

For Retired Club Members



The Best Years

City Retiree Associations:

DWP Retirees Association



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

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?

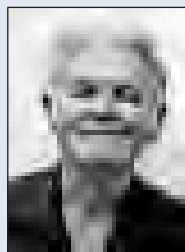
If you change your address, notify Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, at 323-728-4930, or write to her at 5423 Dewar St., Los Angeles, CA 90022. Also notify LACERS.

Have News About Yourself?

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

RLACEI: LACERS Fund Is at Historic High Level

By Phil Skarin, Publicity Chair, RLACEI

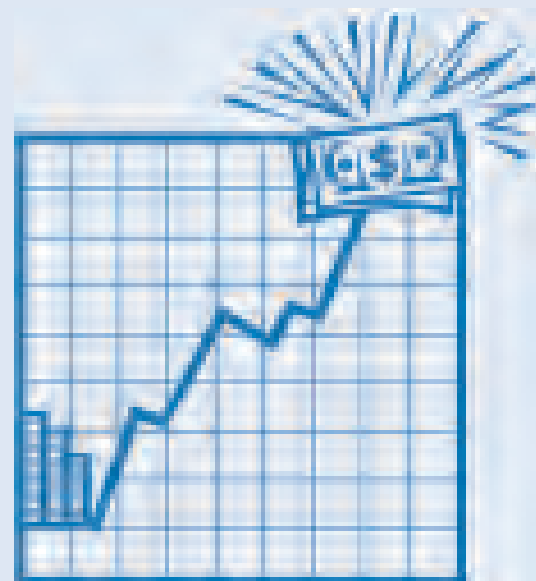


Legislative Update:

■ Ken Spiker, our elected Commissioner to the LACERS board, reports: "I have received many letters and phone calls regarding the condition of the retirement fund. The news media has been full of disaster stories reporting the failure of many private and public pension deficits.

■ "The City of San Diego has a \$2 billion deficit, and Orange County reportedly is in poor shape. Many private companies, United Airlines for example, have declared bankruptcy and transferred their pension benefits to the Federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation. Their deficit is reported to be \$22.8 billion. Local governments don't have this fall-back guarantee to protect their retirees. "Our fund has now reached an all-time high of more than \$9 billion and though only 76 percent funded, it is in no danger. Though private sector companies are reducing or eliminating benefits previously provided to retirees, I see no evidence of that happening to our retirees."

■ Membership Campaign: Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, expects to enroll several hundred new members as a result of the recent membership campaign, which should push us over the 9,000 mark. Great job, Helen. If you change your address, notify Helen at (323) 728-4930, or write to her at 5423 Dewar St., Los Angeles, CA 90022.



President's Report:

Ed Harding, RLACEI President, reports: I just returned from the Serra Retreat Center, which used to be for City Employees and their friends. There were several groups and some City Retirees there, but I plan to bring back all of past City retreatants, retirees and present City employees and their friends, Jan. 5-7, 2007.

What a beautiful place. It's high in the Santa Monica Mountains, overlooking the Pacific Coast Highway and the ocean. The sea was calm and it was so clean that Catalina Island appeared close by.

It was nice to see some of the men I knew when I was working, like Gil Gerakos, who started working with Mayor Sam Yorty and then became Supervisor Ed Edleman's Chief Deputy and ended his City career as Councilman Rich Alatorre's Field Deputy.

Also Al Alvarado, who was Field Deputy for Sam Yorty, and Art Snyder, who ended his City career as Coordinator for Olvera Street, which was part of El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Park. Al brought his son, Don, who is Vice President of Smart and Final.

Neil Dennering was also there. Neil was in charge of the Street Tree Division when I was in charge of the Street Maintenance Division. We both retired in the 1980s.

Our next General Meeting will be held on April 13 at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Citizen Center. Again we plan to have a great lunch at noon and lots of door prizes. LACERS will send Sandra Dysen to talk about medical issues, and Ken Spiker will bring you up to date on our Pension System. Please call one of the officers on the Retirees help line a week ahead to make reservations for lunch.

