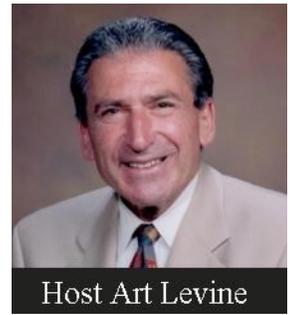


STRAIGHT TALK *MAGAZINE*

Community & Television Show News

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Host Art Levine

Volume 11 Number 1

January/February 2016

ICT Opens Season with **Closer Than Ever**

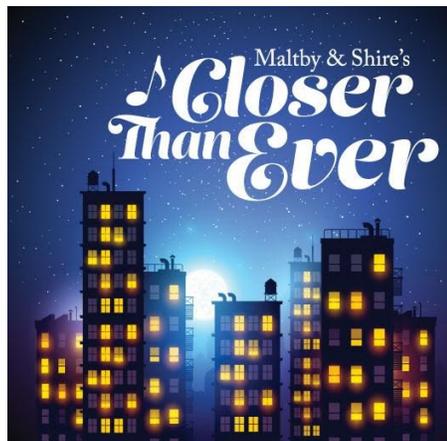
International City Theatre kicks off its **31st Season** with the West Coast Premiere of the award-winning musical *Closer Than Ever* opening **Friday, February 12**.

Written by **Richard Maltby, Jr.** with music composed by **David Shire**, this timeless musical comedy serves as a hilarious “how-to” manual for life.

Each song is a self-contained story inspired by real-life experiences. Its message to *value the little things in life* remains timeless.

This updated production is directed by **Todd Nielsen** and opens at ICT’s home in the newly-named *Beverly O’Neill*

Theatre (formerly the Center Theatre).



Closer Than Ever began its life at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts during the Summer of 1989. It came to New York in the Fall, officially opening in November 1989 at the Off-Broadway Cherry Lane Theatre, where it ran for 312 performances.

Closer Than Ever runs **February 12** through **March 6**. The show plays **Thursdays, Fridays** and **Saturdays** at **8pm** and **Sundays** at **2pm**. Low price preview performances on Wednesday, February 10 and Thursday, February 11.

For tickets or more information, visit www.InternationalCityTheatre.org or call **(562) 436-4610**.

Straight Talk on the Drought



Chris Garner
General Manager
Long Beach Water Dept.

Chris Garner is the new General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department, replacing Kevin Wattier who recently retired after 14 years with Long Beach Water.

Chris will join us to discuss the current drought and the proactive conservation measures the department continues to take in response to the prolonged drought.

Born, raised, and educated in Long Beach, Chris has been with the City of Long Beach for over 30 years, holding a variety of positions. Most recently, he was General Manager of the Gas & Oil Department. Chris is determined to maintain the high regard in which LB Water is held in the water community, and further explore the possible applications of new technologies.

Also on the show is **Frank Martinez**, President of the LB Board of Water Commissioners. He will discuss the relationship

between the Board and staff, and how they work together to make Long Beach Water a leader in water conservation.

Chris Garner and Frank Martinez will be our guests on the Straight Talk Show airing the weeks of January 23 & January 30.

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- **Guest Column** by LA Dist. Attorney Jackie Lacey



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Ethics for the New Year

As we enter the New Year, we typically make resolutions—such as to lose weight, exercise, be more thoughtful to family and friends, along with a variety of other personal and professional goals. During this time, we should also consider adding another important goal: To strive to act ethically in our personal and business interactions.

Most people think of themselves as ethical and want others to view them in that manner. Being ethical means **doing the right thing** in any given situation. Although acting ethically might be second nature to some, for most of us it requires a conscious effort. Therefore, a useful New Year's resolution would be to deliberately strive to make ethics a dynamic reality in our decision making process.

While each of us may approach the subject differently, there seems to be a consensus on certain core ethical values:

- **Honesty**—Being direct and forthcoming in interactions and not deceiving others.
- **Accountability**—Taking responsibility for one's own actions and not trying to shift blame onto others.
- **Promise-keeping**—Fulfilling the commitments made to others and being a person whose word is his or her bond.
- **Full disclosure**—Providing all of the relevant information to others in a comprehensible manner to allow them to make an informed choice.

