

For Retired Club Members



# The Best Years

## City Retiree Associations:

### DWP Retirees Association



**Dolores Foley, President**  
Phone: (626) 445-7376  
E-mail: vinmar@altrionet.net

Dolores Foley, *President*

### Los Angeles Retired Fire and Police Association



**James Chastain, President**  
Phone: (323) 283-4441  
Fax: (626) 285-1461  
E-mail: larfpa@pacbell.net or  
9521 Las Tunas Dr. #4,  
Temple City, CA 91780

James Chastain, *President*

### Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)



**Ed Harding, President**  
www.rlacei.com  
Contact him: (805) 584-9417  
or via E-mail:  
postmaster@rlacei.com

Ed Harding, *RLACEI President*

### 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.

### Have News About Yourself?

Contact Phil Skarin, 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411-3910, or call (818) 784-0130.

## RLACEI: Two New Reps Named to LACERS Board

By Phil Skarin, Publicity Chair, RLACEI



RLACEI — Ed Harding, RLACEI President, reports: "Our Christmas Party Dec. 8 at the Grace E. Simons Lodge was an outstanding affair. Over 200 attended, most of whom had made reservations. Sandy Mack entertained by singing appropriate holiday songs, while we enjoyed a delicious lunch."

Some of the special guests in attendance were: Robert Aguallo Jr., General Manager, LACERS; Lori Kozlowski, Editor, El Pueblo; and several from the City Employees Club: John Hawkins, President/CEO; Arlene Herrero, Counselor; Michelle Moreno, Events Guru; and Robert Larios, Director of Communications and Marketing.

Rick Rogers, Commissioner, LACERS Board of Administration, installed the following Directors to two-year terms on the RLACEI Executive Board beginning Jan. 1: Hal Danowitz, Americo Garza, Neil Ricci, Phil Skarin, Tom Stemmcock and Bob Wilkinson. Wilkinson had been elected to a one-year term as the First Vice President by the Executive Board beginning Jan. 1.

Sandra Dyson, LACERS, attempted to clear up any confusion about Medicare Part D, which will be included in our LACERS medical plans. So, you need not do anything to take advantage of it. If you have any questions about your health benefits, call (213) 473-7200 or (800) 779-8328 for assistance.

President Bush will now send birthday cards only to those who will be 100 or older. If you will be, send your name, address, phone



number, age and date of birth to Ed Harding at 2890 Waterfall Lane, Simi, CA 93065, and he will make the arrangements.

"I want to thank Americo Garza for making all the party arrangements, Phil Skarin for the excellent publicity, and Greg Spiker for arranging the courtesy taxi service," Harding concluded.

### Legislative Update:

- **Ken Spiker, our legislative representative and LACERS Commissioner, said if you are receiving health care services not now covered by our LACERS plans, drop him a line explaining what service is excluded and he will try to get it included in future programs. Write to him at 1100 South Flower St., #2100, Los Angeles, CA 90015-2115. Thanks Ken for continuing to represent us so ably!**
- **The mayor has appointed two new members of the LACERS Board of Managers: Kelly Candaele and Adolfo Nodal, a retiree.**
- **Retired or semi-retired grading inspectors are needed for part-time work for a developer. Call Harry B. Dictor at (818) 344-7444.**
- **The Los Angeles Federal Credit Union has partnered with local auto dealers through the Credit Union Direct Lending Program. You can now select a car at the best price and get on-the-spot low-rate credit union financing. Go to your Credit Union's Website www.lafcu.org for directions about the CUDL programs.**

### RLACEI Upcoming Events:

**April 13:** General Membership Meeting at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center

**June 6:** Golf Tournament at the Alhambra Golf Course

**Aug. 10:** Picnic at the Grace E. Simons Lodge

**Oct. 12:** Annual Corporation Meeting and Elections at VN/SO Senior Center

**Dec. 7:** Christmas Party at the Grace E. Simons Lodge

## The Best Years

ADVENTURES  
with HAL!

The fountains at Peterhof.

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



## Grandeur of St. Pete

■ In this fourth installment detailing Hal's northern European cruise, he and his entourage dock at St. Petersburg, Russia.

St. Petersburg, Russia, was the highlight of our northern European cruise aboard the Celebrity Cruise ship Constellation. My mother's family was from Russia, and I looked forward to returning to the country of my foremothers. The last time any member of my family was in Russia, Czar Nicholas II was still in power and my grandparents were fleeing from the Cossacks.

St. Petersburg sits on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Finland, in the delta of the River Neva, some 400 miles northwest of Moscow. The city, with a population of more than five million, boasts the largest seaport in the country. The city is built on a series of islands spread over a wide area, in an attractive plan of large city squares, parks, boulevards and broad avenues. A network of 60 rivers and canals crisscross the city and are spanned by about 400 bridges. The principal waterway is the River Neva, contained within impressive granite banks, and it was along this river that Russian classicism flourished during the 18th and 19th centuries.

St. Petersburg is relatively young for a European city – less than three centuries have passed since the first structure, the Peter and Paul Fortress, was built by Peter the Great in 1703. The city has a rich cultural and political history, being both the home of the Imperial Royal Family and the cradle of the Proletarian Revolution, for it was here that Lenin began his revolutionary activity and laid the foundations of communism.



Evelyn at Pushkin.

In 1914, at the start of World War I, the city's name was changed to Petrograd as it was considered less Germanic. In October 1917 the Bolsheviks, Lenin's Communist party, seized power, and the Soviet state was established.

By 1918 the seat of government was moved to Moscow, and in 1924, when Lenin died, Petrograd was renamed Leningrad in his honor. During World War II, Leningrad withstood a 900-day siege by the Germans. The city was rebuilt into a major industrial and scientific center after the war. In 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated, Boris Yeltsin became president, and in the first democratic election, the people of the city voted to change the name of Leningrad back to St. Petersburg.

Our ship docked in a commercial shipping area about a 30-minute drive from the city. We had been awakened by the welcoming music of a Russian band playing "When the Saints Go Marching In." While the Russian authorities were clearing the ship, the band continued to play American music to entertain us. It seemed out of place but it was entertaining, and as I left the ship I tipped the band. We noticed that at most tourist attraction there were bands playing.

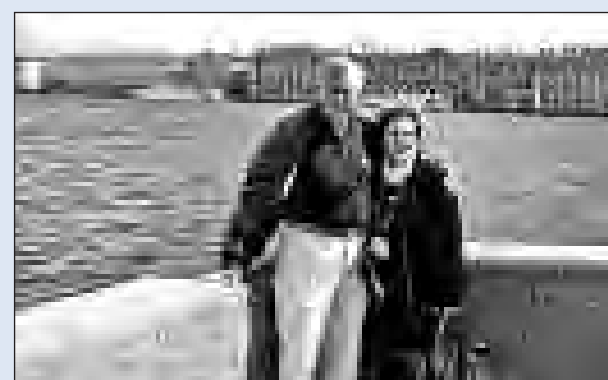
We were docked at St. Petersburg for two days. Because of the visa restrictions imposed by the Russian government, we had to take tours offered by the ship. The first day we visited the suburbs of St. Petersburg to see Pushkin, the summer residence of the Russian Czars; we saw the palace of Catherine the Great; and then we went to Peterhof to see the Grand Palace of Peter the Great. That evening we attended a concert at the State Academy of Fine Arts and then took a night cruise on the Neva. It was called a "White Nights" cruise because at that time of the year the sun did not set until midnight. The next day we toured St. Petersburg and visited the Hermitage. It was a full schedule with 36 hours of touring.

