

A VACATION TO REMEMBER

December 3, 2023 - December 11, 2023



Visit to the National
Notary Association



Cross-Country Train Ride
from Los Angeles, CA to
New Orleans, LA



Family Visit to
New Orleans and
Gretna, LA

Our Visit to The National Notary Association (NNA) Headquarters in Los Angeles, CA

Fred and I have been members of the National Notary Association (NNA) for more than twenty years. While attending the 2023 NNA Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, we decided that it was time to visit the headquarters of the Association that had given us superior notarial guidance for many years. I conveyed our desire to Nicola Jackson, NNA Director of Training, and she welcomed our visit wholeheartedly.

On Sunday, December 3, 2023, we flew from Maryland on Southwest Airlines to LAX Airport in Los Angeles, CA, to visit NNA.

About Elaine and Fred Harris



Elaine Wright Harris is a Professional Notary Public Educator and Maryland Title Insurance Pre-Licensing and Continuing Education Instructor. She developed a comprehensive notary public course program at Prince George's Community College (PGCC) in Largo, MD. For more than a decade, Elaine has coordinated, in conjunction with PGCC, an annual Maryland Notary Public program to further enhance the knowledge and skills of notaries public. In 2009, NNA awarded Elaine as Notary of the Year. She is also an NNA Ambassador and Conference Workshop Presenter. Elaine received a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

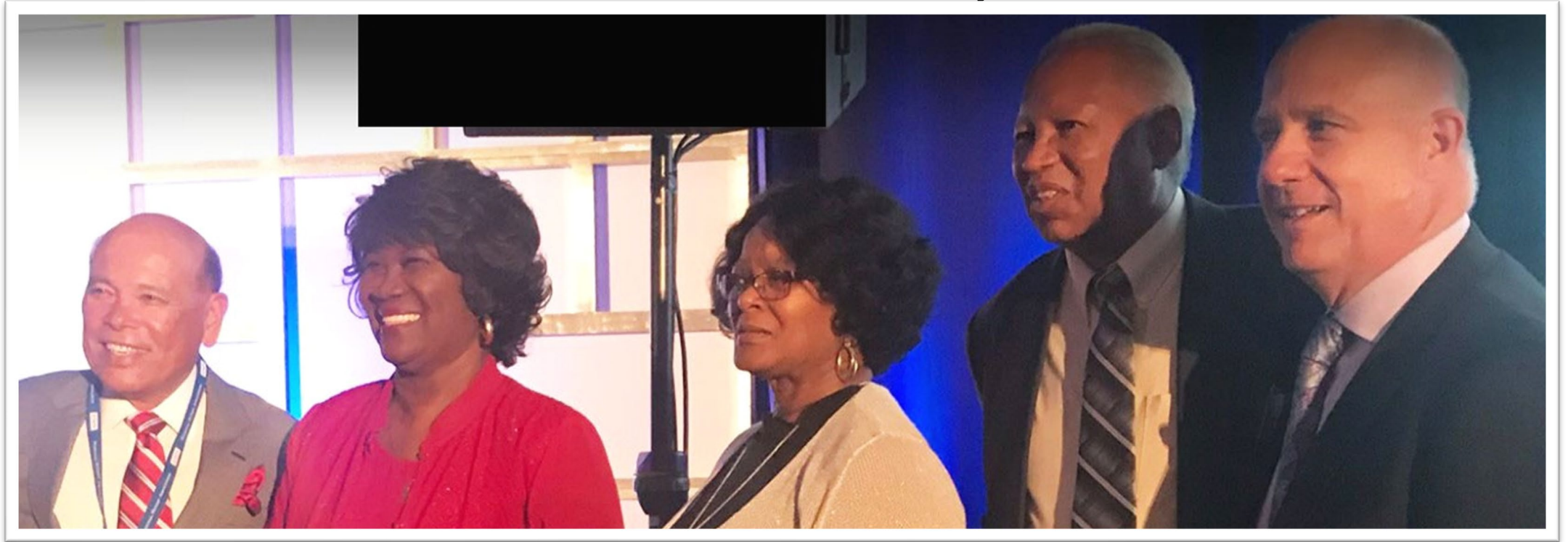


Frederick (Fred) Harris is a Professional Notary Public Educator at Prince George's Community College and Maryland Title Insurance Producer Independent Contractor (TIPIC). He has performed thousands of notarizations for the general public and the mortgage industry as a Full-time Notary Public and Maryland TIPIC (aka Notary Signing Agent) for more than 20 years. Fred received a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from Southeastern University in Washington, D.C. Fred is also a United States veteran.

Fred and Elaine are also instructors for the Maryland Secretary of State Course of Study for NEW and RENEWING notaries.

About NNA's Outstanding Leadership

Milton Valera and Thomas Heymann



*(Left to right: Milton Valera, Chairman, Elaine Harris, Wanda Moore, Frederick Harris, and Thomas A. Heymann, President and Chief Executive Officer)
[Picture taken at the 2018 National Notary Association Conference Green Valley Ranch Resort Spa & Casino, Henderson, NV]*

Milton (Milt) Valera became President and CEO of NNA in 1982 and served for over four (4) decades. During his tenure, he oversaw all major notary education, support programs, and services. Fred, Wanda, and I met Milt in 2004 at our first NNA Conference in Philadelphia, PA. Thomas (Tom) Heymann assumed the role of NNA President and CEO in 2012. His leadership continues to make NNA the premier notary association in the United States. We met Tom at the 2012 NNA Conference in San Diego, CA.



Monday

December 4, 2023

Fred took a snapshot of me while I was sitting in the lobby of the Marriott Residence Hotel in Chatsworth. Our excitement was mounting as we waited for the Uber ride to the National Notary Association headquarters.

Yes!

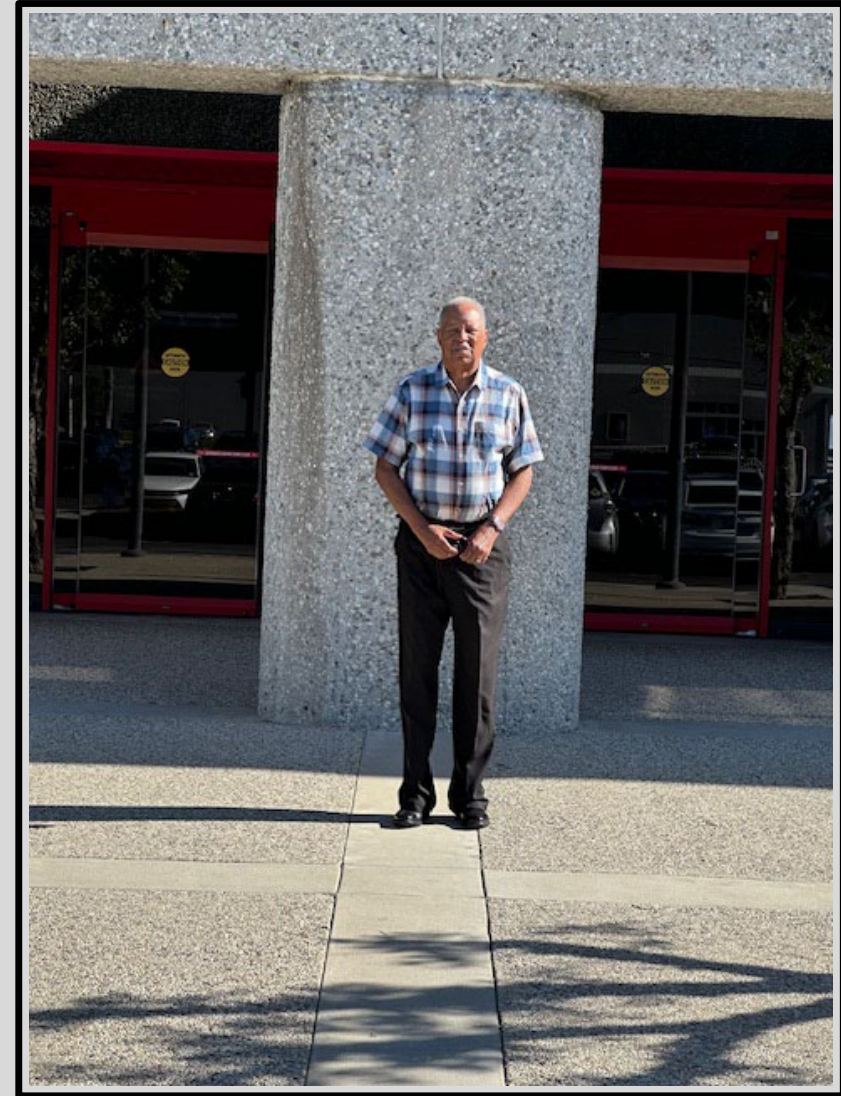


Hi, I am Wanda Moore.
Due to unforeseen
circumstances, I was
unable to accompany
Elaine and Fred on this
trip; but I was there in
spirit.



