It was a Monday in January; it was 4:30 in the morning, and the BIG one they had all warned about seemed to be upon us.

I had been a member of IFMA Los Angeles for about two years and had volunteered for the Newsletter Committee. At that time, it was a hardcopy letter that we mailed out to the members almost every month. I helped with photos and articles as well as the organization of the material.

On this day, I came to work at the West LA office of Intex Solutions not realizing the extent of the damage and the aftermath that we would live with for many months to come. Our newsletter editor was out of town, so I jumped in to contact our FMs to see what they were dealing with. Of course, everyone was extremely busy, but I managed to get a hold of a few harried members who could share their stories. I wrote about some of the situations being dealt with including:

- A tank at Rocketdyne had tilted on its foundation braces, and efforts were being made to shore up the base.

- The folks at what was then 20th Century Insurance had to deal with file rooms where hundreds of files had fallen off the shelves and blocked the doors. Employees who came to work had to use the stairs to access all 20 floors because of non-working elevators and go down to the ground floor for restrooms.

- Sony Music in Santa Monica had a six-inch diameter pipe break on the third floor and water ran for hours in an electrical room flooding all three floors, bringing down ceiling tiles into opened lateral file cabinets. Hundreds of CD jewel boxes were scattered all over the floor under six inches of water. Because my company was involved with the restoration, we were able to quickly get a hold of a sufficient quantity of generators to run our equipment to pump out the water while the power was out. Our crew members were dealing with aftershocks that made them very nervous as they went up and down stair wells loaded with the equipment needed to remove the water and dry out the furnishings.

- Buildings in Museum Square in the mid-Wilshire area experienced separation between the different building wings as well as broken pipes that flooded many building areas. Again, I had first-hand knowledge of the conditions as my company's crews were involved in the restoration along with many other partners. The restoration included freezing wet documents, removing walls, etc.

- Drivers trying to transverse the Los Angeles area had to take surface streets around the area where the 10 Freeway had collapsed causing long delays and many frustrated trips. If you were an outside sales person or other traveling staff member, you will always remember those times!

- Zenith Insurance lost rooftop HVAC equipment and had pipe breakage. However, Zenith managed to get their building back into operation within a week.

- Tom Moske, Past President of the LA Chapter, participated in the teams that went around the city red-tagging buildings that were no longer habitable.

Facility managers were challenged beyond what they thought they were capable of. Not only did they have to be concerned about their own families and home conditions, but they also had the responsibilities for getting their companies back into safe operation for the employees. Los Angeles should be very proud of the efforts of facility staff throughout the city for providing needed services and renovations that allowed the city to recover rapidly and continue doing business as usual.

Pamela Kalmus is currently Executive VP at Montebello-based Intex Solutions; Pam has been a team member there for over 31 years. A graduate of UCLA, she has worked primarily in sales and customer service most of her career. Her industries served include communications, automotive, car leasing and rental, interior landscaping, and finally the specialty cleaning services offered by Intex Solutions.

Pam became a member of IFMA in 1992 and attended her first World Workplace in San Diego. As a member of the Los Angeles Chapter, she has been involved with the Newsletter, Hospitality, and Programs Committees and has served as chapter historian, photographer, and secretary. At the 1996 WWF in Chicago, she was selected as Associate Member of the Year.

She has always been active in both LA and SFV Chapters and highly values the education, business opportunities, and friendships provided by the association and all the members. On behalf of the SFV Chapter – thank you Pam for your support over the years!!