Tsarskoye Selo, also known as the Tsar's Village or Pushkin, is the site of Catherine's Palace. It is located about 17 miles south of St. Petersburg in a 1,482-acre park and was built in the mid-18th century and named in the honor of Peter the Great's wife; it was the summer residence of the imperial family from the time of Peter until the fall of the monarchy in 1917. The palace's aqua-colored façade is nearly 1,000 feet long and decorated with gold and white ornaments. Before entering the palace we were required to wear shoe covering on to protect the wood floors. It is hard to put into words the grandeur of each room that we visited in the palace; each one seemed more opulent than the previous one. The gem of the palace is the Amber Room, once considered to be the "Eighth Wonder of the World." The panels were too heavy to dismantle when World War II broke out, so they were looted by the Nazis, sent to Germany and never seen again. Photographs and archives helped Russian art experts fashion thin amber pieces to exactly match the originals in shape and color and to curve fine ornaments, thus recreating the legendary work of art. Much of the palace had been damaged during the war, and great care had been taken to restore it to the pre-war condition. Each room had a guard, usually an older woman, making sure that we did not touch anything. Our tour took about an hour and a half and we exited into the French Garden, laid out in geometric patterns.

After lunch at a local restaurant we made a one-hour drive to Peterhof, 22 miles west of St. Petersburg on the Gulf of Finland. Built in 1723 as a summer home of Peter the Great, it was intended to rival Versailles. Mostly destroyed during World War II, painstaking work, using old plans, photographs and descriptions, made it possible to recreate the famous palace and park with fountains considered among the world's most precious historical sights. While the interior of the palace was magnificent, the real centerpiece of Peterhof was the gardens. Peter himself drafted the layout of the 300-acre park, including the spectacular system of fountains that cascade throughout the grounds. The elaborate system includes four cascades as well as 173 fountains, all powered by gravity.

We returned to the ship for a quick dinner before our concert and river cruise.

As luck would have it, Vladimir Putin, the Russian President, was in town and we were caught in a traffic jam that caused us to be over an hour late for the concert, which could not begin until we arrived. Also, we had our first taste of bad weather as it began to rain very hard. Between the bus and the Fine Arts Building, we got very wet. The concert featured a small group of folk singers and musicians performing a folkloric concert, which I found very entertaining. It was still raining when we left the concert and we crossed the Neva River to board the riverboat. We were already an hour behind schedule



Hal and Evelyn, with the Hermitage in the background.

and in a bad mood because of the weather, but once we boarded the boat and had a few shots of vodka, everyone felt a lot better. It was still very light outside, but the windows were steamy and we couldn't see very much. We did get a nice view of the Hermitage and the Winter Palace. The entertainers on board gave a great performance of Russian songs and dances and they even got me up on stage as part of the show. After the river cruise, on the way back to our ship, we stopped for some shopping. Because of the restriction of our visa, we had the chance to shop in stores only as we toured or with street vendors. We were told that no one would take dollars, but that is all anyone wanted. We did buy a nice nested doll set and a lacquer box, and a few porcelain dolls for our granddaughters.

The next day the weather was much better and we started our tour of St. Petersburg with a stop at the Navel Church, with a short stop at a synagogue. We also stopped at St. Isaac's Square to see the Bronze Horseman.

The highlight of the day's tour was a visit to the Hermitage Museum. The enormous complex is comprised of five buildings on the banks of the Neva River that once formed the Winter Palace. Tours were allowed in one hour before the general public so we were able to get a good start before it became crowded.

The Hermitage contains more than three million exhibits displaying some of the world's greatest art treasures. There is no way you can see everything, so our three hours were spent visiting the Gala Suite of apartment and the artwork of the Italian Renaissance, including Da Vinci and Rafael. The rooms themselves were magnificent to see, with many chandeliers and elaborate staircases. Our guide told us that if you spent just three minutes with each exhibit it would take you a year and a half to see the whole museum.

After lunch at a local hotel, we visited St. Isaac's Cathedral. Its dome, coated with more than 200 pounds of pure gold, dominates the city skyline. The cathedral can hold 14,000 people, and the walls are heavily ornamented with marble and precious and semi-precious stones.

On the way back to our ship we stopped to take pictures of the Cruiser Aurora, which fired the first shot in the Russian Revolution, and the Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood.

Our two days of sightseeing were like an appetizer to what you can see in St. Petersburg and in the rest of Russia, and we would like to go back again.

During those two days we heard a lot about the Czar, but very little about communism. It seemed that the 60-plus years had quickly been forgotten and replaced by what were glorious times before and one hopes a better future.

Next month I promise to finish up this cruise with our visits to the three Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

If you have any comments or questions you can e-mail me at [adventureswithhal@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:adventureswithhal@cityemployeesclub.com)

# Retiree Question of the Month

Alive! asked retirees...

## What is your New Year's Resolution?

Vic: "I can't remember."  
Pat: "I didn't make any because experience tells me that they're too easy to break."  
- Vic and Pat, Transportation, 32 years



"Living the next year happily."  
- Fred Frazier, Rec and Parks



"Be a good guy."  
- Jack Chester Mathews

"We wish to live another 100 years."  
- Wilma Rebbe, LAPD and her daughter, Rene O'Malley



"Kick our son out of the house...we need peace and quiet!"  
- Vino Buchicchio, retired, Rec and Parks, 36 years, and his wife, Marie



"Travel more."  
- Ben Reyes



"To do as little work as possible."  
- John Shadle, retired, Building and Safety, 18 years, and his wife, Margaret

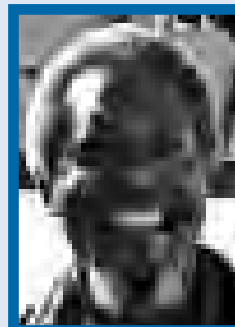


"Keep on doing what I'm doing."  
- Lee Burrell, retired, Building and Safety, 32.5 years

Angel: "Play more golf."  
Grace: "Stick to my diet."  
- Angel Gonzalez, Building and Safety, 20 years, and his wife, Grace.



"Better serve God."  
- Robert Jacobs, Street Maintenance



"Love more people."  
- Tony Alvarez

"Stay healthy."  
- Charles O. Wilson



"Good health and a great life."  
- Paul Salles, retired, Building and Safety, 30 years, and wife, Agnes.