- **Transparency**—Providing those impacted by your individual or group decision with a clear understanding of the manner in which the decision was reached.

There are other important values that each of us could add to the list. The key, though, is to consciously apply our ethical principles to the decision-making process. Remember, there are always **two questions** to ask in approaching a decision. First, is it legal? And second, is it ethical? **Legality alone is not enough.**

One of our goals for the New Year should be to try to **improve our ethical batting average**. None of us bats 1,000. We can all seek to improve the percentage of our decisions which are made consistent with our ethical principles.

Ethical behavior has **personal benefits** besides the satisfaction of doing the right thing. It makes us feel more at peace with ourselves and the world, and more fully connects us to others in the community.

It is also critically important for the future of our society. **In the long run, a corrupt society will ultimately fail.**

Happy New Year!

— Art Levine, Publisher

Thought of the Month

"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

— Mark Twain

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Life At the Beach: A Student's Perspective

by
Meagan Meylor

California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) has become the most popular university in the 23-campus Cal State System, with over 90,000 students applying for the fall of 2016. As CSULB alumnus and now Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia has expressed, it is clear that "people want to move to and study in Long Beach."

As a current student and President's Scholar at CSULB. I am honored to be a representative of the university, and I am proud that CSULB continues to be a place where students receive high-quality degrees and accomplish their goals. As I near graduation in the Spring, I would like to reflect on some of my most poignant memories while at The Beach.



As a recipient of the President's Scholarship, I have had the opportunity to continue challenging myself academically in my classes, as well as serving as a liaison between the university and the surrounding community. Following my graduation from Wilson High School, the President's Scholars Program welcomed me with open arms, and I will carry the following motto with me throughout all my future endeavors: "Once a scholar, always a scholar."

While at The Beach, I worked as an English tutor and Supplemental Instruction Leader at the Learning Assistance Center (LAC), helping students improve their writing skills and study habits. These experiences confirmed my goals of becoming a university professor, goals that emerged out of my positive experiences with the faculty at CSULB.

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to study abroad through CSULB's International Education Program. I studied for a semester at the University of

Kent in Canterbury, England, where I read medieval literature, interacted with a foreign community, and traveled throughout mainland Europe during the weekends.

All of these rewarding experiences would not have been possible had I not attended CSULB. As I near graduation, I have come to appreciate the breadth of opportunities available at CSULB, a university that continues to grow and accomplish. Go Beach!

Meagan Meylor is an Assistant Editor of the Straight Talk Magazine. She is an English major and will be graduating from CSULB in May 2016.



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West Side Story at MTW

Musical Theatre West presents the musical masterpiece, *West Side Story*, opening **Saturday, February 13** at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center.

West Side Story is the 20th century reimagining of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in which lovers, Tony and Maria, are caught between warring gangs, the Sharks and the Jets. Set in the streets of New York during the 1950's, these idealistic lovers struggle in a world brimming with violence, hate and prejudice. This heart-wrenching musical displays how Tony and Maria find love against all odds.

The tour-de-force musical was created by **Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Laurents and Jerome Robbins**. Among the greatest artists of their day, Bernstein and Sondheim's musical score is considered one of Broadway's finest, featuring such classic songs as *Somewhere, America, Maria* and *I Feel Pretty*.

West Side Story is directed by **Joe Langworth**, a seasoned director of Broadway professionals, who returns after earning critical acclaim for last season's MTW production of *South*

Pacific. The show is choreographed by **Hector Guerrero**, whose credits include Off-Broadway and national tours.

The production is under the musical direction of **David Lamoureux** (MTW's *Sunset Boulevard* and *A Chorus Line*).

Paul Garman is the Executive Producer.



Musical Theatre West began its history in 1952, enriching the community with Broadway-quality productions that feature both professional actors and local talent. Since 1997, MTW began producing shows at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center in Long Beach and is now recognized as the largest musical arts producer in the area.

West Side Story runs **Saturday,**

February 13 through **Sunday,**

February 28. Preview performance on Friday, February 12.

For tickets or further information, visit www.musical.org or call **(562) 856-1999**.

