



San Diego Municipal Employees Association

Quarterly Newsletter
January - March 2010

viewpoint



In the midst of a storm, MEA Executive Board Member Bill Craig locates his sight to begin a survey at Miramar Landfill



on the cover

Bill Craig has been with the City for 28 years and has worked as an Associate Land Surveyor for Environmental Services for the past seven years.

He joined MEA in 1982 and was elected to the Board of Directors in 2006.

Currently Bill serves on MEA's Executive Board, Scholarship Committee, Health & Welfare Committee and chairs the Communications and Publications Committee.



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President's Message

It's hard to believe that my first year as MEA President has already passed. Our union family has experienced a lot of obstacles and trials this past year, but we pulled

together and made sound decisions that only strengthened our resolve and prepared us for future fights.

Looking back on 2009, there were numerous accomplishments that our union should be very proud of. However, there were several that I am especially proud of and would like to highlight and acknowledge the individuals who made them happen.

This past year has been financially challenging for us all. MEA sought to alleviate some of the financial strain by trimming its own budget in order to reduce the cost of member dues. MEA scrutinized all of its costs and aggressively eliminated expenses that were not absolutely crucial to the daily functions of the office. In doing so, MEA cut \$325,000 from its annual budget, resulting in members saving an average of 11% in dues.

Coming off a year where we did not have a signed contract with the City, and the same old song coming out of City Hall that "We have no money for employees" blues, we

knew it would be challenging to even maintain the compensation we had previously fought so hard for. We all experienced the sting when the City asked employees to cut 6% from their pay checks. Through long and arduous negotiations with the City, a two year agreement was reached in which MEA members, not the City, were able to choose how the 6% reduction would be assessed while preserving other important benefits that the City proposed to take.

Though it had not been done in more than 20 years, the Board took on the challenge of hiring a new general manager. The Board was very aware that this leadership position would affect the shape and goals of MEA for years to come. With the gravity of such an important decision in mind, a nation-wide search was conducted which yielded an array of well-qualified candidates. After a three month search and interviewing process, the Board agreed that Michael Zucchet had the best qualifications, experience and motivation to implement the vision and policies adopted by the Board of Directors. We are so fortunate to have Mike working for us and know we'll continue to successfully fight the good fight with him at the helm.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing MEA Officers and Executive Committee. These individuals have come together with the collective goal of working for, and on behalf of, our MEA family. They have done an outstanding job and I look forward to working with them in 2010.



We Want Your Feedback

The Viewpoint is your magazine and we welcome your ideas and suggestions. Please don't hesitate to contact Lora Folsom at (619) 264-6632 if you would like to submit a letter, article, photograph or upcoming event notice. Submissions must be received two weeks before the publication month (e.g. March 15 for the April issue).

Officers 2008-2010

Tony Ruiz, III	President
Bob Cronk	1st Vice President
Jan Lord	2nd Vice President
Candi Mitchell	Treasurer
Kyle Wiggins	Secretary

Executive Committee 2009-2011

Mark Chryslar	Development Services
William Craig	Environmental Services
Lisa Goehring	Water
Francine Howell	City Attorney
Steven Ramirez	Environmental Services
Greg Woods	Treasurer

Board of Directors 2009-2011

Ananta Baidya	Development Services
Juan Bailgad	Engineering & Capital Projects
Sheila Beale	City Clerk
Ron Brown	MWWD
Eleuterio Buquiran	Water
Isabelle Camacho	Engineering & Capital Projects
Samuel Cerrato	Library
Rebecca Cesena	Park & Recreation
Mark Chryslar	Development Services
Stephanie Clark	City Attorney
Shamellia Cooper	General Services
William Craig	Environmental Services
Robert Cronk	Library
Alice Daniels	Purchasing & Contracting
Mary Enyeart	Police
Julie Estill	Police
Jean Evans	Retirement
John Fisher	Development Services
Lisa Goehring	Water
Howard Greenstein	Planning
Connie Higgins	Police
Carmell Honeycutt	Water
Francine Howell	City Attorney
Graham Hufford	Engineering & Capital Projects
Susan Hurst	Treasurer
Kimberly Kahn	Fire
Jan Lord	Customer Service
David Lugo	Park & Recreation
Pete Lynch	Development Services
Chun Chi Ma	Library
Gabrielle Mead	Police
Joseph Miesner	Library
Candi Mitchell	Water
Helen Phillips	Retirees
John Quigley	MWWD
Steve Ramirez	Environmental Services
Tony Ruiz III	Water
Leslie Simmons	Library
John Sylvester	Development Services
Susan Taylor	Real Estate Assets
Deanna Walker	City Attorney
Kyle Wiggins	Police
Karen Witherspoon	Police
Greg Woods	Treasurer

MEA Stewards

Mark Chryslar	Chief Steward
Michele Alano	Administration
Maurice Brown	Engineering & Capital Projects
Shamellia Cooper	General Services
Alice Daniels	Purchasing & Contracts
Tina Davis	City Clerk
Connie Higgins	Police
Francine Howell	City Attorney
Graham Hufford	Engineering & Capital Projects
Renee Kinninger	Development Services
Ramone Lewis	Administration
Jan Lord	Human Resources
Gabrielle Mead	Police
Tony Ruiz III	Water
Matthew Sanders	Police
Janice Stevenson	City Attorney
Mark Wiedenhoff	Environmental Services
Greg Woods	Treasurer



City employees have had a tumultuous five years, and 2009 was obviously no different. The City of San Diego continues to find itself in the throes of chronic budget deficits, service cuts, wage cuts, layoffs and other challenges, all of which are exacerbated by the dishonest (and often times malicious) rhetoric that spews from some politicians, media outlets, and members of the public. About the only positive in these "interesting times" is that there is some rational hope that the City is near the bottom of its fiscal instability.