"Still thinking about it."  
- John Lane

# The Best Years

### RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

**Florence Davis and Gaetano Toppolo** both turned 93 last month.

**Craig Perkins** and some friends go on a 400-mile bicycling trip each year in different parts of the county. Takes them a leisurely week.

**Beverly Farmer** has a flock of relatives who are or have had City service:

- Ira Farmer, brother-in-law, retired in 1977 after 30 years.
- Wrainey Farmer Sr., brother-in-law, worked 34 years.
- Wrainey Jr., son, worked 20 years.
- John Reamer, nephew, has worked 18 years with Contract Administration.
- Freddier Farmer, Beverly's husband, worked 33 years in Street Maintenance.
- Her sister-in-law worked for 32 years.

That adds up to 168 years and still counting! What a gang!

**Ed Nelson**, West Covina, retired in February 2000 and has been caring for their five grandchildren pretty much full-time. But they did take a trip to Utah, Wyoming, Idaho and Seattle visiting friends and family. Two more grandkids are on the way. Ed is nearly recovered from a recent stroke.

**John Martinez** retired in 1982 after 35 years as a Senior Tree Surgeon. His father, a retired City employee, talked him into applying for a job with Rec and Parks after his discharge from the Army. It was a good choice.

#### Comments from the readers that are appreciated:

- David A. Ross says, "I enjoy your writings, Phil-osophy, poems, etc."
- Tom Meacham says, "Thanks for such a good job you fellows are doing representing us."
- Welton Wyrick says, "I appreciate all the good work you are doing."
- Robert K. De Grandis says, "Thank you for your dedication on behalf of all retired City employees."
- Elroy R. Gonzalez says, "Thank you for your help."

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

## The Best Years

## Financial Advice



Planning and Managing Your Retirement

## The Smart Money



Eric Garcia, Smith Barney

Your Club  
Financial Partners

The Club wants to make planning your financial future easier and more confident. To that end, there are now two separate Club partners to choose from: Eric Garcia, Smith Barney; or James Ocon and Kevin Wright, Wachovia Securities.

Remember that all financial decisions are yours; the Club offers these partners as a courtesy to you and offers no financial/securities advice of its own.

*Alive!* will feature these two partners in this space in alternating months. As the two partnerships may or may not have separate views on financial matters, they don't necessarily endorse the others' views. But they stand by what they write in the columns with their name(s) on them.

Feel free to contact them at your earliest convenience:

**Eric Garcia: (626) 683-4621**

**James Ocon and Kevin Wright: (818) 907-4209**



Eric Garcia



Kevin Wright

New Year Investment Resolutions  
You Can Follow All Year Long

Here are a few New Year resolutions that are easier to stick with than many of the traditional January vows. You do not have to overcome big obstacles to follow these tenets of investing, just develop a few good habits.

**Re-evaluate Your Portfolio**

Analyze your portfolio holdings considering your investment objectives, time horizons and life stage. If you have invested heavily in stocks and are approaching retirement age, you may want to consider reallocating a portion of your portfolio into high-quality bonds. Their long-term return potential may not be as high as stocks, but neither is their short-term volatility. As you get closer to the time when you will need these assets, you may want to consider shifting to more conservative investment vehicles to help reduce risk.

**Take The Long-Term View**

Consider the quality of a company before you invest and research its track record over five to 10 years. Resist judging an investment solely by last year's return—past performance is no guarantee of future results. A good investment can have an off year and still provide outstanding returns over the long term.

**Invest in a Blend of Securities**

One time-tested way to help reduce risk in a portfolio is to diversify. That means holding a mix of stocks, bonds and cash-equivalent instruments from a variety of issuers. Younger, conservative investors who want to invest in stocks for long-term growth may want to consider investing a portion of their portfolio in corporate and government bonds. Investors of retirement age should keep in mind that inflation could erode the returns on short-term securities. Maintaining at least a minority portion of a portfolio in equities could improve the chances of keeping total return (yield plus capital gains) ahead of inflation.

**Keep an Emergency Fund**

Be prepared for unexpected cash needs: emergency medical bills, child care, home

repairs and living expenses in case of a sudden job loss. Always keep a portion of your portfolio liquid.

**Watch for Tax Developments**

The amount you keep after taxes is the most accurate measure of your investment's performance. Your tax bracket, investment objective and changes in tax codes could make changing your investment strategy worthwhile. Consider speaking with your personal financial and tax advisors about whether tax-advantaged investments may be suitable for you.

**Leave a Legacy**

In today's environment, it may be a good idea to consider investment strategies that allow you to leave an estate for your children, grandchildren, other heirs or a favorite charity as part of your overall financial plan. Such plans may not require as much updating as altering your investment objectives. A conversation with your tax and financial advisors could help your beneficiaries eliminate probate (a lengthy procedure whereby a court handles distribution of assets not designated to a beneficiary) and other estate planning issues.

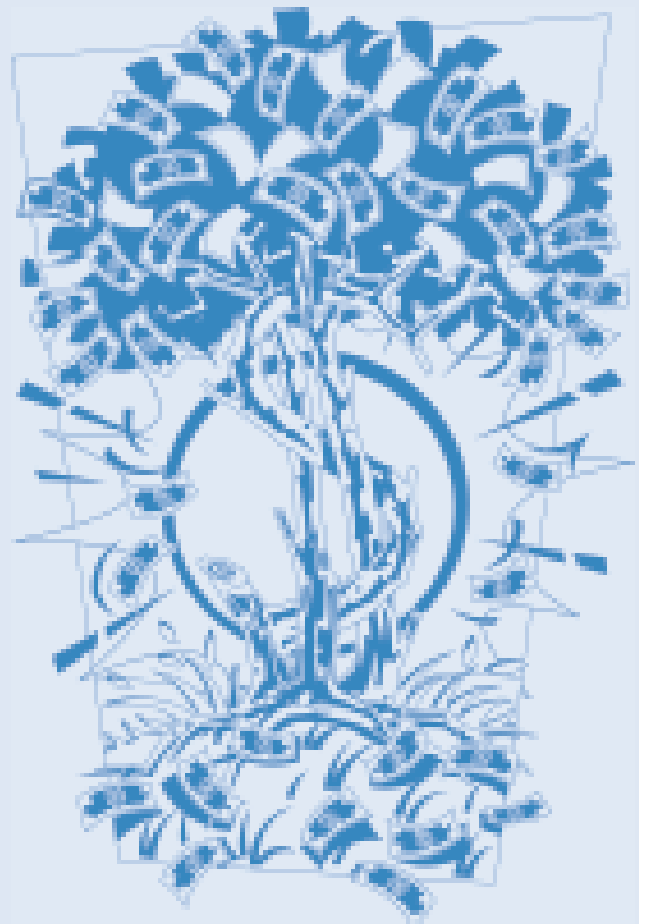
**Save Time and Money**

Take advantage of the services offered by your brokerage firm. You could save yourself the trouble of delivering stocks and bonds to your financial consultant each time you're ready to sell an investment by having your securities held in the firm's street name. When you're ready to sell, just call your financial con-

sultant. Or, consider consolidating your banking and investments into a central financial brokerage account. You may be able to manage all your investing, savings, borrowing and spending in a single account. And, some brokerage firms may supply you with an ATM card for convenient access to your funds.

