually just got back from camping at Lake Powell. He spent a week on a ski boat and camped along the shore while he and his group made their way up the lake.

Dillon's favorite place to camp is Black Canyon. It's downstream from the Hoover Dam and campers can kayak down a river and set up camp near hot springs. If he had to pick his favorite place to hike, it would be Havasupai which is located in the Grand Canyon. Hikers can make their way down the Grand Canyon and after 11 miles of dessert, you come upon a series of water falls with number of plants. For Dillon, camping and hiking is a great outlet and a welcome reprieve from the responsibilities that come with going to school and working.

# MEA is Now Accepting Applications for New Stewards

MEA is looking for hard working people who care about their fellow workers, are committed to standing up against injustices in the workplace and who are dedicated to keeping MEA strong and united.

If you are seriously interested in becoming a MEA Steward, please contact Kelly Cruz for more information. She can be reached at [KCruz@sdmea.org](mailto:KCruz@sdmea.org) or by calling 619-264-6632, extension 110.



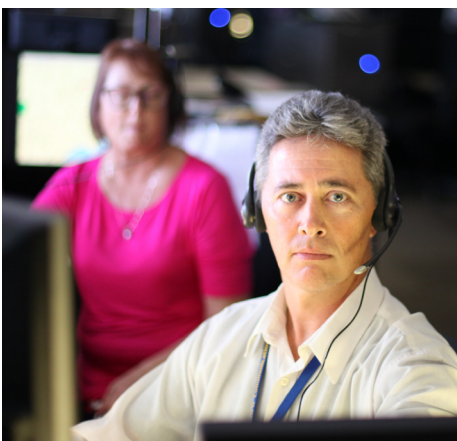
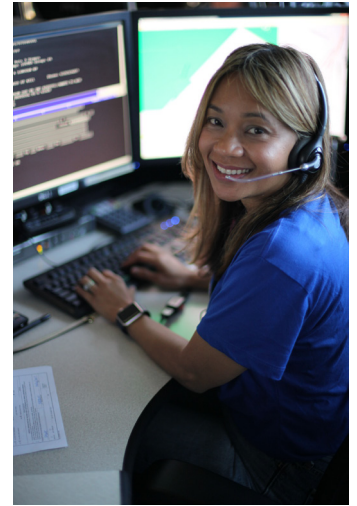
# Recognizing our **Amazing** Dispatchers

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 accurate and succinct 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 callers and first responders. That is why we are so grateful for our incredible dispatchers in Police, Fire, Environmental Services and Station 38.

Most of us have not experienced the high level of stress associated with the daily demands of the dispatcher job. Yet day after day, our dispatchers perform their duties with a distinct ability to stay calm while focusing on the caller and the emergency at hand. Our dispatchers provide a high level of service, all while working long and often irregular hours. Unfortunately, the personal sacrifices that dispatchers regularly make are not often recognized.

Celebrating National Dispatchers' Week is a way to show our gratitude to all of our City dispatchers who have done so much, and often as anonymous heroes. On behalf of the countless callers who you have helped throughout the year, thank you to all of our dispatchers who have been the calm, steady and reassuring voice in the midst of an emergency.





# ACT NOW! The City May Owe You Overtime \$\$\$

If the City paid you for overtime work in the past two-to-three years, it is likely the City underpaid you what it owes. This is because the City used the wrong overtime rate of pay which didn't account for the dollar value of certain monies available to you under the "flexible benefits plan" when determining your "regular rate of pay." If the City got your "regular rate" wrong, then the overtime rate paid (time-and-a-half) was also wrong. The City sent you an e-mail on June 30, 2017, to explain that it would be changing its accounting practice when figuring your overtime rate beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The City recognized that it needed to pay you more when calculating your overtime rate because of your flex benefits plan.

But what about the money owed for overtime worked and underpaid in the past? The law that applies here – the

federal Fair Labor Standards Act – entitles you to be paid retroactively for underpaid overtime for at least 2, if not 3 years. But your right to collect this retroactive overtime is not automatic; it depends on your filing a claim for it. The City has taken no "voluntary" action to ensure that employees are paid retroactively so MEA has asked Ann M. Smith and her law firm, Smith, Steiner, Vanderpool & Wax, to take action to protect all MEA-represented employees whether still actively employed or already retired or separated from City employment who have a claim for underpaid overtime.