"I wish every one a Happy Healthy New Year."

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

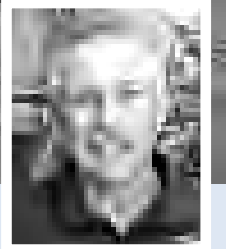
Oct. 12: Annual Corporation Meeting and Elections at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center

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

The Best Years



A band welcomes the adventurers in Lithuania's Klaipeda Theater Square.



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 (membership)	(323) 728-4930
• Americo Garza	(562) 928-2051
• Neil Ricci	(310) 394-1971

DWP Retirement Plan Office: (213) 367-1722

RLACEI:

Officers for 2006

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

Committee Chairpersons for 2006

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



■ Hal's Northern European cruise concludes.

Sailing south from St. Petersburg on Celebrity Cruise's Constellation, our last three ports of call were in the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. These are three countries you would visit only if you have relatives living there. Not because these are not interesting places: Each has a very interesting history and sites to visit, but it is not easy to get there. One of the advantages of traveling by boat is you can visit places that you need to spend only a short time to see the sights. These three ports fit that category.

Estonia is the northernmost and smallest of the Baltic States. It lies on the shores of the Gulf of Finland between Russia to the east and Latvia to the south. It covers 18,000 square miles and has a population of 1.5 million. Over the years the Danes, Germans, Swedes and Russians have controlled the country. In 1918 it declared itself the Republic of Estonia, but was taken over by the Russians in the late 1930s and remained in Russian control until it was made independent again in 1991. Our port of call, Tallinn (population 400,000), the capital of Estonia, is situated on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland, 53 miles by sea from Helsinki.

We had booked the Tallinn highlight tour, and our first two stops after we left the pier were the Song Festival Grounds, where the Estonian song festivals are held every five years and the 1980 Olympic Yachting Complex. We also made a quick picture stop at the main telephone tower, where the uprising against the Russian occupation started.

The highlight of the tour was the visit to Tallinn's Old Town, which is the oldest remaining walled medieval city in Europe. We were able to walk along the ancient walls and had a great view of the lower town with its towers and steeples rising above the cluster of red-tiled roofs. We visited St. Mary's Cathedral to see the medieval coats of arms that are on display. After the tour, we stopped to do a little shopping and then hopped the shuttle back to the ship.

The next morning we docked in Riga, Latvia. Latvia (population: 2.3 million) lies between Estonia and Lithuania is about the size of West Virginia. Over the centuries it has been part of Poland, Sweden and finally Russia, from which it declared its independence in 1991. Riga, the capital (population 800,000), is on the Gulf of Riga and is divided by the Daugava River. It is the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the Baltic region, partially because it has more preserved Art

Nouveau building than any other city in the world.

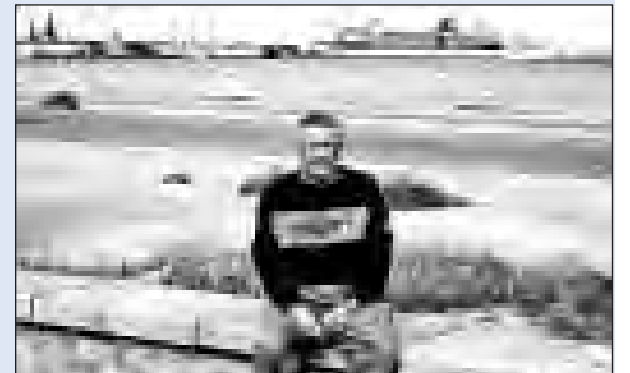
We booked the Riga city tour, which was mostly a walking tour of the old city. This was one of our few rainy days, so most of the time we were under umbrellas. The town is very beautiful, with many interesting building and lots of churches. We were able to visit the Dome Cathedral and have a musical demonstration of the dome organ, the fourth largest organ in the world.

