



## San Diego Municipal Employees Association

Newsletter  
Fall/Winter 2014

viewpoint



**City Councilmembers  
David Alvarez and Marti Emerald  
lend their support to District 6  
Council Candidate Carol Kim**





## on the cover

Carol Kim is MEA's endorsed candidate for District 6 which is the only remaining Council seat open. Carol is an articulate, intelligent and passionate candidate who will work with our allies like Councilmembers David Alvarez and Marti Emerald to move San Diego forward.

This is going to be a very close election which is why we will all need to do our part to help get Carol Kim elected.

For more information about Carol Kim and how you can support her campaign, please turn to page 14.



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## President's Message

MEA's main objectives are to work toward improving your wages, benefits and working conditions. Through

negotiations, political action and defense in the court room, MEA has not only fought for our employment rights, but we have been a labor leader and defining force in San Diego. We are able to lead because we are principled, trustworthy and committed to the cause.

It is because of this commitment that we continue to participate in the political process. In particular, we have become a respected and sought out source of support in local politics. MEA participation in the political arena means that we are creating relationships with the City's decision makers. We are also cultivating an environment of respect and are providing a perspective which is critical for our City leaders to hear and understand. This type of positive political atmosphere is more conducive to thoughtful negotiations and improved outcomes for our members, and City workers in general.

Currently, we are involved in a critical City Council race in District 6 (which encompasses Mira Mesa, Kearny Mesa, Miramar, Clairemont Mesa and parts of Clairemont, Sorrento Valley and Rancho Penasquitos). Carol Kim, the MEA-endorsed candidate, made it into a runoff with Chris Cate, a Carl De Maio supporter, and the hand-picked candidate of the Lincoln Club, Taxpayers Association and big developers. In the Primary alone, these special interests outspent Carol Kim three-to-one in order to try to propel Chris Cate to victory. It is also worth noting that Chris Cate moved into the district not too long before running for the District 6 City Council seat.

Even with so much money going to her opponent, Carol easily made it out of the Primary. Carol advanced to the November General Election with the support of MEA

and a dedicated team of volunteers. She is an incredible candidate and we know that she will be an exceptional City Councilmember. The other thing that we know for sure is that her opponent and his backers are going to marshal all of their resources in an attempt to defeat Carol. We simply can't let that happen.

When Carol is elected to the City Council we will have a smart, empathetic and capable ally who shares our values and interests. She will also help to provide a balance on the City Council that puts people, families and workers first.

It is in our best interests as City employees to ensure that Carol wins, and I am asking you for your help. If you live in the district, please vote for Carol and ask your friends and neighbors for their support as well. If you don't live in District 6, please talk to your friends, family and colleagues and let them know what is at stake in this election. You can also join Carol's campaign as a volunteer. There are a wide range of volunteer opportunities which can be catered to fit your comfort level and available time. If you cannot volunteer, please consider making a monetary contribution to the campaign. Regardless of what you do, please just get involved and help support Carol Kim!

We are on the right side of this election. We are hopeful that through our efforts, City employees will continue to gain ground against those who have fomented an artificial atmosphere of anti-public employee sentiment. You can help reshape the perception of public employees in our City by helping us elect candidates like Carol who will speak truthfully and honestly about this City's dedicated workforce. I hope that you will join your Union family in supporting Carol Kim and all that she represents for MEA-represented employees and retirees.

### Officers

Bob Cronk	President
Greg Woods	1st Vice President
Jan Lord	2nd Vice President
Candi Mitchell	Treasurer
Lisa Goehring	Secretary

### Executive Committee

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

### Board of Directors

Brian Anthony	Park & Recreation
Maurice Brown	Engineering & Capital Projects
Isabelle Camacho	Engineering & Capital Projects
Kathryn Campbell	Library
Sam Cerrato	Library
Rebecca Cesena	Park & Recreation
Stephanie Clark	City Attorney
Bob Cronk	Library
Mary Enyeart	Police
Sarah Erazo	Park & Recreation
Jennifer Geran	Library
Lisa Goehring	Water
Howard Greenstein	Planning
Francine Howell	City Attorney
Graham Hufford	Engineering & Capital Projects
Rene Kaprielian	Environmental Services
Jan Lord	Human Resources
Pete Lynch	Development Services
Gabrielle Mead	Police
Joe Miesner	Library
Candi Mitchell	Water
Helen Phillips	Retirees
Steve Ramirez	Environmental Services
Catherine Rivera	Police
Beverly Simmons	Risk Management
Susan Taylor	Real Estate Assets
Cody Wilkinson	MWWWD
Greg Woods	Treasurer
Roy Wurth	Transportation & Storm Water

### MEA Stewards

Francine Howell	Chief Steward
Adele Campbell	Police
Michele Chicarelli	Park & Recreation
Alice Daniels	Purchasing & Contracts
Mary Enyeart	Police
Teresa Helmski	City Attorney
Graham Hufford	Engineering & Capital Projects
Shanae Hymon	Water
Sherry Jones	Treasurer
Renee Kinninger	Development Services
Jan Lord	Human Resources
Cassandra Maslowski	Police
Gabrielle Mead	Police
Tony Moore	City Attorney
Steve Ramirez	Environmental Services
Tia Ramirez	City Attorney
Leon Sauls	Transportation & Storm Water
Janice Stevenson	City Attorney
Sammie Taylor	Public Utilities
Kimberly Vance	Public Utilities
Greg Woods	Treasurer



## City Retirement Fund Tops \$7 Billion

The San Diego City Employees Retirement System (SDCERS) ended another stellar investment year on July 1, 2014 with more than \$7 billion in the bank, a record for the fund. When the system's actuary performs the annual audit in the coming months, it will likely show additional significant forward progress for a retirement system that was left for dead by many pundits just a few years ago. Taking into account the extremely conservative assumptions used by the managers of the fund (for example, the system's assumed rate of return is among the top 5% most conservative in the country among large public pension funds), San Diego's pension system is one of the healthiest in California or anywhere else.

