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#### San Diego Municipal Employees Association

Newsletter Spring/Summer 2015

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MEA member Lori Felchlin shows off her workplace view at the San Vicente Dam



#### on the cover

Both Lori Felchlin and Maile Harelt work in Public Utilities Water Systems Operations at the San Vicente Dam.

Lori will be celebrating her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the City this year. Congratulations and thank you Lori for your public service and many contributions to the City of San Diego.

For more information on the other MEA members who are celebrating 25 years with the City, please turn to page 12.



#### inside

- 3 President's Message
- 4 General Manager's Report
- 5 Legal Report
- 7 MEA is Working for You
- 8 Boardmember Spotlight: Kathryn Campbell
- 11 Labor Rep Overview
- 13 MEA Children's Party



#### 15 San Diego Works Update

- 16 MEA Holiday Party
- 18 Retiree Spotlight
- 20 Members Making Us Proud
- 22 Catastrophic Leave Requests
- 23 Calendar of Events



At the beginning of the New Year, people tend to reflect on what they have accomplished and look forward to what they can

achieve in the future. For many, it is customary to set New Year's resolutions in order to improve in a particular area of life. This can come in the form of a self-assessment to determine where they "are" and where they might like to "go." This kind of introspection can serve as a catalyst for self-development. For some, this personal growth comes in the form of engaging more in the community which can strengthen a sense of meaning and purpose.

I thought it appropriate to bring this topic up for discussion because we will be having MEA's Board of Directors election in July. If you have been interested in getting more involved with MEA but weren't sure how to do so, this is your opportunity. We have some wonderful members in numerous City departments who serve on MEA's Board. This group has helped to direct and shape this organization and to fulfill the mission of being an effective advocate on behalf of City employees. This tradition of robust employee participation is essential to our labor organization's success. If you have an interest in community service, politics or are just concerned about the future of the City, I encourage you to run for a Board seat in your department.

MEA's primary purpose is to work toward improving your wages, benefits and working conditions. These goals are paramount to our Union's existence, and yet we are so much more. MEA has become a significant political power in the City of San Diego. We also sponsor important employee-connected programs and serve our members through innovative programs and relationships. MEA facilitates greater communication among employees, management and the various City stakeholders whose decisions impact our members. MEA will also continue to look for opportunities for our collective voice to be heard in alternative arenas and venues.

Through the dedication of our members and leadership, MEA's service and goals are promoted throughout the region. We have

### President's Message

a cadre of dedicated employees who have proudly taken up MEA's cause and we are looking to add to this committed group. We would like to encourage interested, enthusiastic and creative people who haven't necessarily been involved with the Union to participate. This is an opportunity to have your knowledge and passion benefit you, your colleagues and the collective cause.

I speak from personal experience when I say that participating in your Union will be a life enriching experience. I was never deeply involved with MEA in the first few years of working at the City. I knew I belonged to a Union and that MEA negotiated a contract, provided insurance options and, if need be, would help me if I were ever in trouble at work. I just thought the Union took care of all these things and I never really questioned what belonging to MEA really stood for.

Good friends of mine who served on MEA's Board of Directors suggested that I get more involved. As I became more active, I realized that we can have a significant impact not only on our workplace, but on the City and broader region. My participation with MEA's Political Action Committee provided me with an interesting glimpse into local government. Not only have I had the opportunity to work on campaigns and promote the interests of MEA-represented employees, but I have also interacted with candidates and gotten to know elected officials. This has been a rewarding experience I would have missed had I not gotten more involved with MEA.

The city, state and country are all at a critical point in history and the future of middle and working class people are at stake. Good paying jobs and health care benefits are worth fighting for. Your colleagues and their livelihood are worth fighting for. If anything that has been discussed strikes a chord with you, I strongly urge you to consider running for a Board seat in the upcoming election, inquiring about the steward program or finding other ways to volunteer for MEA. Trust me, it will be an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience!

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#### Officers

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

Library

Police

I ibrary

City Attorney

Development Services

Environmental Services

Park & Recreation

#### Executive Committee

Sam Cerrato Mary Enyeart Francine Howell Pete Lynch Joe Miesner Steve Ramirez

#### Board of Directors

Brian Anthony Maurice Brown Isabelle Camacho Kathryn Campbell Sam Cerrato Rebecca Cesena Stephanie Clark Bob Cronk Mary Enyeart Sarah Erazo Jennfer Geran Lisa Goehring Howard Greenstein Francine Howell Graham Hufford Rene Kaprielian Jan Lord Pete Lynch Gabrielle Mead Joe Miesner Candi Mitchell Helen Phillips Steve Ramirez Catherine Rivera **Beverly Simmons** Susan Taylor Cody Wilkinson Greg Woods Roy Wurth

#### MEA Stewards

Francine Howell Adele Campbell Kathryn Campbell Michele Chicarelli Dwayne Clayton Alice Daniels Mary Enyeart Graham Hufford Shanae Hymon Sherry Riley Renee Kinninger Jan Lord Roscoe Manigo Cassandra Maslowski Gabrielle Mead Tony Moore Steve Ramirez Tia Ramirez Catherine Rivera Leon Sauls Janice Stevenson Charlette Strong-Williams Sammie Taylor Kimberly Vance Greg Woods

Engineering & Capital Projects Engineering & Capital Projects Library L ibrary Park & Recreation City Attorney Library Police Park & Recreation Library Water Planning City Attorney Engineering & Capital Projects Environmental Services Human Resources **Development Services** Police Library Water Retirees **Environmental Services** Police **Risk Management** Real Estate Assets MWWD Treasurer Transportation & Storm Water

Chief Steward Police Library Park and Recreation Auditor/Comptroller Purchasing & Contracting Police Engineering & Capital Projects Water Development Services **Development Services** Human Resources Public Utilities Police Police City Attorney Environmental Services City Attorney Police Transportation & Storm Water City Attorney Facilities Financing Public Utilities Economic Development Treasurer

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### Looking Back to 2014...Looking Ahead to 2015

Given everything the City has been through in the last decade, 2014 would probably qualify as a relatively "boring" year. But there was still plenty of action to reflect on, particularly on the political and litigation fronts. (MEA attorney Ann Smith has a great look back/look ahead on our legal cases in her article on page 5.)