National Library of Medicine

We Arrived at the National Notary Association Headquarters!



Nicola Jackson, Director of Training



Nicola Jackson

Nicola greeted us with a big smile as we entered the building. As the Director of Training and Education, she works with her team to track industry trends, laws, and regulations to uphold the highest standards of Notary practice. She also manages the NNA Hotline which answers over 10,000 questions monthly from Notaries nationwide. Nicola has spent most of her career with the NNA as a seminar instructor where she taught Notary law seminars in 17 states and is highly regarded as a subject matter expert in Notary laws and practices.

The visitor sign-in went smoothly.

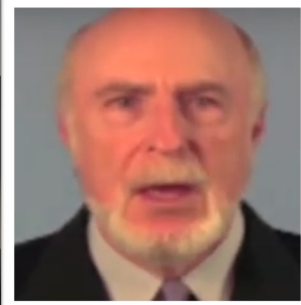
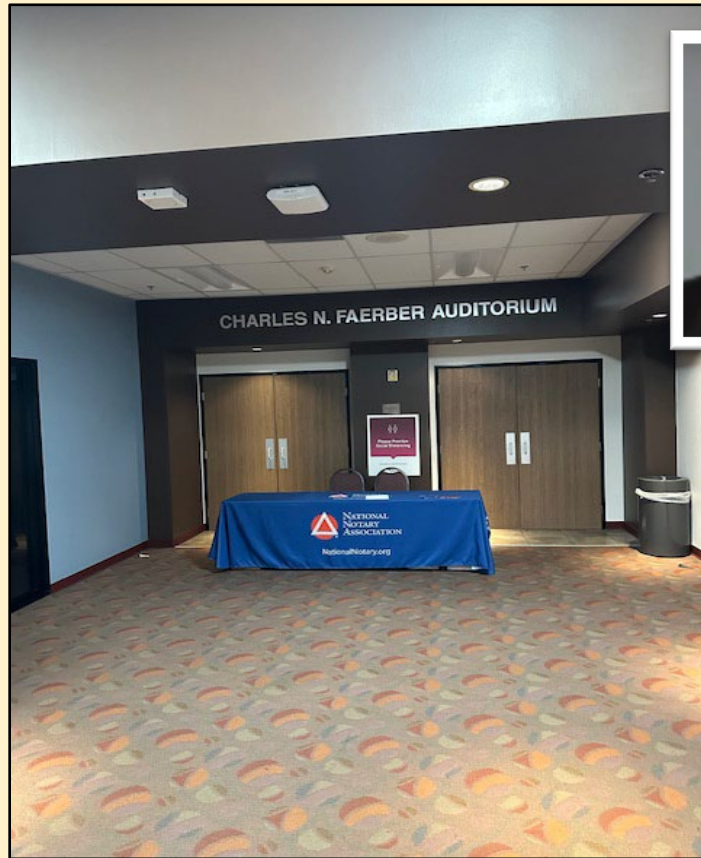


Then Nicola proceeded to guide us on a tour of the headquarters. The first stop was at the NNA Showroom, where we met James Berry, a staff member who is also a notary public. The showroom is open to the public for purchases of notary supplies.



Elaine Harris, James Berry, and Fred Harris

CHARLES N. FAERBER AUDITORIUM



Our next stop was at the CHARLES N. FAERBER AUDITORIUM. Charles Faerber is the past Vice President of Notary Affairs. Early in our Notary Public career, we had the honor of meeting Charles Faerber personally at an NNA Conference. California state-required notary training classes are conducted in the Auditorium, which seats up to 140 students. Also, NNA holiday parties are held at this facility.

Interesting Wall Décor Displaying NNA History and Memorabilia

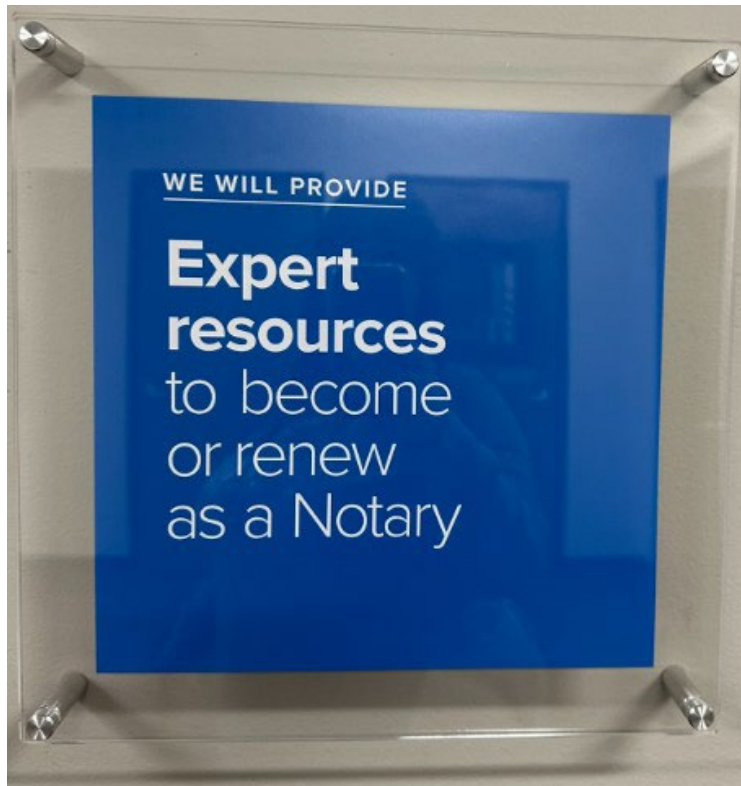


As we walked through the hallway, we saw a beautiful woven quilt mounted on the wall. The NNA logo is woven in the center of the quilt. The quilt was presented to NNA by the Utah Secretary of State.

NNA does not fall short of its commitment to customers. Also, on the wall are five plaques stating the following superior customer service commitments that NNA provides:

1. Engagement whenever, wherever, and however chosen
2. An easy place to research and purchase solutions
3. Expert resources to become or renew as a Notary
4. Timely, responsive service with integrity, simplicity, and security
5. High-quality products and services

OUR COMMITMENT TO customer experience



OUR COMMITMENT TO customer experience





Lunch was delicious!