MEA has already sent multiple e-blasts and mailed written information to homes. Don't miss the opportunity to join this lawsuit to protect your rights. Under the applicable federal law. YOU must sign an individual consent for your right to recover money owed to be protected. Don't lose out and let the

City keep the money you earned! More than 300 employees have already signed their "Consents to Join Lawsuit" and more consents come in to MEA every day for filing with the court. This law strictly forbids any form of retaliation against you for joining this lawsuit. And this is not a claim "against management." The City got the accounting wrong for a long time and apparently neither HR nor the City Attorney's Office gave the Comptroller timely advice regarding corrective action – or, if they did, the City simply dragged its feet while you were being short-changed!

For more information, contact Nichole Johnson at MEA at [njohnson@sdmea.org](mailto:njohnson@sdmea.org). Or call MEA at 619-264-6632. You may also stop by MEA's offices during normal business hours, 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday: 9620 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 203, San Diego, CA 92123.

## MEA'S NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the September Board meeting, MEA was pleased to have City Council President Myrtle Cole deliver the installation oath to the new Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors serves a two year term and meets every month to discuss and make decisions on behalf of 5,000 MEA-represented City employees. The Board is also responsible for approving the organization's budget and for setting policy on MEA matters. Thank you to everyone who sacrifices so much of their personal time to serve on behalf of all MEA members!





# 2017 General Membership Meeting

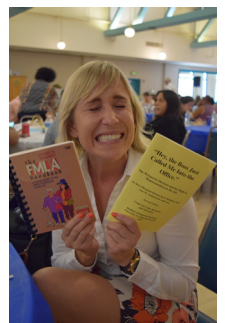
On October 4th, several hundred MEA members and their families enjoyed the company of their Union family at the annual General Membership Meeting. After dinner, members heard from special guest speakers, Councilmember Barbara Bry and former Mayor Dick Murphy.

Mayor Murphy awarded the John Torres Champion of Labor Award to both MEA Attorney Ann Smith and MEA General Manager Michael Zucchet.

Some special members were also recognized for their hard work throughout the year. MEA Boardmember Tom Battaglia was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award, Kathryn Campbell was recognized as the Steward of the Year, and Sarah Erazo was named Boardmember of the Year.

MEA Legal Counsel Ann Smith provided a legal update on Prob B and MEA's lawsuit against the City regarding overtime. After her update, Ann began drawing tickets for the famous MEA raffle drawing. Dozens of members won prizes provided by MEA, Ann Smith, Jonathan Hayes from ILS and our many vendors. Thank you Ann, Jon and our vendors for your ongoing generosity and congratulations to those who walked away with some great prizes!

Thank you to all of those members who attended and made the General Membership Meetings such a fun and successful event. We look forward to the next opportunity to share an evening with our Union family!