In terms of politics, 2014 will likely be remembered as the end of Carl DeMaio's career as an elected official in San Diego. His loss to MEAendorsed Congressman Scott Peters in the nationally targeted 52<sup>nd</sup> District US House of Representatives race was one of the rare pieces of good news for public employees as far as election outcomes in 2014.

Mr. DeMaio's loss in the race for Congress follows his loss in 2012 in the race for San Diego Mayor. It is extremely rare for a candidate to lose two major elections like that and come back to run again—let alone win again. Although Mr. DeMaio is about the last person that should be counted out of anything, at least for now his absence from elected office and from the front page of the newspaper will have a significant positive effect on local politics and political dialogue, particularly on issues related to City employees.

Mr. DeMaio's substantial impact didn't stem from a long list of actual legislative accomplishments during his time in office, but rather from his frustratingly disciplined focus on pension politics and public employee demagoguery. His laser-like emphasis on blaming all that is wrong in the world on City employee compensation had a significant effect on both the public and the behavior of his fellow elected officials. His absence will mean that moderate conservative politicians can now go back to governing like moderates rather than feeling like they have to communicate and govern at the extremes to keep up with Carl. And the public no longer has to be misled that, for instance, every City librarian makes \$250,000 a year while working and even more in retirement. These and other legacies of Mr. DeMaio's time in office in San Diego are hopefully behind us once and for all.

Speaking of pensions, as predicted in this space last summer, the San Diego City Employees Retirement System (SDCERS) ended another solid investment year in 2014. The system's actuary completed its annual audit last month, and the results show more significant forward progress for our retirement system. The funded ratio of the pension system using market valuation is now 80.1%. That's a long way from the 55.4% funded ratio just five years ago. The SDCERS actuary also projects that the system will be 90% funded in 5 years.

There are a number of positive consequences of a healthier pension fund. Both active and retired employees can feel more secure about their retirement being there when they need it. The City's annual required payment to the pension fund is lower, and that payment is projected to decrease further every year going forward. Finally, a healthier system helps dial down the political "heat" and pension scapegoating popular among those elected officials that like to use bad pension fund news to further their own careers. When the pension fund news is good, they tend to move on to something else.

And as we look ahead to 2015, there is reason for hope that better times for the City and for City employees are ahead. The City recently completed its five year financial outlook, and general fund budget surpluses exceeding a half billion dollars are projected. Just as it did in the current fiscal year, that surplus will translate into additional expenditures, expanded City services and more employees to deliver those services.

In terms of compensation, MEArepresented employees will receive a piece of those budget dollars on July 1, 2015 with an additional \$1,180 in flex benefit allowance, bringing total flex dollars to \$8,555. Whether you use your flexible benefit allotment to pay for health insurance or take the cash waiver, this increase will improve take-home pay for employees. Based on MEA's current labor contract, employees will also receive another two discretionary leave days (16 hours) in the fiscal year beginning July 1.

But much more is deserved. City employees were there for the City when the fiscal crisis hit during the great recession. Now the City needs to be there for its employees who need additional cost of living increases just to keep pace with inflation and health premium increases. And the City needs to do more to retain its experienced workers, which is getting harder to do now that the job market has tightened and recruitment and retention challenges have become apparent in most City departments.

Our contract requires the City to revisit those numbers next year, but we will continue to engage the Mayor and City Council in an effort to have those needed additional increases come sooner. As usual, stay tuned for updates and e-blasts as things develop. In the meantime stay safe and here's to a great 2015.



Could it really be ten years since former City Attorney Michael J. Aguirre was sworn into office and the circus came to town? Only a distant memory now . . . but Aguirre's effort to get a Court-ordered roll-back of the general member pension formula from 2.5% at age 55 to 1.75% at age 55 failed after years of litigation with MEA in the lead. And despite multiple legal filings, endless bluster before City Council, and near daily press conferences, none of the legal "stuff" he threw against the side of the barn "stuck" – with one exception.

Just as he was leaving office in December 2008, Aguirre got lucky on the Writ he filed against SDCERS in November 2007 over the PSC "window period." But his luck was not the product of a solid legal theory or a righteous cause; he got lucky because SDCERS served him up a softball by its careless and unnecessary conduct in response to his PSCrelated litigation threats which "restarted the statute of limitations" on purchases of service credit made and finalized before November 1, 2003. Then SDCERS became party to a stipulation it knew was false - advising the court that the City Council had authorized the Writ (as required by the City Charter). The truth, however, was that the motion before the City Council to approve the Writ failed because the Charter-required five affirmative votes were not cast. And SDCERS knew this before putting its name on the stipulation that gave Aguirre's Writ the "green light."

Let's face it – it's a lot easier to win a legal case if your opponent works "with you" rather than against you – and neither the City nor SDCERS brought the affected plan members into the case to be heard. Nor did they give these plan members notice that this Writ, if granted, might adversely affect their pension

### A Decade After Attacks on City Pensions Began, Will PERB Strike Down Prop B In 2015?

By Ann M. Smith, Esq.

benefits so they could decide whether to intervene in the case to protect themselves. MEA is still leading the litigation fight – now at the Court of Appeal – to hold SDCERS and the City accountable for their wrongdoing and to remedy the economic harm they caused these "window period" PSC litigants.

When the public denied Aguirre the re-election he sought in 2008, Jan Goldsmith took office. Many people supported Goldsmith based on an "ABA" rationale - "anybody but Aguirre." But Goldsmith had his own "pension reform" brainchild designed to force employees to give up otherwise vested defined benefit pensions by changing the contribution rules and making them unaffordable. Goldsmith proposed a reinterpretation of decades-old Charter language so that a 50% share of investment losses could be shifted from the City itself to employees to bear from their bi-weekly paychecks (in addition to the substantial contributions they already make for the normal cost of their pensions). The Union-Tribune, of course, praised Goldsmith's efforts at the time he filed his "substantially equal contribution" litigation in 2010, predicting that the impact of the case, if Goldsmith succeeded, would cost each City employee another \$4,000 a year to be taken out of their pay - with uncertainty from yearto-year as to what net take-home pay would be. It took three years of litigation to defeat Goldsmith's case (again with MEA in the lead) - but it's over. [See Viewpoint, Spring/Summer 2013 Issue.] What remains to be decided is MEA's pending appeal before the Fourth District Court of Appeal over MEA's effort to recover its attorneys' fees from the City.