A financial plan that includes the above, periodically monitored with the help of your financial consultant could help make keeping your financial resolutions painless.

Smith Barney does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax and/or legal adviser for such guidance.



*Eric Garcia is a Financial Planning Specialist with Smith Barney located in Pasadena, Calif., and may be reached at (626) 683-4621.*

*Smith Barney does not provide tax and/or legal advice. Please consult your tax and/or legal advisors for such advice. Smith Barney is a division and service mark of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Member SIPC.*

*This article is based, in whole or in part, on information provided by the Sales & Marketing Communications Department of Smith Barney.*

**Send Eric your questions at [smartmoney@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:smartmoney@cityemployeesclub.com). Use "Smart Money" in the subject line.**

# The Best Years



# Volunteer 411 Get Involved!

By Michelle Moreno, Club Events Guru

## Angel Food Project Feeds Seriously Ill

Hello, volunteer enthusiasts!

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season filled with love, fun, laughter, happy tears and great memories.

It's hard to believe that it's already 2006. Did you make your New Year's resolutions? Does it include volunteering? If so, great for you! I have also added volunteering to my list of resolutions. I am going to make 2006 a year of positive changes, one of which is the addition of a volunteer organization spotlight to Volunteer 411. For January, I have chosen Project Angel Food.

Project Angel Food is a great organization dedicated to helping out those with terminal illnesses. Project Angel Food's mission is to "nourish the body and spirit of men, women and children affected by HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses."

Every day, Project Angel Food Program delivers free and nutritious meals prepared by employees and volunteers at their Hollywood location to the homes of their clients. "This year, on any given day, more than 1,200 meals are delivered to clients in the greater Los Angeles area. In 2004, Project Angel Food delivered more than 385,740 meals, averaging 1,054 meals each day."

More than 3,500 volunteers help out throughout the year, either preparing meals, delivering, or helping out during a fundraising event. If you are interested in being a part of PAF, please call (800) 59-ANGEL. Before you volunteer, this organization asks that you attend a two-hour orientation. For further information, you can visit its Website: [www.angelfood.org](http://www.angelfood.org).

Well, that's it for me for this month. As always, if you are volunteering somewhere and would like to share your experience with your fellow Club members, please send me a letter or e-mail. I would very much enjoy posting stories of members who are helping out the community. Always keep an eye out for "Volunteer 411" every month, and if you would like to list some events or opportunities, please send them in to [volunteer@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:volunteer@cityemployeesclub.com) or 350 S. Figueroa St. Suite 700, Los Angeles, 90071. You can also call me at (800) 464-0452. Thanks for reading and have a great holiday season!

Some of the listed volunteer opportunities were found at: [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

L.A. Works  
(323) 224-6510  
[www.laworks.com](http://www.laworks.com)

Volunteer Center of Los Angeles  
(818) 908-5070  
[www.vcla.net](http://www.vcla.net)

## January

### Western Roundup at the Burbank Center (BCR) for the Retarded

"Put on your boogie shoes for an evening of dancing with the delightful BCR clients. Volunteers may also be asked to serve drinks and foods to BCR clients. BCR offers day programs for disabled adults and children to develop their abilities so they may become independent and contributing members of the community." (L.A. Works Website)

Date(s): Jan. 13  
Event Time: 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.  
Location: 230 Amherst Dr., Burbank  
Contact: (818) 843-4907

### Senior Interaction – Arts and Crafts in Alhambra

"Do you like color painting, cutting and pasting pictures, drawing, playing games, chatting, having fun, and at the same time brightening up people's smiles? Then, you'll love the arts and crafts projects at Alhambra Convalescent Home. The people here are very friendly, and your visit makes a crucial difference in the quality of their life." (Website)

Date(s): Jan. 15  
Event Time: 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.  
Location: 415 S. Garfield Ave., Alhambra  
Contact: (626) 282-3151

### Nothin' But Sand Beach Cleanup at Playa del Rey

"Nothin' But Sand Cleanups are hands-on opportunities for volunteers to directly improve the condition of Santa Monica Bay beaches while enjoying the great outdoors." (Website)

Date(s): Jan. 21  
Event Time: 10 a.m. – noon  
Location: Dockweiler Beach, Pacific Ave. and 62nd St., Playa del Rey  
Contact: (800) HEALBAY or [www.healthebay.org](http://www.healthebay.org)

## Ongoing

\*Events subject to change. Please call or visit website to confirm.

### Friends of Animals Foundation

"The Friends of Animals Foundation is a no-kill shelter that rescues abused, abandoned and needy dogs and cats and places them in good homes. We will be walking dogs, feeding cats, and socializing both dogs and cats." (L.A. Works Website)

Date(s): Daily  
Event/Volunteer Time: Varies  
Location: West Los Angeles  
Contact: (310) 479-5089 or [www.foafla.petfinder.com](http://www.foafla.petfinder.com)

### Los Angeles Zoo Volunteer

There are several volunteer opportunities available at the L.A. Zoo, from docents to office work to special events. If you like animals and kids, this event is for you.

Date(s): Daily  
Event Time: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: Varies  
Location: 5333 Zoo Dr., Los Angeles  
Contact: (323) 644-4703 or [www.lazoo.org/volunteering.html](http://www.lazoo.org/volunteering.html)

### Tutor at the Remedial Reading Center

This organization is looking for volunteers to help tutor intercity youths with math, reading or writing skills. Grades 1 - 7.

Date(s): Daily  
Event Time: 3 – 7 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: Varies  
Location: 2239 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles  
Contact: (323) 732-1350

### Project Angel Food

"Project Angel Food's mission is to nourish the body and spirit of men, women, and children affected by HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses. The Project Angel Food Program delivers free nutritious meals prepared with love." Volunteer opportunities include: delivering meals, preparing meals at the Hollywood location, assisting in the office and participating in events.

Date(s): Mon. – Fri., Sun.  
Event Time: 8 a.m. – noon, 1 - 4 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: 2 - 4 hours  
Location: 7574 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood  
Contact: (323) 845-1816 or [www.angelfood.org](http://www.angelfood.org)

### Meal Service for the Homeless at the Los Angeles Mission

"Every day is a day in crisis for the homeless. Help us prepare and serve the evening meal at the Mission. The Los Angeles Mission provides food, clothing and shelter to hundreds of hungry men, women and children every day. Volunteers for this project must be at least 13 years of age. Men must wear long pants (no shorts) and socks with shoes. Women, please wear closed-toed shoes (no sandals or flip flops). Please dress decently – our appearance is important in this project." (L.A. Works)

Date(s): Daily  
Event Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: Vary  
Location: 303 E. 5th St., Downtown L.A.  
Contact: (213) 629-1227 or [www.losangelesmission.org](http://www.losangelesmission.org)

### Feed the Soul While Helping Feed the Hungry at L.A.'s Food Bank

"We need to make care packages for women with infants, children and senior citizens. If you want to volunteer, this is a great way to help your community."