# board of directors 2017-2019



**Greg Woods**  
President  
Treasurer



**Steve Ramirez**  
1st Vice President  
Environmental Services



**Francine Howell**  
2nd Vice President  
City Attorney



**Candi Mitchell**  
Treasurer  
Public Utilities



**Samuel Cerrato**  
Secretary  
Library



**Mary Enyeart**  
Executive Board  
Police



**Pete Lynch**  
Executive Board  
Development Services



**Joseph Miesner**  
Executive Board  
Library



**Arnie Reyes**  
Executive Board  
Environmental Services



**Catherine Rivera**  
Executive Board  
Public Utilities



**Cody Wilkinson**  
Executive Board  
Public Utilities



**Brian Anthony**  
Park & Recreation



**Beverly Asbill-Gumbs**  
Purchasing & Contracting



**Juan Baligad**  
Public Works



**Joseph Bantum**  
Risk Management



**Tom Battaglia**  
Financial Management



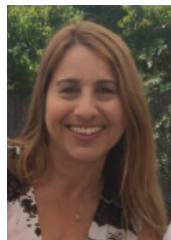
**Jennifer Becker**  
Public Utilities



**Issy Camacho**  
Public Works



**Kathryn Campbell**  
Library



**Michele Chicharelli**  
Park & Recreation



**Sarah Erazo**  
Park & Recreation



**Patricia Foss**  
Economic Development



**Jennifer Geran**  
Library



**Ryan Hay**  
Development Services



**Stephanie Hoover**  
Public Utilities



**Graham Hufford**  
Public Works



**Rene Kaprielian**  
Environmental Services



**Dominic Marostica**  
Library



**Erika McNeill**  
Public Utilities



**Gabrielle Mead**  
Police



**Teresa Morse**  
Real Estate Assets



**Michael Prinz**  
Planning



**Pete Razo**  
Police



**Anthony Rea**  
Public Utilities



**Scott Robinson**  
Communications



**Jeff Robles**  
Development Services



**Ty Rogers**  
Retiree Representative



**Israel Rueda**  
Transportation & Stormwater



**Elizabeth Serrano**  
Police



**Janice Stevenson**  
City Attorney



**Sammie Taylor**  
Public Utilities



**Daniel Weiss**  
Police



# Why Privatization is a Bad Idea

In 1981, during an economic recession, Ronald Reagan took office telling the nation: "Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem."

Reagan aspired to redefine the role of government in Americans' lives – and by one measure, he was successful. His push to shrink the public sector kick-started cuts to the number of federal employees by Republican and Democratic presidents alike.

When Reagan was reelected in 1984, there were about 2.2 million federal workers. In 2012, when Barack Obama was reelected, federal spending had more than doubled, yet there were fewer federal employees – about 2 million.

But a closer look reveals: government isn't smaller now; it's just outsourced. Large corporations now operate virtually every type of public service, including prisons, welfare systems, infrastructure, water, trash, and schools. Taxpayers spend more than \$300 billion each year on defense contractors alone. Nearly half of state and local government spending, over a trillion dollars a year, goes to purchasing goods and services from the private sector.

Privatization – procuring or producing public goods and services from outside the government – may seem like a problem only for government employees and public sector unions, but, in truth, it affects everyone. Stewards, as key communicators of union values like solidarity and the common good, play a crucial role in talking about why contracting out public services is bad for everyone. Here are a few important arguments you can use in a union meeting or at the dinner table.

## Outsourcing Often Ends Up Costing More

The thinking goes, the private sector is fast and efficient, while the government is slow and bureaucratic – therefore outsourcing things like water systems and schools supposedly cuts costs. But reality

says otherwise. In 2011, the Project on Government Oversight found that, on average, contractors were charging the federal government more than twice the amount it pays its public employees. In addition, the costs to oversee and monitor contracts are rarely included when privatization is being considered. And without strong oversight, contractors often cut corners, lowering the quality and accessibility of services and not infrequently underpaying or mistreating workers, who are much less likely to have union protections. All this costs taxpayers even more in the long run.

## Privatization Can Introduce Perverse Incentives

Private contractors don't share the public sector's commitment to the common good – their aim is to maximize profits. Sometimes this can result in incentives that harm users of the services as well as broader communities. For example, many private prison contracts have occupancy guarantees in the form of quotas or required payments for empty prison cells. These quotas – as much as 80, 90, or even 100 percent – incentivize locking up more people and put taxpayers on the hook for guaranteeing profits for private prison corporations, rather than doing what's right for communities.

## Privatization is Fueling Historic Inequality

Public sector work has long offered a stable, middle class life. But many people doing public work while employed by private contractors have plunged into poverty because of declining wages and benefits. In fact, privatization is particularly harmful to women and people of color, as nearly 60 percent of public sector jobs are held by women and one in five Black workers are public employees.

## We Can Lose Democratic Control

Without strong protections, some contracts hand over aspects of public control to contractors. Take Chicago: In 2008, the city hastily signed a 75-year deal with a Wall Street-led team of



contractors to operate the city's parking meters. If Chicago throws a street fair or builds permanent bike lanes, the city must reimburse the consortium for lost revenue. Meanwhile, downtown parking meter rates more than doubled in the five years after they were leased out.