Meet NNA Staff. To my left:

Tamara Rhoads

Training Logistics Specialist – works with Nicola in conference planning

Iris Colocho Gil

Training and Education Supervisor – Nicola's right hand

Yancy Luna

Specialist – helps with state programs, membership, nsa.com

Bri Solorzano

Training Department – works with fingerprints and booking for seminars

Brandon Rosenthal

Marketing Team – Find a Notary expert

Nicola Jackson

Training Director

Kat Garcia

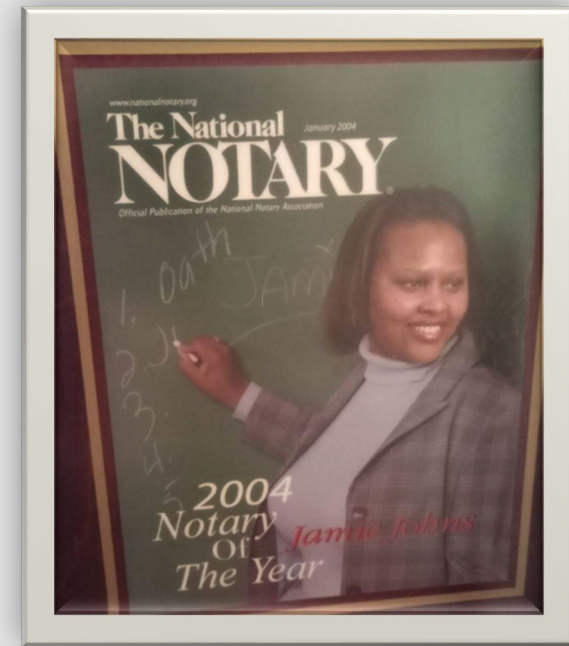
Communications Team



We were joined during lunch by Phillip Brown, Vice President of Communications, and Tom Heymann, President of NNA. Bill Anderson, Vice President of Government Affairs, joined us via Zoom.



Gerrie Pierre-Fluerimond



Jamie Liggins

After lunch, we continued down the "Hallway of NNA History and Memorabilia" to the Maryland Room. The wall was covered with plaques displaying "The National Notary" magazines published over the years. Some of the magazines included cover stories of award-winning 'NNA Notaries of the Year' spanning several decades.

I was touched to see the plaque displaying the 2003 Notary of The Year, Gerrie Pierre-Fluerimond, because we both had been given similar taglines by NNA. Her tagline: "Education, Motivation Are Keys to Her Success". My tagline: "Commitment To Elevate The Office Through Professionalism And Education". I met Gerrie at my 'first' NNA Conference held in Philadelphia, PA. Gerrie was one of the guest speakers at the Conference.

Jamie Liggins was awarded the 2004 Notary of the Year at the same Conference. Her tagline was "Dedicated To Strengthening The Professionalism Of Notaries " Jamie Liggins became my mentor.



*Nicola Jackson, Elaine Harris,
and Kat Garcia*



This image depicts an expanded view of the wall displaying plaques of "The National Notary" magazines spanning over several decades.

The hallway also housed a library of past NNA's magazines attesting to the growth and development of the Association and Notaries Public served over the years.

Note: I am pointing to the large library of magazines. I don't have anything in my hands. There is a magnolia flower on the table between the bookcases. lol!

We passed the "California Room" as we headed to the Maryland Room! The California Room is set up as a collaborative workspace for staff.

CALIFORNIA ROOM



THE MARYLAND ROOM



Nicola explained the birth of the Maryland Room. This room was set up to be used as a collaborative workspace for staff; the same function as the California Room. However, it did not have a name. Tom Heymann, NNA's President and Chief Executive Officer, suggested, "Let's call it the Maryland Room since Elaine and Fred are coming to visit from Maryland. It would be an opportune time to christen the room."

What an honor for all Maryland notaries public!

The Cutting of the Ribbon!

Fred and I stood in front of the Maryland Room. Right before clipping the red ribbon, I said, "This is the Maryland Room!" There was applause. Fred opened the door, and we entered the Maryland Room!



The Maryland Room is a model workspace! It is an honor for all Maryland notaries.



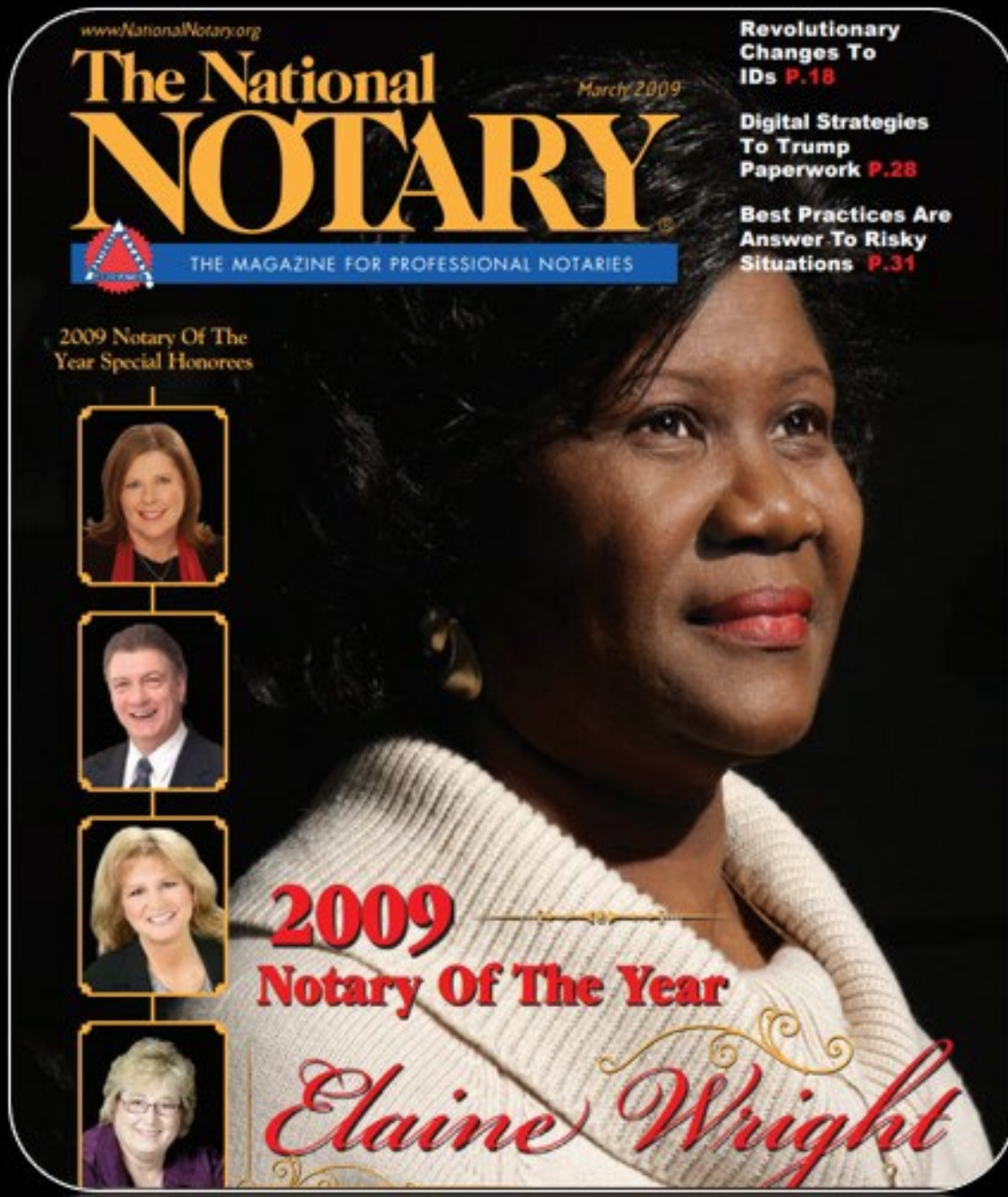
The Maryland Room provides an ideal workspace for staff. The walls were filled with positive quotes:

I am worthy;
I am focused;
I am happy;
I am motivated;
I am grateful.

Phillip Brown placed the March 2009 edition of The National Magazine on the wall. This issue featured me when I was awarded the 2009 NNA Notary of the Year. A copy of the magazine's cover page is on the next page.