During this same decade, MEA fended off the political and legal attacks on DROP – ultimately preserving this benefit for those hired before July 1, 2005. And in 2011, in the face of an uncertain legal climate over the vested nature of the City's retiree health benefits, MEA again took the lead in negotiations with the City to achieve a 15-year retiree health benefit agreement designed to maintain the core promise made to employees hired before July 1, 2005, that a reasonable retiree health benefit would be available at City's expense during their retirement. Ever vigilant, MEA was again in the lead when Mayor Sanders used his position and power as Mayor to avoid the City's meet and confer obligations and instead play "private citizen" in leading the Prop B effort in 2011-2012. MEA filed an unfair practice charge with California's Public Employment Relations Board ("PERB"); took a Writ to the Fourth District Court of Appeal to force the City to a hearing before PERB; and presented our case before an Administrative Law Judge ("ALJ") – cross-examining Mayor Sanders as the central witness in the case. The ALJ's "proposed decision" came down in our favor. He ordered the City to rescind Prop B and return to the pre-Prop B status quo while also making affected bargaining unit employees "whole" for lost pension benefits, plus interest at the rate of 7% per annum. The City, of course, filed exceptions to this "proposed decision" and asked the full PERB Board to reject it. The matter has been fully briefed since October 2013 and remains pending before the full PERB Board for its decision.

As we turn the page to year four in a legal process which began in 2012, it seems likely that we will have PERB's decision this year. Our case is number 12 on the PERB Board's docket of pending Proposed Decisions in Unfair Practice Cases, with eleven older cases ahead of ours. Much is at stake for every non-police City employee hired as a new employee since July 20, 2012. Keep your fingers crossed.

Let's hope that 2015 is the year when the pendulum finally swings back into a normal rhythm with the law and justice determining outcomes instead of politics. But, however the pendulum swings, let's pull out all the stops to make 2015 the year when City employees finally get both the recognition and the fair compensation they deserve. Not only can the City afford it but it is undeniable that employees' economic sacrifices over the past several years – and continuing even now – have made the City's eye-popping budget surpluses possible.



## Healthy Habits to Work into your Work Day in 2015

The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't about short-term dietary changes. It's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity and balancing calories consumed with calories your body actually needs.

With busy work schedules and family obligations, it isn't always easy to find time to exercise regularly. Many of us also have jobs that require us to be deskbound and in front of our computer screen for large portions of the workday.

According to the *European Heart Journal*, the damage done by sitting too much during the day could not be reversed, even for those who exercised moderately to vigorously after work. The good news is that with a little creativity and a commitment to staying healthy, there are practical ways to increase your movement and activity in your workplace.

Rodale Institute's Leah Zerbe recommends simple modifications to your workday like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking over to a co-worker's desk, rather than sending an email, standing up while talking on the phone and even using a restroom on another floor. All of these activities promote additional movement and combat sedentary and monotonous workdays.

A healthy eating plan that includes a wide variety of foods like fruits and vegetables, calcium-rich foods, grains and proteins is also crucial to healthy living. Yet "healthy" doesn't necessarily have to replace "delicious" in your vocabulary and on your taste pallet. *Women's Health Magazine* suggests several dessert recipes which combine a variety of fruits with great flavor. The next time you reach for a cookie or that ice cream carton, try one of these simple desserts instead.

#### Frozen Yogurt with Blueberries and Cardamom

Top ½ cup vanilla frozen yogurt with ½ cup blueberries and a pinch of cardamom.

182 calories | 2g fiber | 4g protein | 5g fat



### Minty Pea Dip with Pretzel Chip*i*

Mash ½ cup frozen peas with 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint and 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice. Serve with 15 pretzel chips.

209 calories | 5g fiber | 8g protein | 0g fat



# MEA Is Working For You ...



Senior Labor Relations Representative Kelly Cruz went over proposed changes to the Divisional Work Standards with MEA members in the Facilities Maintenance Division.



MEA's Adopt a Senior Committee assembled goodie bags full of gifts and treats for the City's senior volunteers.



General Manager Mike Zucchet sat on a panel along with Councilmember Todd Gloria, Stephen Puetz (Mayor Faulconer's Chief of Staff) and Ryan Clumpner (Executive Director of the Lincoln Club) to discuss the results from the General Election.



MEA's Board of Directors met with the City's Chief Operating Officers, Scott Chadwick, to discuss the City's budget, current and future projections, its hiring process and how to improve employee morale.



General Manager Mike Zucchet spoke at the Retired Employees Association and discussed issues affecting both active and retired City employees.



Staff members Cathleen Higgins and Nichole Johnson helped serve pizza to children and their families at the annual MEA Children's Party.

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#### What's a memory that makes you smile when you think back on it today?

There are many memories that make me smile but I would have to choose the time that I met Al Pacino and he kissed me on the cheek! I met him when I was 21 years old when I saw him in a play in Boston (The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel which he took to Broadway and won a Tony Award). After the performance, I went to the stage door and Al Pacino was gracious and charming and he gave me a hug and a kiss after he signed my program. This took place two weeks before the release of The Godfather, right before he became incredibly famous. I shall always remember him fondly.

#### If a movie was made about your life, which actress would you want to play you?

Julianna Margulies! I am a big fan of Julianna...she is elegant and sophisticated, two words that have been used to describe me more times than

I can count. Julianna's facial expressions and mannerisms impress me; she acts well without saying a word. In my opinion, Julianna Margulies is one of the great actors of our time.