So don't take any guff from friends or family who only get their information from the local newspaper or Carl DeMaio. And don't be afraid to speak up when the subject of San Diego's pension fund gets brought up in conversation. In addition to the overall health of the system and conservative management, some important points to remember are:

- The City has now made its full pension payment for 10 years
- City employees NEVER stopped making their contributions to the system; only the City has failed to make its required payments in the past
- "Taxpayers" only fund a small portion of pensions—about 80% of San Diego's pension funding comes from employee contributions and investment gains
- City employees do not have Social

Security benefits and the City reaps considerable savings by not having to pay into Social Security

- Pensionable pay freezes AGREED to by employees—not illegal "citizen" ballot propositions written by politicians—have saved the system more than a billion dollars
- Had the City not decided to use our pension fund as a credit card, there would never have been a crisis

A healthy pension fund does more than help make our retirement more secure. It also lowers the City's annual required payment to the fund, and it lowers the required employee contribution from every paycheck. Stay tuned for more updates after the first of the year when the fund's annual valuation comes out and the City embarks upon next year's fiscal year budget process.

## Fiscal Year 2015 City Budget

And speaking of the City's budget, the City Council's annual budget deliberations just concluded with the passage of a budget that increases City services (and the number of employees delivering those services) in meaningful amounts in several departments. In addition, the City is now projecting significant budget surpluses for the next five years which is a first for the City since it began doing five year financial outlooks over the last decade.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the City has been slow to reverse the compensation cuts agreed to by employees that helped the City get through the global economic recession and into the solid financial position that it enjoys today. The City needs to step up to 1) reverse the remaining compensation take-aways that are still in effect today and 2) provide its employees with the basic cost of living increases that we need and have gone without for the better part of a decade.

MEA-represented employees have enjoyed a good start to those righteous goals in the last two fiscal years, with the end of mandatory furlough (and its associated pay deducts), increases in Flex benefit allotments, more discretionary days off, lower pension contributions and other benefits resulting from the contract we negotiated in 2013. But now City employees need real increases to offset the cuts of the past and to simply keep up with the inflation of the future. We have and will continue to work with Mayor Faulconer and the

City Council to help them understand why a fair contract for City employees is also in the City's and citizens' best interest.

At the bargaining table in 2013, we showed the City—using the City's own numbers—how the City's budget was headed toward surplus and how the City could afford to compensate its employees fairly. Not surprisingly, the City didn't see its own budget that way and instead proclaimed poverty when it came time for employee compensation. But now there is no dispute about the City's financial position and its projected future. All that is left to do is what is right...which sounds easy enough but of course nothing is easy given the politics of the day. Stay tuned on this front and please know that MEA's top priority is a new contract that compensates City employees more fairly.

## General Membership Meeting

In July, MEA hosted another fabulous General Membership Meeting at the Balboa Park Club. More than 300 active and retired MEA members enjoyed a great meal, camaraderie, raffle prizes and some amazing speakers, including the Speaker herself—former City Councilmember and now Speaker of the California State Assembly Toni Atkins. Speaker Atkins received MEA's highest honor, the John Torres "Champion of Labor" award for her ever-present commitment to working families. MEA's own Ann Smith also provided the crowd with important legal updates and developments and, as always, oversaw the most spirited raffle known to humanity.

Thanks very much to Membership Committee Chair and MEA First Vice President Greg Woods and his entire committee for their outstanding efforts to put together another great event. If you missed this year's meeting, watch for next year's meeting date announcement coming soon and plan to be there!

## Carol Kim for City Council

Please be sure to read MEA President Bob Cronk's excellent piece (Page 3) about the importance of helping Carol Kim win her race for the San Diego City Council's Sixth District in November. Very well said Bob and we hope to see all of you volunteering out on the campaign trail this fall!





## SDCERS Argues “Immunity” in Purchase of Service Credit (PSC) Litigation to Cover Up its Bad Conduct in Breach of Trust . . .

unless SDCERS’ stunning demands for more money were met; for others, it would mean a substantial reduction in the amount of their fixed pension income.

In an outpouring of personal stories of reliance and hardship, employees and retirees begged SDCERS not to do this to them. I even made a compromise proposal to SDCERS and the City calling for employees and retirees to pay the higher price for the service credits they sought to preserve but with no interest charges added. All efforts failed and litigation followed.

Even if you already knew how unfair this “PSC Correction Process” was, however, you may not realize just how egregious SDCERS’ conduct was in causing this “correction process.” To hear SDCERS tell it, the blame lies elsewhere – on the City (partly true) or on the Court of Appeal. But the undisputed evidence developed during the PSC litigation makes it crystal clear that it was actually SDCERS’ own conduct in late 2007 – in an unnecessary and imprudent reaction to Mr. Aguirre’s threat of (more) PSC-related litigation – which resurrected the City’s otherwise time-barred claim against members who had purchased service credits. And this breach of fiduciary duty was followed by the ultimate betrayal of your trust when SDCERS made a secret decision in 2008 to sign and file a stipulation – which former SDCERS CEO David Wescoe admitted under oath was false – that the City Council had authorized Aguirre to pursue the City’s new PSC-related claims when the vote actually failed 4-to-1 under the City Charter which requires five affirmative votes for any action to be authorized. [In any other circumstance, City Attorney Goldsmith would be waving the City’s Charter – its Constitution – in the court’s face and crying foul. But not here where employees and retirees are the ones hurt.] Thus, based upon this authorization lie, SDCERS literally gave Aguirre the keys to the courthouse door and then failed to raise available defenses to defeat the City’s claims.

If the SDCERS Board of Trustees hadn’t done what it did in 2007-2008 in breach of its duties and in betrayal of its trust, the Court of Appeal decision on which SDCERS relied to justify

its “correction process,” would never have occurred. No SDCERS member – whether an active employee or a retiree – would have been harmed. All members with “window period” service credits would still have them today based on their settled rights as of 2007; instead, SDCERS honors the “window period” service credits of some members as final, binding and vested, while having imposed the heartache and economic harm of its “correction process” on others.

Now, your current SDCERS Board of Trustees has spent trust fund assets seeking to defeat the PSC litigants’ claims – not by explaining what it did and why, and not by convincing a court or a jury that it acted properly in 2007-2008 and that it did not breach its duties or betray its members’ trust – but rather by arguing “discretionary immunity” so that SDCERS doesn’t have to explain itself at all. In other words, SDCERS argues that it is immune from any liability to injured plan members whether or not its decisions were correct, whether or not its decisions adversely impacted PSC litigants, whether or not its conduct fell below the high “standard of care” for a fiduciary, and whether or not it conspired with the City to file a false stipulation permitting Mr. Aguirre to pursue an unauthorized case.