Nicola Jackson, Elaine Harris, Phillip Browne, and Tom Heymann



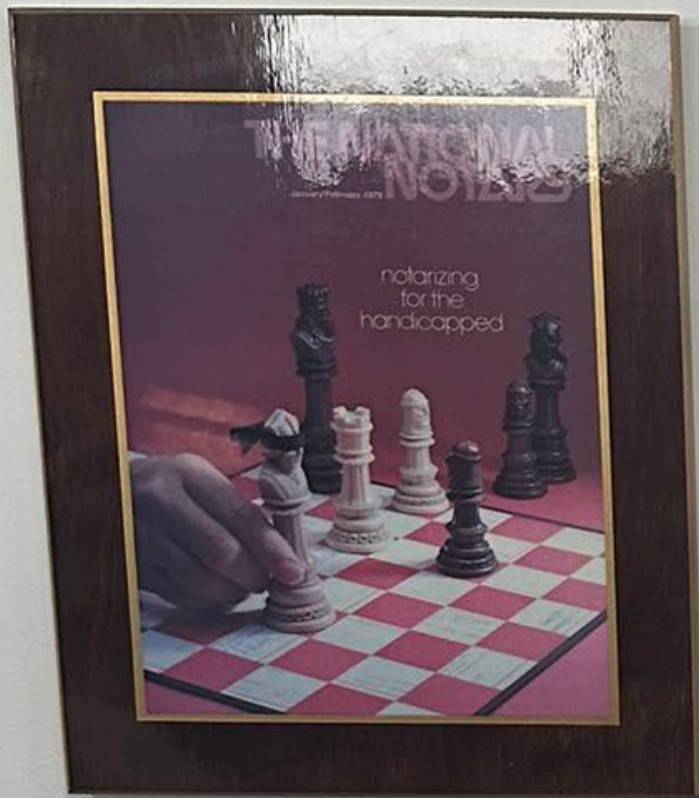
Elaine Wright Harris Maryland

Commitment To Elevating The Notary Office
Through Professionalism And Education

Cover Story

21 • The 2009 Notary Of The Year: Elaine Wright

A chance encounter with a Notary during the 2002 refinance of her home led Elaine Wright to a new career as a Notary Signing Agent and reconnected her to an old one – teaching, as a Notary instructor. Today, Wright is a shining example to all Notaries working tirelessly to elevate the Notary Public office through a commitment to professionalism and education.



MARYLAND ROOM



*Thanks to all Maryland Notaries
for putting us on the map!*



MARYLAND ROOM

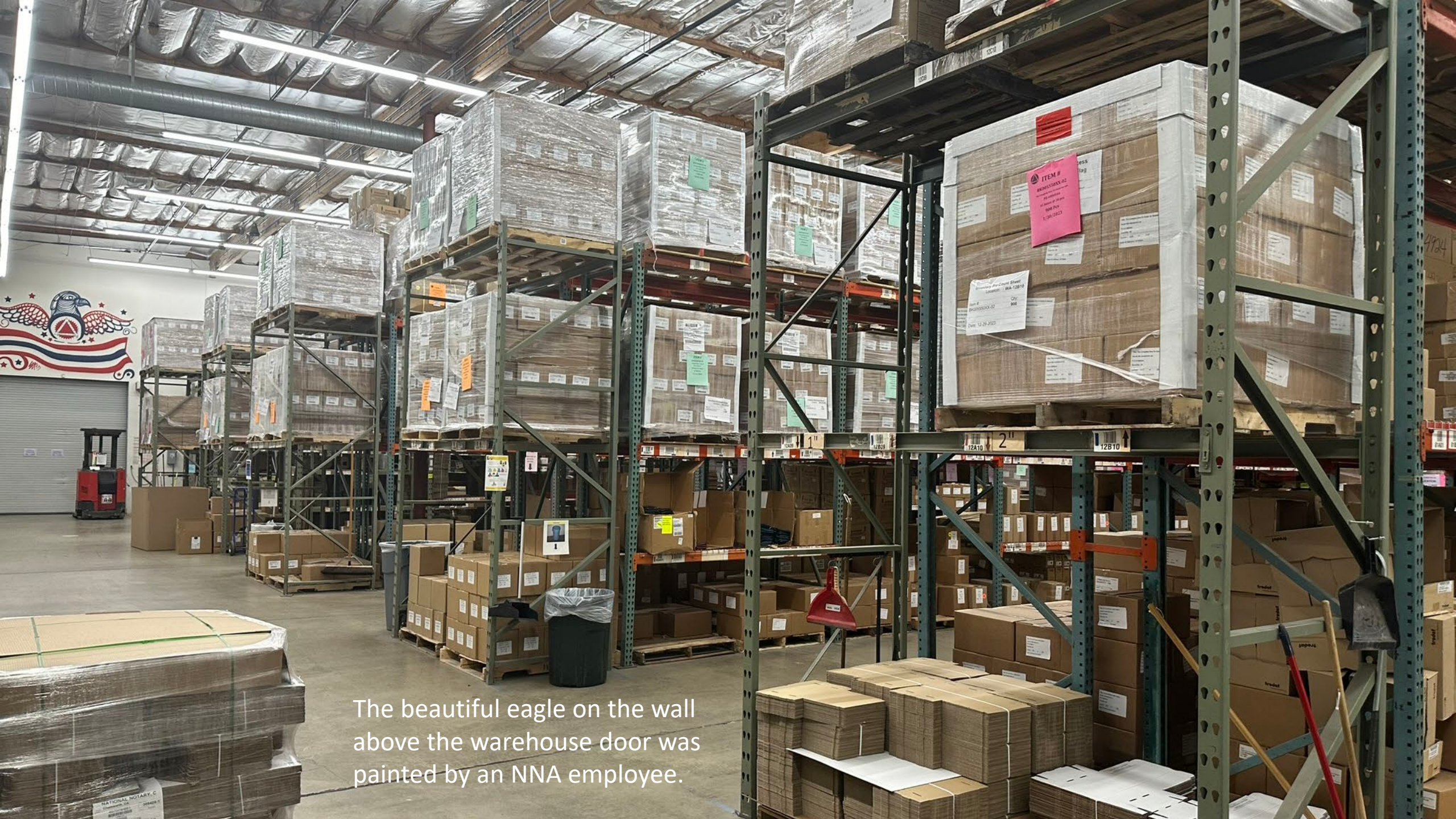


**TEAMWORK IS THE SECRET
THAT MAKES COMMON PEOPLE
ACHIEVE UNCOMMON RESULTS.**

– Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha



- Nicola and Kat gave us a tour of the warehouse. All supplies are processed at headquarters.
- The picture in the upper right corner shows ink stamps ready to be processed with Notary information!



The beautiful eagle on the wall above the warehouse door was painted by an NNA employee.

This Wraps Up Our Wonderful Tour of NNA Headquarters!

Thanks to NNA For An Informative Tour.



Fred and I were introduced to the notary profession more than twenty years ago at a refinance closing. Never in our wildest dreams did we think that this would lead to a rewarding and fulfilling notary public career. We really enjoy providing notarial services to the general public, businesses, and government.

We thank the National Notary Association for providing the guidance and knowledge required to successfully perform our duties as notaries public, notary signing agents, and instructors in this profession.



Cross-Country Amtrak Train Ride

We departed Chatsworth, CA, on Wednesday, December 6, by train to Los Angeles, to begin our "Cross-Country AmTrak Train Ride" to New Orleans, LA.