Date(s): Saturdays (call to confirm)  
Event Time: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: 3 hours  
Location: L.A. Food Bank, 1734 East 41st St., Los Angeles  
Contact: (323) 234-3030 or [www.lafightshunger.org](http://www.lafightshunger.org)

### PetSave: Animal Interaction – Rabbits

"PetSave and the spcaLA helped to rescue more than 400 neglected rabbits in 2002. PetSave's mission is to continue to care for these rabbits until all have been adopted into good homes. Volunteers are needed to help with the daily care of the rabbits, including assisting with feeding and cleaning cages, brushing and socializing the rabbits, and helping to clean and organize the shelter."

Date(s): Saturdays  
Event Time: 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: Two hours/week  
Location: 522 West 9th St., San Pedro  
Contact: (310) 833-7333 or [www.petsave.org](http://www.petsave.org)

### Environment Conservation at the Ballona Wetlands

"Volunteers are needed to help remove non-native plants and trash, and they are then invited to go on guided eco-tours offered by local biologists and ecologists. Refreshments and free raffle prizes are also available. Please bring work gloves if you have them – they are mandatory for weeding and trash cleanup, and we only have a limited supply! Also, we recommend sunscreen, sunglasses, sunhat and a water bottle. Wear work boots or sturdy footwear and clothes that can get dirty." (L.A. Works Website)

Date(s): Second Saturday of each month  
Event Time: 7 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: Varies  
Location: Playa del Rey  
Contact: (310) 264-9412 or [www.ballona.org](http://www.ballona.org)

### Mentor for the "I Have A Dream" Foundation

"Mentors provide a window to the world. They motivate and coach their mentees to create and achieve their dreams. Mentors are matched with individual Dreamers and commit to at least a year of monthly in-person visits and weekly phone or mail contact. This is not a financial commitment, but rather an opportunity to expose a child to new cultural and educational experiences and opportunities outside their communities."

Date(s): Monthly  
Event Time/Volunteer Time/Location: Vary  
Contact: (213) 572-0175 or [www.ihadla.org](http://www.ihadla.org)

### Hospice Volunteer Opportunity

"Do you enjoy working with an energetic team in the office? This is an opportunity to enjoy being with an energetic team working to serve each patient and family member we have during the end of life's journey." Several volunteer opportunities available.

Date(s): Ongoing  
Event Time: 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Volunteer Time: 4 hours/month  
Location: Odyssey Healthcare, 1900 W. Garvey Ave. #200, West Covina  
Contact: (626) 851-4000 or [www.odsyhealth.com](http://www.odsyhealth.com)

### Retired Teachers for Pawprints Literacy Plus Foundation

"Pawprints Literacy Plus Foundation helps fight illiteracy by using animal stories to involve kids – and adults including seniors – in reading and creative writing, plus listening and speaking exercises. We are looking for: Ability to work effectively with youngsters grades 1-12 (any combination of grade level useful). Must be proficient in language arts, able to manage discipline without a heavy hand. Ability to talk with others in the L.A. community, to help in fund raising efforts – training provided for both program and fund raising."

Date(s): Ongoing  
Event Time: Varies  
Volunteer Time: 10 hours per week  
Location: Brentwood Village  
Contact: (310) 471-5048 or [www.inaspawprints.com](http://www.inaspawprints.com)

### Public Education Ambassadors for Multiple Sclerosis Association of America

"Public Educational Ambassadors use their communication skills to represent the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America and America's Charities at public speaking events. These events include workplace-giving campaigns, health fairs and regionally organized public education events. We are looking for people who have good public speaking skills and can convey our mission to people in a public setting."

Date(s): Ongoing  
Event Time: Varies  
Volunteer Time: 3 hours  
Location: Varies  
Contact: (800) 532-7667 or [www.msaa.com](http://www.msaa.com)

### Reading to Kids

If you like reading and like helping kids learn then this opportunity is perfect for you. The Reading Club meets every Saturday and provides children with a great educational experience.

Date(s): Saturdays (call to confirm)  
Event Time: 9 a.m. – noon  
Volunteer Time: 3 hours  
Location: Elementary schools near Downtown L.A.  
Contact: (310) 479-7455 or [www.readingtokids.org](http://www.readingtokids.org)

# Poetry Contest Draws Great Entries, Winners

THE BEST YEARS

RLACEI — The Annual Retirees' Poetry Contest features some outstanding poems. The winners are:

## Members:

FIRST: Frances Cota, "Kindred Spirit"

SECOND: Elaine Chambers, "Sons"

THIRD: Leonard Ladieu, "Always Two Sides"

FOURTH: Ivan Forbes, "Ode to Tweedie Two"

## HONORABLE MENTION:

Grady Mullen, "I Wonder;" Jim McCloskey, "A 21st Century Christmas;" Angela Hughes, "Happiness;" Carleton Ralston, "Do You Miss Me?;" Marcella Butler, "Mathematics: Age, Years and Numbers;" and John Morea, "Life of a Retiree."

## Spouses:

FIRST: Lee De Bord, "The Silver-Haired Cello Player"

SECOND: Jane Hanson, "Soaring at Sunset," and

THIRD: Betty Kemeier, "To a Seagull, On Its Inability to Fly."

Everyone who entered is a winner and will receive a prize.

### Kindred Spirit

They search each other out among the throng,  
Reaching, grasping, prone to touch.  
No matching now of skin or hair or eyes;  
No sorting out of gender.  
To exist in harmony is quite enough.  
No earthly force can lay a barrier down  
That they will not transcend.  
Once having found that invisible link  
That joins, they spend a lifetime in the bond,  
and do not try to meld an end  
It is the soul that seeks. They may grow ancient  
Never having kissed, nor mourn a carnal closeness  
They have missed. Appearances are cast aside  
Without a care. Just knowing that the other one  
Is there, is all they need.  
It's quite enough to share the earth and all its  
strife,  
If you've been lovers in another life.

— Frances A. Cota

### Sons

There's only one thing nicer than having a son  
It's having been blessed with yet another one  
Two little brothers and what buddies they'll be  
Together they'll share all of life's greatest joys  
How LUCKY we are to have TWO little boys!

— Elaine Chambers (written after her youngest son  
and his wife learned they were having another  
boy)

### Always Two Sides

Just remember, for every argument,  
There are two sides  
Each side is right in their own eyes  
Regardless of who lies  
For to do otherwise  
Would diminish their cries

— Leonard M. Ladieu

### Ode to Tweedie Two

We had a little Tweedie bird  
She got eaten by a hawk  
We replaced her without a squawk.  
Now Tweedie Two chirps  
She investigates every thing.  
She even pecks on all our food,  
And tried to edge out  
our dog Benji from his food dish.  
Benji gave a sharp bark,  
which is his answer  
For such an intrusion.  
He showed Tweedie Bird Two  
Who was Cock Robin on his roost.

