

A NEW Section for Retired Club Members

The Best Years

INSIDE:

- Upcoming Events Listing
- Members News
- Adventures With Hal Danowitz
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Crossword Puzzle Contest!
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HAVE NEWS?

If you have news about retirement activities that you'd like to share, call **Phil Skarin** at (818) 784-0130, or write to 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411 or fax (818) 906-3722.



Ed Harding is the President of Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI), one of three major retirees associations for the City of Los Angeles. Contact him: (805) 584-9417.

Ed Harding, RLACEI President

RLACEI Website

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit our Website at: www.rlacei.com to find out the latest retiree news.

Change of Address?

If you change your address, notify **Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, at 323-728-4930, or write to her at 5423 Dewar St., Los Angeles, CA 90022.** Also notify LACERS.

RETIREE
NEWS
ONLY

LACERS Recommends Retaining Same Consultant

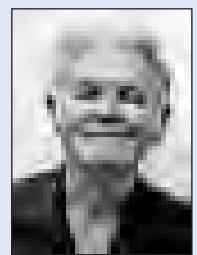
By Phil Skarin, Publicity Chair, RLACEI

Ed Harding, RLACEI President, reports: "Our Holiday Party and Installation of Officers will be on Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park. We will have a great lunch and about 40 door prizes. John Hawkins, President and CEO of the City Employees Club, usually donates many gift certificates, as does LACERS and RLACEI. We thank them."

"Please call one of the officers on the Retirees Help-Lines a week ahead to make reservations for the Holiday Party Lunch, so we will know how many lunches to order."

"The Men's Retreat that Larry Jones sponsored for almost 50 years, will be held at the Serra Retreat House in Malibu. It will begin with dinner on Friday, Jan. 6, and end with lunch on Sunday, Jan. 8. It is an opportunity for male City employees, active or retired, and friends to get together for a weekend. There are optional sessions whose purpose is to promote a better way of life. Tommy Hannifin, City Treasurer, started this retreat, and when he died, Larry Jones took over. After Larry died, I have attempted to continue this tradition. If you are interested, or wish more information, call me at (805) 584-9417, or the retreat house at (310) 456-6631."

"I wish all a Happy Thanksgiving and Holidays."

**Legislative Update:**

Ken Spiker, our elected LACERS Commissioner, reports that the LACERS Benefits Administration Committee, which he chairs, has recommended to the Board a three-year contract extension to Deloitte Consulting LLP.

Deloitte has been under contract with LACERS for the last six years, providing health care consulting services. Ken stated that they have provided outstanding services. He is sure that our premiums have remained relatively low in a large part to their efforts.

Six firms bid for the contract, and three were selected for interviews by the Committee. Bids ranged from \$242,000 to \$749,502. Deloitte came in at \$582,800.

Ken indicated that the Deloitte staff and LACERS staff, especially Sandra Dyson, Chief Health Benefits Administrator, have worked very well together to deliver health care programs to our retirees and at a reasonable cost.

Ken wishes that you have a happy and safe Holiday Season.

**LACERS Statistics:**

1. Total value of the fund as of close of business Aug. 31: \$8,859,600,600
2. Number of retiree checks issued monthly as of Sept. 30: \$14,620
3. Average retiree monthly allowance as of Sept. 30: \$2474.70

Special note:

Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, said that due to a computer malfunction, some people who are already members were sent an application to join. We apologize.

RLACEI Upcoming Events:

Christmas Party and Installation of Officers

— Thursday, Dec. 8, noon to 3 p.m.
at the Grace E. Simons Lodge

28th Annual Retirees Golf Tournament

— Tuesday, June 6, 2006
at the Alhambra Golf Course.