CWT-MULTIPLE CITIES

CHATSWORTH, CA

Multi-City Trip

DECEMBER 6, 2023

TRAIN
784

PACIFIC SURFLINER
Dec 6, 2023

DEPARTS
3:52 PM
Chatsworth, CA

ARRIVES
4:48 PM
Los Angeles, CA
Union Station

2 Unreserved Coach Seats

TRAIN
2

SUNSET LIMITED
Dec 6, 2023

DEPARTS
10:00 PM
Los Angeles, CA
Union Station

ARRIVES (Fri, Dec 8)
9:40 PM
New Orleans, LA
Union Passenger Terminal

1 Superliner Accessible Bedroom | Car 230 - Room H

PASSENGERS (2)

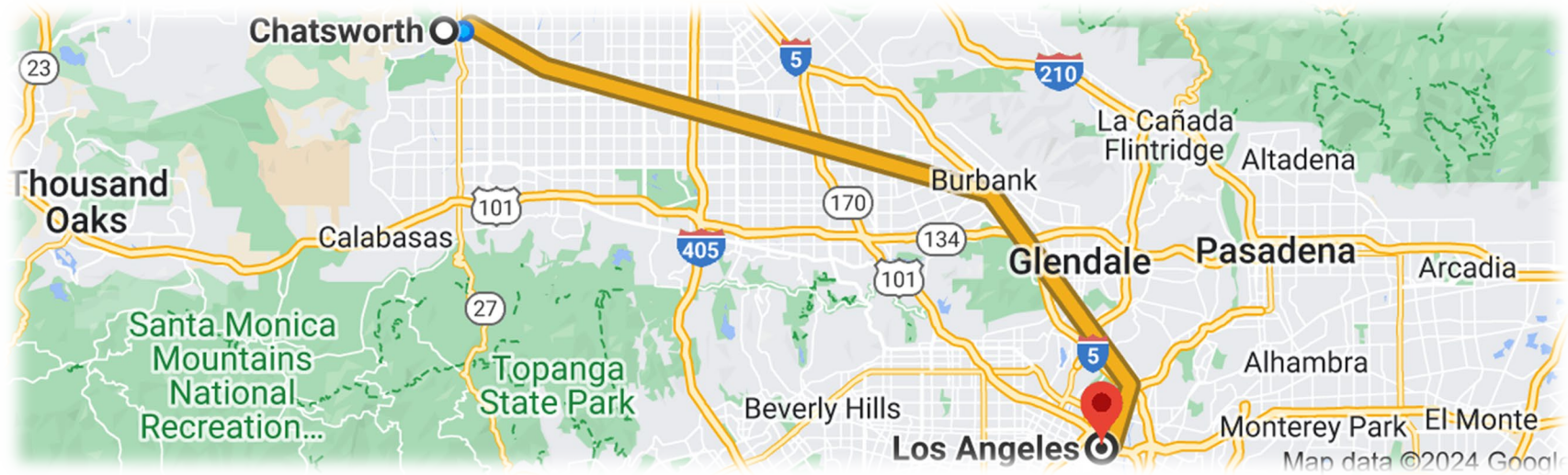
HARRIS, ELAINE
HARRIS, FREDERICK

SENIOR
SENIOR

AMTRAK GUEST REWARDS

No member number provided. Join at Amtrak.com
No member number provided. Join at Amtrak.com

Proper identification is required for all passengers. This document is valid for only passengers listed. See www.amtrak.com/ID for details.



Map of the train route from Chatsworth to Los Angeles



Chatsworth Station (also known as Chatsworth Transportation Center) is served by ten Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains (five in each direction) every day.



Pacific Surfliner - Train #784

December 6, 2023

WELCOME TO
LOS ANGELES UNION STATION



Arrived at the Los Angeles Union Train
Station at Approximately 5:00 PM

Los Angeles Union Station, located at 800 North Alameda Street in downtown Los Angeles, is the main train station in Los Angeles, California. It is known as the largest passenger rail terminal in the Western United States. The station is a major transportation hub for Southern California. The Union Station is a vibrant symbol of a downtown renaissance and a perfect destination for the arts, entertainment, and culture.



The Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge

We waited in the Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge for approximately 5 hours until the Sunset Limited Train arrived. The lounge staff provided additional assistance for us, such as ticketing assistance, a guide to the train platform, and complimentary snacks. The lounge provided a comfortable, quiet, and relaxing atmosphere.



We watched television, played Scrabble (of course), and enjoyed the complimentary snacks and drinks.

The Amtrak Network

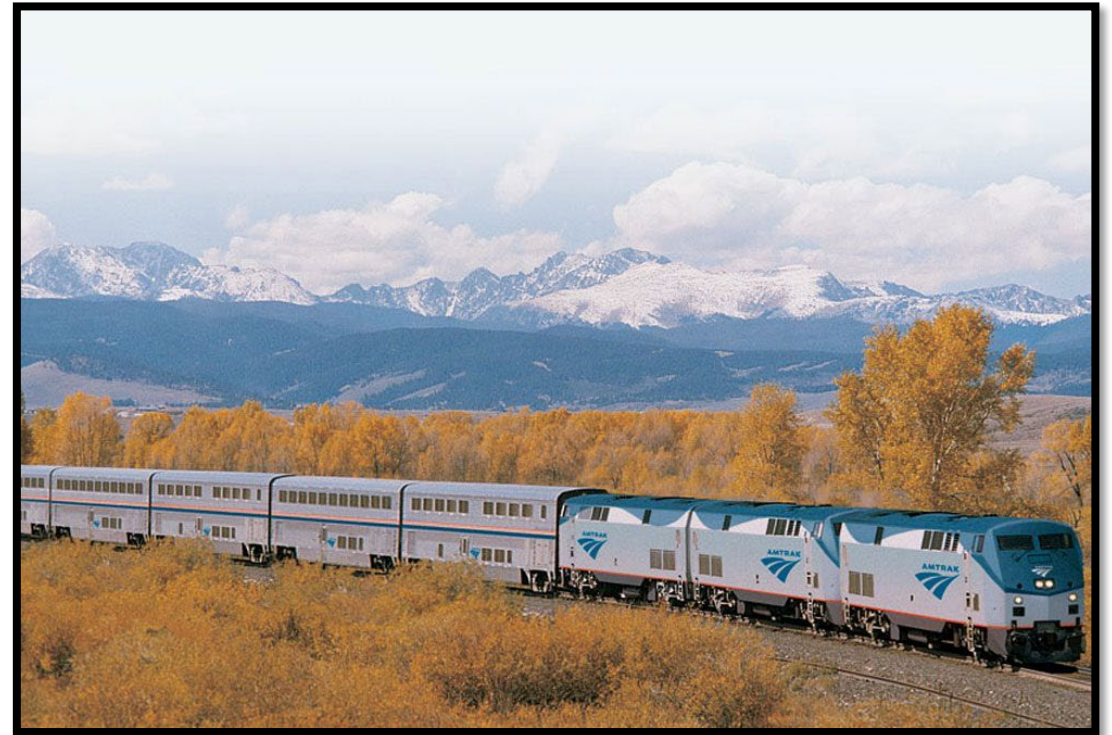


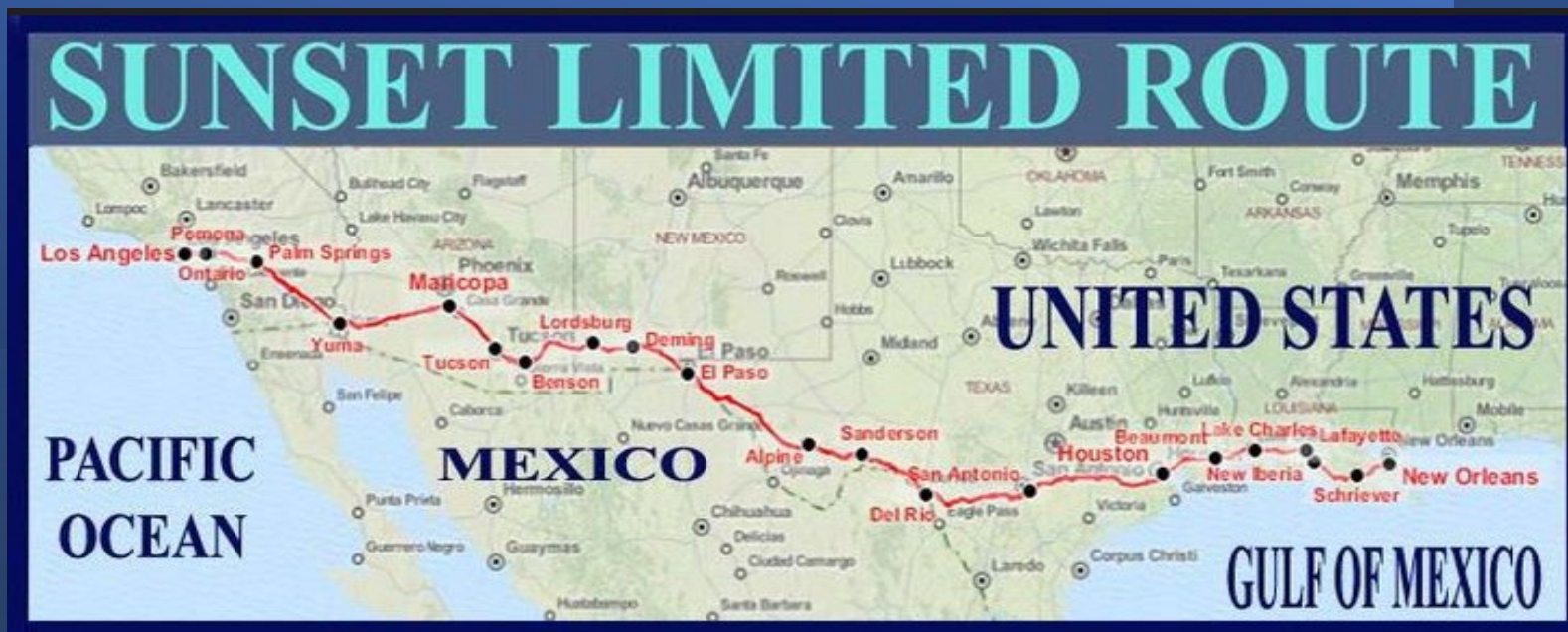
For information and reservations,
call 1-800-USA-RAIL or visit Amtrak.com