#### Which famous person would you want to keep you company if you were on a deserted island?

That's easy, John Lennon! He has been my hero since I was 13 years old. I relate to his "angry young man" personality. I was fatherless as a child (as was John) and I had a chip on my shoulder for many years. I admire John Lennon's vision of peace and how he grew as a person over the years. He dove deep into himself to find answers about why he was so hurt and angry, which is something I also did many years ago. I would love to spend time with him and discuss music, art and poetry. Many people don't know that John was really an artist and poet who later became a musician.

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

When I started with the City, I was hired as an hourly library aide working only 4 hours a week. So my first week on the job was very short. I was 45 years old, so I started working for the City a little late in my life. I was also in a transitional place in my life and I was looking for more fulfilling work in a different direction. I definitely got what I was looking for at the library! I couldn't believe (bibliophile that I am) that I had never thought of working for a library before.

#### What is one goal that you have set for yourself this year?

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I'm not really a goal oriented person. I take life one day at a time and live in the moment. That being said, I did fulfill one of my dreams this year; I sang a capella on stage at a club with an audience full of local musicians and the song that I sang was written by one of those musicians. It was so thrilling!

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

I am a very direct person and I say what I mean and mean what I say. I stand up for what is right and I have no tolerance for injustice. I also do what I say I'll do and get the job done! I am a busy person and the adage "if you want something done, ask a busy person" certainly fits me. I give everything my all.

### Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Adopt a Senior Event

For the 20<sup>th</sup> year, MEA honored some very deserving senior volunteers during the holidays.

MEA, along with Council President Sherri Lightner and Assistant Chief Operating Officer Stacy LoMedico greeted the seniors and thanked them with small gifts in the City Administration Building's lobby area. Council President Lightner highlighted the many contributions and accomplishments of these senior volunteers who give so much of their personal time.

The City's senior volunteers field calls and assist guests who call and visit various public locations throughout San Diego. In total, our local senior volunteers donate over 1,000 volunteers hours each month! We are so fortunate to have such a willing and capable group who lend their time and institutional knowledge in order to help others.

Thank you to MEA's Adopt a Senior Committee Chair Candi Mitchell and her entire committee for their hard work helping make this event a great success.



In Memory of...



#### **Robert Belciano**

We are so deeply saddened to announce the loss of MEA member Robert Belciano.

Robert was born in Philadelphia but grew up in Wildwood, New Jersey. Even at an early age, he was incredibly focused and determined. As a young man, he shined shoes on the Boardwalk in Wildwood and Cape May. According to Robert, he once shined the shoes of Frank Sinatra! Later on, Robert became a fireman for the Wildwood Fire Department and he even became the precinct's president.

To his friends, Robert was known for being incredibly supportive and helpful. Robert was always ready

to lend a hand on any projects or work tasks that his friends needed help on. He was also known for being an amazing listener and would come at a moment's notice to support a friend in need. One friend noted that, "He would give you the shirt off his back if you needed it, and he wouldn't think twice about it." Robert would even pull his neighbors' trash cans out of the street so they wouldn't have to do it themselves after they returned from work.

Robert had a great sense of humor and an infectious laugh. He was also incredibly creative and did numerous free hand drawings. Robert was quite good at home improvement projects and he never stopped remodeling his house. In fact, every room in his house had been remodeled, with some rooms being redone more than once. Robert enjoyed building and remodeling so much that he had even toyed with the idea of starting a business to build outdoor furniture.



Robert is survived by his mother Anne, sister Barbara, brother Gus, sons Jason and Bobby and his daughter Jessica. Robert was also an uncle to numerous nephews and nieces and had two grandchildren. Robert will be deeply missed and we send our deepest condolences to his family and friends.



#### Kathryn Redding

With a heavy heart, MEA is announcing the passing of MEA member Kathryn Redding. Kathryn was a native San Diegan but traveled around a great deal as a result of her father being a Colonel in the Air Force. She had lived in Oklahoma, Texas and even Japan.

Kathryn worked in the City's Fleet Division and had gotten into the parts and automotive business through her then husband who was into fixing and racing off road vehicles in Baja. Although she had an interest in automotives, her real passion was surfing. She and her brother had been to most beaches up the coast and she had even surfed the great waves in

Hawaii. For Kathryn, there was a sense of peace when she was alone with the ocean and waves.

Those who had the privilege of calling Kathryn a friend and loved one would say that she was kind, a great listener and the most non-judgmental person that you will ever meet. Kathryn just wanted those around her to be happy, and she did everything that she could to make that happen.

Many might not know this, but Kathryn LOVED to buy beauty products for her face. Her friends don't believe that there was a cream or treatment that she hasn't tried to slow the aging process. Some joked that she should have bought stock in some of those companies that she supported with her many purchases.

Kathryn is survived by her father and brother who live in the Sacramento area, her cousins in Palm Springs and San Diego and several close friends and colleagues. Kathryn will be greatly missed and we send our thoughts and prayers to all of those who were touched by her kindness.

#### Labor Representative Overview August - December 2014

A total of 71 new cases were opened in the last half of the year, resulting in a total of 165 cases for 2014.

MEA's Labor Representatives worked on issues related to fact findings, employee performance reports, reasonable accommodation, industrial leave appeal, written reprimands and counselings, worker's compensation and long term disability denials.

In addition, there were meet and confers in various departments including Fleet Parts. MEA members in Fleet were originally slated to have their job responsibilities outsourced as a result of Managed Competition. However, MEA's Mike Zucchet and Cathleen Higgins were successful in working with the City to keep all current employees in their positions with no reduction in force. Meet and confer has also been concluded with the finalization of a revised Administration Regulation 75.12, Vehicle and Industrial Review, Reporting and Prevention Program which will be distributed to all City employees by Human Resources. Nancy Roberts facilitated meet and confer in the Library Department as a result of the increase to library hours. She is also part of the meet and confer process

regarding the impacts to employees after the City's announcement to create a new Communications Department. In addition, Nancy is working with Environmental Services' Collection Division and Human Resources on updating all of their Division Instructions. Kelly Cruz met with the ranger divers in order to increase employee safety by meeting and conferring on Diving Operations policies and procedures.

Numerous labor management committees took place in several departments. Kelly continues to meet with employees in the Facilities Maintenance Division to review the proposed changes to the Divisional Work Standards. Marin Mejia meets with Development Services employees regarding increased maintenance and repairs to their buildings, filling staff vacancies and department reorganization.