Looking ahead to 2010, I think employees can continue to expect rough seas however. On the one hand, MEA-represented employees are very fortunate to not be at the bargaining table during these difficult times, thanks to last year's successful negotiation of a two-year MOU. On the other hand, the City continues to balance its structurally underfunded budget by cutting essential employees and City services.

Perhaps someday City officials might actually consider making the citizens of San Diego simply pay their fair share for the services they receive, much like every other municipality in California. But given that 2010 is another election year, that type of common sense approach to the budget shortfalls might once again be too much to expect.

Instead, we continue to be bombarded by elected officials succumbing to the politics of the day by announcing their passionate intention to "reform" (read: take away) our pension and health benefits, even though it is the City's failure to fund promised benefits over the last several decades that has created the problem—not the benefits themselves.

Retiree healthcare will continue to be target number one for many City leaders. DROP is always an old favorite for some, while managed competition is the new kid on the block. Suffice to say you will be hearing a lot more about these issues in the coming months, but in any and all cases know that MEA and our legal counsel will continue to fight to protect what has already been contractually promised to you.

On a happier and more optimistic note, let me say how honored I am to be at MEA and how thankful I am for your support in moving the organization forward. MEA is already a strong union with a lot of positives going for it, as well as several areas of untapped potential, all of which makes me excited and extremely hopeful about the future of your union.

Working with your elected union leadership, we have spent the last several months trimming staff and other expenses at MEA in order to reduce your dues by more than 10%. We have also made the organization more transparent in every way, and refocused union expenditures back into areas that protect your rights, enhance your ability to do your job well and to be properly compensated. These are the core missions of your union, and our budget expenditures and staff assignments now reflect that.

With respect to member communications, hopefully you have already seen a difference in the past few months. Communication is a two way street, as they say, and we need to be more communicative with our members and vice versa. We have a new electronic communication system that alerts you in a timely way to important news and announcements. We have an updated and improved website that continues to undergo substantial changes that will be unveiled

in the next few months. We are getting back to worksite visits, such as our recent decision to personally hand out copies of our new MOUs to each of your worksites rather than simply dropping them in the mail. And our new and improved *Viewpoint* publication represents another aspect of our renewed focus on informing and seeking input from our membership in a more professional and comprehensive way.

As we look to the future, I think you will also be pleased to see additional improvements in the way we conduct ourselves on your behalf. We will spend more time educating City leaders about the issues that affect your job and will advocate more effectively on your behalf at City Hall. In addition, we will have a significantly larger presence when it comes to political action, both in terms of candidate races in the City of San Diego as well as City ballot propositions and initiatives put before the voters. From my perspective, MEA's lack of presence in these areas represents its biggest fields of "untapped potential" that I referred to earlier.

Thankfully, there is a lot at our union that is already very solid and only needs to be protected. Your reorganized and refocused MEA staff members are extremely competent and have a long and successful track record representing you both at the bargaining table and in grievances and disciplines. Your legal counsel, Ann Smith, is recognized as the best labor lawyer in the State of California, and her record on your behalf both at the negotiating table and in the court room demonstrates that label as something of an understatement. Your union finances are also very strong, with substantial reserves saved for legal and political battles in the future.

Despite the bleak fiscal times we live in at the City of San Diego, I sincerely believe that MEA's brightest days are ahead. I am honored to be a part of this transition, and I welcome your support, feedback, constructive criticism, and partnership in that effort in the coming months and years. Thank you and please stay strong!

Seven Justices for Five Innocents

Ann Smith has yielded her space in this issue of *The Viewpoint* so Dan Coffee's recent San Diego Daily Transcript column could be reprinted in its entirety. MEA was thrilled to get the recent news from the California Supreme Court that former MEA Vice President John Torres and longtime MEA member, Sharon Wilkinson, were finally and completely vindicated in their case brought about in the heat of the pension madness in San Diego.

In the next edition of *The Viewpoint*, Ann will be back with an update on the ongoing discussions related to retiree healthcare as well as the ongoing areas of pension litigation.

In the meantime, here is what Dan wrote about John and Sharon's recent vindication:

Five innocent people, wrongly accused, politically vilified, and whose lives were destroyed by the mere act of prosecution, were partially redeemed Jan. 25 by the unanimous opinion of California's seven-member Supreme Court in *Lexin v Superior Court*.

Remember the names of the innocent, good and decent people whose lives were utterly destroyed for no proper reason: Cathy Lexin, Mary Elizabeth Vattimo, Teresa Aja Webster, Sharon Kay Wilkinson and John Anthony Torres. Be reminded that, but for the political fates and the grace of God, go any one of you reading this column, or, for that matter, anyone about whom you care.

The "crime" of those five: They were in the wrong place at the wrong time doing public service as required of them by the law and City Charter; but, public money was running short. "Effie, bring me my tar 'n pitchfork, thar's public employees ta be distroy'n," was apparently the guiding sentiment in San Diego's panic of 2004.

