For the second year, Downtown Long Beach Alliance is offering local businesses a free opportunity to tune up and strengthen their operations by attending the DLBA Small Business Winter Workshop Series.

“Ideally suited for Downtown businesses which have been operating for three years or more, the Small Business Winter Workshop Series is an opportunity for them to re-assess their goals for the year, and see how they can re-align their practices for the remainder of the year,” said Austin Metoyer, Economic Development and Policy Manager for DLBA.

The three-part workshop, which started in January, takes place at DLBA on the first Saturday of each month at 9 AM. Business
owners are encouraged to attend the March 28 workshop, “Perfecting the Sales Cycle,” which will be presented by Kena Fuller of the Fuller Management Corporation.

Business topics covered throughout the 2020 workshop series included new accounting standards and practices, tax preparation, profitability, branding, and the importance of intellectual property rights. Business owners were encouraged to attend all three of the 2020 Winter Workshop sessions, but it is not a requirement.

The Winter Workshop also serves as a primer for those interested in the Entrepreneur Education Series (EES), an all-encompassing, back-to-the-basics learning and grant opportunity presented by DLBA in partnership with Farmers and Merchants Bank. Please read the related article in this installment of the DLBA Newsletter for details about EES.

LONG BEACH BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES BUILD ON CENTURY-OLD FOUNDATION
Since 1976, every U.S. President has recognized the month of February as Black History Month. In celebration, DLBA would like to shed light on the work of two courageous African-American business pioneers in Long Beach at the start of the 20th century, and to recognize a current Downtown business owner who has a keen appreciation of black history.

An early advocate for the success of black-owned businesses in Long Beach was George Washington Hawkins. Born in Alabama in 1845, Hawkins moved to Los Angeles in 1891 and opened a furniture shop on Second Street in Downtown L.A. He was instrumental in forming the Colored Business Men’s League of Los Angeles, which met at his shop. The League’s stated goal was to “instill into the race a desire to branch out in various commercial lines and to be better known among their people that they might obtain a good share of the trade that now drifts to other firms.”

The League was very vocal in its condemnations of the lingering discrimination and violence against African-
Hawkins, who advised African-Americans to purchase and develop their own land, followed his own advice and bought property in the Los Cerritos area of Long Beach. He established a ranch there while commuting via the Pacific Electric Railway to his L.A. shop and continuing to be a fierce proponent of civil rights and African-American commerce.

Ernest McBride Sr. was another key figure in the development of Long Beach black-owned businesses. It is poetic justice that McBride, born in Mississippi at a time when there were no schools there for African-Americans, now has a high school named after him in Long Beach.

McBride arrived in Long Beach in 1930 and got a job loading cotton onto ships in San Pedro Harbor. When he discovered injustices with his crew’s pay rate, he quit the job and began his fight to unionize all shipyard workers, regardless of race.

McBride met resistance when he tried to purchase a home in Long Beach in 1948, but he persevered, raising six children in his home on Lemon Avenue, which became a regular meeting place for civil rights activists.

After co-founding the Long Beach chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), McBride established himself as a local legend by successfully fighting to integrate the Long Beach Police and Fire Departments, the Naval Shipyard and General Telephone Company.

McBride and Hawkins paved the way for successful Long Beach business owners such as Max Viltz, whose world imports shop Village Treasures has been a Downtown fixture for almost 20 years (you may have noticed the stunning African masks and sculptures through the picture windows of her previous location in the East Village, or the life-size Zebra statue that beckons people into her current Broadway Avenue
location).

Viltz was inspired to open an import shop on Atlantic Avenue in 1997 after a trip to Egypt in the ’90s guided by Cornell University Egyptologist Dr. Yosef Ben Jochannan. Jochannan encouraged his pupils to educate their communities about African culture. Inspired, Viltz opened her shop and filled it with artifacts and artwork from Africa while continuing to work a corporate job.

Viltz, a Downtown resident, decided to commit full-time to her own business, getting a financial start-up loan and connections to City business protocols from DLBA. She became active in the Long Beach culture community, serving on the board of the Arts Council of Long Beach for nine years.

Village Treasures is filled with African artwork: ebony sculptures from Tanzania, textiles from The Congo, and various artifacts from Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Nigeria. Viltz has visited all of those countries. She is passionate and knowledgeable about the history of black-owned businesses in Long Beach and of black culture in general.

Viltz serves as Co-Chair of Long Beach African American Culture Center Project, which called upon the input of community stakeholders throughout 2019 in a series of meetings and workshops to help shape its vision.

The mission statement of the LBAACC is “to celebrate, cultivate, and advance the enrichment of the heritage and culture of the Black/African American community in Long Beach and beyond.”