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Jim Michaelian on Straight Talk



Jim Michaelian
President/CEO
Grand Prix Association of Long Beach

Bio

As a racing competitor himself, Jim holds a competition driver's license and has participated in a number of endurance races in Dubai, France, Abu Dhabi and the Numburging in Germany. He has also raced at Daytona sixteen times, with his best finish a 8th in class in 2005.

and the exciting features of the upcoming race this Spring.

Jim has played a pivotal role in the growth of the **Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach**, which is now the single largest event held in the City of Long Beach. He has been with the organization since its first event, a Formula 5000 race on the streets of downtown in 1975.



Jim crosses the start/finish line at the 24 hours of Daytona in 2012

Serving in a number of capacities over the years, Jim is now responsible for the management of all Grand Prix related activities. This includes managing operations for the organization's subsidiary, Race Circuit Management, which specializes in event construction and operation for such events at the Academy Awards, the Rose Parade and various other race facilities.

Visitors Bureau.

Jim resides in Seal Beach with his wife Mary, and has two adult sons.

Jim Michaelian will be our guest on the Straight Talk Show airing the weeks of March 26 & April 2.

A California native, Jim graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor's degree in Physics and a Master's degree in Business Administration.

He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Grand Prix Foundation, as well as on the Board of Directors of the Long Beach Convention and

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Presidential Race Update



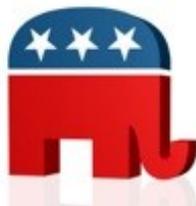
Dr. Craig Smith
Former Presidential
Speechwriter

Former Presidential speechwriter and political analyst Craig Smith will again join us to discuss the current presidential election campaign.

He will provide an update on the most recent presidential debates, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates from this year's election cycle.

As a former speechwriter for President Ford and former consultant to President H.W. Bush, Craig will place the current election race within the context of the long history of presidential debates in the United States.

He will comment on the Republican and Democratic candidates, analyzing their performances during the most recent debates. He will look at their speaking styles, and analyze their strengths and weaknesses. He may also make some predictions as the likely outcome.



Bio

Craig Smith is a Professor Emeritus of Speech Communications and is one of CSULB's most distinguished faculty members. He has written over 60 scholarly articles and book chapters, and has published 17 books that develop important themes pertaining to history, rhetoric, public address, and civic life. His most recent book is *Confessions of a Presidential Speechwriter*.

The impact of his work has been acknowledged nationally, as he was the recipient of the Douglas Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award—one of the National Communication Association's most prestigious awards.

He has also given expert testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, and several U.S. Congressional subcommittees.

Craig is also the Founder of the Center for First Amendment Studies and served as its Director for many years. He has also served as Chair of four different departments.

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CCEJ Interfaith Breakfast

A crowd of over 800 is expected at the **25th Annual Interfaith/Intercultural Breakfast on Wednesday, February 24, 2016 at 7:30am** at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. The Breakfast is sponsored by the California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ).

The Keynote Speaker this year is Professor **Margaret Burnham**, faculty member at Northeastern University School of Law. Professor Burnham is the founder of the *Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project*, which engages students in legal matters relating to the 1960's Civil Rights movement.

Professor Burnham headed a team of outside counsel and law students in a landmark case that settled a federal lawsuit: Professor Burnham's team accused law enforcement officials of Franklin County, Mississippi of assisting Klansmen in the kidnapping, torture and murder of two 19-year-olds, Henry Dee and Charles Eddie Moore. The case and settlement were widely covered in the national press.

The Interfaith Breakfast incorporates the traditions of several religious and cultural groups that contribute to the ethnic and spiritual mosaic of the community. The event offers the opportunity for people of all racial, ethnic and religious back-

grounds to come together to celebrate the rich diversity of the Southern California area and to share the vision of truly inclusive communities.



Margaret Burnham



Co-chairs of the event are **Gina Rushing McGuire**, President of St. Anthony High School and **Tarek Mohamed**, Chairman of the Long Beach Islamic Center.

Ever since its inception, Benefactors **Gene and Ann Lentzner** have underwritten the costs of the Breakfast, thereby allowing ticket prices to remain affordable. For the past few years, **Dr. Mike and Arline Walter** have also generously helped to underwrite some additional costs.

Registration begins at **6:45am**, with breakfast at **7:30am**. Cost is \$40 per person. Tables of 10 are \$400 (Harmony Table), \$500 (Peace Table), \$750 (Celebration Table), and \$1,200 (Jubilee Table).