— Ivan Forbes

### I Wonder

I wonder about all sorts of things  
From mice and men to rockets wings  
Will man travel in outer space  
And rocket ships be common place  
I often love to sit and think  
Of cycles past and each a link  
Explaining Man's slow evolution  
The transformations by revolution  
I often ponder god's true reason  
For earth, man, bird and season  
I wonder too, what the future brings  
About these do I wonder and other things  
Is time really the fourth dimension  
Will it one day be simple in our comprehension  
Why can't we calibrate eternity

When does the soul have its birth  
If the body faileth ere reaching its goal  
Whence so fleetly flieth the soul  
Tho at this the bell of my conscience rings  
I still dare to wonder about such things.

— Grady Mullen

### A 21st Century Christmas

Twas A Week Before Christmas, And All Through  
Our House,  
Not a Virus Was Stirring, Except For Our  
Computer Mouse...  
With Mamma On Her Lap Top, And Pappa In  
His Garage,  
Not A Google Inquiry Unopened, In Preparation  
For A Shopping Barrage...  
Outside Lights And Ornaments Were Down,  
Strewn All Over The Place,  
In Hopes Our Neighbors Took Pity, And Helped  
Ol' Dad Decorate...  
Visions of ATM Cards Melting, Purchasing Gifts  
Large And Small,  
Presents For Family And Friends, And Neighbors  
One And All...  
When Out At The Curb There Arose Such A  
Clatter,  
I Unbolted The Security Door To See What Was  
The Matter...  
When What To My Wondering Eyes Should  
Appear,  
But The Postman, Fed Ex And UPS, At Once  
Were All Here...  
As They Approached Our Front Porch, I Stared  
With Fright,  
My Wife's Ordering Frenzy, Meant Delivery Was  
Overnight...  
With Our Grand-Kids Due In Town, In Less Than  
Three Days,  
The Honey-Do List Keep Growing, My Mind  
Working In A Haze...  
And Although I've Been Retired For Three And A  
Half Years,  
The Joy Of The Holiday, Can Still Bring Me To  
Tears...  
So As We Make A Toast, To Begin The Holiday  
Cheer,  
Merry Christmas To All, And To All A Happy  
New Year...

— Jim McCloskey

### Happiness

Happy memories helps make a perfect day  
To make each day happy that the best of  
health and happiness will always  
be on our way.  
Time is precious so make it count in a selfless  
way.  
May every kind of happiness fill each single one  
of us everyday.  
No matter what the day may bring – or what may  
lie in store, just fill your heart with hope,  
peace, family closeness and good friends  
which brings lasting happiness.  
Home is a restful haven filled with joy and tender-  
ness, and a place you never want to have to  
leave for Home means Happiness!  
Life knows success and happiness, misfortune and  
distress, and in times like now, count your  
many blessings and Thank God for our day of  
happiness.

— Angela M. Hughes

### Do You Miss Me?

Your captain told me how died!  
And oh, my love, I died inside!  
Through this window only glass and concrete  
buildings may be seen;

Dismal monuments to battles that man's enter-  
prise has won.  
Long ago, so long ago, here smiled a meadow,  
fresh and green,  
Where the poppies glowed like drops of fire fallen  
from the sun.

We gathered golden poppy blooms,  
Where yonder stately tower looms,  
And draped an unprotesting cow,  
About where Bullock's store is now.  
And where that office building stands,  
We walked together holding hands,  
With hearts responding to a lark,  
Whose joyous music filled our park.  
We hearkened to the meadowlark,  
Whose joyous music filled our park,  
And marveled that such hearty note  
Could tumble from so small a throat.  
We wandered to a brook, and there  
You kissed my eyes, my mouth, my hair,  
And whispered in my ear, "You I adore",  
Where jaded shoppers storm a discount store.

— Carleton Ralston

### Mathematics: Age, Years and Numbers

I'm a "proud age six"!  
I play "pick-up-sticks"!  
And, I'm told that  
I'm such a "big girl"  
A baby no more!  
About this I am sure!  
So, off to school I trot,  
Proudly, ribbon and curl!  
Now, I'm sweet sixteen!  
I'm our prom night queen!  
Oh, how lovely, smart and grown-up I feel!  
About twenty-one? Fun!  
Been off to college and done!  
How this working world  
glows with appeal!  
I'm now twenty-three!  
Such a busy little bee!  
I'm wife and mother  
That's me around the clock!  
Until now, I thought I was grown.  
But, I hadn't really known  
that age brings wisdom  
that only time can unlock!

I'm now twenty-six!  
Long gone, the "pick-up-sticks"!  
Yet, this "big girl"  
remains very chipper  
though picking up toys  
of dogs, little girls and boys,  
hubby's newspaper, socks,  
wallet and slippers!  
I'm now thirty-five!  
Oh, Thank God I'm still alive,  
being maid, nurse, chauffeur,  
Cook, the chores galore!  
But needless to say  
I've always a full day  
with not moment  
to feel that life's a bore!  
I'm now fifty-two!  
Hey! How about you?  
been pretty much the same?  
Well, then, live at it's best  
and let God do the rest!  
You will find that's the  
Best "Name Of The Game"!  
I'm now sixty-one!  
And, I must say it's been fun!  
Because, through it's been fun!  
Because, through it all  
I've been surrounded by love  
Of sweet children and spouse!  
boy! I'd feel like a louse!  
if I hadn't thanked God,  
for that love came from above!  
We've shared God's love in all ways!  
So, I'm grateful for those days  
even though they were  
as hectic as can be!  
I've joined the "Over The Hill Gang"!  
But, I'll go out with a bang!

Because I've learned that  
"age is just a number", you see!  
Besides, I know life's just beginning.  
And, I've never lost for always  
Winning!  
For these experiences have  
made me wiser, not dumber!  
Oh, thank God I came to know  
that with age, one can still grow!  
And, thank God that  
"Age is, still, just a number"!

— Marcella Butler

### Life of a Retiree

Being retired is great. You never have to worry  
about being late. You just wake up at nine,  
have a drink of good wine and never have  
another headache!

— John Morea

### The Silver-Haired Cello Player

The silver-haired cello player plays  
Amid the younger students on the stage.  
I wonder just how many days  
He spent dreaming of this place  
It makes me think about the years  
That he spent in dreary places  
Without the "bravo" cheers  
Away from those eager faces  
To share Bach beneath the moon  
His golden years are his delight  
The memory of toils forgotten soon  
His is now the music of the night  
The orchestra has made his life complete  
For his savage breast is soothed  
By the music oh so sweet.

— Lee De Bord

### Soaring at Sunset

God writes His signature  
Upon the sky  
In flaming sunset tones  
That lift the heart!  
Enchanted with His nearness,  
The soul swells with song,  
And hope soars high  
To claim its promised joy!