MEA is also a part of the process to review public works contracts under Article 73 of our MOU. Cathleen Higgins and Nancy Roberts meet on a monthly basis with a group of department employees to review hundreds of contracts to make sure that work that City employees could perform isn't being outsourced to private contractors.





Congratulations to MEA Labor Relations Representative Marin Mejia and her husband Mike who welcomed their second baby girl, Owen Eleanor Amelia Mychal Yaple Mejia, on November 25, 2014.

Marin will be on leave in the coming months and her departments will be represented by Kelly, Nancy and Cathleen.

#### **Know Your Rights:** Bereavement Leave

It's always incredibly difficult when you lose a loved one and the last thing you want to think about is work. That is why there is a clause in MEA's MOU which grants bereavement leave to allow time for you to focus on your family and to work through this difficult period. Article 85 states that "paid bereavement leave of up to five days is available upon the death of an employee's spouse, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter (son or daughter to include: step-, foster, or adopted) or state-registered domestic partner, with a limit of one eligible death per fiscal year. Proof of death (death certificate, obituary, funeral program, etc.) must be provided before an employee can be paid for Bereavement Leave, which is in addition to Annual Leave and must be submitted within thirty calendar days of when the employee returns to work."

If you have recently lost a loved one, please let us know how we can help and support you. If you encounter any difficulties in getting bereavement leave, please do not hesitate to contact your MEA Labor Representative at (619) 264-6632.

# Congratulations to the following MEA members who are celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the City of San Diego. Thank you for your commitment to public service and your quarter century of dedication!

Aaron Sims Adolfo Ocampo Albert Gatavasky Jr. Alberto Elguira Alejandro Mangual Aleta Knowlton Ali Mostaiabian Alice Daniels Ana Maria Alvarez Andre Luiz Macedo Angelina Black Annette Dunbar Anthony Evans Anthony Gardner Bert Salamida **Bob Cronk Brock Jones Buffv Budz** Byron Burnham **Carlos Rios** Carolyn Carr Cha Moua **Cheryl Willis** Claudia Apodaca **Clayton Walsten** Cynthia Meinhardt Cynthia Shatzer Cyrus Tang David Tice Debra Mendoza

Debra Thomas-Dixon Denise Jenkins Derek Moses Diana Bergen Dianna Di Giulio Don Weston Dondiego Faiai **Duncan Hughes** Eduardo Martinez Eorsa Coleman Erika Ferreira **Florence Glaze** Frederick Le Page George Freiha Greg Woods **Gregory Diaz** Gregory Whalen Harold Harris Harold Ritchie Henry Anthony Jama Vega Jennifer Hobbs Jessica Poblete Jihad Sleiman John Anderson John Stephens Jorge Wilkins Jose Oropeza Juan Del Razo Julie Wong

Julissa Alcoser Karen Anderson Karen Maillet Kathryne Close Kathy Sanchez Kenneth Finnigan Kevin Jovce Kevin Oliver **Kevin Wiggins** Kim Andersen Kristen Ikeda Kurt Hoeger Kurt Kidman Labib Qasem Laura Abbott Leslie Sennett Lori Felchlin Maria De La Luz Maryam Liaghat Merlina Reyna Michael Elling Michael Handal Michael Joslyn Michele Coleman Michelle Ruiz Mike Kloth Nabeel Qawasmi Nariman Khomamizadeh Nitin Nakrani Olga Castellanos

Patrick O'Donnell Paul Bareno Paulette Crawford Phyllis Swanegan Ramin Hatam Richard Hopson Ricky Riojas Rita Rogers Rob Relph Robert Hagan Robert Major Robert Minet Rodolfo Gonzalez Rolf Lee Rosie Caudillo Sandra Kistner Skyla Wallmann Stacy Moore Steve Fragoso Steven Lucas Tasha Alexander Ted Recidoro Timothy Labadie Tracy Tryon Trinh Duong Ty Palusky Victor Nguyen Victor Van Wey William Zounes Zelda Sacro-Santo



## MEA Children's Holiday Party

Kids of all ages (and a few adults who are still young at heart!) spent a Sunday afternoon playing games, eating pizza and taking pictures with Santa Claus at this year's MEA Children's Party. The children were all smiles and had a great time playing the arcade games and riding the amusement rides at The Boardwalk. For many families, this has become a fun-filled event that they look forward to each year. Thank you for making the day so special and fun for us all.

We look forward to planning next year's Children's Party and we can't wait to see how much all of the babies and children will have grown by next December!

Thank you to MEA's Social & Recreation Committee Chair Francine Howell and her entire committee for your hard work and another great event.



### Introducing Your 2014-2016 MEA Officers...

Thank you to the many members who took the time to vote in the 2014 MEA Officer election. The Officers will serve a two year term and were sworn in at the November Board meeting. Councilmember Marti Emerald delivered the oath of office and thanked the Board for their service and support. Congratulations new Officers!



From left to right: Michael Zucchet (MEA General Manager), Jan Lord (2nd Vice President, Human Resources), Lisa Goehring (Secretary, Public Utilities), Councilmember Marti Emerald, Bob Cronk (President, Library), Greg Woods (1st Vice President, Treasurer's Office) and Candi Mitchell (Treasurer, Public Utilities).

### **Coming to a Workplace Near You!**

MEA is scheduling site visits with General Manager Mike Zucchet in various department workplace locations throughout the City.

Would you like Mike to come to your workplace to answer questions and to provide an update on the City's budget, litigation, future contract negotiations and how to get more involved in your Union? If so, please email Lora Folsom at Ifolsom@sdmea.org.

Whether you have a group of 5 or 50, we would be happy to schedule a site visit to talk with you and your co-workers!







### San Diego Works: Mayor Faulconer's Pilot Program that Rewards City Workers for Ideas that Save Time and Money!

When Mayor Faulconer took office last year, one of the first programs he announced was San Diego Works. This program rewards employees monetarily who come forward with cost saving ideas that generate budgetary savings and operational efficiencies. MEA worked with Mayor Faulconer to draft an agreement that would be a win-win for both the City and its many employees.