Checks should be made payable to "CCEJ." Mail your reservations to CCEJ, 3711 Long Beach Blvd. Suite 1017, Long Beach, CA 90807. For further information, call Katherine McIlquham at **(562) 435-8184** or visit www.cacej.org.



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Sunday, March 6th
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Meet at Temple Israel
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Kick-off Event begins at 12 noon

A complete list of volunteer activities
for the day can be found at the registration site:
<http://www.volunteerspot.com/Group/765035238097/#!/show>

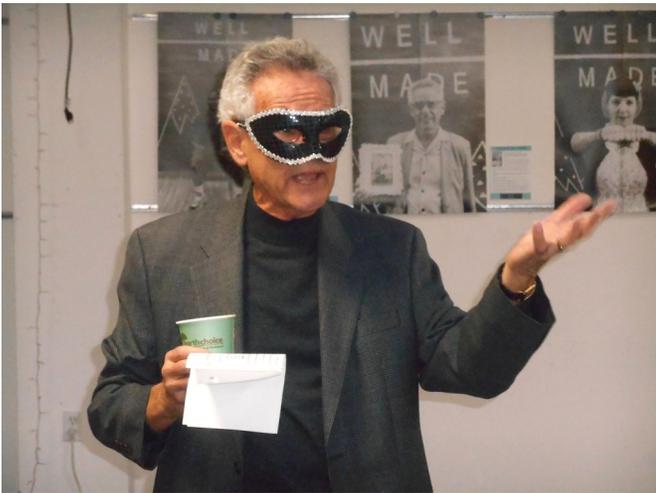




Actress **Lucy Daggett** portrays Carrie Della Walker, wife of C.J. Walker, founder of **Farmers & Merchants Bank**. The portrayal was part of the popular *Historical Cemetery Tour* sponsored by the **Historical Society of Long Beach**.



W. Henry Walker, President of **Farmers & Merchants Bank** and great grandson of founder C.J. Walker, actress **Lucy Daggett** and Henry's young friends, **Jacquelyn Armus** and **Meredith Bond**. The young ladies were there as part of an extra credit project for their English class at Rogers Middle School. Their teacher, **Pamela Weinstein**, was one of the event volunteers.



U.S. Congressman **Alan Lowenthal** addresses constituents at a *Community Coffee* on Halloween held at **MADE** in Long Beach located on Pine Avenue.



The audience enjoys coffee and donuts on a Saturday morning while listening to a Washington update from Congressman **Alan Lowenthal**.



International City Theatre Artistic Director/Producer **caryn desai** addresses guests at the *Encore 30th Anniversary Celebration*. Honorees visible on stage (l. to r.) are former LB Mayors **Beverly O'Neill** and **Bob Foster**, LA County Supervisor **Don Knabe** and **Nancy Ackerman Gaines** representing the Ackerman Family. Other honorees were **Marlene Temple**, **Mario Cordero**, LB Mayor **Robert Garcia** and the **Rotary Club of Long Beach**.



McCarty's Jewelry owner **Page Henley**, WomenShelter of Long Beach Director of Development **Susan DeLand** and WomenShelter Trustee **Freeman Welsch** at the *Holiday Pop Up Shop Party* fundraiser at The Boathouse on the Bay to benefit the **WomenShelter of Long Beach**.

Around Town



LA County Supervisor **Don Knabe** delivers his Annual *State of the County* Address to a large crowd at the Long Beach Convention Center.



The smokestacks of The Queen Mary are decked out with lights for the **CHILL** attraction and the holiday season.



Famed car designer and Host of *Overhaulin* **Chip Foose**, LA County Sheriff **Jim McDonnell** and Performance Plus owner **Hank Feldman** on a lift truck platform behind some of the many volunteers who assembled and packed several thousand boxes of food at the Performance Plus 18th Annual *Thanksgiving Food Drive & Hot Rod Happening*.



One of the many classic cars exhibited at the Performance Plus 18th Annual *Food Drive & Hot Rod Happening*.



Rabbi **Abba Perlmutter**, head of *Shul by the Shore*, addresses a large gathering at the 3rd Annual *Chanukah Festival & Menorah Lighting* in Belmont Shore.