— Jane Huelster Hanson

### To a Seagull, on Its Inability to Fly

O lovely, lonely little bird  
I watch you struggle vainly  
To rise above the floating dock,  
But your wing is too ungainly.  
You spread your wings as if to fly,  
To soar above the ocean.  
You barely rise, to fall again;  
Your wing is surely broken.  
Life played a cruel trick on you;  
You can't fulfill your mission.  
But I, what reason can I give?  
Just laziness, I'm fearing.  
An injury has crippled you,  
But you are far from daunted.  
You try, then try again to rise,  
But still your will is flouted.  
I grieve for you, poor wounded gull,  
As broken wing you're grooming,  
Not knowing what lies just ahead;  
Your death is surely looming.  
Your trust and courage, gentle bird,  
Taught me the wondrous lesson  
That even broken human lives  
Through grace can cast a blessing.

— Betty Kemeier

# Retirees Celebrate

The Best Years



From left: Leo Rosen, Retiree, 32 years; Reginald Fosters, Retiree, 40 years, City Planning; Joel Rosen; and Norma Rosen all went home happy to start the holiday season.



Paul Salles, Building and Safety, 30 years, and his wife, Agnes, both won raffle prizes.



Charles O. Wilson, General Services Electronics Division, Retired, 30 years.

## RLACEI hosts annual holiday luncheon.

Story by Robert Larios, Club Director of Communications and Marketing  
Photos by Robert Larios and Michelle Moreno, Club Events Guru

RLACEI — If it weren't for the signs of winter hurtling through Chavez Ravine and Elysian Park, you'd think that with as many cars that were bustling by that there was a day game at Dodger Stadium. But instead dozens of retired employees and their families and friends carpoled into the Grace E. Simons Lodge parking lot and made their way into the lodge hall to join RLACEI President Ed Harding and the hundreds of RLACEI members for the Christmas Party and Installation of Officers Dec. 8.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that there were well more than 200 attendees seated for their Holiday party, which began sharply at noon. At one of the most festive holiday luncheons of the year, retired employees from a wide variety of City departments gathered with smiles and glee to see former supervisors and colleagues from departments including General Services, Bureau of

Sanitation, Rec and Parks, and LAFD, just to name a few.

"It has been such a joy to see the faces from my working days — I have only good memories," Charles Wilson, a General Services retiree, told *Alive!*

When RLACEI President Ed Harding said in his President's Message, published in the association's Winter 2005 newsletter, that the party would provide lots to eat, door prizes, and entertainment, he was not fibbing.

"Ed and the rest of the officers have outdone themselves with today's Christmas event; the food was scrumptious," Grace Gonzalez said.

Although the Christmas Party was festive and served as a much anticipated annual reunion for many retired City employees, official RLACEI business was part of the agenda with the installation of RLACEI officers. The list of officers is published in the Best Years section in every issue of *Alive!*

Additionally, RLACEI welcomed special guests Veronica Sanchez of the Department of Aging, LACERS General Manager Robert Aguillo Jr., and LACERS Chief Management Analyst for Health Benefits Sandra Dyson.

Once finished with the official business, the festivities continued with the distribution of door prizes. There was much eagerness and enthusiasm for movie tickets, chocolate candies, and \$50

Safeway Grocery gift cards provided by the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.

"I'm very happy to win the gift card. This is going to some good use, and I want to thank the Club for donating their door prizes," said Edward Rishel of LAFD after jumping out of his seat to snatch his winnings when his name was called out.

Satisfied that the agenda was completed, bellies filled and prizes released, retirees shook hands and exchanged warm hugs while united by the sounds of indiscernible chatter of holiday wishes carried toward the exit doors and toward parked cars outside.

"Merry Christmas to you!" said Ken Spiker to many of the members as they exited the lodge. Spiker served 28 years with the City and retired as the Chief Legislative Analyst. He has been a RLACEI Director since 1994.

"Happy New Year!" exclaimed Leo Rosen, a City retiree who arrived with his wife, Norma, and son, Joel.

As the last of the members went on their way, emptying the lodge hall to a deafening silence, RLACEI officers and directors looked at one another with gratifying grins as if to acknowledge that this event was one of their most successful yet. It looks like the prosperity for 2006 arrived a few weeks early.



Ivan Forbes, Retired, Public Works-Sanitation, 23 years, won one of the many raffle prizes handed out.



RLACEI President Ed Harding took care of some association business.



Edward Rishel, LAFD, won a \$50 gift card donated by the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.



Jack Mathews handed Morrie Henkin a prize as a raffle winner. Morrie, Retired, LAPD and Public Works, 40 years.



Lee Burrell, Retiree from Public Buildings (now known as General Services), 32.5 years.



Robert Perry, Sanitation, Waste Water Collection, Retired, 31.5 years.



The Great John Shadle and his wife, Margaret, couldn't wait to be reunited with old friends from the City. John had 18 years of service before retiring from Building and Safety.



From left: Benjamin Mills, Rec and Parks, Retired, with his wife, Lilly, and granddaughter, Jalean Wade.



Angel Gonzalez, Retired, Building and Safety, 20 years, sat next to his wife, Grace.



From left: René O'Malley and her mother, Wilma Rebbe of LAPD, had a grand time.



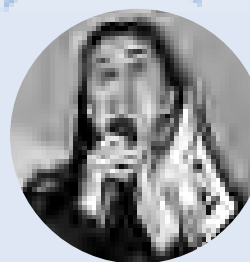
Vino Buchicchio, Rec and Parks, 36 years, and his wife, Marie.



The talented writer Phil Skarin listened the items on the agenda.



LACERS General Manager Robert Aguillo Jr. spoke to the retirees about the latest ongoings with LACERS.



Department of Aging employee Veronica Sanchez gave good information about the services that the Department provides.