Our last port on this cruise was Klaipeda, Lithuania's only seaport on the Baltic Sea. Lithuania (population: 3.5 million) is on the Baltic Sea between Latvia and Russia and is slightly larger than West Virginia. This area of Eastern Europe has been part of Germany, Sweden, Poland and Russia. It became the first of the Soviet Republics to declare its independence, in 1990.

Klaipeda's claim to fame is it is the major ferry port between Sweden, Denmark and Germany. The ship docked within walking distance to the city center, and many of the town's people came out to see the ship. It was only the second time the ship has docked here, and the economic value of our ship was very important to the town. We had booked an afternoon tour, so we walked into town to see what there was. We found the town (theater) square, where a band was playing. It had a number of stalls selling amber jewelry. We later found out that during World War II, Hitler visited the town and spoke in the square. We continued our wandering and found a larger handicraft market and made a few purchases.

Our tour of Klaipeda Old Town and Palanga Amber Museum covered most of what we had already seen in our morning walk (on our own) except for the Amber Museum, but our guide did provide interesting information during the tour. The ride to the Amber Museum took about an hour, and we got to see a lot of the countryside. The museum and gardens are located in a resort town, which looked very pleasant. The museum is in the Botanical Gardens in a palace built by Count Tiskevicius family in 1897. While the visit to the museum was interesting, I really enjoyed walking through the gardens. On our return to old town we stopped in a beer garden (part of the tour) for a free glass of beer.

Of the three ports I think Riga was the best, but in any case I really don't think we will be visiting any of them again.



Hal Danowitz in the Tallinn harbor, with his cruise ship Constellation in the background.

We now had two days at sea until we docked in Dover, England. We really needed the time to relax as we had been to six ports in a row without a chance to have a little down time. The two days at sea gave us a good break, and by the time we docked in Dover we were ready for our short visit to London before returning home.

Getting off the ship in Dover was very easy. We didn't need to go through immigrations or customs because we had started our cruise in England, a Common Market County, and had returned from Lithuania, also a Common Market Country.

Our car and driver were waiting for us, and after a two-and-a-half-hour drive we arrived at the London Kensington Hilton. It was July 2, and we were staying until July 5. We got to celebrate the Fourth of July in England. It isn't quite the holiday there as it is in the United States.

On Sunday we decided to do a walking tour of the east end and follow in the footsteps of Jack the Ripper. I had printed out from the Internet a map to follow. We did the walk around Whitechapel and then stopped for a drink at the Ten Bells Pub, where Jack's victims were known to drink. We enjoyed walking around the area, which is now a Middle Eastern immigrant area. We were in the Altgate-East tube station, which was one of the stations that were bombed by terrorist two days after we were there.

We were able to get half price tickets to a London show and did a little shopping to round out our trip.

This was a great trip and a good way to see the northern European Baltic area. Celebrity is a great cruise line, and I would recommend them.

Next month I'll report on our family vacation to Hawaii.

If you have any comments or questions you can e-mail me at adventureswithhal@cityemployeesclub.com

Retiree Question of the Month

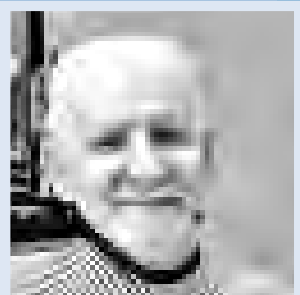
Alive! asked retirees...

What is your favorite Love Song?

The Best Years



"I Will Always Love You"
by Whitney Houston.
— Margarita Garcia



"I Fall in Love With You
Every Day"
by Frank Sinatra.
— Tommy Winters



"You Make Me Feel
So Young"
by Frank Sinatra.
— Shelley Biafora

"A Little Dirt on Your Hands"
by the Deltones.
— Helen Bender



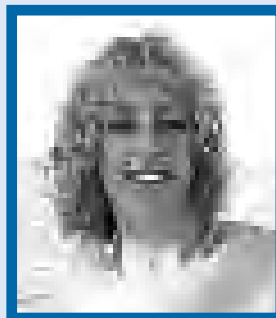
"Dream Lover"
by Bobby Darin.
— Jaime Mendez



"Come Fly With Me" by
Frank Sinatra.
— Joe Fowles.