Rabbi Abba Perlmutter under the large menorah in the Citibank parking lot, as the crowd begins to gather for the *Chanukah Festival* in Belmont Shore.

Nohemi — a Song for Paris

Mimi — can I call you that
this is a song for you —

with candles we stand & we kneel
this is how it is now we
well all of us we
send you these flowers across time
this time here which we
cannot explain

all love goes to you
& your friends the other night
so many with you gone we
stand we play Lennon's piano
Imagine — we say
a world without violence —
we want to imagine that in your name
Nohemi Gonzalez from El Monte
from Whittier California from
Cal State Long Beach —
Then
we run out of words

the words
so many words your mamá
Beatriz your cousin Jacqueline
we know them now — for you

we write them a poem too
I do not know how we will do that
we are doing that — that is all
like the designs you made — for a high-spirited world
you said you were *high-spirited & self-driven* — yes
like the dreams you had
& the words *First Generation*

the ones you used to
describe your life

we continue with you — somehow
it is not important to know how
it is important to continue that is all
I must — say it again

we are all writing a poem
for you for your cousin Jacqueline
for your mamá Beatriz — she loved you
their love will make it alright
all of our love will make it alright yes

here is your song Mimi —

*We light Nohemi a candle
the candle waves across the stars
close they are so close because
Nohemi & Paris are in our hearts*

Because
Nohemi &
Paris — are in
our hearts

This poem was written by United States Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera
in honor of Nohemi Gonzalez, a design student at CSULB who was killed during the Paris attacks.

The poem was delivered aloud by CSU Chancellor Timothy White at a memorial service for Gonzalez
held at California State University, Long Beach on Sunday, November 15, 2015.

In Memorium at CSULB



Nohemi Gonzalez
1992—2015

Sponsor & Community News

Aquatic Capital Awards Banquet

The Aquatic Capital Foundation will be holding its *7th Annual Awards Banquet* on **Wednesday, January 20** from 6pm to 4pm at Keesal, Young & Logan. At the event, the Foundation will honor the 2015 individuals, athletes and organizations who have contributed to making the City of Long Beach the Aquatic Capital of America. For reservations or further information, contact Donna Becker at acoa.dbecker@gmail.com.

Chinese New Year Festival

Join the Long Beach—Qingdao Sister City Association *Annual Chinese New Year & Spring Festival Celebration* on **Saturday, February 20** 4pm-7pm at Long Beach City College. Enjoy the food and culture of China. Witness astonishing Chinese magic and the beauty of Chinese martial arts. Be entertained by musicians, acrobats, and the always-popular Lion Dancers. Children will be entranced by the storytelling and crafts of ancient China. Specially selected Chinese dishes will be prepared and served by the LBCC Culinary Department. Tickets are \$35 for adults, \$15 for children ages 11 to 17. Children 10 or under are free. For reservations or more information, visit www.lbqa.org.

Performance Plus Tire



Performance Plus Tire & Automotive Superstore owners **Joyce and Hank Feldman** are pictured in front of some of the several thousand boxes of food and other items donated

by the firm, suppliers or purchased with proceeds from fundraisers during the year. The items were packed into boxes by volunteers at the Performance Plus 18th Annual *Food Drive & Hot Rod Happening*. The drive supports local needy families pre-selected by over 25 non-profits and schools, and was delivered to their homes on Thanksgiving Day.

Roe Xpress

Roe Express Fish Market is back in the Shore after a nearly two-year hiatus. They serve delicious seafood dishes such as clam chowah, fish and chips, ahi poke, ceviche, and much more. They also offer fresh fish to take home and prepare yourself (ask Chef Arthur for grilling suggestions).

Roe Xpress is located at 5374 E. 2nd Street. Hours are **11am to 10pm** 7 days a week. For further information, visit roeseafood.com or call **(562) 434-2763**.



A full service restaurant will be complete in late Spring, and will serve hand-crafted, seasonal dishes with bold flavors and exciting tastes. Watch for the announcement of their opening in late April.

Straight Talk Magazine

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Photo Focus: Holiday Cheer



Long Beach Mayor **Robert Garcia** and partner **Matt Mendez** at the lighting of Long Beach's tallest Christmas tree on the Terrace Plaza in downtown Long Beach. The tree was decorated with 35,000 twinkling LED lights and sparks a new holiday tradition.