## Citizens Become Consumers

When we hand public goods over to corporations, citizens become consumers of public services rather than participants in a democratic society. For example, charter schools, which are publicly funded but privately operated, are run by private groups rather than democratically-elected school boards. This means the schools are accountable to neither the public who pay the bills nor parents. Ultimately, this hurts vulnerable students – those from low-income families or those with disabilities – the most.

## It's About the Kind of Society We Want to Be

Public goods and services, by bringing economic and social value to everyone, especially the most vulnerable, make all of our lives better. There is enough to go around, and unions ensure that the owners share the wealth with the workers. Public services have long been a crucial part of our healthy, democratic society.

STEWARD UPDATE NEWSLETTER  
- Jeremy Mohler. The writer works at the nonprofit organization *In the Public Interest*, where he writes on a wide range of issues related to the role of government and responsible contracting,



# 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!



## Alice Daniels

I worked for the City of San Diego for 27 years in various departments including the City Attorney's Office, Purchasing & Contracting, Department of IT, Park and Recreation and the Library. I retired as an Associate Management Analyst for the Environmental Services Department.

In my almost three decades with the City, I have a great deal of memories. One experience that comes to mind was when I was a Payroll Specialist. The Department Director didn't give me a leave slip but just told me to cash in some of his time (pay-in-lieu). Somehow, I completely forgot to enter it in the system... Come pay day, the Department Director came to me looking very serious and said, "Oh no, what am I going to do? I'm going to be homeless." My heart completely sank as I realized what had happened. To my great relief, he then said, "I'm just kidding!" and he began to laugh. I took my job as a Payroll Specialist very seriously and I had always been so conscientious about employees' paychecks. To be honest it really bothered me that I had messed it up which is probably why it still comes to mind among all of my memories.

Another experience was when I worked downtown. My favorite Department Director's office was right on the end of the building where he could see everything going on in the quad. So whenever I would take a walk outside, he could see me. One day, I was taking a walk when my cell phone rang. I answered and it was my Department Director who said, "You need to move a little faster than that, you're walking too slow and you won't burn many calories like that." I couldn't stop laughing but eventually I was able to tell him that he should be working, not looking out his window at the people below!

I've been retired for a few months now and I have been able to do a little travelling. So far, I've been to Dallas, Las Vegas, Seattle, Oklahoma and a few mini trips to Los Angeles, Stockton, Palm Springs and some wine tasting tours. I'm excited to go on a cruise to Belize in October and I'm planning on going to Jamaica in June or July of next year. I'm looking forward to enjoying the sites and learning about the history of each city that I visit. Eventually, I'm going to make my way to Europe and take an Alaskan cruise.

In addition to traveling, I will continue to plug away at my business. About 2 or 3 years ago, I started a baking business. This wasn't too much of a stretch since I've been baking since I was 8 years old! My specialty is mini cakes with cream cheese icing, both of which I make from scratch. One day, I made some mini cakes but I didn't have time to make the icing. I decided to go to the store and just buy some icing. Well that was a lesson learned... The store bought icing was nowhere near the same and it just ruined my cakes.

In addition to my fantastic colleagues, I do miss being a MEA steward. Being a steward is like being in a close-knit family. Although I'm now retired, I will still keep in contact with my friends at the City and my Union family.



# MEA **Making Us Proud** members



## **Recognizing Rafael Padilla**

Congratulations to Rafael who was named Employee of the Quarter. Rafael is a Recreation Leader who positively impacts his

workplace. He has been the department's go-to guy when recruiting youth to various sports programs at the San Ysidro Community Activity Center. He has taken it upon himself to even stand in front of schools, pass out fliers and speak to students and their parents about the programs. Within the past year, Rafael has coached a total of 11 teams with 125 participants. He has also been a huge help at the Summer Lunch kick-off events, and has volunteered to help with the Parks Fit and Nature Play citywide events. His nickname of "Sunshine" is fitting because he brings a smile and a positive attitude to work every day!