Due to space limitations, not all stops are shown. Services are subject to change. Amtrak System Map effective October 2018. Amtrak and see where the train can take you are registered service marks of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

Boarded the Sunset Limited Train at 10:00 PM for Departure to New Orleans

The Sunset Limited is an Amtrak train route that runs between Los Angeles and New Orleans, passing through Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to Louisiana. The route offers scenic views of mountains, deserts, and lakes. The Sunset Limited is the oldest named train in the US and the only route that travels to and from Houston. The train uses Superliner rail cars and has a sightseer lounge. The sightseer lounge, which can be found upstairs on every Amtrak Superliner train, serves as a welcome, glass-enclosed space for travelers to get away from their seats or rooms.





Cafe



Sightseer Lounge



Roomette by day: We spent time in our private room playing our favorite game, Scrabble, and watching the beautiful scenery.



Roomette by night: Our roomette turned into sleeping quarters at night.

Note: This is a stock image.





December 7, 2023

Maricopa

54°

Partly Cloudy

H:77° L:44°

Sunny conditions expected
around 11AM.

Now	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM
				
54°	57°	63°	69°	75°

Sonoran Desert National Monument
Maricopa County, AZ
12/7/2023 7:31 am

Maricopa, AZ
12/7/2023 7:47 am

Scenes Captured Along the Sunset Limited Train Route

ARIZONA



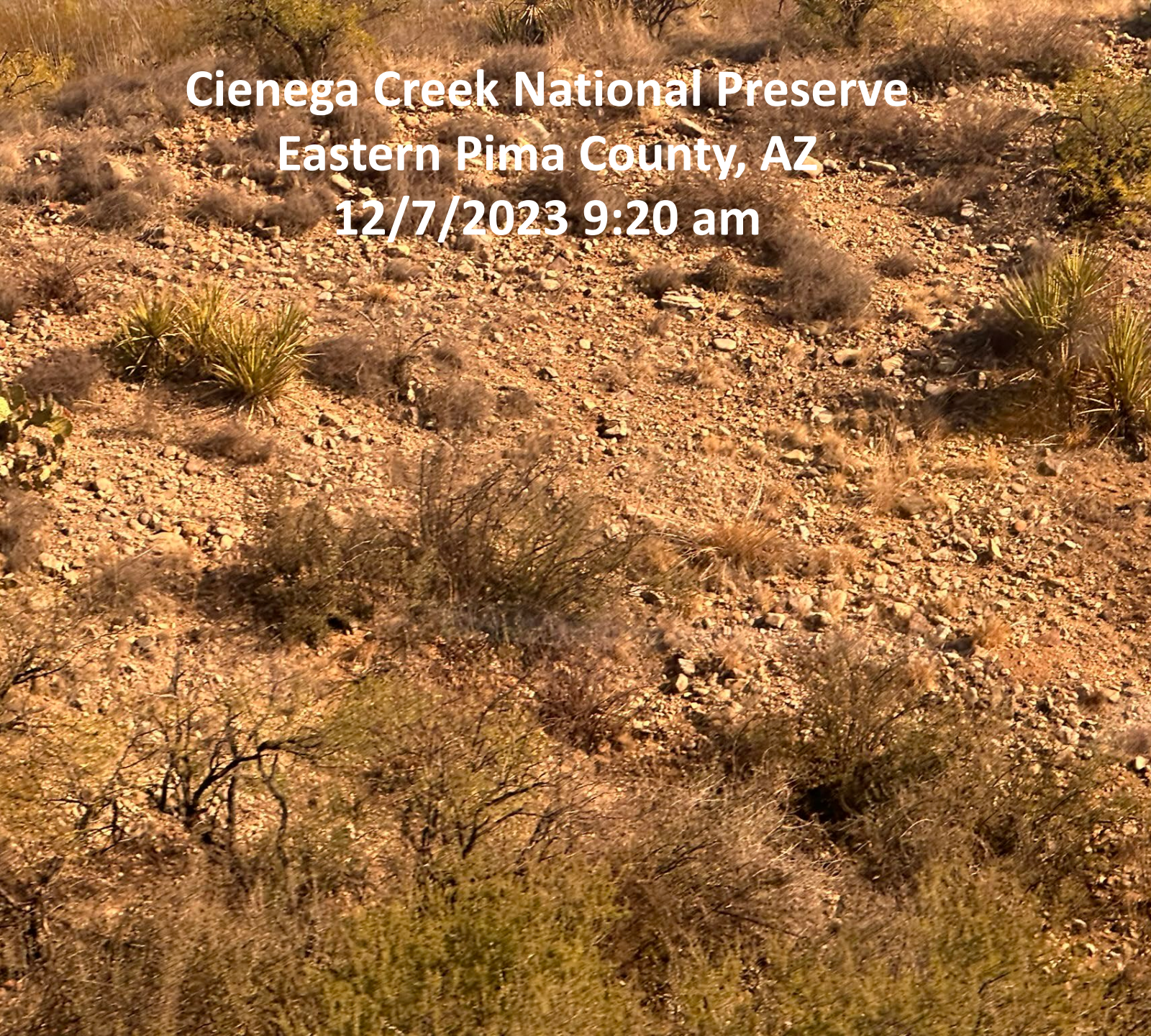
Breakfast while passing
through Casa Grande, AZ
12/7/2023 8:24 am



Tucson, AZ
12/7/2023 9:19 am



Tucson, AZ [Congress Street]
12/7/2023 9:44 am



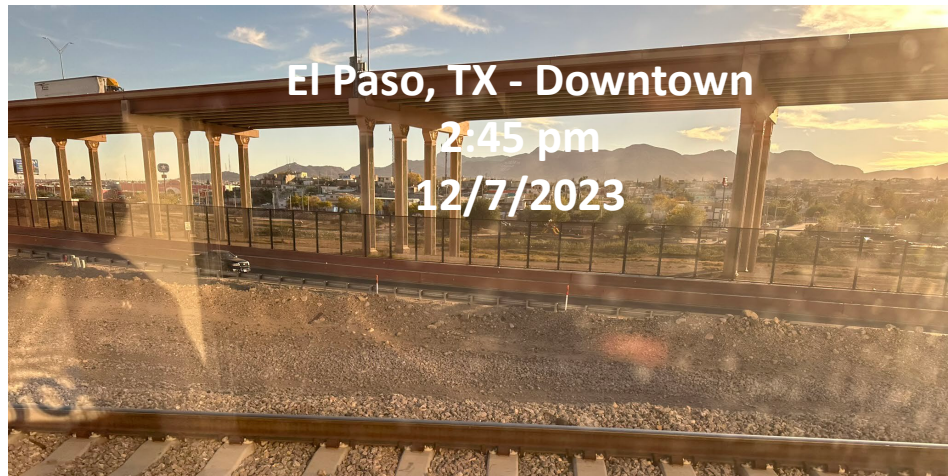
Cienega Creek National Preserve
Eastern Pima County, AZ
12/7/2023 9:20 am