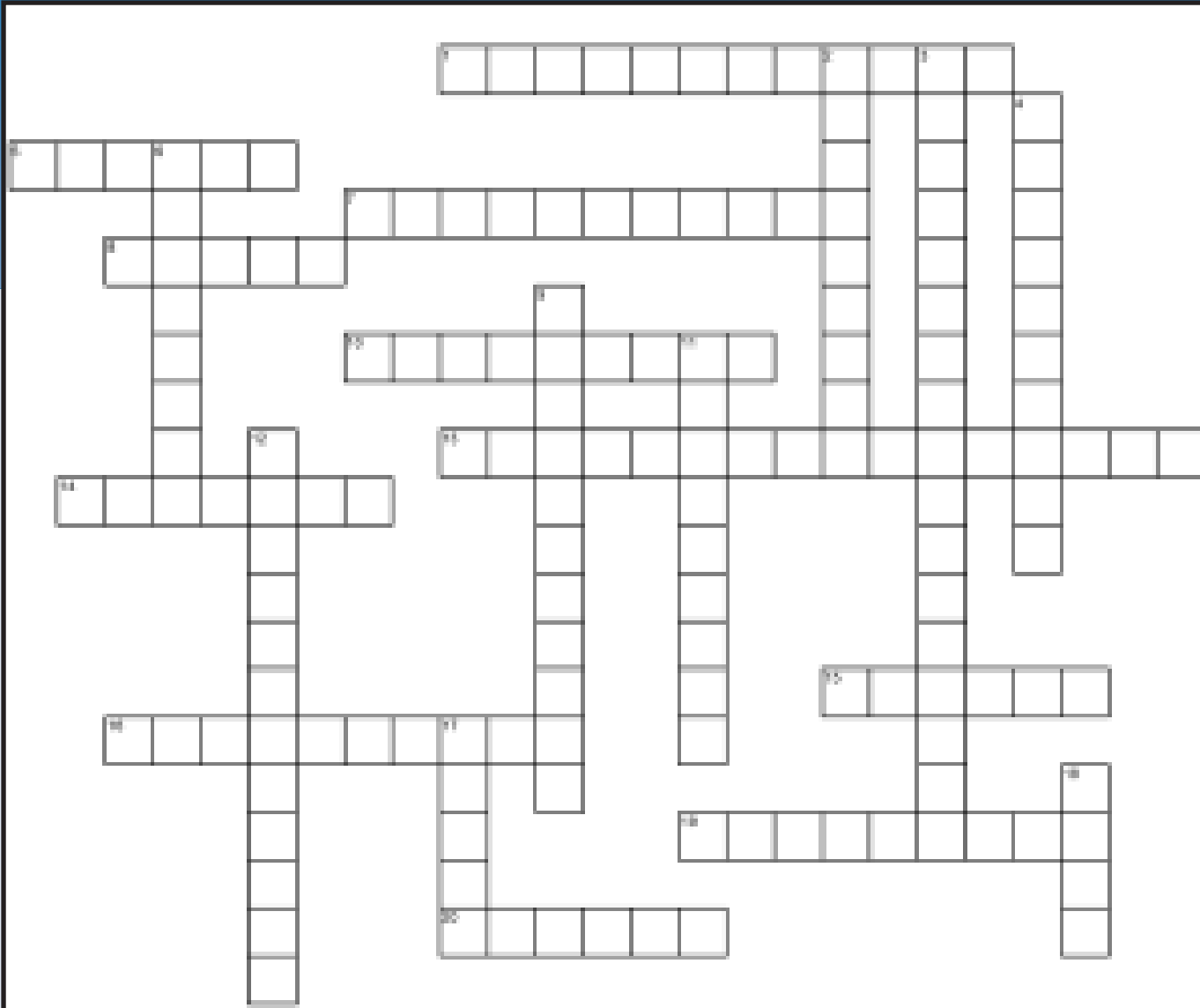


John Lane, General Services, Retired, 26 years, waits in line for lunch.

# The Best Years

## The *Alive!* Crossword Puzzle

Created by Club Events Guru Michelle Moreno



Grab your pencil, and let the fun begin!

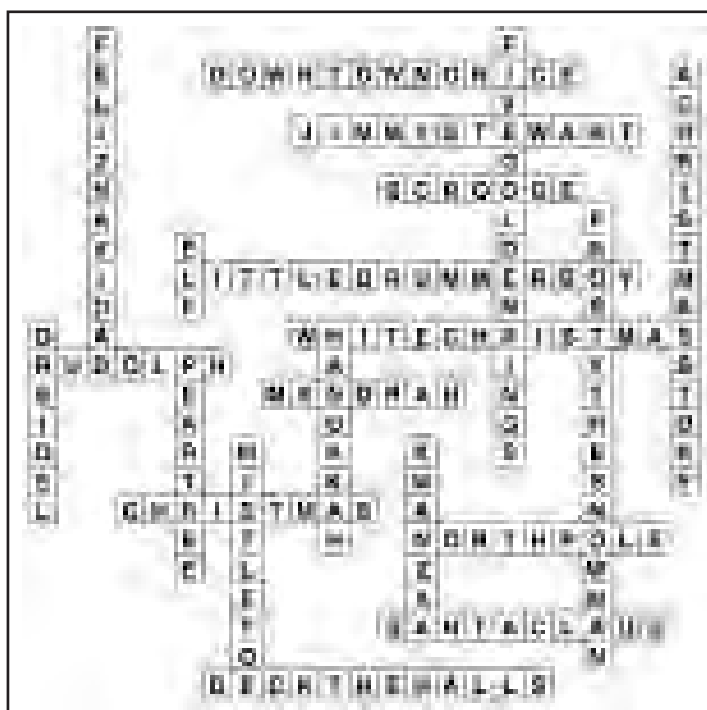
### ACROSS

1. (2 words) Roman Emperor
5. Peaceful Indian Leader
7. (2 words) Fought for immigrant farmer rights
8. Owns "Harpo"
10. (3 words) National heroine of France and Patron Saint
13. (2 words) Led British army during WW11
14. President during Civil War
15. Famous Chicago Bulls athlete
16. First U.S. President
19. Egyptian Queen
20. General during WWI

### DOWN

2. Queen of England
3. (3 words) Famous Greek Conqueror
4. (2 words) led the Knights of the Round Table
6. Famous French General
9. (2 words) Founder of the City Employees Club
11. New Deal
12. (2 words) Famous catholic Polish priest
17. New York Real Estate Guru
18. Civil Rights Activist

### Last Month's Answers



### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

*Christmas is Coming Again*

*It's time to roll up the scroll for 2005 of things*

*we have said and done*

*and place it on the shelf of memories.*

*Then, as we take down a new scroll for 2006,*

*we expect to find a clean page on which to begin*

*recording the New Year's deeds and events.*

*But, instead we find a list of leftovers from 2005:*

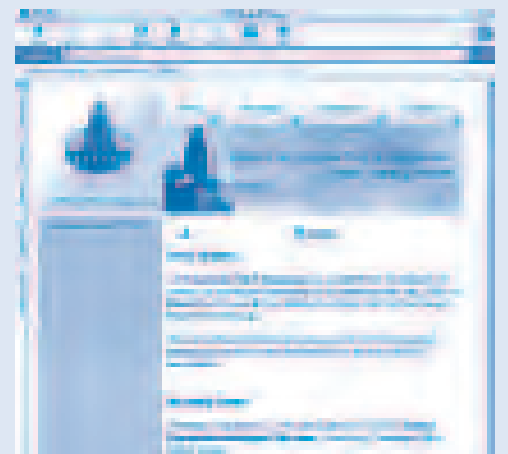
*promises we didn't keep, wrongs we haven't made*

*right, and love we have withheld from our neighbor.*

*So, start now to clean up any leftovers and then start*

*with a clean slate and then have a Happy New Year!*

-- Phil Skarin, RLACEI



### RLACEI Website

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit our Website at: [www.rlacei.com](http://www.rlacei.com) to find out the latest retiree news.