The panic of prosecutorial officials had all the earmarks of a desperate, rioting street mob looting stores, but executed with panache and legal formalities, misusing institutions intended to protect justice, not exact a heavy five-finger

price discount via a grandiose smash-and-grab scheme. Have we been experimenting to discover how far justice can fall from its original charter?

Let me repeat: Five innocent lives were destroyed; five careers were ended; each gave up five years of the "threescore and 10" allotted to each human in the King James Bible. It didn't end there: Their parents, children, friends, loved ones and spouses also lived a horror as news people and prancing political hordes trampled five reputations, besmirched their honor, and repeated ad nauseam the nonsense belching from the Aguirre-run City Attorney's office, a source of legal effluvium in endless supply. The words "illegal benefits" were on lips hither and yon.

To be abundantly clear: Elected District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis was wrong to charge these people based on incomprehensible, experimental "crimes." They committed no crime, but they were wrongly, mercilessly and publicly punished. Mincing words at this stage to save the political feelings of those in power would undercut the severity of the injustice done to these five innocent people; political niceties will play no part in my summary here, come what may.

Mike Aguirre: You remember him -- the elected, "independent," city attorney responsible for overspending public funds, losing cases, excessive outside counsel costs, hiding employees on the city books, bad legal analyses, constant press conferences, serious ethical gaffs, and an astonishing range of violated rules. He brought you imagined angst sufficient to justify a sliding scale of justice. These innocent people were pursued, in large part, because he and his advisers had found a political horse to ride to victory -- to save the public from paying their bills. Who doesn't like that?

In response, many in the media, and therefore the public, were swept up in a self-serving passion to find someone to blame for purportedly imprudent public decisions which cost money; convenience overwhelmed the legal community. Together, these are a formula which underpins anarchy and against which our legal system must stand stalwart.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, the official but "enigmatic Latin motto appearing on the seal of the Department of Justice (is) 'Qui Pro Domina Justitia Sequitur.'" They explain this as: The attorney "who prosecutes on behalf of the Lady Justice." Sadly, the unofficial federal motto appears closer to: "Rah, rah, me too, me too." Now we are offered justice rivaling an ego-driven, intellectualized sporting event.

Former United States Attorney Carol Lam likewise indicted a group of defendants in connection with pension decisions, including some of the five named above. Inexplicably, she included the General Counsel for San Diego's City Employee Retirement System. One key witness: Diann Shipione, apparently a personal financial adviser of Lam's. From its inception, the federal case appeared exceptionally vague, flimsy and, frankly, politically suspect. Each court hearing has intensified that appearance. Federal District Court Judge Benitez has publicly observed on several occasions that he would dismiss the case against the federal defendants, but lacks a procedural device. Apparently having demoted the objective of "doing justice," Team U.S.-Attorney repeatedly and fervently riles against dismissal; no doubt, a dismissal would be publicly embarrassing for them. What will happen in federal court now the California Supreme Court has spoken? Nothing?! We're here to win!?

The U.S. Supreme Court recently asked lawyers in the Skilling case to brief whether the federal "honest services" statute, which also underpins the majority of charges in San Diego's federal case, is or is not unconstitutionally vague. If unconstitutional, what will Team U.S.-Attorney do to serve justice?

One modest reminder: Lady Justice is not sport.

Dan Coffee's opinion column on San Diego can be read every Friday in the *San Diego Daily Transcript*.



Tony Ruiz III
President
Water



Bob Cronk
1st Vice President
Library



Jan Lord
2nd Vice President
Human Resources



Candi Mitchell
Treasurer
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Kyle Wiggins
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Police



Ananta Baidya
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Services



Juan Baligad
Engineering &
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Sheila Beale
City Clerk



Ron Brown
MWWD



Eleuterio Buquiran
Water



Issy Camacho
Engineering &
Capital Projects



Samuel Cerrato
Library



Becky Cesena
Park & Recreation



Mark Chrysler
Development
Services



Stephanie Clark
City Attorney



Shamellia Cooper
General Services



Bill Craig
Environmental
Services



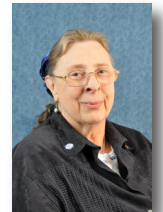
Alice Daniels
Purchasing &
Contracting



Mary Enyeart
Police



Julie Estill
Police



Jean Evans
Retirement



John Fisher
Development
Services



Lisa Goehring
Water



Howard Greenstein
City Planning



Connie Higgins
Police



Carmel Honeycutt
Water



Francine Howell
City Attorney



Graham Hufford
Engineering &
Capital Projects



Susan Hurst
Treasurers



David Lugo
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Joe Miesner
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Helen Phillips
Retiree
Representative



John Quigley
MWWD



Steve Ramirez
Environmental
Services



Leslie Simmons
Library



John Sylvester
Development
Services



Susan Taylor
Real Estate
Assets



Deanna Walker
City Attorney



Karen Witherspoon
Police



Greg Woods
Treasurers

Let's Celebrate...

The Stars are Shining at MEA

MEA would love to acknowledge its members' many awards, promotions and special moments.

Please contact Lora Folsom at MEA at 619.264.6632 if you are celebrating a birthday, promotion, award, wedding, birth, etc.

We want to celebrate with you and let our MEA family know of the significant moments in your life.



Congratulations to Arlene Frank for her promotion to Senior Wastewater Operations Supervisor.

Arlene has worked for the City for 32 years.

It's a Boy!!!

Proud parents, Eric and Allison Weals welcomed their first child, Frederick John Weals at 2:09pm on November 18th, 2009.