On August 7, 2014 the City Council approved the agreement and the pilot program was created. The program was introduced to City employees through over 50 informational sessions (MEA's Cathleen Higgins attended most of these) with nearly 2,000 employees making it to one of the sessions. In addition, all employees received multiple updates and information via Citynet.

The intent of the program is to find savings and efficiencies that could be realized in the upcoming FY 2016 budget or within the next five years. Almost immediately, the Performance and Analytics Department that administers the program was inundated with proposals that ranged from ideas to improve employee morale to proposals that could generate millions of dollars of savings.

Employees will be rewarded based on the amount of savings their proposals are expected to generate. Employees get to share 10 percent of the savings anticipated from their ideas-up to \$100,000 for an employee team to share equally among its participants and up to a maximum of \$5,000 per person. This is serious money!

Ideas that enhance customer service but don't necessarily generate savings are also eligible for an award of at least \$50. Additionally, the Mayor is offering a "Top Award" for the most successful proposal with the highest average annual savings of over \$1 million dollars. This has the potential for an employee to receive \$10,000 for their cost savings idea(s)!

The pilot program went live on August 7, 2014 and proposals were due by November 15, 2014. Over 200 proposals were received and the department is currently reviewing them for implementation. We should hopefully hear about some successful proposals and winners in February or March. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in this program. While it is not a new concept at the City, we applaud the Mayor for recognizing that the best ideas come from the very employees who perform those functions every day and must deal with the bureaucracy and red tape that can hinder them from being effective and successful in their jobs.

At the Mayor's request, the Managed Competition Program has been put on hold while City consultants review the City of San Diego's MC Guide and labor and management work to address some of the flaws and shortcomings of this program. We will need to "meet and confer" on another MC Guide before any future competitions can occur. We will continue to keep you posted along the way. If you have any questions about Managed Competition, please don't hesitate to contact Cathleen Higgins at chiggins@ sdmea.org.







The end of the year wouldn't be the same without celebrating the holiday season with your Union family at MEA's Holiday Party. This year, over 300 members and their guests joined us at the Four Points by Sheraton. Guests enjoyed a delicious dinner, took advantage of the photo booth with props and danced late into the night.

MEA First Vice President Greg Woods called out the winning raffle ticket numbers and many lucky guests took home some awesome prizes. Thank you to Integrated Labor Solutions, Sharp Healthcare, MetLife and Liberty Mutual for donating some great prizes to the raffle.

Thank you to MEA's Membership Committee and for all of those who attended this sold-out event. We hope that you had as much fun as we did! If you weren't able to attend this time, we hope that you can make it to next year's night of fun and festivities.















































### **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!



#### Jessica (Rodrigues) Battaglia

I began my City career in August 1970 as an Aquatic Aide/Lifeguard. After receiving my degree in Recreation Therapy from San Diego State University, I moved to Therapeutic Recreation Services (formerly Disabled Services). I have made some lifetime best friends through my experience working at Therapeutic Recreation Services. With our shared commitment and vision, we developed a program that we were proud of which benefitted our participants and the community. Our team grew up together and shared and celebrated each other's milestones including the birth of our children. Now all of

our children are getting married and having babies. It makes me so happy that I can enjoy my retirement alongside those who I have worked with who are also now retiring. We started our careers together, and now we get to start this next chapter of our lives (retirement!) together.

I was fortunate enough to be able to include my four sons in the activities sponsored by Disabled Services/Therapeutic Recreation Services. Through their experiences and exposure to diversity, I am proud to say that they became tolerant, compassionate and understanding young men. Three of my sons began their careers in Park and Recreation, two of which have moved up to jobs in other departments. I have 11 family members who have worked for the City, primarily in Park and Recreation. Some of my young family members are now approaching the age when they'll start on the same career path that so many of us have followed.

After retiring, I continue to keep busy with all of the activities that I love. I enjoy spending time with my granddaughters, Gianna and Melina, and having get togethers with all of my family and friends. I plan to do a lot more traveling, starting a travel club for seniors and I might start a day camp in the summer. This past fall, I traveled to Italy and volunteered with the seniors as a trip escort.

I will undoubtedly miss working with the wonderful people at Therapeutic Recreation Services, along with the other Park and Recreation staff members. We are a very close knit family and I am very grateful for their friendship and support throughout the years. I will also miss planning and supervising the activities and experiencing the joy seeing all of the participants' happy faces.









#### Barbara O'Donnell

April, 21, 1981 was one more of those picture perfect days in San Diego that you never tire of. So much for enjoying our weather that day...unbeknownst to me at the time, I was on my way to a long and mostly beautiful affair working for The City of San Diego. It never crossed my mind that I would share close to 34 years of my young life with one organization. I remember at the beginning of my career speaking with a co-worker who had 20 years on the books; it was like looking into a mirror that day, but a cloudy one. I thought at the time, who does that? Now I know who.

Thank goodness I still have my sense of humor and a somewhat intact memory. My first of several jobs with the City involved working in the Records Division at the Police Department as a clerk, then as a supervisor. You can imagine that it was quite an interesting and exciting place to work, but not so much if you happened to be handcuffed and locked up in a police car. I would also meet my future husband at the Police Department (and no, not one of the

prisoners!) Before I could reach the watch commander's office to deliver some important message of sorts to the police officer working that desk, I first had to take a daunting walk through the patio where prisoners were taken for further questioning. Just visualize being asked in a not so polite manner by the suspects urging me to release them out of the police car. I honestly can't say that I remember that first meeting with my now husband. I admire my husband for being a police officer, but it was hard and I worried about his safety before he finally retired from the profession. He was definitely cut out for the job and he really loved protecting the citizens of San Diego. Police officers come pretty close to being super heroes in my book.

What followed next in my career was a brief stint of two weeks as a police dispatcher that really doesn't deserve mentioning other than to say you need nerves of steel to field all the different calls in addition to the immense responsibility of taking care of the officers. Dispatchers are also heroes every day. Needless to say, I decided I didn't have nerves of steel and I worried too much about the officers' safety.