RLACEI Holiday Party — December 8, 2005

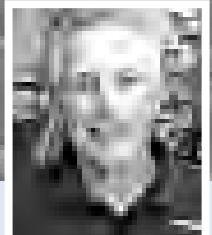
The **RLACEI's Annual Christmas Party and Installation of Officers** is scheduled for noon Thursday, Dec. 8, at the Grace E. Simons Lodge. The Lodge is at 1025 Elysian Park Dr., near Dodger Stadium. Chairman Americo Garza has promised a light lunch (sandwiches, salad and drinks), entertainment and valuable door prizes. You must make reservations at least a week ahead. Guests welcome. Call one of the officers on the Retirees Help-lines. Free Taxi service can take you from the parking area to the Lodge.



The Best Years

ADVENTURES with HAL

The entourage in Helsinki Senate Square in front of the Lutheran Cathedral.



*By Hal Danowitz,
Secretary, RLACEI*

Retiree Hotlines

Who to call? Following is a list of contacts for RLACEI and for the DWP:

City Employees Retirement System: (213) 473-7200

RLACEI Retirement Counselors:

- Edward Harding (805) 584-9417
- Phil Skarin (818) 784-0130
- Robert Wilkinson (818) 886-1000
- Jerry Bardwell (818) 782-5568
- Harold Danowitz (310) 472-0224
- Jack Mathews (310) 762-1942
- Helen Salgado (323) 728-4930
- (membership)
- Americo Garza (562) 928-2051
- Neil Ricci (310) 394-1971

DWP Retirement Plan Office: (213) 367-1722

RLACEI

Officers for 2005

Edward Harding, President
Robert Wilkinson, First Vice President
Kenneth Spiker, Second Vice President
Hal Danowitz, Secretary
Jerry Bardwell, Treasurer

Committee Chairpersons for 2005

Bob Wilkinson, Audit
Jerry Bardwell, Budget
David Wilkins, Bylaws
Ken Spiker, Legal and Legislative
Helen Salgado, Membership
Phil Skarin, Publicity
Tom Stemnock and Phil Skarin, Golf
Americo Garza, Picnic
Americo Garza, Holiday Party and Installation
Jack Mathews, Senior Citizens
Neil Ricci, Health
David Wilkins, Nominating
Neil Ricci, Special Needs for Retirees
Hal Danowitz, Parliamentarian

Directors

Thomas Stemnock
Americo Garza
Helen Salgado
Phil Skarin
Dave Wilkins
Jack Mathews
Neil Ricci



On to Stockholm and Helsinki

■ Hal and his entourage continue their European cruise.

We awoke to a beautiful day on the fifth day of our Northern European cruise. It was a sea day as we sailed to Stockholm. It is also the Summer Solstice (June 22), the longest day of the year; the sun rose at 4:23 a.m., and would set tonight at 9:57 p.m. Sailing north, the days became longer.

I always enjoy a day at sea because it gives you time to relax, especially after yesterday's 14-hour tour of Berlin.

Each night the ship's newspaper was delivered to our stateroom. It contained various news and information about the ship and a schedule of activities and events for the next day. On a typical sea day I counted 80 different activities and events on the schedule from 8:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. There was something for everyone: computer training, excise classes, golf clinic, dance class, slot tournament, cooking demo, trivia contest, port talks and the evening's entertainments, to name a few. And let's not forget all of the opportunities to eat!

After breakfast I stopped by the Internet café to check my e-mail. The cost of using the Internet was 75 cents per minute without purchasing a package. If you purchased one you could bring the cost down (250 minutes for \$125) to 50 cents per minute. The café, which served neither food nor drink, had more than 20 workstations. Most of the time the room was full, but you never had to wait too long for a device, given the cost per minute. The last day of the cruise we still had some minutes to use.

The weather was cool but sunny, so I found a place by the pool and read my book and took short naps until Evelyn woke me for lunch.

After lunch we decided to take a look at the art that was to be auctioned during the cruise. We were looking for animation for the grandkid's room. We did purchase two small pieces. We ended the afternoon with jackpot bingo. Usually bingo is big on a cruise ship and the final jackpot can reach \$5,000, but on this trip there just wasn't enough time and the last jackpot was under \$1,000. We played when we could, but didn't win anything.

Casinos are big on cruise ships, but we rarely play. Evelyn did one night and won \$7 at blackjack and quit.