We encourage you to learn more about the LBAACC (please visit link below) and to explore the great events happening during the month of February in celebration of Black History Month including:

African American Festival at the Aquarium of the Pacific
NEW CLEAN AND SAFE TEAMS
PROGRAM MANAGERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

In January, DLBA welcomed its new Clean and Safe Program Manager, Sergio Andrades, and Assistant Program Manager, Kaelan Traylor. If their previous experience is any indication, they will set the tone for DLBA’s ambassadors and porters with a tremendous work ethic and positive leadership philosophy.

“I read the job description and thought, ‘That sounds like me,’” said Andrades, whose responsibilities also include overseeing DLBA’s contracts for service with the nationwide
company Block By Block.

Andrades, who grew up in Echo Park and South Central Los Angeles, has always been an industrious self-starter. He started working young and quickly ascended into management positions, eventually earning the title of Regional Manager for a large storage company.

Seeking a change, Andrades saw the opportunity to implement his managerial skills with the Clean and Safe Teams, and, by extension, to help the Downtown Long Beach community.

“I wake up every morning thinking, ‘I set the pace to everyone’s day,’” Andrades said. “We start each day with a quick huddle, talk about the day, do morning stretches, make sure everyone’s uniform is together and they have all the right tools.”

Kaelan Traylor grew up in Inglewood but spent lots of time in Long Beach; His mother worked Downtown in the building right behind DLBA.

“It’s a pleasure working with Sergio,” Traylor said. “We share the same mindset and the same skill set.”

Traylor got his start with Block By Block in 2017, working security/hospitality in West Hollywood. After a year he transferred to Santa Monica and added maintenance duties to his workload. Within another year he was offered outreach duties and had become team lead.

After a year and a half in the lead role, Traylor was offered the Long Beach position and began work in the DLBA’s Clean and Safe Team office three weeks ago.

“Our Teams want to help everybody feel the new wave of energy and accomplishments when they come to Downtown Long Beach,” said Traylor. “If we contribute to that, we have executed our plan.”
The Teams get to work on the Downtown streets with the goal of having the bulk of their task list completed by the beginning of business hours.

Andrades and Traylor are able to monitor the progress of each Team member from their office, but they also spend plenty of time walking or bike riding the assigned routes and assisting with Clean and Safe duties. They write up daily incident reports, breaking down the data from the day. This enables DLBA to spot trends (high-graffiti locations, for instance) and find ways to deal with them more effectively.

“We’re very excited to have Sergio and Kaelan join the team,” said DLBA COO Broc Coward. “We look forward to their enthusiasm as well as their management and facilities experience contributing greatly to our Clean and Safe operations.”

JAMES SINGLETERRY’S FIERY SUNSET PHOTO WINS UNFILTERED FAN FAVORITE AWARD
Powers of observation, a passion for photography, childhood memories and drone piloting skills all worked together to earn James Singleterry the Downtown Long Beach Unfiltered Fan Favorite award.

Singleterry’s stunning sunset shot of the Downtown Marina is now front and center on the wall at DLBA.

“I spent tons of time in Downtown as a kid,” said Singleterry. “I was a member of the Navy Sea Cadets in high school, I sold Grand Prix programs here in the ’70s, I even watched the TV show ‘C.H.I.P.S.’ being filmed down here. This is my childhood.”

Singleterry captured the winning shot after receiving a tip from a sunset forecast website. When he arrived Downtown with his digital camera-equipped drone, “the sunset was on fire,” he said. He sat down under a palm tree, piloted the drone over the water and took several shots, controlling the shutter with his iPhone. At the bottom of the photo, ripples from the
Born and raised in Long Beach, Singleterry is a well-rounded fellow. A Navy veteran of the first Iraq war, James has been a motorcycle officer for the El Monte Police Department for 20 years. He is an avid bicyclist who has completed many “centuries”—the insider term for a 100-mile ride. Art has been an important component of his life since childhood when he caught the photography bug after watching his brother pursuing his own photography hobby.

Singleterry got a major boost of inspiration the hard way: Last year, while walking through El Monte, he was struck by a car, flying 22 feet and severely damaging his arm. Needing an outlet during a painful, three-surgery recovery, he turned to photography. He especially enjoyed the camaraderie and education gained from shooting photos with others.

“There’s so much cool stuff in life,” said Singleterry. “To capture moments in time and share them with other people is very rewarding. There is so much beauty in the world.”

To see James’ Fan Favorite sunset picture or any of the other twenty inspired Downtown Long Beach Unfiltered Photo Contest finalists, drop by DLBA’s office at 100 West Broadway, Suite 120, where they are proudly exhibited.
WALKING TOUR SHEDS LIGHT ON EAST VILLAGE’S COLORFUL, LAYERED HISTORY
Downtown Long Beach’s East Village Arts District has gained more recognition among the culturally curious from LA and other points in Southern California, but its identity as a fertile ground for the arts was established a century ago. During Long Beach Heritage’s monthly East Village Walking Tour, participants will learn all about the origins of the District and the many ways it reflects the development and evolution of the City of Long Beach.