Baby Johnny was 19 inches and weighed 5 lb 13 oz. This is the first grandchild for MEA member, **Jack Canning**.



Baby Johnny



MEA member Jack Canning pictured here with his new grandson, Frederick John Weals

SHOW US YOUR VIEWPOINT

In the future, The Viewpoint will have a section featuring MEA members photographed with their Viewpoint in different (and hopefully exotic) locations. 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.

We look forward to your submissions!

A special
birthday wish
for the following
MEA Board members and
staff:

January

1st Helen Phillips

4th Issy Camacho

27th John Sylvester

February

1st Francine Howell

13th Kelly Cruz

18th Debbie Quinones

March

5th Howard Greenstein

17th John Quigley

26th Gwen Phillips

29th Brian Ballas

31st Dawn Kealaluhi



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!

Jesusa (Susan) Gonzales

I will be undergoing knee surgery and I don't have any annual leave available. I will be gone for approximately 3 months for recuperation and whatever donations I can collect is really appreciated. Thank you.

Jesusa (Susan) Gonzales
Billing Clerk
San Diego Fire Prevention Bureau

Nick Williams

My name is Nick Williams and I work for the City Attorney's office. Due to a work related injury it has become necessary for me to have knee surgery and unfortunately I don't have enough annual leave for the time needed to recover. I've needed this surgery for over two years and now it has become necessary. Any time that you would be able to donate would be greatly appreciated.

MEA is Working for You!



On January 11th, Police Code Compliance Officers, Police Investigative Aides and Police Service Officers met at the MEA office for an update on the meet and confer process pertaining to civilian PD employees.



Hadi Dehghani, City Personnel Department Director, also spoke at the January 11th meeting to answer members' questions.



After receiving feedback from affected MEA Environmental Services employees, Senior Labor Relations Representative Gwen Phillips organized a second meeting to discuss the 4 day, 10 hour work schedule change.



Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz met with Fire dispatchers to discuss management proposals related to staffing policies.



Ann Smith spoke at the January Board meeting to provide a legal update and answered members' questions.



General Manager Mike Zucchet spoke to the attendees (above) at the City of San Diego Retired Employees Association's monthly meeting to discuss the history and future of the retiree healthcare benefit for both retired and current City employees.



Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz met with MEA members and management from Fleet Services to discuss the effects of fleet restructuring at the Fire Repair facility.



Congratulations to former MEA Vice President Jim Baross on being elected as the new president of the City of San Diego Retired Employees Association.

Successful Civil Service Commission Disciplinary Appeals

Terminations Reduced to Suspensions Without Pay

MEA Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz represented a 24 year City employee and Labor Relations Representative Marin Mejia represented a 20 year employee who were both facing termination due to alleged violations of the City's Threat Management Policy found in Administration Regulation 97.10. Prior to the hearing, both representatives spent considerable time meeting with both appellants, reviewing their personnel files and interviewing and subpoenaing some witnesses in order to prepare for the appeal hearing.

The appeal for the 24 year City employee was heard at the Civil Service Commission on July 24th. Following the hearing, Commissioner Edward Fletcher advised his fellow commissioners not to terminate the appellant's employment with the City due to several mitigating factors including the employee's honest and forthcoming testimony, his sincere remorse for his conduct during the incident in question and most importantly, the appellant's length and highly satisfactory tenure with the City. The Commission ruled in favor of the appellant and reduced the judgment from a termination to suspension without pay.

The appeal for the 20 year City employee was heard at the Civil Service Commission on August 12th. Commissioner Kathryn Ashworth presided over the case and acknowledged the appellant's lengthy tenure with the City and his lack of any previous formal disciplinary action. In addition, Commissioner Ashworth disagreed with the City and did not believe it was realistic to assume the employee could have resolved the situation differently. Based on these findings, the commissioner determined that a suspension without pay, rather than termination was warranted in the case.

Two Week Suspension Overturned and Back Pay with 7% Interest Awarded

MEA Senior Labor Relations Representative Gwen Phillips represented an employee faced with a two week suspension for his/her alleged conduct and negligence with City property. The negligence charges were a result of a system failure that caused considerable damage to a UV disinfection system.

Gwen analyzed the merits of the suspension by reviewing all of the supporting documentation, meeting with the employee and witnesses and consulting MEA's attorney. Based on her extensive review, Gwen determined that the charges were not supported by the evidence and that the employee had acted appropriately.

The hearing included exhibits rebutting the evidence (including the finding that policies had been put in place **after** the incident) and testimony from an expert witness who was very familiar with the plant facility where the incident occurred. The expert testified that it would be difficult to identify what could have been done differently to prevent the system failure.

Based on the findings and testimony, the Commission agreed with MEA's position and cited insufficient evidence to find the employee responsible for the system failure. The Commission ruled that no disciplinary action was warranted and awarded the employee the pay lost during the suspension as well as 7% interest.

Termination Reduced to Demotion

Gwen also represented a 20 year City employee who was facing termination at the Civil Service Commission. Leading up to the appeal, Gwen spent hours meeting with the employee, reviewing facts, appealing the termination at the department level, consulting MEA's attorney and even interviewing 20 character witnesses on behalf of the employee. Based on Gwen's analysis, it was evident there were strong grounds to appeal the termination before the Civil Service Commission.

The appeal was heard before the Civil Service Commission on August 13th and 14th. The Commission ruled in favor of the MEA-represented employee. Based on the evidence presented, the Commission agreed with MEA's position that termination was not justified and considered the employee's lengthy tenure and exemplary performance history in reducing the judgment to a demotion.