This evening was a formal night, so we needed time to dress and meet for cocktails before dinner.

After dinner we watched the show in the theater, which was very good.

On this cruise, entertainers from Cirque du Soleil were on board, putting on a special



Stockholm art.



Evelyn with our waiter Bernard.

show in the Bar at the Edge of the Earth. It didn't start until 11 p.m. and was surreal. We didn't enjoy it at all, and it seemed a waste of a good bar.

When we woke the next morning we were sailing through the Northern Stockholm Archipelago and it was very foggy. The fog delayed our arrival

in Stockholm, Sweden's capital and largest city. Located on the eastern coast of Sweden, Stockholm is situated on approximately 20 islands. Because of its many waterways and parklands, Stockholm is often called the "Venice of the North" or "the city that floats."

We had signed up for the three-hour tour of Stockholm and the Vasa Museum. The tour was a drive-by of the important sights, including the Royal Palace and a stop at the Vasa Museum, which houses the warship Vasa. The 17th-century warship sank in Stockholm's inner harbor on her maiden voyage in 1628; its discovery in 1956 and salvage in 1961 is one of the most important events in marine archaeology. This was the most interesting part of the tour, and we could have done the whole tour on our own.

After returning to the ship for lunch, we took the ship's shuttle back to the center of town and walked over to Gamla Stan (old town) to do some shopping. It is a really nice area, with narrow streets with shops and restaurants. This was the place to buy crystal, so we brought a small piece as a souvenir. As we walked back to the shuttle stop, I noticed the funniest looking piece of art in the water (see picture). Who says Swedes don't have a

sense of humor.

Our next stop was Helsinki. Known as the city of the sea, it is the capital of Finland. The city was founded by King Gustav Vasa (same guy they named the ship that sunk after) of Sweden while the country was under Swedish rule. The city is surrounded on three sides by

water and therefore is a natural seaport. Helsinki Harbor handles most of Finland's maritime trade. The city is interspersed with gardens and parks and is absence of high-rise building and retains a small-town atmosphere.

It was Friday and the start of the Summer Solstice holiday weekend; everyone in Helsinki was getting out of town.

We booked the three-hour Helsinki city tour. We drove past the downtown area and the normal government building, and then stopped at the Temppeliaukio Rock Church. It is one of Europe's most unusual modern churches, carved out of solid rock and topped with a copper dome. Due to its acoustical qualities the church is also used as a concert hall.

We then stopped at the Olympic Stadium, site of the 1952 Olympic games. I took a picture in front of the statue of the "Flying Finn" – Paavo Nurmi. We stopped at Sibelius Park to see the stainless-steel monument erected for the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius.

The tour ended at the Senate Square, where we saw the domed Lutheran Cathedral. It was about noon and we wanted to do some shopping, but because of the holiday most of the stores were closing. Lucky there was small shopping area near the ship and we were able to buy a few souvenirs before the ship sailed.

The ship sailed at 6 p.m., and as we sailed out I noticed all the people along the waterway waiting for sunset (10:38 p.m.) to light large bonfires to welcome the Summer Solstice.