And the current SDCERS Board of Trustees goes even further – asserting to the court that SDCERS’ immunity shields it from liability to its plan Members even when a breach of its Constitutional duties gives rise to damages as occurred here. Yet the People of the State of California added these duties to California’s Constitution by referendum to protect every public pensioner in California – and no exemption was written for SDCERS. According to SDCERS, these Constitutional duties are meaningless because they are

## and Wins For Now

Whether you were directly affected or not, most of you likely know a fellow employee or retiree who was victimized by SDCERS’ “PSC Correction Process” imposed on hundreds of pension plan members in 2011. Their individual stories shared a common theme: back in 2003, every employee’s City paycheck included SDCERS’ written notice about the opportunity to purchase service credits during a “window period”; City managers issued reminders about the purchase opportunity during City staff meetings and at tailgates; in response to widespread publicity and encouragement, employees made good faith decisions to purchase “window period” service credits based on the non-negotiable price SDCERS set. Once employees paid the amount owing under their “purchase contracts” with SDCERS, the years passed as they planned their finances, their retirements, and their lives based on these additional vested service credits.

Then in 2011, SDCERS’ certified letters announcing a “correction process” began arriving. To their dismay and disbelief, employees who had long-since retired, others who were locked in 5-year DROP contracts, and still others who, as active employees, had made their financial and retirement plans based on their 2003 “window period” purchases, learned that SDCERS would rescind the service credits they purchased during the “window period” unless they paid nearly double the amount paid in 2003 plus 8 years of interest charges at 8% a year. This threatened loss of service credits meant no retirement at all for some retirees

continued on page 6...

## Legal Report

continued from page 5...

unenforceable when a breach causes damage; according to SDCERS, public pensioners are second-class citizens who have no damage remedy for a breach of fiduciary duty despite the Constitution when those in private sector pension plans – who have no Constitutional level of protection – do have a damage remedy available to them.

On June 18, 2014, Superior Court Judge Ronald Prager accepted SDCERS' immunity argument and the factual cover-up on which it is based – issuing a decision which is a verbatim recital of SDCERS' briefing with barely a passing reference to our strenuous factual and legal opposition. This decision means that there will be no trial and no scrutiny of what SDCERS did or why, and the "cover-up" will continue . . . at least for now. Busy trial judges do get it wrong when deciding motions on the hundreds of cases that come before them each year – and we believe that Judge Prager got this one very wrong. Our recourse is to go to the Court of Appeal and we will –

indeed, we must.

By arguing the legal issues as it did, SDCERS added insult to injury and expanded the harmful effects of what it had already done to the PSC litigants to threaten every member of the pension plan. And, in the process, SDCERS contradicted the "Legal Analysis" SDCERS paid legal experts to prepare – using trust fund assets – for publication to its Members, elected officials, and the community at-large in January 2006, and even contradicted the various "power point" training guides SDCERS has paid its outside fiduciary counsel to prepare and present during open sessions.

Justice demands that we fight on. If SDCERS believes that it has immunity from liability whenever it takes any action (however unnecessary or imprudent) which it claims to be "administration of the pension plan" or which it claims to be in "defense of suit or legal

proceedings" (however dishonest), when will SDCERS ever take responsibility or accept liability for a breach of fiduciary duty or a betrayal of trust? If the California Constitution doesn't matter to SDCERS in the performance of its plan administration duties, what does matter? If SDCERS has the power to "correct" benefits at any time, as it argued in this case, without regard to established statutes of limitation – whose pension benefit is ever safe?

Only a panel of three Justices at the Court of Appeal can tell us – on a full record of the facts and law – whether SDCERS' arguments will indeed become the law in California applicable to all public pensioners. Meanwhile, be aware that, when it comes to its administration of your pension plan in all the ways that really count, your current SDCERS Board of Trustees considers itself immune from liability. Ironically, SDCERS continues to solicit Member feedback about its website updates and its "pursuit of excellence in Member communications and



Ann M. Smith, Esq.

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

# SAVE THE DATE

## MEA's Annual

# Holiday Party

December 13, 2014

6:00pm to 11:00pm

Watch for an upcoming e-blast with more information.





# *MEA Is Working For You...*



MEA staff members joined Carol Kim on the Primary Election to get voters out to their polling location.



Executive Committee Member, Sam Cerrato, helped out a great deal the General Membership Meeting.



Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz met with employees from the Facilities Maintenance Division to discuss the newly proposed Divisional Work Standards.



MEA Benefits Specialist Jon Hayes greeted members at this year's benefits open houses.



MEA General Manager Mike Zucchet sat down with KUSI reporter Steve Bosh regarding managed competition.



Staff members Cathleen Higgins and Kelly Cruz went over the wording on a proposed Administrative Regulation for the San Diego Works Program.



# Joe Miesner

## Library

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 Virginia, the youngest of six kids in a Navy family. We moved to San Diego when I was three years old where I attended Silvergate Elementary, Dana Jr. High School and Point Loma High School (A.S.B. President 1984). I attended SDSU and graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy. I married my high school sweetheart and we started a family. I started with the City in 1991 as a Library Assistant and 23 years later, I am the Branch Manager/Librarian IV of the San Diego Public Library City Heights/Weingart Branch. I am the proud father of five children, two of whom have graduated from college (UCSB and Berkeley). The others are close behind...

Did you have any nicknames growing up? If so, what are they and how did you get them?

My friends gave me the moniker of "Joe Cautious" or "Cautious Joe" because I was the only one among my group of spirited friends who would caution, "Are you sure that's a good idea?" That has now morphed into my advice for my children, "Let somebody else be the stupid one!" Comically, my bandmates decided it was a good idea to name our current band Cautious Joe. For what it's worth, my mom still doesn't believe that this is my real nickname.

What's a rather embarrassing memory from your childhood?

One particular time was at a restaurant when my entire family conspired to switch a bowl of soft-serve vanilla ice cream with a similar bowl of sour cream. To the delight of everyone, I dug in, only to discover my sour folly. To this day, they still enjoy recalling my misery.

