

For Retired Club Members



# The Best Years

## Dental Subsidy Could Be Added for Spouses

By Phil Skarin, Publicity Chair, RLACEI



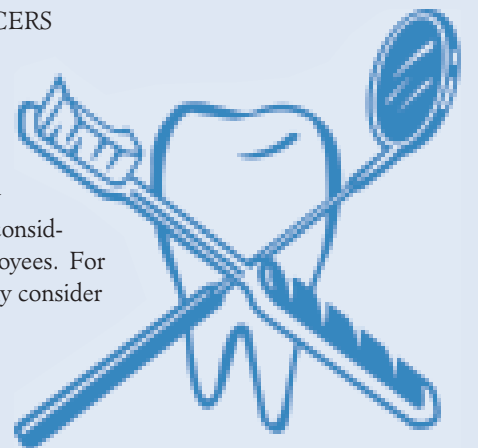
### Legislative Update:

■ Ken Spiker, our elected Commissioner to the LACERS Board of Directors, reports that the CAO has approved a dental subsidy benefit for surviving spouses/domestic partners.

■ The benefit had received unanimous approval by the LACERS Board before being sent to the Mayor and City Council. The CAO report states, "All benefit enhancements should be considered in the context of all benefits available to retirees and active employees. For example, in recent negotiations with active employees, the City would only consider neutral enhancements."

■ The CAO report was submitted as a result of a Council motion introduced by Councilmen Bernard Parks and Dennis Zine. Though the CAO recommended the matter be received and filed, the file is still the property of the Budget and Finance and Personnel Committee.

■ Ken is asking certain unions to include this new benefit in their request package for this year. Three-thousand-eighty four (3,084) surviving spouses would benefit if this allowance would be approved by the Mayor and Council.



### President's Report:

■ "I want to remind everyone, that in just a few weeks, we will have our first general membership meeting of this year. Another great lunch will be served at noon, free, but only if you call a week ahead to one of the officers on the retirees helplines.

■ "LACERS will have several employees to talk about our health plans. Ken Spiker will bring you up to date on our retirement benefits. You may win one of the many door prizes given by LACERS, the City Employee Club and 20 envelopes with \$10 gift certificates from RLACEI. Don't forget the date, Thursday, April 13, at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center. Lunch at noon, meeting at 1 p.m.

■ "One of our members inquired if there was a retreat for married couples at the Serra Retreat in Malibu, where I attended a retreat for men only in January. The married couples retreat will be held on March 24 - 26. It will be given by Fr. Emory Tang, a great speaker. He is a very modern, right down-to-earth great guy. Call the Serra Retreat Center at (310) 456-6631 for information about other retreats held throughout the year.

### Legal Assistance:

■ Neighborhood Legal Service of Los Angeles County offers tips on the law to poor residents. They have offices in Glendale, Pacoima and El Monte. Call them at (800) 433-6251.

## RLACEI Upcoming Events:

The 28th Annual Retirees Invitational Golf Tournament will again be at the Alhambra Municipal Golf Course Tuesday, June 6, followed by an awards luncheon at the Almansor Court. Prize sponsors have helped keep the entry fee low. If you would like to be a sponsor this year, contact Phil Skarin at (818) 784-0130. Look for an entry form in the spring 2006 RLACEI newsletter.

**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

### 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.

# The Best Years



Hal's granddaughter Isabelle in the sand.



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

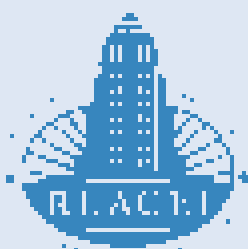
- Edward Harding, President
- Robert Wilkinson, First Vice President
- Kenneth Spiker, Second Vice President
- Hal Danowitz, Secretary
- Jerry Bardwell, Treasurer

### 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



# A Hawaiian Holiday

## ■ Hal finds a great deal and takes the family to the islands.

Every year we take at least one family vacation where the grandkids (Madeline, Isabelle and Caroline) and their parents (JP and Michelle) come along, but last year we ended up taking two trips – the first was to Cabo San Lucas and the second to Hawaii.

Periodically I get solicitations from hotels with vacation packages that are very well priced. A few years ago we received an offer from the Grand Wailea Hotel on Maui for a vacation package and we found it to be a great value, so when I received the same type of offer from the Sheraton I knew what to expect.