Success at MEA!

Congratulations to Gwen Phillips for her promotion to Senior Labor Relations Representative at MEA. Gwen has been working hard to represent City employees since 1999.

Congratulations to Marin Mejia for her promotion to Labor Relations Representative at MEA. Marin first started with MEA in 2004 by assisting members with their benefits. We're lucky to have Marin and Gwen on our Labor Relations team!

Know Your Rights

Recently MEA filed a grievance on behalf of one of its members when the employee was required to provide a doctor's note for a sick day, or their timecard would be changed to Red-K, resulting in the employee not being paid. This demand violated Article 18, Sections 8 and 9, titled Annual Leave and Compensatory Time Off. MEA's MOU specifically states,

8. Approved unscheduled annual or sick leave properly used for family, dependent or significant other/co-tenant illnesses shall be considered as a separate category when reviewing employee performance with regard to attendance and/or absenteeism issues and shall not be subject to disciplinary action.

Should the City, for good and sufficient reasons, determine that an employee is abusing this leave provision, the appointing authority may request a bona fide doctor's statement from the employee to substantiate the leave request(s).

Failure to provide documentation, by a mutually agreed upon date, to the appointing authority may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the City's Personnel Regulations.

9. Criteria to be considered in determining leave abuse shall not be limited to stated department/division numerical standards, and must include but not be limited to, length of service, prior attendance record throughout City career, reason for absence, past performance reports, hard to the work unit, leave balances, past discipline, as well as job classification and working conditions.

If disciplinary action for employee leave abuse under this article is proposed which deviates from this criteria, the appointing authority or designee must obtain prior approval from the Labor Relations Manager.

So if you are required to provide documentation of a doctor's visit and do not feel it is warranted, let us know. We are here to protect and enforce your rights!

your MEA reps

Below are your department representatives. MEA Representatives can be reached at 619.264.6632 or 858.300.3888 or via their e-mail address listed below.



Nancy Roberts

nroberts@sdmea.org
Office of Homeland Security
Office of COO
Office of CFO
Office of IBA
Office of the Mayor
Office of Assistant COO
Human Resources
Ethics Commission
Community & Legislative Services
Business Office
Business Operations
Administration



Kelly Cruz

kcruz@sdmea.org
City Clerk
Fire Rescue
General Services
Park & Recreation
Personnel
Retirement
Storm Water



Gwen Phillips

gphillips@sdmea.org
City Planning & Community Investment
Environmental Services
Police
Public Utilities - MWWWD
Purchasing



Brian Balla

bballa@sdmea.org
City Auditor
City Comptroller
City Treasurer
Debt Management
Financial Management
Library
Public Utilities - Water
Stadium



Marin Mejia

mmejia@sdmea.org
City Attorney
Debt Management
Development Services
Engineering & Capital Projects
Real Estate Assets
Risk Management

Pete Lynch

Development Services Department

Pete was elected to MEA's Board of Directors in September of 2009. Currently he serves on both the Bylaws and Political Action Committees. Thanks Pete for your time and service!

Can you provide a brief history of yourself - where you were born, where you went to school, some jobs you had before working for the City, names of your family, age of any children, etc.

I was born the youngest of seven children in Fresno, California. Before I was a year old my family relocated to Northern California. We moved to San Diego in 1976 and I graduated from Platt College in 1983 with a certificate in drafting. Right away I took a job with San Diego Gas and Electric.

Three years later I was working in the defense industry with McDonnell Douglas, which lasted until I came to work for the City in 1989. I married my wife Linda in 1984 and we presently live in Carmel Mountain Ranch with our dogs, Benny and Roxy.



Any good stories of you and your siblings growing up?

Seriously too many to list. And some I definitely shouldn't list. Let's just say with five of the seven siblings being male, it's easy to imagine the stupidity. Fortunately we're all still alive, so I guess my mother did something right.

What is your job title and City department?

Development Project Manager II, Development Services Department

What brought you to the City?

After working in the highly secretive environment of the defense industry, I wanted to get back to the public sector. But, even more important were the pay and benefits offered by the City. Quite frankly, earning a pension was a huge motivator.

How long have you worked for the City?

Just over 20 years. I started working for the City on September 11, 1989 and have been with Development Services Department the entire time.

What are your job responsibilities at the City?

A Development Project Manager acts as a single point of contact for development projects. We ensure that reviews are completed on time, all conflicts are resolved and the appropriate fees and deposits have been assessed. I specifically specialize in large construction permit projects such as Petco Park, the airport expansion and downtown high-rises.

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

Ironically I had never stepped foot inside the "building department" until the day I interviewed for the position of Plan Review Specialist. I came to work totally clueless. The first week was a blur. I didn't have any preconceived notions and was completely open minded. This may sound sentimental, but I am so grateful that I have a job serving the public. Ensuring building safety is a noble cause and I've felt that way since that very first week.



What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I spend most of my spare time at home with my wife and our dogs. Recently we've been riding our beach cruisers along the bay, which is an excellent way to stay young on so many levels. I love classic cars and motorcycles and although I don't have either at the moment, I do go to a lot of the local shows.

Do you have any hidden talents?

It's been a while, but I can knock out a pretty mean blues riff on the harmonica.

What's the furthest you've ever been away from home?

I spent a few months in Saudi Arabia back in the 70's. My father took a job there as a civil engineer and he was able to bring my mother, brother and I over for the summer. We stopped in a lot of exotic cities along the way.