Do you have any hidden talents?

I am a Fifth-Degree Black Belt in Kenpo Karate, an amateur Stone Mason, raise orchids, and I am a part-time musician. I am also a good cook!

What brought you to the City?

I started with the City after walking into the City Employment Office and applying for positions that I was both qualified for and found interesting. One position that I applied for was Library Assistant, and soon after (about a year or so), I was offered an hourly position. In my many years as a Substitute Library Assistant, I have worked in every library throughout the City.

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

I was a new dad and it took some adjustment to transition from rock & roll musician and restaurant worker to library staff. I learned that I love what the library stands for by supporting life-long learning and community building. I would often laugh at the length of time that many of my co-workers had worked for the City and now I am one of those "lifers."

If you could pick any job to do for a week, what would it be?

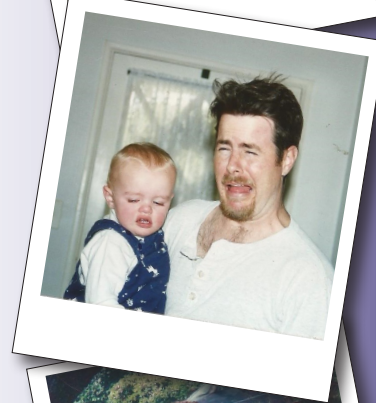
It would either be a bartender, a philosopher or a part-time motorcycle mechanic.

Have you ever met anyone famous?

When I was in my 20's, I met John Entwistle, the bassist from The Who. I shook his hand a little too vigorously and he looked at me like I was crazy. Another brush with musical fame was when my wife and I were asked to dance on stage with Chuck Berry. That was cool.

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

I am a firm believer in fighting for what's right and supporting your fellow man. I appreciate all of the talented folks who keep the City running, who, through thick and thin, have provided quality services to the public. I know that recent years have been tough, but by sticking together, we can gain the respect and compensation that we truly deserve.





# 2014 Benefit Open Houses

MEA would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy day 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 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 free goodies that our vendors provided and that you had one of the many lucky raffle tickets that won you some great prizes!

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





# Notice of MEA Officer Election

It is time once again for Officer elections at MEA. Article V of MEA's Bylaws details the rules that govern our Union's elections. Those rules call for the announcement of procedures to be used to nominate Officer candidates.

If you qualify and would like to run for office, please stop by or contact MEA at 619.264.6632 and we will send you a nominating petition.

All petitions must be received by MEA prior to the start of the September Board of Directors meeting which will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 10, 2014. Completed petitions can be hand delivered to MEA's office (9620 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 203 in Kearny Mesa) or sent via U.S. Mail or interoffice mail (MS126). An MEA staff member will contact you to confirm receipt of your petition. If you do not receive a phone call, it is your responsibility to follow up with MEA. No late petitions will be accepted.

All candidates will be notified by the Election Committee as to the status of their application prior to ballots being prepared.

At the October 2014 Board of Directors meeting, the Election

Committee will report to the Board regarding the eligibility of all applications. At this meeting, all candidates will be given the opportunity to address the Board of Directors as well.

If you are interested in running for office, MEA's Bylaws state the following:

*Article 5, Section 2. Election of Officers shall be held in each even numbered year.*

*At the time of determination of eligibility to be a candidate, a Regular Member must meet all the eligibility requirements for the Board of Directors and must have completed either: a) two (2) full terms as a member of the Board of Directors or b) one (1) full term as a member of the Board of Directors and one (1) full term as a member of the Negotiating team.*

*At the August meeting of the Board of Directors in each even numbered year, a Nominating Committee will be selected in accordance with rules established by the Board of Directors. The Committee shall nominate at least one (1) candidate for each of the offices of President, First Vice President,*

*Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. At the September meeting of the Board of Directors, the nominating Committee shall present its nominations.*

*Candidates for any office may also be nominated by a nominating petition signed by the candidate and at least ten (10) Regular Members. All nominating petitions must be filed with the Nominating Committee prior to the close of the September Board of Directors meeting, for review of conformance to nominating requirements. Filing is deemed accomplished upon delivery of the petition to the Nominating Committee Chair.*

*At the October meeting of the Board of Directors, a portion of the meeting shall be set aside to allow each candidate an equal opportunity to address the meeting, pursuant to rules and procedures to be established by the Election Committee.*

If you meet the criteria and would like to serve as an MEA Officer, please contact the MEA office for a nominating petition.



# Labor Representative Overview

## January - July 2014

A total of 94 new cases were opened in the first half of the year. The range in cases, classifications, and issues was broad, including ADA Requests for Accommodation Interactive Processes, grievances, fact findings, terminations, supplemental employee performance reports, EEO investigations and Vehicle Accident Reviews. MEA labor representatives also represented employees regarding their Long Term Disability benefits, Industrial Leave benefits and made referrals to MEA's workers' compensation attorney.

Labor Representatives made recommendations regarding adding new positions to the FY 15 budget which resulted in the City Council adding new positions to a variety of departments. Meet and confers took place in Public Works regarding the Facilities Maintenance Divisional Work Standards, and in Public Works regarding the Ranger Diver Standard Operating Procedures and Job Safety Analysis for Dives. In July, the meet and confer process began regarding the impacts of the City's decision to create a new Communications Department which will consolidate the Cable Office, CityTV, Internal Communications, Multimedia Services and Public Information.

MEA labor representatives also attended the Benefits Open Houses, distributed MOUs and helped at the annual General Membership Meeting.

## Know Your Rights: Tuition Reimbursement

Recently, a member was told that he could not exercise his right to utilize tuition reimbursement due to budget shortfalls, even though the employee had followed all of the proper procedures.

Article 77, Section D 1 of MEA's Memorandum of Understanding states that the "Tuition Reimbursement benefit amount will be \$1,000 per fiscal year."

Administrative Regulation 70.30, Tuition Refund Plan, is incorporated by reference into the MEA Memorandum of Understanding. It outlines the procedures and requirements for Tuition Reimbursement. Section 2.1 states the following:

"Eligible employees will be reimbursed for 100% of tuition and mandatory fees, and for textbooks and supplies under certain conditions, up to a limit of \$1,000.00 per fiscal year. Reimbursement will be made for professional and technical courses offered by accredited colleges, universities, business, trade or correspondence schools, as part of an educational plan which has been approved by the Appointing Authority."