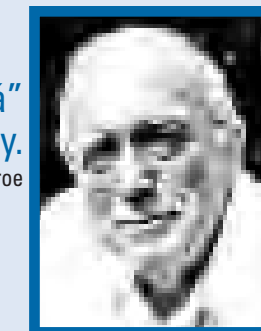
"My Heart Will Go On" by Celine Dion.
— Suzanne and William Nokian



"Earth Angel" by The
Penguins.
— Tom Hinkel



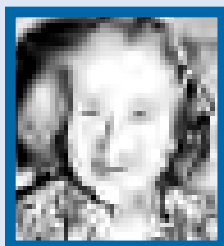
"Cheaper to Keep Her"
by Johnnie Taylor.
— Jenny Riley



"Light My Fire"
by the Doors.
— Gerald Martin

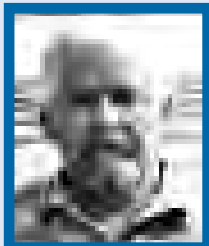


"Que Será, Será"
by Doris Day.
— Jim Monroe



"I Only Have Eyes for You"
by The Flamingos.
— Maxie Trevor

"Oh Pretty Woman"
by Roy Orbison.
— Ron Gilroy



"Donna" by Ritchie Valens.
— Norma McDaniel



RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Doris Stuart writes, "When working for the City Clerk's office, I didn't travel much. Now I'm seeing places [mostly] in our Western states. I travel with senior groups – that's the easy way for me."

Thomas Meacham writes, "We have become avid R.V. travelers and go to rock shows and flea markets. In May 1998 we took the 'Rails to the Rim' ride from Williams. There had been a two-inch snowfall the night before. The Grand Canyon had been fogged in, but as we approached it, the fog began to part, just like the biblical story of the parting of the Red Sea. It was our biggest thrill!"

Virginia Dona, Palm Desert, writes "My husband, David Dona, passed away on Dec. 17." Dave had been the Engineer of Surveys and a good friend.

Jess Barley phoned on his way back from the St. Lawrence area of Canada, where his wife, Marie, has two sisters. Next, they'll head for Mexico in their R.V.

Daniel Jovanovich spends a lot of time babysitting his four grandchildren.

Encouraging comments:

- "Thanks for such a good job you fellows are doing representing us." – Tom Meacham
- "I appreciate all the good work you are doing." – Welton Wyrick.
- I enjoy your writings, Phil-osophy, poems." – David Ross
- "You are a journalist par excellence. I am looking forward to working with you again at our Golf Tournament on June 6." – Bob Okuda

If you have any news about a retiree that you would like to share, send it to:

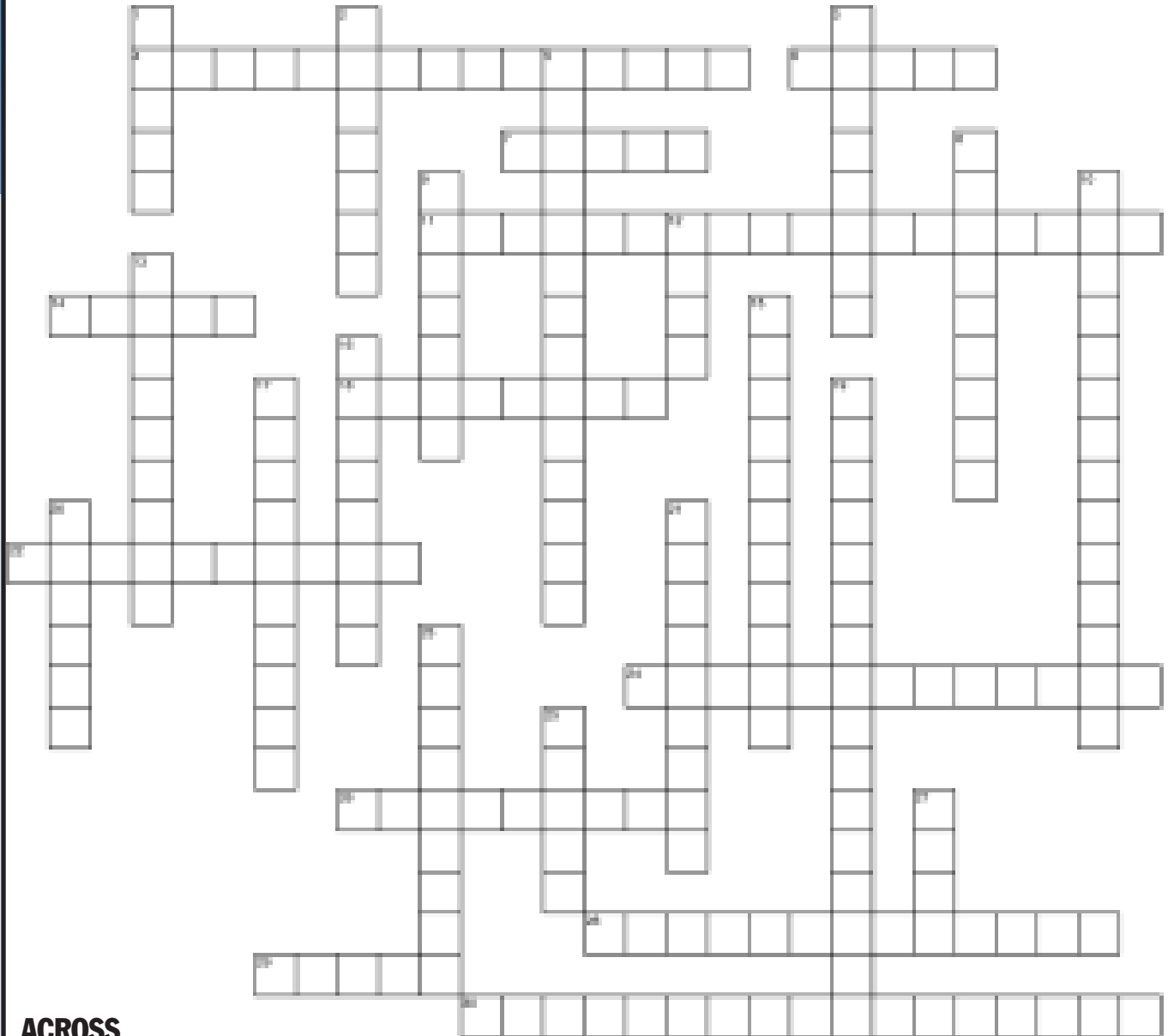
Phil Skarin
5301 Norwich Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91411
or call (818) 784-0130

The Best Years

The *Alive!* Crossword Puzzle

Created by Club Events Guru Michelle Moreno

Grab your pencil, and let the fun begin!