## **Kudos to Manny Briseno**

Hats off to Manny Briseno who was selected to be a contestant on Wheel of Fortune. The theme of the episode was Great American Cities which featured San Diego. From being on the show, Manny learned that each contestant has their own motorized standing platform to move up or down depending on how tall or short they are, that Vanna White greets the contestants before taping and that in between commercial breaks, contestants are asked to step away from the wheel so new prize wedges can be added. Manny solved three puzzles and won \$6,500!

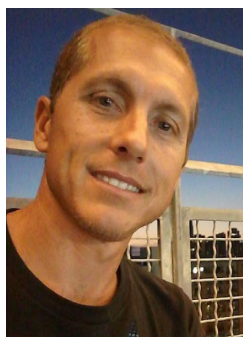


## **Well Done Nicole McNeil**

Congratulations to Nicole who was awarded the 2017 National Drowning Prevention Alliance Community Lifesaver Award. She has been the Pool Manager at City Heights Aquatic Center for many years and she now manages half of the Department's pools.



Nicole seeks grants to bring free classes to several San Diego pools. She has also helped San Diego leaders to secure an author for SB422-the Pool Safety Act, legislation which will be truly life-saving for young children in the State of California.



## **Praise for Jonathan Richards**

Jonathan was awarded the Employee of the Quarter because of his caring demeanor and professionalism. Juggling a work load due to three

vacancies, he still never hesitates to volunteer to assist colleagues and his supervisor.

Understanding budget constraints, Jonathan created a GoFundMe account which raised over \$1,300 for the Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) programs. Additionally, he worked with the Torrey Pines Kiwanis in securing a \$4,000 donation. Jonathan has taken the lead on a project to provide TRS services to veterans and has organized a wheelchair basketball scrimmage.



## **Thanks to Greg Armstead**

Thanks Greg for following up so quickly. Your responsiveness is much appreciated. You deserve a raise! Have a wonderful day, Joan

## **Recognizing Dianna Di Giulio**

Congratulations to Dianna who was named Employee of the Quarter. Dianna has one of the most unusual jobs at the Mount Hope Cemetery. It takes a special person to

navigate the emotional needs of the public and to balance that with the administrative needs required of a city business. In her position, Dianna completes all of these tasks with compassion, grace and professionalism. When dealing with families who have recently lost a loved one, she gives each person her time and understanding. In doing so, each person leaves the cemetery with a sense of importance and a feeling that their loved one means something.



## **Appreciation for Victor Nava**

This is a shout out to all of you who have helped to make the removal of 972 tires plus about 500 rims and wheels from the depths of Denner Canyon such a huge success! Thank you Victor Nava and all of you from Park and Recreation Department for bringing this matter to our attention and setting up the







logistics for smoothly and efficiently removing the tires. I'm hoping we'll be able to collaborate again in the future to tackle the next challenge.

All the best,  
Bill Prinz, Program  
Manager, DSD

## Kudos to Eileen Rodriguez

I just wanted to send Eileen a big thank you note for that great response on Friday to our downed tree. We didn't know what to expect with the weather problems occurring everywhere, but you and your team came through with flying colors. We couldn't believe that they showed up minutes after you left and got everything removed from our property before dark (while it was still pouring with rain)! Please share this thank you message and let nobody say that government doesn't work! Regards,  
Hans Recker



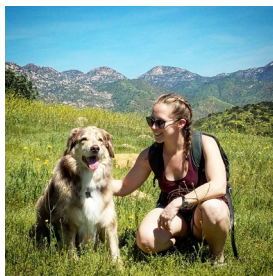
## Congratulations to Jay Villanueva

Employee of the Quarter recipient Jay Villanueva was recognized due to his positive attitude that is contagious among his colleagues. Jay is known for being a team player and is highly motivated when it comes to helping out others around him. Some might not know that he's known as the "Department DJ" since he volunteers his talents and equipment to enhance department events and meetings with music, computer slide shows, lighting, technical support and his entertaining emceeing. Jay also arrives early to set up and stays late to help clean up.