Tuition reimbursement is a negotiated benefit that all MEA-represented employees are eligible to request. This benefit was created in order to encourage and financially assist employees with their scholastic endeavors in order to improve their job knowledge, skills and abilities. If you are denied tuition reimbursement, let us know. We are here to protect and enforce your rights!

By acting now I can PROTECT MY FAMILY when they'll need it most.



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*Plan to make it right.*

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MEMORIAL

December FD 1371

# 2014 General Membership Meeting

MEA's Membership Committee put on another great General Membership Meeting on July 17th. Members and their guests enjoyed a great dinner and the opportunity to sit down and talk with their City colleagues and fellow Union members. The evening also included an exciting raffle drawing with MEA's own legal counsel, Ann Smith calling out the winning tickets (outside of the court room, you will never see Ann as animated as she is during the drawing!).

Members also heard from special guest, California State Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins. Toni talked about "coming home to her kind of people" when she's in San Diego talking

with MEA members. She also spoke about her years on the San Diego City Council and the struggles that everyone had to endure when Michael Aguirre was the City Attorney. Yet through it all, Toni recalled, she knew that she could always count on MEA to work collaboratively to move San Diego forward. Speaker Atkins was also honored with the John Torres Champion of Labor Award for her leadership and unwavering commitment to protect and defend the hardworking men and women who work for the City of San Diego and throughout the State of California.

The crowd also heard from MEA Legal Counsel Ann Smith on the status of several crucial legal

battles. In addition, District 6 City Council Candidate Carol Kim introduced herself and talked about her experiences from the campaign trail.

Special commendations were presented, including Boardmember of the Year awarded to Francine Howell, Volunteer of the Year to Kathryn Campbell and Steward of the Year to Janice Stevenson (read more on page 15).

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









# MEA SUPPORTS CAROL KIM FOR CITY COUNCIL!

With November's election deciding the last open San Diego City Council seat, MEA is doing everything thing we can to help propel Carol Kim to the finish line. As you might already know, Carol's opponent is Chris Cate, who is supported by Carl DeMaio. Chris has also received incredible amounts of money from the Lincoln Club and Chamber of Commerce to try to defeat Carol Kim. In the Primary alone, Chris Cate's special interest supporters outspent Carol three to one. However, even with the influx of nearly three-quarters of a million dollars against her, Carol finished strong and showed the anti-employee establishment that she is a candidate to be reckoned with!

Although Carol is a first time candidate, she has been serving her community for many years. After graduating from UCLA, she began her career as an inner city school teacher. In addition to teaching her own students, Carol was the lead teacher of an after-school program for at-risk boys.

She has also worked in HIV prevention, serving high-risk groups including active and recovering substance users and foster youth. Carol also provided training for public health nurses, community service providers and teacher candidates.

Carol has spent the last seven years working with schools throughout San Diego and the state of California to provide effective programs that support the health, safety, and well-being of students in public schools, and to develop career and technical education opportunities for students in partnership with community colleges.

Perhaps due to Carol's impressive resume and commitment to her community, we project that the Lincoln Club, Chamber of Commerce and several prominent developers will spend upwards of \$2 million on this one City Council election to try to defeat Carol and tip the balance of power on the Council toward their interests. As you read in Bob Cronk's

President's Message (page 3), we need every member to do what they can to help Carol Kim. If you live in District 6 (which includes Mira Mesa, Kearny Mesa, Miramar, Clairemont Mesa and parts of Clairemont, Sorrento Valley and Rancho Penasquitos), please vote for Carol and ask your neighbors to do the same. If you do not live in the district, please talk to those friends and family members who do and tell them how important it is for Carol to win. There are also a number of volunteer opportunities. Volunteering on a campaign is a great way to personally get to know a candidate and to meet new friends. If you are interested in volunteering, please feel free to contact MEA at 619-264-6632.

Thank you for helping us to elect City Council candidates like Carol Kim who are supportive of your many contributions and sacrifices as a City employee.





# Congratulations to this Year's MEA Award Recipients



## Steward of the Year

Janice Stevenson

MEA is proud to recognize Janice Stevenson as the 2014 Steward of the Year.

Her enthusiasm and reliability symbolize the true meaning of Union Steward. Janice has also demonstrated an extraordinary ability to represent members of this organization with the highest level of professionalism. Janice is known for facing challenges head on and she has taken the time to obtain the knowledge and skills in order to defend our members. Janice's impressive abilities have made her a respected MEA Steward.

Thank you Janice for all of your hard work and your tireless efforts to protect and uphold the rights of MEA members.



## Volunteer of the Year

Kathryn Campbell

Due to her dedication, service and many contributions on behalf of MEA

members, Kathryn Campbell has been recognized as the 2014 MEA Volunteer of the Year Award.

We appreciate her tireless efforts and outstanding commitment to her colleagues at the City of San Diego and to her Union. Her service as a Board member requires significant professional and personal commitment, and she always goes above and beyond the call to lend a hand. Kathryn is the first to volunteer for Union activities, political activities and events of all types where she can support the cause.

Thank you Kathryn for your countless contributions which have greatly benefited MEA and its membership!



## Board Member of the Year

Francine Howell

Congratulations to

Francine Howell for being named the 2014 MEA Board Member of the Year Award.

We recognize and appreciate her outstanding commitment to her colleagues at the City of San Diego and to her Union in her role on MEA's Board of Directors. In addition, Francine goes above and beyond the call with her service as Chief Steward and as a member of the Executive Committee of MEA's Board.

Thank you Francine for all you do for MEA and for your fellow San Diego City employees!



# *Celebrating National Dispatchers' Week*

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 Police, Fire, Environmental Services and Station 38 who do so much, often as anonymous heroes, throughout the year.

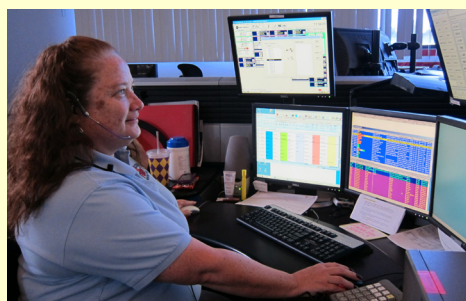
Dispatchers serve as the first and most critical link between

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.