Santa & Mrs. Claus under the tree. The festive event also included musical entertainment, holiday sweets and free train rides for the kids.



Glorious reindeer helped illuminate the Terrace Plaza Fountain.



Guests gathered at the Terrace Plaza of the Long Beach Performing Arts Center for a matinee performance of *The Nutcracker*.



Guest performers sponsored by the **Bob Hope USO** entertained at the reception at F&M Bank prior to the Belmont Shore Christmas Parade. They performed in the parade as well.



Straight Talk host **Art Levine** is interviewed by BSBA Executive Director **Dede Rossi** along the parade route, as **Diane Levine** and Gelson's General Manager **Vieki Caitlan** happily look on.



Sponsor Spotlight: Russo's Ristorante—Where Everyone is Family



Russo's Ristorante has been owned and operated by **Jack and Vikki Russo** since 1989. Previously known as Pasta al Dente, the restaurant was reinvented and renamed in 2009. Russo's is now celebrating its **27th Anniversary**.

ideal for birthdays and special occasions. In addition, their **outside patio dining** is perfect for those romantic evenings. Remember, it's the simple joys... fine food, fine wine, and fine friends that make it all worthwhile. And you can find them all at Russo's.

Featuring Jack and Vikki's favorite recipes, a new menu was created serving seafood, steak and pastas. Some of the customer favorites are **Chilean Sea Bass, Bone-In Rib Eye** and **Linguini di Mare**, to name just a few.



Jack and Vikki invite you to enjoy the sounds of family and friends having memorable times around the dining table. Better yet, sit down and join in at Russo's. . . *Where Everyone is Family.*

Russo's is also known for their **fresh baked focaccia bread**, served nightly with their signature sun-dried tomato olive oil. They also feature **awesome desserts** such as tiramisu, home made cannoli, and crème brulee caramelized table side.

Russo's is open nightly from 5pm, Sundays open early at **3pm**. For reservations, call **(562) 433-1616**.

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Naples Rib Company.....(562) 439-7427

Papalucci's.....(562) 434-4454

Picarelli's.....(562) 986-5280

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But how's the food?

Brix proudly serves the *World's Best Pastrami*, along with artisan burgers, award-winning Clam Chowda, and hearty salads. Just introduced: a monthly gourmet pasta and **New York Steak Dinner.**

The Appetizers—try Simon's (as-in Paul) Sweet Potato Fries or the super-garlicy Garfunkle Fries, are a perfect starter, or just nosh on a few while you sip your fine wine or brew.

The 3 O'Clock Club (happy hour, Brix-Style) meets Monday 3-10 and Tuesday-Friday 3-6

2 for 1 large pastrami sandwiches Mondays 11-3*

\$6 Brix Burger Wednesdays 6-9*

Taps Dancing 2 wines & 2 draft brews are just \$3/glass

*w/ purchase of 2 glasses of wine or draft brew



See Page 19 Before Reading These Answers

(Clockwise from upper left)
U.S. Congressman Alan Lowenthal
LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey
LA County Supervisor Don Knabe
LA Sheriff Jim McDonnell
LB Mayor Robert Garcia
LBUSD Board of Education President Felton Williams
LB City Auditor Laura Doud
CSULB Women's Volleyball Head Coach Brian Gimmillaro
International City Theatre Artistic Director/Producer Caryn Desai
LB Chief of Police Robert Luna
CSULB President Jane Conoley
U.S. Vets President/CEO Stephen Peck
LB Convention & Visitors Bureau President/CEO Steve Goodling
Former Presidential Speechwriter Craig Smith
Grand Prix Association President/CEO Jim Michaelian
LB Vice Mayor Sujia Lowenthal
Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioner Doug Drummond
Federal Maritime Commission Chairman Mario Cordero
SCAN Health Plan CEO Chris Wing
Aquarium of the Pacific President/CEO Jerry Schubel

Guest Identifications
(See Page 19 before reading)



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Fighting Sexual Exploitation

by

LA District Attorney Jackie Lacey

In Los Angeles County, girls as young as 12 years old – in essence, sixth-graders – are forced into commercial sexual exploitation. Los Angeles County is considered one of the nation’s worst areas for this heinous form of human trafficking. Faced with this bleak reality, the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office has devoted more resources to protect victims and worked to curb this rapidly growing criminal enterprise.