## Thanks to Becky Lowndes:

To Becky Yzaguirre  
Subject: Kudos

Hi Becky,  
I wanted to thank you and your staff, especially Becky Lowndes for assisting me in scheduling a room for a Saturday training. The process



was simple and painless. Becky did the paperwork and scanned it to me. I had to change the date after the initial reservation and Becky was very

accommodating and replied to all my emails within a very short period of time. Thanks again for your assistance.  
Rita Rogers, Risk Management/Safety & Environmental Health

## Well done Kyle Connors

Our home in south San Diego overlooks the Finney Elementary Outlook and we enjoy walking there every morning with our dog. The other day we were able to express some of our thoughts with Ranger Connors concerning the upkeep of the Outlook mainly around trash, broken glass and general neglect. The City staff does a good job of managing the graffiti but we hoped that a little more attention could keep the hardscape clear of sand, glass, trash, etc. We are very pleased to see that this has happened and the space is much improved. We want to thank Kyle for listening and responding.  
Best regards,  
Ashley and Peter Meisen



## Praise for Steve Smith

To: Steve  
Haupt  
Subject: Steve  
Smith

Mr. Haupt, we wanted to tell you how pleased we are with the efforts made by Park Ranger Steve Smith in response to a Tecolote Canyon encroachment issue that we brought to his attention yesterday. Steve's response was prompt and thorough and we deeply appreciate his fine work. Steve Smith is a very responsible and thoughtful young man who is a fine representative of the department and the City of San Diego.

With gratitude, Dennis and Barbara Moran

## Appreciation for Tia Turner

Patron Emily Rodgers called me regarding the South Clairemont Recreation Center staff. She wanted to express how grateful she is for the programs and staff. She also commented on the friendliness, warmth and service oriented nature of the staff, especially Tia Turner. Congrats to Tia and her staff on this well-deserved praise and also for their successful programs. I am so proud and happy that the public has recognized the terrific work that they do.

Kathryn Ruiz  
Deputy Director,  
Community Parks I Division



## Congratulations to Mike Rasmusson:

Grounds Maintenance Manager Mike Rasmusson was recognized as Employee of the Quarter because he has consistently provided exceptional customer service to the Miramar Ranch North MAD community. This has generated a level of trust that has allowed him to actively pursue making large scale enhancements to the district. Although not a part of his normal job duties, Mike has



been presenting at community meetings. He uses his immense knowledge and education on irrigation and drought tolerant plants to create new dialogues about nature within San Diego communities.



## Kudos to Sarah Erazo and the Park and Recreation Staff

Congratulations on being awarded the Parks Project of the Year \$2-5 Million: Solana Ranch Neighborhood Park.

## Catastrophic & Medical Leave Requests

**new MEA members**

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!

### **Makia M. Simpson-Siam Awadien**

My name is Makia and I'm a single mother of two boys, ages 12 and 16. I am currently a word processor operator for PUD Long Range Planning & Water Resources Division. I have worked for the City for a little over 12 years. Towards the end of November 2015, I began utilizing FMLA to take care of my 16 year old son who was diagnosed with lung cancer. In April 2016, he had major surgery to remove tumors from his left lung which was a success, but he had major complications afterwards. His 3 day hospital stay turned into a month long stay due to his lungs collapsing.

Now we're dealing with cancer that has spread throughout his whole right lung. We have tried numerous chemotherapy treatments to shrink the tumors with no success. So now we're trying a new chemotherapy that will take 7 cycle treatments. His treatments take place on three Fridays out of the month with only one Friday off to rest. If this chemotherapy is not successful, my son will have to undergo major surgery to have his right lung completely removed in order to get rid of all the tumors. I have had to take leave without pay to take my son to his appointments. Unfortunately, I am the only source of income for my household. Any time that you're able to bless me with to take care of my son will be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much for taking time to read my story and for your consideration.