What is something you'd like MEA members to know about you?

Although I love the entire state of California, San Diego is the best place in the world to live. With pride and commitment those of us who work for this city can honestly make a difference. It may not always be apparent, but we are very privileged to work and live in such a fine city.



Another Successful Year...

MEA's First Vice President, Bob Cronk, and his committee put on another great Adopt-a-Senior event this year.

On December 18th, Councilmember Todd Gloria and MEA Board members and staff presented 50 deserving seniors with stockings containing candy and cookies as well as grocery and drug store gift cards.

Many of these senior volunteers are former City employees who now donate their time and institutional knowledge.

Senior volunteers account for over 1,000 volunteer hours each month, field countless calls and assist guests that visit various locations including the City Administration Building and Balboa

Park's Senior Lounge.

This is MEA's 15th year of donating and we look forward to taking part for years to come in order to acknowledge the volunteer efforts of our seniors.



From left to right: Cathleen Higgins, MEA Staff; Candi Mitchell, MEA Treasurer; Bob Cronk, MEA 1st Vice President; Todd Gloria, Councilman; Michael Zucchet, MEA General Manager; Jan Lord, MEA 2nd Vice President; Committee member Becky Cesena; Committee member Bree Hauck



Councilman Todd Gloria and a proud City of San Diego Senior Volunteer



Storm Water Department

With the latest rash of rainy weather, it's fitting that we highlight Storm Water, the department responsible for protecting ocean and bay water quality for the citizens of San Diego. You may be surprised to know that the department wasn't created until July 2008. Up until then, the Pollution Prevention Division and Operations & Maintenance Division were housed in other departments. The Pollution Prevention Division has always been tasked with reducing pollutants in urban runoff and storm water, but until 2008, never had a permanent home. This innovative divisional merge came about in order to be more effective in addressing the changing regulations and tightening of runoff control.

The department has approximately 120 employees that include biologists, planners, engineers, code compliance officers, public information officers and administrative staff. Although Storm Water has a workforce with diverse responsibilities and skills, the entire staff share the same ultimate goals, to protect lives and property, and reduce pollutants in our water ways.



During the recent storms, the department responded to many calls from the public and often worked around the clock (literally) to address the various emergencies due to accidents and flooding. Although Storm Water has reacted swiftly in times of emergencies, they have also been instrumental in implementing proactive measures, such as long range planning, and working with state and federal regulators on storm water policy. For example, in 2009, staff worked diligently to prepare the Tijuana River Valley for the rainy season that is now upon us. The department,



Diana Flores, Anita Koyama, Jorge Ariza, Jim Hook, Celeste Robinson, Ed Rodriguez, Jacque McIlwaine, Jason Edwards, Thomas Abeyta and Antonius Evans

along with an outpouring of local constituents, spoke at City Council meetings to express concerns over water quality in that region's watershed. Storm Water credits their success to the number of residents who took the time to speak in support. In response, the Council issued the necessary permits to allow Storm Water crews to clear the channel in advance of the rain.

The department has also created a pollution prevention campaign called Think Blue, in order to educate the public on their role in reducing pollutants in our beaches and bays. Each year, the program reaches more than

1.2 million residents, 70,000 businesses and numerous government agencies working in the City limits. In addition, City staff are educated on storm drain collection systems, the pollutants that cause beach closures and steps that can be adopted both at work and at home to improve the region's water quality.

Although Storm Water is one of the newest departments in the city, it has quickly become a leader in urban runoff control not only locally, but at both the state and federal level. Especially during this most recent bout of wet weather, it is comforting to know there is a group of hard working individuals who are committed to protecting water quality in San Diego. MEA is proud to represent the dynamic and committed employees in the Storm Water Department. Thank you for all you do!

Special thanks to Jennifer Nichols Kearns for her assistance and department profile.



Elvia Sandoval at the Think Blue booth.



Jason Edwards doing dry weather testing.

SAP, Flex Dollars and Your Paycheck

You may have recently noticed your paycheck looks a little different. With the conversion to SAP the full bi-weekly flex allotment now shows up as income on your paycheck, and the biweekly cost of your benefits are also shown as deductions. These deductions will be in a pre-tax form thus negating the flex allotment and will not affect your net income. Some employees may also see some post-tax deductions, which generally involves domestic partners.

Some members have expressed concern that the new way of showing the flex allotment will cause a tax complication. The only way this would become an issue is if your pre-tax flex

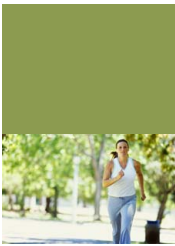
deductions were less than your allotment. This would occur if you put any money into the cash-out option during open enrollment. Cash-out option funds have, and will always be taxed since the IRS deems this as taxable income. This also means that if you took the cash-out option, you will no longer get two large payouts. Instead, the City will provide you with smaller payouts on a bi-weekly basis.