The East Village tour is one of four regular walking tours hosted by Long Beach Heritage. It coincides with the popular Second Saturday Art Walk and is the perfect appetizer for a night spent taking in the amenities of the East Village Arts District.

“We find that most people who take the tour are long-time Long Beach residents who have grown up around the buildings but don’t know their rich histories,” said Sam Dragga, tour guide and Vice President of Education for Long Beach Heritage.
The East Village is a living dictionary of architectural styles. “There are few spots on the planet where all these styles live side by side,” said Steve Gillis-Moore, a loquacious and well-informed Long Beach Heritage docent. Gillis-Moore obviously takes great pleasure in discussing the variety of East Village building styles: Mid-Century Modern, Italian Revival, Art Deco, Chateau, Prairie, Streamline Moderne and more.

The East Village’s identity as an arts center was ordained many decades ago; In the early 1900s, the first movie studio headquartered in California—The California Motion Picture Manufacturing Company—stood near the corner of 7th Street and Alamitos Avenue, where the Museum of Latin American Art is now.

On the southwest side of the District, expatriate James Savery returned to the USA from Paris after World War I and established the Wayside Art Colony near the corner of Atlantic Avenue and First Street. The Colony nurtured the creative efforts of sculptors, glass blowers, musicians, painters, dancers and weavers. It could be said that the Wayside Art Colony set the stage for today’s thriving East Village creative energy.

The tour starts at 3pm on the second Saturday of each month at the Cooper Arms Building. Guests will stroll the East Village streets, learning about how events in Long Beach history such as the 1920s oil boom and the 1933 earthquake are reflected in the Village’s architectural style. The tour ends at the top of the Lafayette Complex, where tour-takers will get a bird’s-eye view of the District before partaking of the Second Saturday Art Walk’s artistic and musical offerings.

For more information about the East Village Walking Tour on February 8, please visit the Long Beach Heritage website: www.lbheritage.org
The Downtown Long Beach Alliance Strategic Plan, established in 2016, includes an action item to advocate for the redesign of Victory Park/Santa Cruz Park in a way that aligns with the desires of the Downtown Community.

Since 1889, when it was officially dedicated as parkland by the City of Long Beach, the green space along the south side of Ocean Boulevard in Downtown Long Beach has played an
important role in the first impressions of countless visitors. Currently, the City is in the process of engaging the public’s help in updating Victory Park/Santa Cruz Park guidelines to make this space more appealing and useful for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

“We think it’s a good time to take a look at those guidelines and refresh them,” said Patricia Diefenderfer, Advance Planning Officer in the City of Long Beach Development Services Planning Bureau. “The current guidelines,” she added, “were established in 1989 and don’t include such issues as sustainability and new placemaking practices in general.”

Santa Cruz Park, which runs along Ocean Boulevard from Golden Avenue to Cedar Avenue, and Victory Park, which continues from Cedar all the way to Alamitos Avenue, reached their full potential in the early ’20s when the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm applied its expertise (The company’s founder, Frederick, designed Central Park in the mid-nineteenth century and his sons Frederick Jr. and John continued building the company, creating the landscaping at the White House and 6000 other locations throughout the country).

This space continues to be of high significance, serving as a pedestrian bridge between the Waterfront and Downtown core. Various redevelopment projects over the decades put the squeeze on the linear park, which now constitutes a strip approximately 80 feet wide. Pleasantly green and well-maintained, it is easy to mistake it for the front yards of adjoining Ocean Boulevard buildings. The City seeks to make updates that affirm the identities of these parks as public spaces.

“The guideline redesign process presents a great placemaking opportunity to reimagine this open space and the public realm experience in a way that speaks to the history and values of
our Downtown community,” said DLBA Placemaking Manager, Mariah Hoffman.

Last December, the City held a workshop in which Downtown residences and business owners were quizzed about what the park means to them, how they use it, and what improvements they would like to see. Those who missed the workshop can still provide input by clicking this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/victorysantacruzpark. Here, visitors can scan the “Outreach Boards” to get background and context and then click the “I’m Ready” button to take the survey.

Your input is requested about such improvements as which drought-tolerant shrubs would work best, what sort of seating and gathering places you might like, and what can be included to pay tribute to the park’s history.

“With the right guidelines,” said Planning Bureau Landscape Specialist Alex Muldrow, “Victory/Santa Cruz park once again has the potential to become something iconic to Long Beach.”

To learn more about the Victory/Santa Cruz Park project, please click here: http://www.longbeach.gov/lbds/planning/victory-santa-cruz/