### **Monica Steward**

My name is Monica Steward. I have worked for the City and Police Department for well over 20 years. I currently work SDPD/ Permits & Licensing/VICE Unit. In November 2016, I began utilizing Family Medical Leave Act program (FMLA) for my own personal illness intermittently throughout the year. For the past few months, it was necessary to take a number of days off work due to my FMLA illness. As a consequence, I have been exhausting paid leave which has caused me to go without pay on occasion. I am the only source of income in my household, and I humbly request any hours to support my FMLA time off. Your gift of leave time assistance would be graciously appreciated. Thank you very much for considering my situation.

### **Sue Benson**

I have been employed as a Legal Secretary with the San Diego City Attorney's Office, Civil Division since December 2005. During the past few years I have had numerous family tragedies, along with personal illnesses that have exhausted my leave. I visited my ailing parents in May and returned with pneumonia. It is challenging to be the primary resource for the family while living in a different time zone, being 2000+ miles away, and working. Most recently my Dad had a heart attack, diagnosed with dementia, moved to skilled nursing; leaving my Mom to learn how to navigate through bills, insurances, VA requirements, and technology that is all new to her. In addition to family matters, I personally expect to have cataract surgery in the near future; along with repairing an umbilical hernia diagnosed a few weeks ago. I would appreciate any donation of leave you could spare. I am extremely grateful and thankful for those who can help. Blessings

### **Michael Mosco**

Hello. My name is Michael Mosco. I am currently a DNA Criminalist for the San Diego Police Department Crime Lab and have been an employee here for roughly 7 months. I have had to take an emergency trip to my hometown of Brooklyn to provide extra care for my ailing father. For approximately 8 years he has been suffering from a progressive neurological disease. The disease has confined him to a wheelchair and requires him to have 24 hour care (provided by my mother). In March, he contracted pneumonia which combined with his weakened condition, made breathing extremely labored and coughing impossible. Early on, there was a good chance that he would not recover. I am happy to report that the infection cleared and his regular breathing returned.

As a result of this trip, and due to the fact I am a relatively new employee, I exhausted all of my banked leave. Any amount of leave time assistance would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.

Monica Rodriguez  
Mores Mekho  
Natalie Biasevich  
Nicholas Bulkowski  
Noora Fathullah  
Olivia Tyson  
Patricia Blair  
Patrick Maguire  
Paul Moser  
Peggy Goings  
Peter Darvas  
Piedad Alcala  
Rachel Murray  
Raeniece Jefferson  
Rafael Padilla  
Raquel Collier  
Raul Moreno  
Rebecca Alvidrez  
Rebecca Vela  
Renee Brower  
Reynaldo Don  
Robert Acosta  
Robert Browns  
Roberto Solis  
Roderick Jordan  
Rodney Williams  
Rosa Angelica Gil  
Rosemary Rico  
Roula Bejjani  
Ruperto Aquino  
Samia Ahmed  
Sarah Veillette  
Sarah Wheeler  
Scott Albanese  
Sergio Vega Andrade  
Shadi Sarikhani  
Shannon Getz  
Sharon Robles  
Stephan Merten  
Steven Dillard  
Steven Stanley  
Stewart Kerr  
Tanya Molina  
Tanya Watkins  
Terri Bauman  
Thurman Hodges  
Tianna David  
Timothy Lee  
Toni Hunter  
Victor Hernandez Sanchez  
Vinh Phung  
Wilfred Cletus  
William Elder  
William Franklin  
Willie Shipley  
Yashar Asgharzadeh  
Yvonne Bolanos



# ME A 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                                      | <b>\$44.20</b> | \$52.00       |
| Children (Ages 3-11)                        | <b>\$35.70</b> | \$42.00       |
| <b>San Diego Safari Park Deluxe Package</b> |                |               |
| Adults                                      | <b>\$44.20</b> | \$52.00       |
| Children (Ages 3-11)                        | <b>\$35.70</b> | \$42.00       |
| <b>K1 Speedway</b><br>(Must be 4'11")       | <b>\$15.00</b> | \$25.95       |
| <b>AMC Green Reading</b>                    | <b>\$10.25</b> |               |
| <b>Regal Unrestricted</b>                   | <b>\$7.50</b>  |               |
|   | <b>\$8.50</b>  |               |