For far too long, criminal street gangs viewed human trafficking as a high-profit operation. Sadly, selling a girl several times a day is more lucrative than selling drugs or guns. Gang members and others viewed the crime as low-risk. Prison time for these crimes, comparably, was not significant.

These cases were once extremely difficult to prosecute. California’s human trafficking law required that prosecutors prove that victims were lured into the trafficking scheme by force, fear or duress. Many victims are emotionally bonded to their traffickers, making coercion difficult to prove. In addition, victims are often reluctant to testify in court for fear of retaliation.

In 2012, voters approved Proposition 35, which dramatically changed how these cases are handled. The new law removed the requirement that prosecutors prove that victims were forced into sex work. Penalties increased, with sentences of up to life in prison and fines of up to \$1.5 million. Convicted traffickers were now required to register as sex offenders.

Most importantly, the young people who are subjected to human trafficking are viewed and **treated as victims**, not looked upon as child prostitutes.

Empowered by this change in the law, I established the office’s first **Human Trafficking Unit** in 2014 and the Human Trafficking Committee. The Human Trafficking Unit consists of highly skilled deputy district attorneys with expertise in prosecuting sex crimes and human trafficking cases. The formation of the unit has led to more efficient and effective handling of these sensitive and complex cases.

The unit is led by a coordinator who is responsible for training deputy district attorneys and law enforcement personnel. More than 400 law enforcement officers have been trained on the best practices for investigating human trafficking cases. The coordinator acts as the law enforcement liaison to assist in all human trafficking matters and also takes part in community outreach to increase human trafficking awareness.

The unit coordinator chairs the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Human Trafficking Committee, which includes experts from the office’s units that address organize crime, hardcore gangs, juvenile crime and victim services. Committee members meet on a regular basis to advise the coordinator on issues pertaining to human trafficking and make suggestions on what can be done to improve prosecutions and aid the victims. The committee also is involved in training.

The office has developed a human trafficking database to help prosecutors identify emerging trends and document the results of cases. Recognizing the need to treat the minors in these cases as victims, the office implemented the First Step Diversion Program in 2013. This program gives minors, caught up in commercial sexual exploitation, a way out.

Prosecutors work with law enforcement and non-governmental agencies to identify minors who will benefit from First Step. Minors must agree to enter the program, which provides wraparound services such as substance abuse treatment, education, counseling and medical assistance. Minors who successfully complete the program will not have a criminal case filed against them.

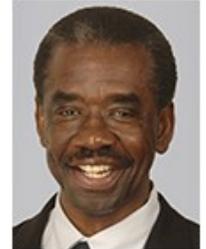
With the First Step Program and the Human Trafficking Unit, more charges related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children are being filed, resulting in more convictions and longer sentences. The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office has continued to push for legislation that will assist human trafficking prosecution. This includes exploring ways to increase the penalties for those who would purchase sex from minors. This despicable, dehumanizing conduct must stop.

With each case we prosecute, the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office sends a clear message to human traffickers and buyers of child sex that we know they exist and we will use all tools in our arsenal to see that they are punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Ms. Lacey was elected as District Attorney in November 2012 and was sworn in on December 3, 2012. She is the first woman and first African-American to serve as Los Angeles County District Attorney since the office was created in 1850. She will be our guest on the Straight Talk Show airing the weeks of January 9 & January 16.

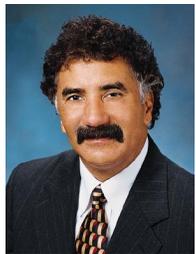


Straight Talk Year in Review



Can You Identify These Community Leaders?

(Answers on Page 17)



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or





Happy Holiday Season



From All of Us at Straight Talk

Pictured (l. to r.) Director Ron Petke, Make-up Artist CJ Eastman, LA District Attorney Jackie Lacey (January Guest), Host Art Levine, Robotic Cameras John Gean, LA County Supervisor Don Knabe (December Guest), Audio Engineer Vic Carpenter, Floor Manager Keith Chacon, and Production Assistant Amara Trujillo.