Even with the stress associated with the daily demands of the job, dispatchers perform their duties with an uncanny ability to stay focused and dedicated to the acute needs of the caller. 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!





# The Ultimate Gift

MEA member and police dispatcher, Jeff Monis, is accustomed to providing back up support to the San Diego Police Department's officers. Yet when he was the one in need, he wasn't prepared for the overwhelming support that he received from Officer Ivan Sablan.



After being on dialysis for three years, Monis was in desperate need of a kidney transplant. Although the two did not know one another, Officer Sablan stepped up to be the kidney donor. According to Sablan, he didn't hesitate to help Monis, especially when he thought about the ages of Monis' children, "He's got kids that he can play with, enjoy. I'm an old guy. I've already done that with my kids!" Monis was blown away with Sablan's generosity and had to hold back tears as he thought about his second chance at life. "A perfect stranger; I never thought in a million years it would ever happen," Monis said.

Sablan and Monis underwent surgery a few weeks ago at UC San Diego Medical Center. The kidney

transplant went well and both men are in the recovery process.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, there are more than 96,000 Americans who are on the waiting list for a kidney. Each year, fewer than 17,000 people receive that desperately needed kidney. Sadly, every day 13 people die while on the waiting list for a kidney.

If you are thinking about becoming a kidney donor, the National Kidney Foundation first encourages you to read everything that you can about the outcomes, risks and benefits of the donation process. They also ask that you think about your reasons for wanting to donate, and to not only consider the effect that it would have on your recipient, but also the emotional, physical and financial impact that it would

have on you and your family. After you have weighed the options, and you decide that you would like to donate a kidney, you are encouraged to contact transplant centers (hospitals that perform transplant operations) in your area. To find a list of all U.S. transplant centers, please go to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' website at <http://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/members/search.asp>.

If you are not able to be a donor or you decide that organ donation isn't right for you, you can still help those who are waiting for a transplant. Some other ways that you can make a difference include being a donor after your death, donating blood (which saves lives every day) and/or join the bone marrow registry.



Jeff Monis and Officer Sablan's story demonstrates the depth of human generosity and it encourages each of us to look beyond ourselves in order to help

and support those around us. Our deepest gratitude goes out to Officer Sablan for his selfless act of kindness that has saved one of our Union family members.



## GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE!

## BE A LIVING KIDNEY DONOR

# 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!



## Maureen Hall

I started working for the City in 1980 in Police Communications as a Dispatcher 2. Though in the more than thirty years that I worked for the City, I have also worked in the Purchasing Division, Engineering & Capital Projects and in Water Conservation. I can honestly say that I loved my job in Water Conservation. I loved my work, the people I worked with and my supervisors. I loved all my jobs in the City, and my heart will always be with SDPD, but I am really going to miss Water Conservation.

There are so many memories (both good and bad) that I will always remember. Losing Officers Ebeltoft and Tiffany and the McDonalds Massacre will be with me forever. Having my co-workers in Engineering give me a wedding shower and having Water Conservation give me a grandma shower will be joys I'll never forget.

On my last day in Police Communications, the *Union Tribune* came down and did a story on the 911 system. The next morning, I awoke to read on the front page of the paper, "Who Are You Going to Call" and then saw my picture. It was so cool!

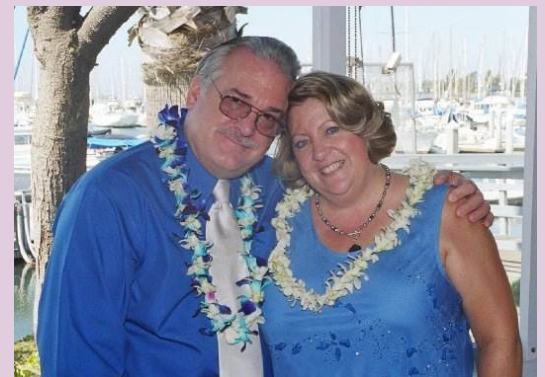
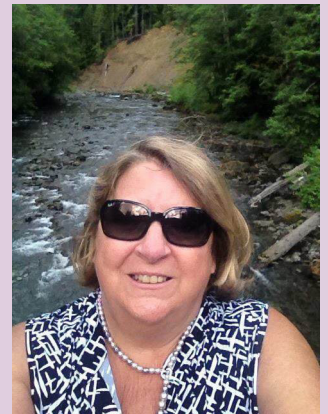
I will also remember a certain staff meeting when we were celebrating birthdays. At that time, we were on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of 600 B Street and we had a pretty serious roach problem. There we were, enjoying cake and going through the agenda when out from the corner of the ceiling came a HUGE flying roach and it flew right into a cake which was being held by our Senior Clerk. She immediately screamed and threw her cake up in the air where it landed, in pieces, on several of us. Another funny memory was celebrating an Administrative Professionals Day at a restaurant. I bit into a roll when my tooth hit a hardened piece of uncooked dough tearing my tooth out of my mouth and straight onto the plate of – you guessed it – the SAME Senior Clerk. Poor Suzanne.