*Prices subject to change without notice*

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

|                                 |                 |          |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Sea World</b>                |                 |          |
| Adult Day Pass                  | <b>\$69.00</b>  | \$89.00  |
| Adult Fun Card                  | <b>\$155.00</b> | \$155.00 |
| Child Day Pass                  | <b>\$69.00</b>  | \$89.00  |
| Child Fun Card                  | <b>\$155.00</b> | \$155.00 |
| <b>Legoland</b>                 |                 |          |
| Adult Day Pass                  | <b>\$77.00</b>  | \$95.00  |
| Adult Hopper                    | <b>\$69.00</b>  | \$119.00 |
| Child Day Pass                  | <b>\$72.00</b>  | \$89.00  |
| Child Hopper                    | <b>\$69.00</b>  | \$113.00 |
| <b>Six Flags Magic Mountain</b> | <b>\$44.99</b>  | \$76.99  |
| <b>Knott's Berry Farm</b>       |                 |          |
| Adult Day Pass                  | <b>\$39.00</b>  | \$72.00  |
| Child Day Pass                  | <b>\$34.00</b>  | \$49.00  |

## November

2: Finance and Executive Committee meetings  
5: Daylight Savings Time ends  
8: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings  
10: MEA closed for Veteran's Day  
23-24: MEA closed for Thanksgiving  
28: Steward meeting

## December

7: Finance and Executive Committee meetings  
13: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings  
19: Steward meeting  
25: MEA closed Christmas through New Year's Day

## January

1: New Year's Day  
4: Finance and Executive Committee meetings  
10: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings  
15: Martin Luther King Day  
23: Steward meeting  
25: Executive Committee meeting

## February

1: Finance and Executive Committee meetings  
14: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings  
19: President's Day  
20: Steward meeting  
22: Executive Committee meeting

## March

1: Finance and Executive Committee meetings  
14: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings  
20: Steward meeting  
29: Executive Committee meeting  
30: Cesar Chavez Day





SDMEA  
9620 Chesapeake Drive  
Suite 203  
San Diego, CA 92123

Non Profit  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT No. 411  
San Diego, CA

## MEA OFFICES

9620 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 203  
San Diego, CA 92123

619.264.6632 or 858.300.3888

## WEBSITE

[www.sdmea.org](http://www.sdmea.org)

## GENERAL EMAIL

[info@sdmea.org](mailto:info@sdmea.org)

## BENEFITS INFORMATION

888.217.9175

## STAFF

### Michael Zucchet

General Manager  
[mzucchet@sdmea.org](mailto:mzucchet@sdmea.org)

### Nancy Roberts

Supervising Labor Relations Representative  
[nroberts@sdmea.org](mailto:nroberts@sdmea.org)

### Kelly Cruz

Senior Labor Relations Representative  
[kcruz@sdmea.org](mailto:kcruz@sdmea.org)

### Katy Seals

Labor Relations Representative  
[kseals@sdmea.org](mailto:kseals@sdmea.org)

### Nick Wright

Labor Relations Representative  
[nwright@sdmea.org](mailto:nwright@sdmea.org)

### Cathleen Higgins

Governmental & Labor Relations  
[chiggins@sdmea.org](mailto:chiggins@sdmea.org)

### Dawn Kealaluhi

Office Manager  
[dkealaluhi@sdmea.org](mailto:dkealaluhi@sdmea.org)

### Nichole Johnson

Member Service Representative  
[njohnson@sdmea.org](mailto:njohnson@sdmea.org)

### Lora Fleming

Director of Communications  
[lfleming@sdmea.org](mailto:lfleming@sdmea.org)

## Advertise With Us!

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

Advertising your business in MEA's semi-annual publication is a great way to reach a new consumer base to grow and expand your business. We offer competitive advertising rates and a special discount to MEA members.

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



## Editorial and Graphics Information

Editor  
Lora Fleming  
(619) 264-6632  
[lfleming@sdmea.org](mailto:lfleming@sdmea.org)

Graphics and Page Layout  
Dawn Kealaluhi  
(619) 264-6632  
[dkealaluhi@sdmea.org](mailto:dkealaluhi@sdmea.org)