Later in my career, I made another attempt to try something different in my profession. For some reason, I got it in my head that I would give it a go as a community service officer, then maybe become a police officer. Aye yai, yai, what was I thinking?! First, I don't like working outdoors and basically I am a scaredy-cat, but don't tell anyone. Thank goodness there are so many different jobs in the City so I was able to make it back to a less dangerous position.

Somewhere along the way, my husband and I were blessed with a baby girl. I now needed a job where I could work part-time in order to experience the joy of raising our daughter. A friend told me I could work part time at the library and I jumped at it. I became a library assistant for the next 14 years in my career. I absolutely loved working at the library! It truly is a myth that working at the library assistant was a pleasure working at the many different libraries that I had the fortune to be at. For me, being a library assistant was akin to being a mom. It was easy to be a mom to all who walked through those library doors, especially to those who ran in or had their noses pressed against the windows while we were closed. I loved greeting the patrons at the door during opening and saying goodbye when we closed. It was a blessing to hear about the dreams that people had and to speak to the young and the young at heart, the rich and the poor, the lonely and the extroverts. The library is a great equalizer, a gathering place for the community and a celebration of possibilities.

It has been over a month since I cut the cord with the City. It took me 2 years to make that decision and I always wondered how I would know when it was time to go. I had been told by the great ones before me that you will know eventually when to "let it go" and not be frozen. I finally realized when I couldn't wipe the smile off my face that I was ready to make the jump. I miss my wonderful co-workers, my amazing bosses who knew how to lead and the many special friends I was lucky to have made. You are a fantastic and dedicated group of people! It still has not soaked in that I am in a new chapter of life, but all good things take time to absorb. I do have to admit though I am enjoying having new adventures with my family.

Barbara O'Donnell – wife, mother, daughter, sun worshipper, dog lover, gardener, crafter, baker, voter, reader and now "Director of Adventures," God willing for the next half century!



#### Kudos to Grounds Maintenance Manager Eileen Rodriguez



I wanted to express my appreciation for the effort of Eileen Rodriguez, and the crew that removed a large eucalyptus tree that fell into my back yard... I spoke with Eileen at 4 p.m. and the next day at 7:45 a.m. she had a crew at my house. Four hours later, the last of the tree was gone. A shout out to Eileen and her crew!

Larry Beyersdorf, Scripps Ranch

#### Recognizing Kristi Fenick and Therapeutic Recreation Services



... I want you to know what a valuable partner your group is for MADCAPS. You offer a variety of activities throughout the year for our girls to volunteer... Then looking back on their six years of volunteer experience, most of our girls point to TRS as the most meaningful volunteer work they did...

Barbara Lamb, Program Manager Performance & Analytics Department

#### **Thanks to Janice Lavallee**

Dear Ranger Janice, Thank you for all your help with my Eagle Project. It couldn't have been done without you. The long approval process was made much easier because of your tothe-point emails and quick responses, and for that I am thankful... Thank you for all the hours you've given to help make this project a reality. It won't be forgotten.

Thanks again, Ian Moreau

#### **Acknowledging Sharon Parks**



I would like to thank Sharon sooooo much for her assistance and persistence in handling a problem with my account....she did a great job handling the matter, keeping me informed and expediting this issue. Her performance was excellent. I wish there were more like her. Thank you.

Mitchell Stern

#### Shout out to Ron Agustin



I am 75 and an active park volunteer. I have given Ron a "heads up" on numerous deficiencies...and I must say, he gets stuff done....He is polite, cares, and communicates with clarity and accuracy. I am by the office often,

if for no other reason but to say hi...we need more people like him in the world...

Sincerely, Greg Gieselman

### Recognizing Jeff Remsburg and his crew

I would personally like to thank Jeff and his crew for the excellent, timely service they provided while fixing a water main leak...they performed their work in an expeditious and conscientious manner. Your prompt and professional service in averting this potential road failure and restoring our water service is greatly appreciated.

Michael D. Thompson Facility/Program Manager, Miramar Landfill

#### **Congratulations to Luis Andrade**



Luis was selected as one of the recipients of the National Management Association Customer Service Awards which was presented at a City Council meeting.

#### Kudos to Cindyrose Catapia

Dear Rahfeal,

I wanted to bring to your attention what a PHENOMENAL job Cindyrose is doing. She has been a tremendous resource for me and my clients and such a pleasure to work with. She always answers the phone and is prompt to return any missed communications. My only request for improvement is for every water district to have a Cindyrose on their team!

Alessandro G. Fraschetti

#### **Congratulations to Hanadi Arjan**



A customer left a detailed message thanking Customer Service Representative Hanadi Arjan for providing superb customer service. She stated that

Hanadi was very patient and helpful and she could hear her smiling through the phone. Thank you Hanadi for giving customers the best of you. Your cheerful voice brings a smile to customers' faces and your contributions to the department do not go unnoticed.

#### Acknowledging Ed Christensen

My call to Ed on Tuesday was with regard to a fallen and quite large eucalyptus branch immediately behind our house. The branch fell probably about 6 months ago and of course by now was nothing more than fire timber. Unfortunately, with this weekend's Santa Ana winds, I was quite concerned about the liability of having this huge branch available for any blown ember. Ed was exceptionally sensitive to the circumstance and promised to address it as quickly as possible. Both my wife and I were very pleasantly surprised to see that the branch was removed the very next day. I wanted to formally thank Ed and his team for the rapid response and outstanding customer service. Many thanks again to your entire team!

Gary Saner

#### **Recognizing Amy Hill**



Recently, Customer Service Representative Amy Hill got a call from customer Devona Dungan. Mrs. Dungan initially called with concerns about her bill and balance but after speaking with Amy, the customer fully understands her water usage and rates. Mrs. Dungan was so pleased with her customer service experience that she wanted to notify management of a job well done. Mrs. Dungan said Amy was very professional, pleasant and knowledgeable. Thank you Amy for always being so professional and patient with customers. You are so awesome!