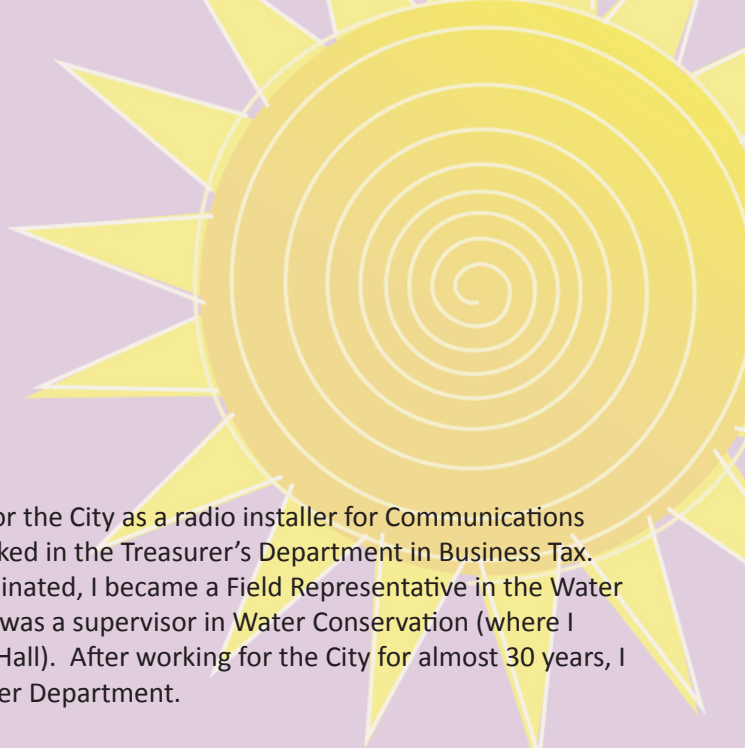
I have had some amazing co-workers throughout the years. In Water Conservation, however, we are more of a family than co-workers. We had Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheons together, we exchanged gifts, we celebrated monthly birthdays, we had summer functions and much to our delight, we had baby shower after baby shower. There is something called "The Conservation Curse" in Water Conservation. When people leave, they almost always come back! I left for 6 weeks before I came back, and one of my co-workers only lasted a day in another department before returning to Water Conservation.

My husband, Daniel Hall, retired from the City 2 years ago. We are looking forward to travelling a great deal more. We've already spent 10 days in Orlando and 5 days in Indian Wells. We have a house in Washington State and we plan to spend several months a year up there.

Although I'm looking forward to having more free time to spend with my family, I am definitely going to miss my family at the City, serving my customers, my daily lunches with my co-worker Jana Vierola and my monthly lunches with my best friend Carole O'Hanlon from Comptrollers. And I'm going to miss my supervisor Chris Robbin's trivia. NEVER play trivia with Chris!







## Corky Patterson

In 1986, I started working for the City as a radio installer for Communications (Electrical). I have also worked in the Treasurer's Department in Business Tax. After that position was eliminated, I became a Field Representative in the Water Department. From there, I was a supervisor in Water Conservation (where I met the amazing Maureen Hall). After working for the City for almost 30 years, I retired from the Storm Water Department.

Throughout the years, I have had some great co-workers and bosses. I really enjoyed working with Ken Morrison who was my supervisor in Water. One day, he took me out and showed me "well witching" which is when you use what looks like coat hanger-like rods in order to locate water. We were able to find a lot of missing water meters that had been buried underground. Later on, I was in the desert with my sister and dad and we were in need of water. My sister tried the method that Ken had taught me, and sure enough, we found water!

I will also remember Tanisha King in Storm Water. I don't know what I would have done without her; she was always such a great support. Charles Butler was also a character that I won't soon forget. He is so down to earth and a logical thinker. I'll definitely miss our talks and breakfast breaks.

Although my co-workers were great, so were the citizens that I came in contact with. I really loved educating the public on storm water issues. Yet even when I had to fine someone, often times, the person wasn't mad and was actually glad to have a better understanding of the environmental impacts of discharge.

With retirement, I'll be able to do a lot more traveling. I really want to visit Montana, Wyoming and Utah. Ten years ago, I took a motorcycle trip across the United States, up to Canada and we ended up in New York. During that trip, I felt like I was in the movie, Easy Rider. Now I want to take that trip again!

I'm not one to stay inside the house, so I'd also like to boogie board and swim a great deal more. I just love being in the ocean. If I eventually do get bored, I'll probably join a group like Surfrider or Coast Keeper.

Even though I'm looking forward to the flexibility that retirement brings, I will miss the day-to-day contact with my co-workers and the public. I just loved talking with citizens who truly cared about their surroundings. The public and my co-workers made my job so rewarding and I will certainly miss them all.

# MEA members Making Us Proud

## Recognizing Alex Davis

Recently, Alex offered exceptional customer service to the family of a young woman whose car went off the road and ended up upside down in the drainage ditch in front of the Canyonside Recreation Center. Alex was extremely helpful to the young woman's family who was very concerned about retrieving her belongings from the car, once they knew their daughter was okay. Alex reassured the family that he would help and he acted quickly in assisting the police and tow truck drivers. He was also able to retrieve the personal items from the car while the family was with their daughter at the hospital.

## Shout out to Monique White Carter

You are a rock star! Definitely the best customer service I have received from a government agency... Rock on and continue to do what you do! Your bosses should be happy to have you!

Kenneth Aguilar  
Customer

## Kudos to Vicky Hara and Victor Johnson

I just wanted to thank you for the wonderful opportunity to run futsal at the municipal gym. I really enjoy and appreciate working with you and Victor at the gym. Victor is doing a fantastic job and is such a pleasure to work with.

Sincerely,  
Karleen Driggs, Executive Director,  
Soccer Kids America

## Thanks to Cindy Rose Catapia

Dear Cindy Rose,  
Thank you for your help and information. It is truly a breath of fresh air to find someone so amiable and personable such as yourself...Thank you again for your time and help!

Jonatan Jatombliansky  
Steele Group Realty

## Congratulations to Customer Service Representatives Amy Hill,

## Mai-Lan Le, Maria Solorio, Tynisha Gentry and Patricia Cruz

*Customers have thanked all five representatives for their patience, knowledge and exceptional customer service skills. The customers also mentioned that each representative had a positive, can do attitude, even when the situation required a lot of time. Keep up the great work!*

## Recognizing the Carmel Valley Recreation Center Staff

Hi Sarah,  
I would like to take the time to let you know that I really enjoy working with your area staff. Salome (Martinez) is a great director; in difficult situations, she is always willing to work for a solution. Regarding Jerry (Abbott), Brett (Stanley) and Mike (Stark), they are always smiling, willing to lend a hand if I need help with a table, open the door if my hands are full, and just very pleasant all the way around.

## Welcome to the MEA Family!



Congratulations to MEA staff member, Nichole Rice, on her new addition. She and her family grew a little bigger with the birth of Olivia Belle Johnson. Olivia weighed 7 lbs. 6 oz. and was 19 ¾ inches long.



MEA member Meghan Cannis and her family welcomed home Reece Cannis. Little Reece is growing quickly and he's already cut his third tooth and just started crawling!