Bowie, AZ
12/7/2023 11:24 am



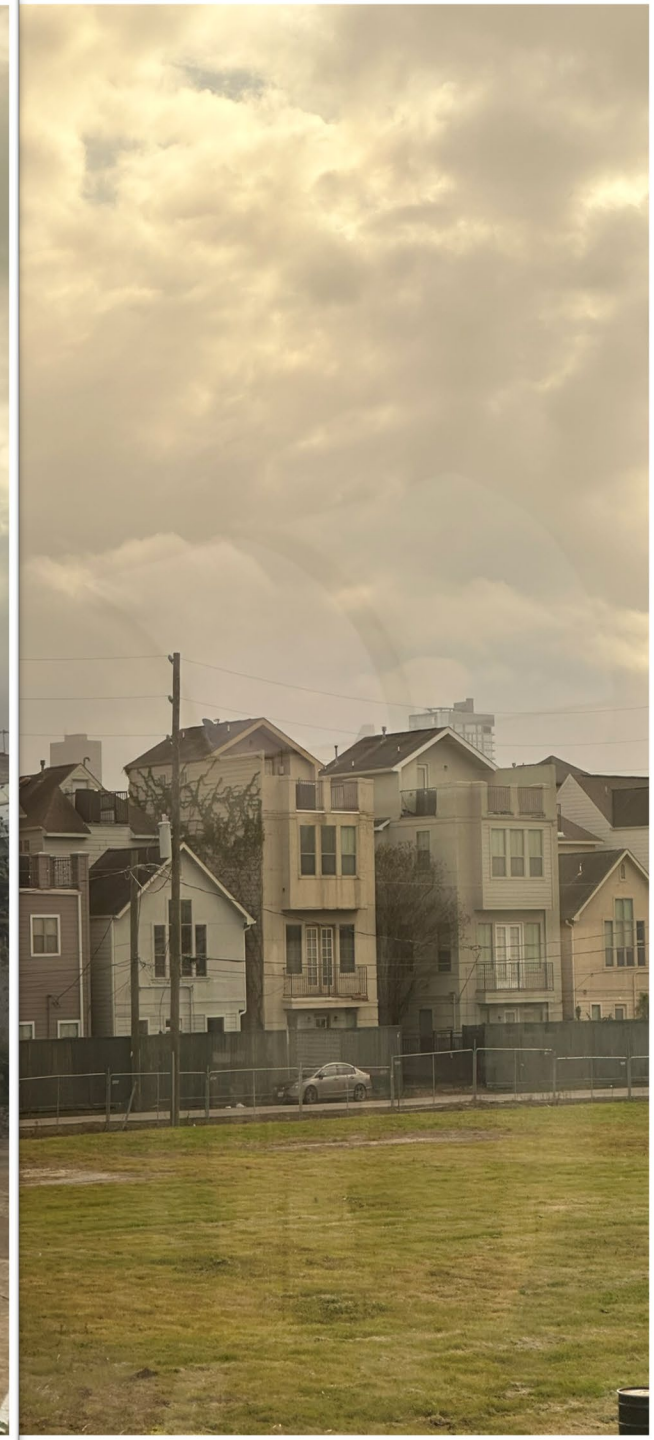
Lordsburg, NIM
12/7/2023 11:31 am

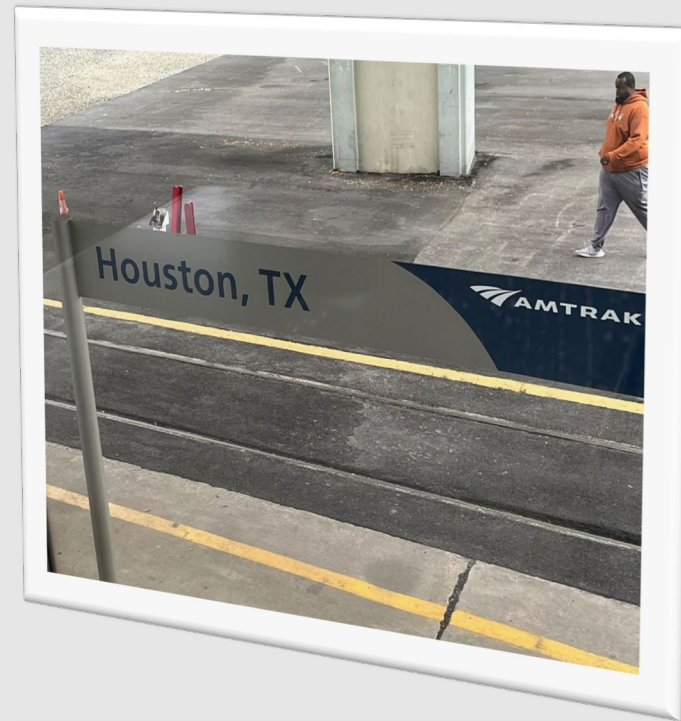
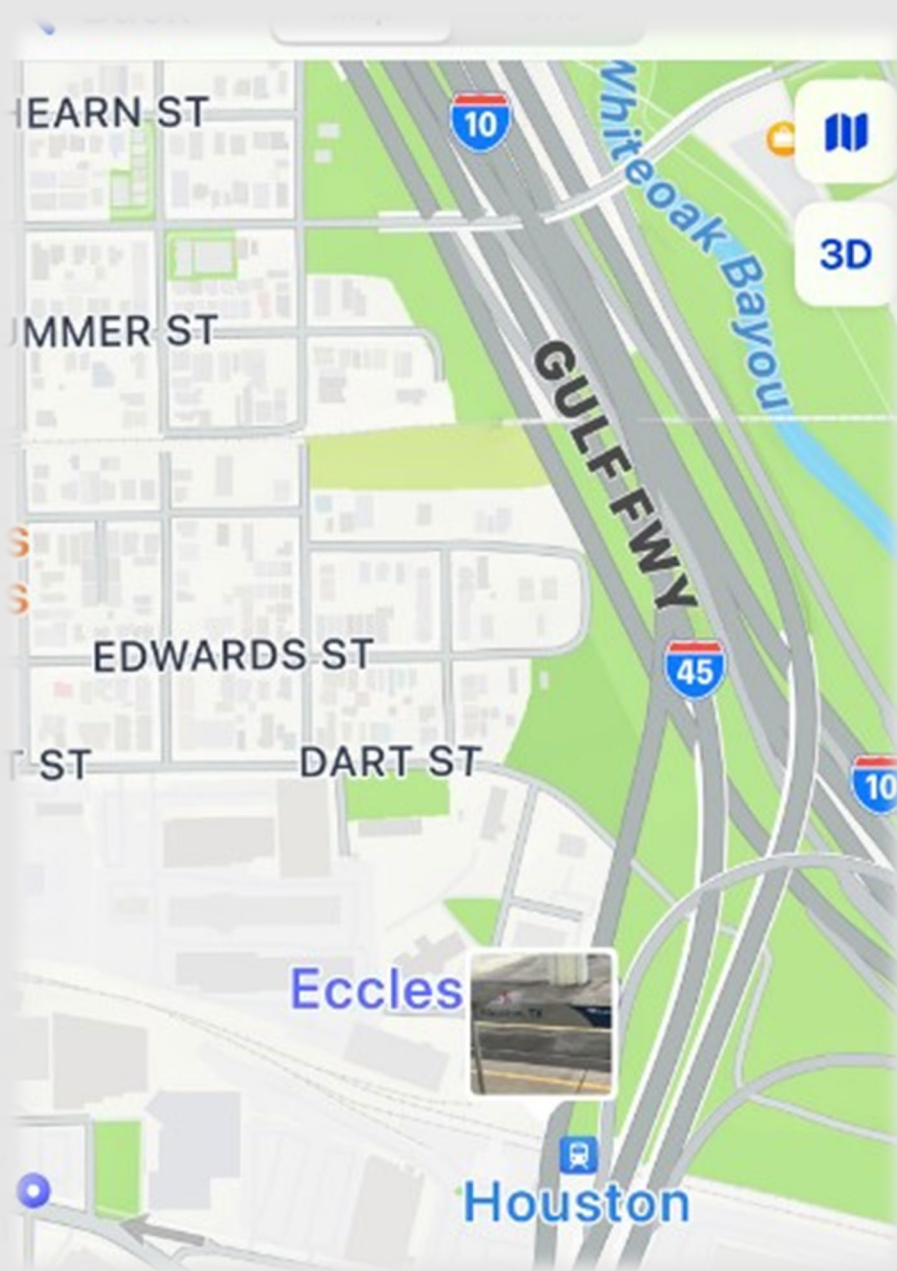