#### **Kudos to Lori Williams**

A customer left a detailed message thanking Customer Service Representative Lori Williams for providing such good customer service. She stated that Lori was very professional, helpful and extremely kind. Thank you Lori for giving customers the best of you. Your professionalism and customer service does not go unnoticed.

### Welcome to the MEA Family!



#### Ariel Lucinda

Congratulations to MEA member Haining Schoeneman who gave birth to a baby girl. Ariel Lucinda Schoeneman was born on August 30, 2014.



#### Melina Michelle

MEA member Tom Battaglia and his wife welcomed a baby girl into their family on August 14, 2014. Melina Michelle Battaglia weighed 7 lbs, 15.7 oz.



#### UPDATE...

In 2011, MEA member Sarah Johnston and her husband Frank were eagerly expecting the arrival of their first baby when Frank had a heart attack. After being resuscitated, he was hospitalized and placed in an induced coma. Soon thereafter, Sarah had an unscheduled C-section and gave birth to their daughter, Sienna. Although it was a tough time for the family, we are very happy to report that Sarah, Frank and Sienna are doing great! The couple purchased their first home in October 2014 and they consider themselves to be blessed with amazing family and friends.

### 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!

#### Carolyn Carr

Hello! My name is Carolyn Carr. I am a 25 year career employee with the City of San Diego. I suffered a City injury in 2012, and will now need surgery to finally correct the issue that has plagued me for over 10 years. I have used up all of my leave time due to a hand issue that required appointments. I feel that I cannot become homeless while trying to get well. Any time that you can donate would be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

#### Steve Tinkham

My name is Steve Tinkham and my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer which has moved to her spine and neck. She requires daily trips for treatment. I have worked for the City for nearly 6 years and we have 7 children, Sadie, Shane, Mason, E.J., Christian, Caden and Khloe. I'm very low on leave and I need help so I can be there for my wife.

#### **AveMaria Perkins**

I am requesting catastrophic leave due to the fact that I am now completely responsible for caring for my sick mother. She was living in Georgia with her husband but he is no longer able to care for her due to his own serious health condition. My mom is in the last stages of severe dementia. She needs assistance with eating, bathing and other everyday simple tasks that we generally take for granted. My mother is in a constant state of confusion, and at times, she thinks that I am her mother, sister, best friend, and sometimes even a "nice lady." My mother very seldom remembers I am her daughter, but I am willing to be whatever she needs me to be if it makes her happy. I can't begin to explain the daily care that is needed since it varies daily, and I usually have to be in character for wherever she is mentally. I don't have any assistance during the day at this time and that is why I am unable to work. I am in the process of applying for MediCal so that we may get IHSS (In Home Health Services). Even with that service, the State will only pay for a certain amount of hours. Basically, this means they will not pay for the whole 8 hours I am at work and the travel time it takes to get there. Any donation given would graciously be appreciated by myself and my family!

God bless you and have a wonderful day!

#### new MEA members

Alejandra Inzunza Alexander Ottens Allegra Vinson Amor Estrada Angela Stava Annette Ortiz-Sanchez AnnMary Gomez Araceli Lona Brent Krohn Brian O'Bayley **Christopher Moore** Daryl Hawkes David Paczona Deanna Berry **Deidre Brock Devin McClain** Dianna Santillan Elena Martinez Fawn Chang-Lee Freddy Padilla Guillermo Witte Heather Woodard Hector Gomez Holland Kessinger Jaleesa Torres James Silverstein Jesus Ortiz John Michener Jonathan Richards Joshua Bennett Joshua Lambdin

Judith Nunez Julie Aeilts Katheryn Hale Katrina Foster Kenneth Le Lakisha Alomar Laricia Bell-Pinckney Lisa Bevilacqua Lyle Kankelborg Maria Nieves Martin Sorrell Matthew Carrillo Melanie Fontana Melissa Cortez Derflinger Naiahd Askor Nancy Graham Natasha Penksa Nicholas Christilaw Nicodemus Lim Rebecca Wright Robert Armantrout Robert McComb Ronak Rekani Rowdy Sperry Sandra Barajas Solita Uvero Steven Smith Veronica Ford Victoria Fedalizo Victoria Ruiz

# SAVE THE DATE!

MEA's General Membership meeting will be held August 20th at the Balboa Park Club

Watch for upcoming E-blasts for more information.

### EA 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 Children (Ages 3-11)	\$40.75 \$32.25	\$48.00 \$38.00
San Diego Safari Park Deluxe Package Adults Children (Ages 3-11)	\$40.75 \$32.25	\$48.00 \$38.00
K1 Speedway (Must be 4'11")	\$15.00	\$25.95
AMC Unrestricted Reading Regal Unrestricted	\$8.00 \$7.50 \$8.00	

#### Prices subject to change without notice

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

#### Sea World

Adult Day Pass	\$66.00	\$86.00
Adult Fun Card	\$80.00	\$86.00
Child Day Pass	\$66.00	\$80.00
Child Fun Card	\$80.00	\$80.00
Legoland		
Adult Day Pass	\$71.00	\$85.00
Adult Hopper	\$76.00	\$109.00
Child Day Pass	\$66.00	\$79.00
Child Hopper	\$71.00	\$103.00
Six Flags Magic Mountain	\$41.99	\$69.99

#### **February**

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

#### March

5: Finance and Executive Committee meetings 8: Daylight Savings Time 11: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings 17: Saint Patrick's Day 24: Steward Meeting 26: Executive Committee Meeting 31: Cesar Chavez Day

#### **April**

2: Finance and Executive Committee meetings 5: Easter Sunday 8: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings 15: Tax Day 22: Administrative Professionals Day 23: Executive Committee Meeting 28: Steward Meeting

#### May

7: Finance and Executive Committee meetings 10: Mother's Day 13: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings 25: Memorial Day 26: Steward Meeting 28: Executive Committee Meeting

- 4: Finance and Executive Committee meetings 10: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings 21: Father's Day
- 23: Steward Meeting
- 25: Executive Committee Meeting

#### July

- 2: Finance and Executive Committee meetings
- 4: Independence Day
- 8: Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings
- 23: Executive Committee Meeting
- 26: Parents' Day
- 28: Steward Meeting



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