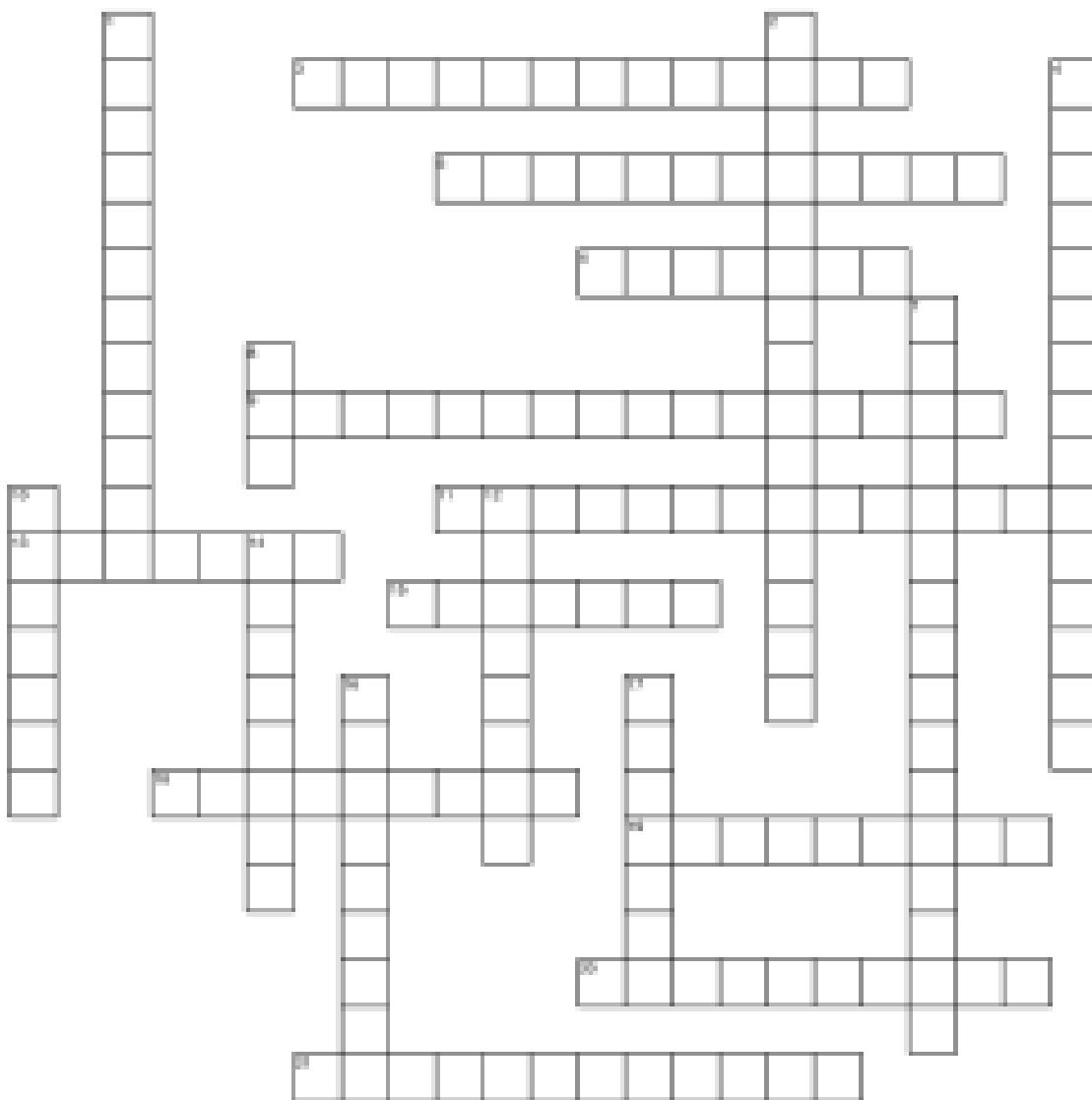
One of the drawbacks of using a cruise to see a city is the limited time you have in port. In both Stockholm and Helsinki, we would have liked to have another day or two to really see the city. The two tours we took were okay and having a knowledgeable guide did help, but we could have easily seen both cities on our own.

Next month we will visit St. Petersburg.

**Readers with questions or comments
can e-mail Hal at
adventureswithhal@cityemployeesclub.com**

The **Alive!** Crossword Puzzle

For Retired Members, Created by Club Events Guru Michelle Moreno



Here's a new fun feature for Alive's retired readers... and a new contest!

Introducing the *Alive!* Crossword... a monthly puzzle with a theme relating to the City of Los Angeles and the Club. We'll print the answers the following month.

And here's the contest:

The first retired Club Members to complete the puzzle and send in the correct results will win a Ralphs grocery gift certificate for \$25.