El Paso, TX - Downtown
2:45 pm
12/7/2023

December 8, 2023

Houston, TX
12/8/2023 10:20 am





We met very interesting people on the train. We met Aaron, a twelve-year-old young man, in the sightseer's lounge. He was playing a board game, consisting of trains that made stops at train stations all across the country, with his father and a train attendant. Consequently, he knew almost every city in the United States by playing this board game.



He also shared with me that he was home-schooled because he was pursuing his goal of becoming a professional skier; he skied 3 days a week.



The train arrived at the New Orleans Passenger Terminal on Friday, December 8, around 11:00 pm. The train arrived approximately 1 1/2 hours late due to an accident on the tracks. Thank God that we arrived safely.





St. Louis and Bourbon Streets



Gretna City Hall

The Fun Continues in New Orleans and Gretna, LA!

We visited one of the most unique cities in the United States, New Orleans. It is so unique because of its diverse cultures that influence the city: food, attire, music, and streets.

Fred's brother lives in Gretna, LA. Gretna is the second-largest city in, and parish seat of, Jefferson Parish in the U.S. state of Louisiana. Gretna lies on the west bank of the Mississippi River, just east and across the river from uptown New Orleans. [Wikipedia]

KBGNO CHRISTMAS BALL



December 9, 2023

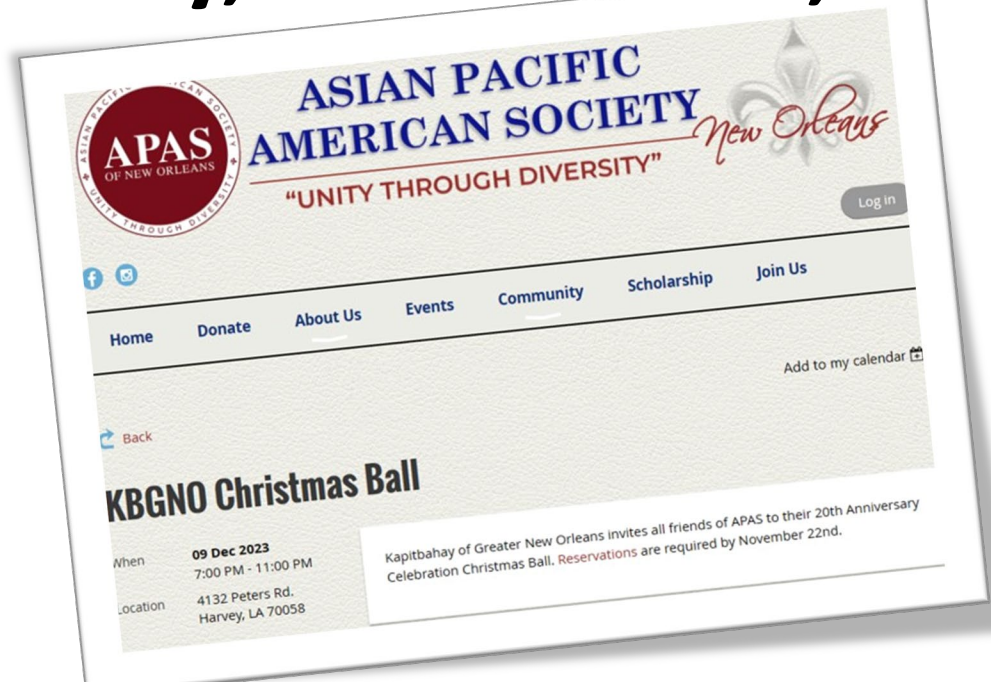
Fred's brother, Reginald (Reggie) Harley and sister-in-law, Divine (Vi) Harley

KBGNO CHRISTMAS BALL



December 9, 2023

Saturday, December 9, 2023



We joined Fred's brother, Reggie, and sister-in-law, Divine, at the 20th-anniversary celebration of the Kapitbahay of Greater New Orleans (KBGNO) Christmas Ball held in the Jefferson Ballroom at the Boomtown New Orleans Hotel.

The KBGNO's mission is to provide means to welcome new Filipinos into the local community and to uphold Filipino tradition within the community.

It was a great affair. The dinner was delicious!



Fred and Paula Keifer
A friend of Divine Harley



Fred dancing with the
Mistress of Ceremony,
Jewel Espinosa-Balolong



Fred and Elaine



Reggie and Divine Harley
Fred's brother and
Sister-in-law

dance

[through life]

When you dance, your purpose is not to get to a certain place on the floor. It's to enjoy each step along the way.

- Wayne Dyer



Sunday, December 10, 2023

Reggie took us on a tour to see the Christmas lights on Sunday morning. We visited the Roosevelt New Orleans Hotel (a Waldorf Astoria property). I took a picture of the hotel sign before entering the hotel. The Christmas lights were gorgeous! Lots of families were viewing the lights.



Ritz-Carlton Hotel

921 Canal St, New Orleans, LA

The Christmas trees stood tall in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, adorned with hundreds of lights that cast a warm glow as residents and tourists walked by. The lights were arranged in a spiral pattern, alternating between red, green, and white. Each light appeared to have a life of its own.



Landry's Seafood House
8000 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, LA



After viewing the lights, Reggie took us to Landry's Seafood House in Lakeview at Lake Pontchartrain for lunch. Landry Seafood House is a chain of seafood restaurants in the US, offering a true taste of Gulf Coast tradition.



We experienced the taste of the Gulf Coast!

Landry's Seafood House serves fresh fish and seafood selections, from sensational entrées and appetizers to assorted salads, platters, and desserts on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans, Louisiana. It has a casual and elegant dining style, with a scenic view of the lake. The seafood was scrumptious!!!



Brother to Brother

Fred and Reggie walked toward the seawall of Lake Pontchartrain, a largely man-made lake, bordering the northern side of New Orleans that measures over 25 miles across.

About Lake Pontchartrain - Lake Pontchartrain is not a lake, but an estuary. An estuary is a body of water that is connected to the sea and receives fresh water from rivers and streams. Lake Pontchartrain is connected to the Gulf of Mexico through the Rigolets Strait and Chef Menteur Pass and receives fresh water from several rivers and bayous. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina caused the waters of Lake Pontchartrain to flood New Orleans due to defective levees.



After lunch, Reggie took us to see “The Gretna Holiday Lights” along Huey P Long Avenue (a main street in Old Gretna); a festive event that takes place in the city of Gretna during the month of December. It features a display of lights on the trees along the avenue, from 10th Street to the river, making the historical district look magical.

The Gretna Holiday Lights Along Huey P Long Avenue



Southwest Airlines <southwestairlines@ifly.southwest.com>

You're going to Baltimore on 12/11 (ZZOUXYZ)!

To thedeskofelainewright@comcast.net



December 11, 2023

A de-light-ful 9-day vacation!

Thank You!

Thank you for allowing us to share our vacation with you. We hope that you enjoyed reading about our vacation as much as we enjoyed the experience.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me.

Elaine Wright Harris

[Trusted Agent Services Group](#)

thedeskofelainewright@comcast.net