# 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.**



MEA retiree, Art Brown, took his Viewpoint on a trip to Bettles, Alaska, 35 miles north of the Arctic Circle, to see and photograph the Northern Lights.



Phet Guiney brought along her Viewpoint on a mission trip to Taiwan.

While there, she visited the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial in Taipei.



Liz Tarnove remembered to take her Viewpoint while touring Florence, Italy.

## Catastrophic 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!

### Betty Heilig

I work as a Library Clerk with the City of San Diego. I have been going through a difficult time physically as I was recently diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) creating nerve weakness in my legs, as well as back problems. Due to not being able to walk and dealing with constant back pain, I am currently on LTD for one-year from a position I thoroughly enjoyed with the North University Library.

Due to the foregoing, it necessitates many medical appointments with physicians, specialists, acupuncturists, massage therapists, physical therapy, etc., thereby exhausting whatever time I had on the books. Unfortunately, in order for me to sustain a quality of life, these appointments are truly necessary.

Lastly, it is not my style to ask for anything. However, in view of my dire situation, I am humbly asking for a contribution of time if any of you are able and willing to donate to me. I sincerely thank you in advance and greatly appreciate your prayers and support as well.

God Bless you all.

### Pamela Peterson

I'm currently working out of Traffic Division as a Parking Enforcement Officer. In January, my family was given the devastating news that my mother was battling cancer for the third time.

My mother's cancer has been diagnosed as terminal. My leave time is quickly depleting as I care for her. I am humbly asking for any donations, and every little bit counts. I graciously appreciate any help that you can provide, as well as your thoughts and prayers.

Thank you in advance for any hours that you can spare and God bless.

### Lilibeth Barcelona

I work in the Retirement Office. My father has been going through a difficult time with his illness. Most recently, he was placed in the hospital and has been in critical condition.

I have requested that a catastrophic leave bank be opened in order to get assistance from my City colleagues. Any donation of hours would be appreciated.

## new MEA members

Summer Adleberg  
Patricia Allen  
Stephanie Allen  
Hanadi Arjan  
Sonny Bautista  
Nellia Bavaki  
Carol Beam  
Omar Beltran  
Andrea Blas  
Stephen Boeh  
Lilia Bowman  
Allison Brownlee  
Rochelle Burright  
Tim Cannon  
Cynthia Cecil  
Alberto Cisneros-Vidal  
Kelley Clark  
Lauren Council  
David DeLaTorre  
Wendy Embick  
Anita Eng  
Rachel Freitas  
Craig Frisbie  
Arturo Galvez  
Michael Garcia  
Christopher Gehrki  
Daniel Gonzalez  
Icela Gonzalez  
Jessica Gonzalez  
Maria Gonzalez  
Melissa Gonzalez  
Linda Graham  
Christina Hernandez  
Graciela Hernandez  
Michael Hill  
Lisa Johnson  
Jasmin Kaeser  
Bouthayna Khalil  
Roxanne Kotzebue  
Ming Lai  
Caylyn Lanzl  
Erin Lea-Endrelunas  
Louise Lopez  
Nenet McGoyne  
Eileen McNeil

Margarita Medina  
Louis Merlin  
Ana Messina  
Bianca Monterrosa  
Rosella Moreno  
Kymeshia Morris  
Angel Murillo  
Leslie Nanninga  
Christian Adam Napalan  
Michael Natisin  
Alejandro Navarro  
Jorge Ortega  
Mia Osorio  
Eugene Ovruchesky  
Pines Pakingan  
Robert Patmon  
Kimberly Patton  
Noor Paulos  
Casey Pilkinton  
Colette Redon  
Beverly Richardson  
Noraldoyda Rivera  
Rowena Ronsairo  
Haining Schoeneman  
Brendan Sheehan  
Marie Sheffield  
Cynthia Heide Sison  
Daniel Sowersby  
Melissa Strong  
Kevin Sullivan  
Alyson Talbot  
Olga Tanja  
Bobby Towers  
Valentin Vega  
Maria Villanueva  
Kara Walker  
Ryan Warmuth  
Eduardo Wells  
Emir Williams  
Avram Yu  
Lois Yum





# MEA Discount Tickets for Members

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

Discount Ticket	MEA Price	Regular Price
San Diego Zoo Deluxe Package		
Adults	<b>\$39.00</b>	\$46.00
Children (Ages 3-11)	<b>\$30.50</b>	\$36.00
San Diego Safari Park Deluxe Package		
Adults	<b>\$39.00</b>	\$46.00
Children (Ages 3-11)	<b>\$30.50</b>	\$36.00
Legoland		
2 Day Pass	<b>\$59.00</b>	\$78.00
2 Day Hopper Pass	<b>\$68.00</b>	\$97.00
K1 Speedway (Must be 4'11")	<b>\$15.00</b>	\$25.95
AMC Unrestricted	<b>\$8.00</b>	
Reading	<b>\$7.50</b>	
Regal Restricted	<b>\$7.00</b>	
Regal Unrestricted	<b>\$8.00</b>	

*Prices subject to change without notice*

## New ONLINE ticket program for Sea World and Six Flags Magic Mountain!

Visit our website, [www.sdmea.org](http://www.sdmea.org) to purchase and print tickets for Sea World and Six Flags Magic Mountain...all from the convenience of your own computer!

### September

- 1: MEA Closed for Labor Day
- 4: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 7: National Grandparents Day
- 10: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 23: Steward meeting
- 25: Executive Committee meeting

### October

- 2: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 8: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 16: Boss's Day
- 23: Executive Committee meeting
- 28: Steward meeting
- 31: Halloween

### November

- 2: Daylight Savings Time ends
- 4: Election Day
- 6: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 11: MEA closed for Veteran's Day
- 12: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 25: Steward meeting
- 27: MEA closed for Thanksgiving

### December

- 4: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 10: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 25: MEA closed Christmas through New Year's Day

### January

- 1: New Year's Day
- 8: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 14: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 19: Martin Luther King Day
- 22: Executive Committee meeting
- 27: Steward meeting

### February

- 2: Groundhog Day
- 5: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 11: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 14: Valentine's Day
- 16: Presidents' Day
- 24: Steward meeting
- 26: Executive Committee meeting



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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 Lora Folsom at (619) 264-6632.



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