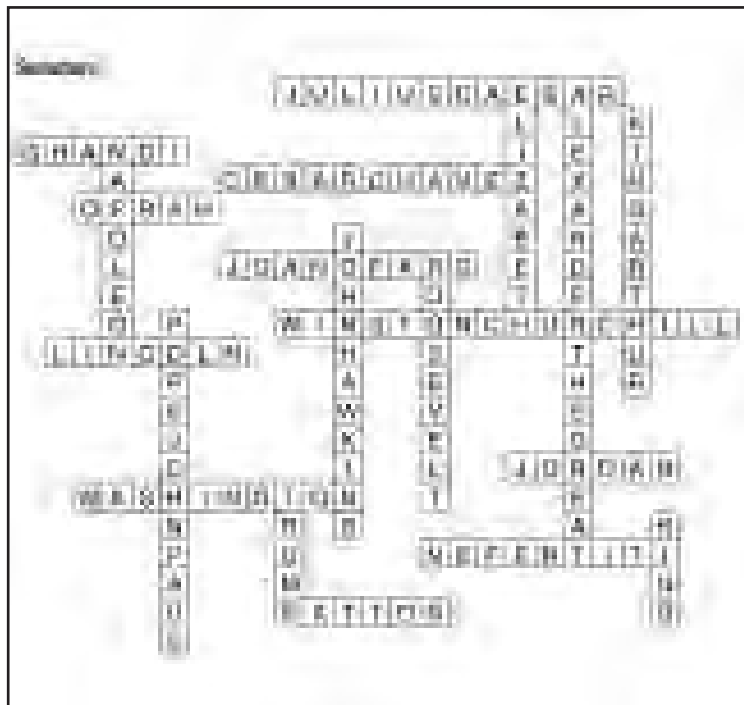
ACROSS

- 4. (2 words) Righteous Brothers hit
- 6. Symbol of love
- 7. Roman goddess of love
- 11. (5 words) Houston hit
- 14. 1990 film starring Moore and Swayze
- 18. Popeye's love interest
- 22. (2 words) Married to Yoko
- 24. (2 words) He fills the world with "silly love songs"
- 26. Deliciously sweet gift
- 28. (2 words) February 14 holiday
- 29. Club discount code for 1-800-flowers
- 30. (4 words) Joe Cocker classic

DOWN

- 1. Shoots love arrows
- 2. (2 words) Homer and Marge
- 3. ... better to have loved and lost...
- 5. (2 words) All I have to do is dream
- 8. (2 words) Film about Cavalleri and Barrett
- 9. Film about Rose and Jack
- 10. (3 words) Tragic Shakespearean love story
- 12. ...means never having to say you're sorry
- 13. Bonaparte's lover
- 15. (3 words) Unforgettable
- 16. (2 words) ... how wonderful life is while you're in the world
- 17. Film about Piccolo and Sayers
- 19. (3 words) "Inconceivable!"
- 20. (2 words) Comic created by Kim Casali
- 21. (2 words) "the greatest thing you'll ever learn is to love..."
- 23. Greek goddess of love
- 25. Fred Flinstone's wife
- 27. #1 flower purchased during February

Last Month's Answers



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Today Is Tomorrow

We often have duties or responsibilities that we don't want to do at the present time, so we say to ourselves "I'll do it tomorrow."

We may use a variety of reasons to postpone them:

I'm too tired. I'm waiting for inspiration.

I have higher priorities today.

I'll do things that are more fun today.

If I wait long enough, the need may go away.

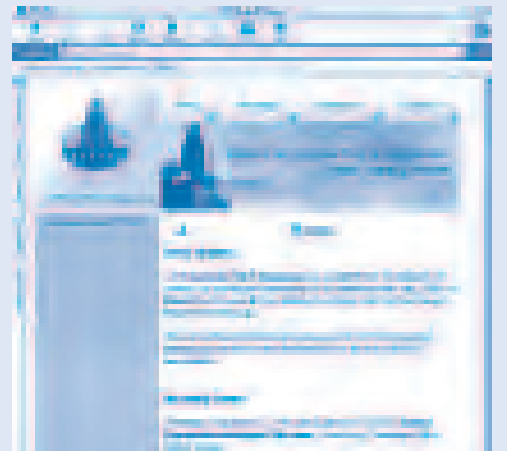
No one will know that I'm procrastinating.

The more we put things off, the greater will be the weight on our conscience

and will inhibit our subsequent actions.

So, don't be surprised, if someday you wake up and find that Tomorrow Is Today!

-- Phil Skarin, RLACEI



RLACEI Website

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