If you feel there is an error in your paycheck or with any deduction, please immediately contact your payroll specialist. If you have additional questions or comments on the new SAP conversion, please email MEA at info@sdmea.org.

new members

Thank you for making our Union strong by joining your City brothers and sisters in their commitment to diligently working on improving the quality of wages, hours and working conditions of those we represent. MEA is proud to have these new members join us:

Alarice King
Brent Peterson
Deanna Navarro
Denise Knighten
Earl Jay Menta
Esmeralda Sanchez
Kenneth Hood
Kenneth Junious
Maile McKeon
Manuel Garcia
Ralph Monroy
Stacey Houg
Susan Vega
Margaret Bartel
Irma Salcedo
Nancy Donnelly
Ricardo Huertas
Kevin Holyfield
Lisa Rutherford
Matthew Tanner



To Your Health Your January Wellness Tips

Resolve to be Healthy in the New Year

The start of the new year is often a time for reflection on the personal changes we want to make in the weeks and months ahead – a welcome chance for a fresh start. Health-related goals are popular New Year's resolutions; to help you get started, here are some ways to get and keep a Healthy You and a Healthy Home!

Enjoy a new year of healthy possibilities!

Healthy You

- Make healthy food choices. Grab a healthy snack such as fruit, nuts, or low-fat cheese.
- Be active. Try simple things such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Be active for at least 2 ½ hours a week.
- Protect yourself from injury or disease by wearing a helmet, sunscreen, or insect repellent when necessary.
- Make sure your vaccinations and screenings are current and schedule a check-up if you haven't seen your doctor for a while.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Be tobacco-free.
- Get enough sleep. Remember that sleep is a necessity, not a luxury.

Healthy Home

- Go green. Reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor, including the basement, and particularly near rooms in which people sleep.
- Make your home safer to prevent falls among children and seniors.
- Keep cleaning products and medication out of the reach of children.
- Have an emergency plan and practice it often.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Did You Know?

Weight loss is consistently among the top three New Year's resolutions. Sharp Health Plan members have access to a variety of weight management programs through Sharp. Learn more about these programs by attending a free orientation. Programs are designed for adults seeking safe, effective and long-term weight loss with medical supervision, in-class instruction, structure and accountability, qualified staff, appetizing food and long-term support.

Orientations are held at locations in Kearny Mesa, East County and Rancho Bernardo. To learn more or to register, call (858) 505-1400.

Best Health
your best. your health. your way.

Stewards Celebrate a Successful Year

On December 22nd, the Steward Committee celebrated another successful year of representing MEA members in the workplace.

MEA stewards faithfully volunteer their time and resources to represent their union colleagues in cases involving written warnings, counselings, performance evaluation and minor grievances.

Before cases are assigned, stewards must participate in a year-long training that equips them with the knowledge and tools to fully understand and defend the rights of MEA employees.

In addition, stewards are given ongoing training to ensure that they continue to hone and improve their representational skills. On average, MEA stewards take on 100 cases a

year, with some lasting several months and even one case that lasted an entire year (thank you to Chief Steward, Mark Chrysler!).

MEA is very proud and grateful to have 18 stewards who contribute an invaluable amount of time and resources to make sure all MEA members are represented in the workplace. Thank you Stewards for serving!



Stewards enjoyed a well-deserved lunch at Joe's Crab shack after taking on over 100 cases in 2009.



Graham Hufford and new Steward Matthew Sanders enjoyed a break from their busy day.



Bree Mead and Alice Daniels chat about the holidays.

Steward of the Year



MEA wants to recognize Steward of the Year, Francine Howell. Francine was voted by her steward peers for this esteemed award. She has been a faithful MEA Steward for almost three years and also serves on the Executive Committee and chairs the Social and Recreation Committee.

Francine attributes her tenure as a steward to her interest in fighting for the rights of employees in the workplace. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her daughter, watching and attending sporting events, traveling and playing basketball and bowling.

From all of us at MEA, thank you Francine and congratulations on being named Steward of the Year.

Golden Share

MEA's Golden SHARE volunteers were busy distributing food and groceries during the weekend before Christmas.

With many struggling to make ends meet during this difficult economic time, Golden SHARE is a great benefit that MEA offers its members.

Golden SHARE is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of food at a substantially reduced cost.

MEA is able to participate in the program due to great volunteers (including the ones photographed) who donate their time to sort and distribute the food, as well as completing additional community service hours which is a requirement of Golden SHARE.

If you are interested in ordering from the monthly menu or would like to volunteer for the program, please go to www.sdmea.org or call the MEA office at (619) 264-6632.



Hard at work on a Saturday morning, MEA kids wake up early to volunteer their time.



Boardmember Ron Brown from MWWD always eager to help at MEA functions.



MEA Boardmembers Issy Camacho from Engineering & Capital Projects and Jean Evans from Retirement greet MEA members with a smile.



Our smallest volunteer does his part to help out.



Marlin Carnell, son of past MEA Treasurer, Tonia Carnell, hard at work on a Saturday morning.



Jeremiah Wilkinson, son of MEA member Cody (pictured below)



MEA member Cody Wilkinson unloads boxes of food in front of the Penn Athletic Center for the Share pick up.



Rhys, son of Boardmember Jackie Mulvey, carefully balances 4 boxes as he unloads the truck for Saturday's pick up.

Announcements

The Executive Committee consists of the five officers (President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary) and six at-large members elected from the Board of Directors.

The six at-large members below were elected to a two year term at the January 2010 Board meeting:

Mark Chrysler-Development Services, Bill Craig-Miramar Landfill Ops, Lisa Goehring-Public Utilities, Francine Howell-City Attorney, Steve Ramirez-Environmental Services, Greg Woods-Treasurer.

The Adopt-a-Senior gifts were presented by Councilmember Todd Gloria at a ceremony in the lobby of the City Administration Building on December 18.