But: You also have to tell us what the theme is. The theme could relate to:

- The City
- The Club
- A topic of interest to retirees, from the past (or the present)

So grab your pencil, and let the fun begin!

ACROSS

3. (3 words) Cool Pershing Square event (hint: see Events 411)
5. (2 words) Star of "It's a Wonderful Life"
6. "Ba Humbug!"
9. (3 words) "pa rum pum pum pum"
11. (2 words) Film starring Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney
13. Reindeer with shiny red nose
15. Candelabrum with seven candles
18. Holiday celebrated on December 25th
19. (2 words) Dwelling of St. Nicholas
20. (2 words) "Ho Ho Ho"
21. (3 words) "Fa la la la la, la la la la"

DOWN

1. (2 words) Spanish phrase for "Merry Christmas"
2. (3 words) What you receive on the 5th day of Christmas
4. (3 words) "You'll poke your eye out!"
7. (3 words) ...was a jolly happy soul...
8. "Movie of the Month" in Who's Got the Popcorn section
10. Four-sided, top-like toy with the Hebrew letters on the sides
12. Jewish Holiday celebrated for 8 days
14. (2 words) Where is the partridge?
16. You kiss under it
17. Week-long holiday honoring African-American Heritage

The Best Years

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: *Christmas is Coming Again*

Here are some useful holiday suggestions:

1. Instead of sending card, make an equivalent donation to one of the disaster funds.
2. Gift ideas that are inexpensive: Time to make people feel special and loved; a friendly smile; a helping hand; words of encouragement.
3. Some practical decorations for your Christmas tree: Compassion, honesty, reliability, integrity, sincerity, trustworthy, moral, affectionate, sensitive.

Let us dedicate ourselves at this Christmastime to new birth of faith, hope and love.

-- Phil Skarin

RECENT MEMBER NEWS:

James Ogg is back in his apartment after an amnesia attack. He has a new phone number (818) 765-3417. Phone calls will help cheer him up.

Don Tillman, former City Engineer, writes from Las Vegas: "I truly appreciate what you have done for retirees. Thanks to Ken Spiker for his efforts on the LACERS Board. After 14 years on that Board, I know the value of that service".

Conrad Bineau had a hole in one on the 14th hole of the Horse Thief Golf Course in Tahachapi. He won an \$81 jackpot. Call him at (661) 822-8348 and he'll give you a blow-by-blow description of it.

Phil and Miriam Skarin celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary with family and friends with a dinner on Nov. 18 at the 94th Aero Squadron Restaurant in Van Nuys. Phil's dad, Gustave Skarin, was a member of that squadron in World War I. He was the cook for the officers, which included General Rickenbacher. Phil and Miriam set their wedding date so they could attend the California vs. Stanford Big Game on their honeymoon. Phil graduated from the University of California and Miriam graduated from Stanford University. The score of the Big Game in 1950 was appropriately, a 7 - 7 tie.

Ronald Skarin, Principal Building Inspector in Building and Safety and son of Philip and Miriam, was inducted into the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame Oct. 14 in Bridgewater, N.J., with mom and pop cheering for him.

Celebrating 90? If you will be 90 or more on your next birthday, let Ed Harding know the date and your age and he'll arrange to have President Bush send you a personal birthday greeting.

Jane Hanson writes, "You write a very interesting column and I want to thank you for all that you do so faithfully for those of us who are retired."

If you have any news about a retiree that you would like to share, send it to:
Phil Skarin
5301 Norwich Ave.,
Van Nuys, CA 91411
or call (818) 784-0130.

Last Month's Answers

Thanksgiving



This month's theme:

Crossword puzzle contest rules:

1. Mail your completed puzzle (and your guess at the theme) to the Club Headquarters,
350 S. Figueroa, Suite 700,
Los Angeles 90071
2. Deadline: The 15th of the month.
3. Anyone can enter, but only Club members with valid Club registration numbers can win.
4. This puzzle is for retired Club Members.
5. It's all in good fun: The Club is not responsible for delays in delivery of *Alive!* or the transmission of entries.