Reports

Tony Ruiz III President

Tony presented a list of accomplishments for 2009 which included:

MEA's budget was trimmed over \$325,000 and member dues were reduced by approximately 11%.

MEA's Negotiating Team negotiated a two year contract.

The General Membership meeting in September celebrating all retirees was well attended and a great meeting.

MEA conducted a nationwide search and hired a new General Manager, Mike Zucchet. We are confident that MEA will move forward.

MEA is close to an agreement on the Managed Competition Guide. The City and MEA were sent back to the bargaining table by the City Council at the impasse hearing. All MEA is seeking is a level playing field in regard to healthcare and contract oversight.

Mike Zucchet General Manager

In December, the City Council voted to accept the Mayor's 18 month budget including cuts to MEA represented positions.

MEA will continue to meet and confer over the affected positions. MEA is the only bargaining unit that has not signed off on the budget.

MOUs will be distributed between January 20th and February 26th. MEA's leadership and staff will be visiting worksites around the city to distribute MOUs. The MOU and distribution dates are on MEA's website.

Tuition reimbursement is a negotiated benefit guaranteed in the MOU and cannot be denied due to a lack of money in the department's budget. Members are to call MEA if their department denies their tuition reimbursement.

Flex benefits will now be appearing on the pay stub as earnings, then as a pre-tax deduction. Take home pay will be slightly less due to the 2010 tax table adjustment.

Committee Reports

Finance

Candi Mitchell, Treasurer

As of the November monthly summary, MEA is under budget

Blood Drive

Steve Ramirez, Chair

Tentative dates for the Blood Drive are June 8, 9, 10 and 15. The committee will also be looking at possibly having quarterly 1-day drives or teaming up with another group, radio station, etc.

Social and Recreation

Francine Howell, Chair

SHARE pickup for February is Saturday, February 27th at Penn Athletic Field.

Communication

Bill Craig, Chair

Met with Jon Hayes regarding the make-over of the website. The website facelift should occur close to March 15th.

Health & Welfare

Bob Cronk, 1st Vice President

Currently there are no applications for assistance

Please call MEA (619-264-6632), a Board member or Bob to report members who are hospitalized, have babies, etc.



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	\$28.00	\$34.00
Children (Ages 3-11)	\$19.50	\$24.00
San Diego Wild Animal Park		
Deluxe Package		
Adults	\$28.00	\$34.00
Children (Ages 3-11)	\$19.50	\$24.00
Sea World Day Pass		
Adults	\$51.00	\$65.00
Children (Ages 3-9)	\$45.50	\$55.00
Legoland		
Adults	\$44.00	\$63.00
Children (Ages 3-11)	\$44.00	\$53.00
Legoland Sea Life Aquarium		
Adults	\$9.00	\$18.95
Children (Ages 3-11)	\$9.00	\$11.95
Six Flags Magic Mountain		
Adults	\$25.00	\$59.99
Children (Under 48")	\$15.00	\$29.99
K1 Speedway (Must be 4'11")	\$15.00	\$25.95
AMC Restricted	\$6.00	
AMC Unrestricted	\$7.50	
Reading	\$6.00	
Regal Restricted	\$6.50	
Regal Unrestricted	\$7.50	

events

February 10, 2010
MEA Board of Directors meeting
MEA Executive Committee meeting

February 15, 2010
MEA closed in observance of President's Day

February 23, 2010
MEA Stewards meeting

February 25, 2010
MEA Executive Committee meeting

March 4, 2010
MEA Finance Committee meeting
MEA Executive Committee meeting

March 10, 2010
MEA Board of Directors meeting
MEA Executive Committee meeting

March 17, 2010
Happy St. Patrick's Day!

March 23, 2010
MEA Stewards meeting

March 25, 2010
MEA Executive Committee meeting

March 31, 2010
MEA office closed in observance of Cesar Chavez

April 1, 2010
MEA Executive Committee meeting

April 14, 2010
MEA Board of Directors meeting
MEA Executive Committee meeting

April 21, 2010
Happy Administrative Professionals Day!

April 27, 2010
MEA Stewards meeting

April 29, 2010
MEA Executive Committee meeting



MEA OFFICES

9620 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 203
San Diego, CA 92123

619.264.6632 or 858.300.3888

WEBSITE

www.sdmea.org

GENERAL EMAIL

info@sdmea.org

BENEFITS INFORMATION

619.677.3952

STAFF

Michael Zucchet
General Manager
mzucchet@sdmea.org

Nancy Roberts
Supervising Labor Relations Representative
nroberts@sdmea.org

Kelly Cruz
Senior Labor Relations Representative
kcruz@sdmea.org

Gwen Phillips
Senior Labor Relations Representative
gphillips@sdmea.org

Brian Balla
Labor Relations Representative
bballa@sdmea.org

Marin Mejia
Labor Relations Representative
mmejia@sdmea.org

Cathleen Higgins
Competition Assistant
chiggins@sdmea.org

Lora Folsom
Communications Coordinator
lfolsom@sdmea.org

Dawn Kealaluhi
Office Manager
dkealaluhi@sdmea.org

Debbie Quinones
Member Service Representative
dquinones@sdmea.org

Nichole Rice
Member Service Representative
nrice@sdmea.org

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Editorial and Graphics Information

Editor
Lora Folsom
(619) 264-6632
lfolsom@sdmea.org

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



9620 Chesapeake Drive, Suite 203
San Diego, CA 92123
619.264.6632 • 858.300.3888 • FAX 858.300.3898
www.sdmea.org