I received the offer from the Sheraton vacation services in early 2005, offering six days and five nights' accommodations at the Sheraton Maui Resort on Ka'anapali Beach for \$749 for two people. It also included a \$100 resort certificate that could be used for dining and activities and a \$185 Avis rental car certificate. Based on retail value, the package was worth more than \$2,400. We decided to go to Maui from Aug. 28 to Sept. 2, and then to go to Honolulu for a USC foot-

(www.westinmaui.com), just down the beach from the Sheraton. For our stay in Honolulu, I booked us into the Aston at the Waikiki Banyan

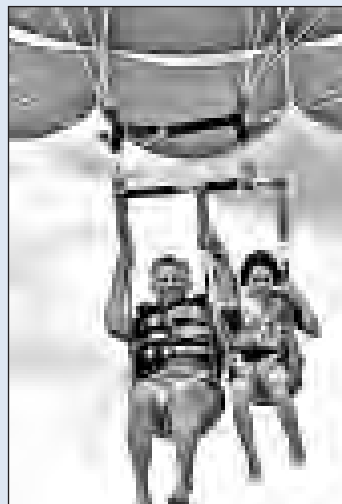
(201 Ohua, Honolulu), about two blocks from the beach. I got two one-bedroom units for only \$135 per night for each.

We flew over on American Airlines direct to Maui. We had waited too long to make our reservations, so we did not get very good airfare (\$750 each). We picked up our cars at Avis and drove about 45 minutes to Ka'anapali, which is just past Lahania on the north-west side of the island.

The best snorkeling in Ka'anapali is at Black Rock by the Sheraton, but about two football fields' walk from the Westin. Black Rock is the site where ancient Hawaiians believed that their spirits "jumped off" or left this world. Early Monday morning we packed up our gear and walked to Black Rock, where I rented a couple of sand chairs and umbrellas, and we set up camp for the day. I think the snorkeling at Black Rock is the best on Maui and both Madeline (age 8) and Isabelle (age 6) were able to swim out to the deep water with me. At the end of Black Rock you can climb up the rocks and jump into the ocean. It is not a difficult climb, but it is about 25 feet in the air. Both Madeline and her father did the jump, but not grandpa or grandma.

The next day we spent around the pool at the hotel. It was a great place for kids. There are five free-formed swimming pools with a large water slide at one end, which the kids loved, and they even got Evelyn and me to go down. Between the pool and the beach, everyone was having a great time. Ka'anapali is self-contained and has a number of restaurants and a few fast-food places. Twice we had dinner in Lahania and it was fine. Keeping three young kids happy is not easy, but we managed.

On Wednesday Evelyn took Michelle and the two younger grandkids, Isabelle and Caroline (age 4), to Alii Kula Lavender farm (www.aliikulalavender.com) for the garden culinary and lunch tour, and JP and I took Madeline fishing.



Hal and granddaughter Madeline parasailing.



Hal and granddaughter Madeline with a small fish.

ball game and return home Sep. 4.

We couldn't get into the Sheraton, so they booked us at the Westin Maui Resort and Spa



The Danowitz family wore matching outfits for their holiday photo.

I had promised Madeline that we would go shore fishing, and I had found a store in Lahaina (West Maui Sport and Fishing Supply, [808] 661-6252) that rents fishing gear. He sold us two bamboo fishing poles, fishing line and hooks, and frozen squid for bait, all for \$12. Madeline had a great time catching and throwing back the fish.

On Thursday, we took the kids parasailing off the beach in front of the hotel. JP, Michelle, the three kids and I went out on the boat. The kids loved it and I hadn't done it in a number of years, and so it was fun to experience with my granddaughters.

On Friday we flew to Honolulu. We spent the afternoon walking around Waikiki, and that evening Evelyn and I had an excellent dinner alone at Hy's Steakhouse (2440 Kuhio Ave., Honolulu).

Saturday morning, we hiked the Monoa Falls Trail. It is listed in the guidebook as an easy two-hour, 1.6-mile round trip. Let's just say that they almost killed grandpa on this one, but I did make it to the top and back down. The best part of the hike was that JP stopped at Leonard's for malassada.

In the afternoon, JP and Evelyn went to the game at Aloha Stadium, and Michelle and I took the kids to Waikiki beach.

Michelle wanted to take the family Christmas card picture in Hawaii, and she bought matching aloha outfits. Evelyn bought the same for us. We had dinner at Tanaka of Tokyo (King's Village), and the patrons were taking pictures of us. After dinner we were walking down Kalakaua Avenue, and we were stopped by a group of kids on a scavenger hunt who had to take a picture of a family dressed alike. They took our picture.

The next day we left for home.

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

The Best Years

# Retiree Question of the Month

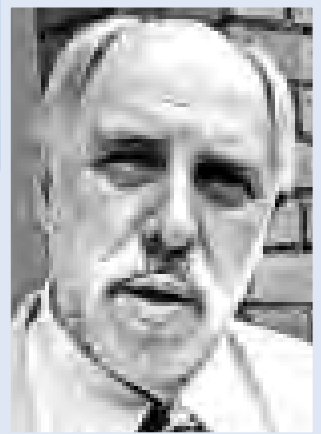
Alive! asked retirees...

## What is your Lucky Charm?



"My heart, for beating all these years."

- William Lackey



"My rabbit's foot that I've carried for 40 years."

- Gary Rostein

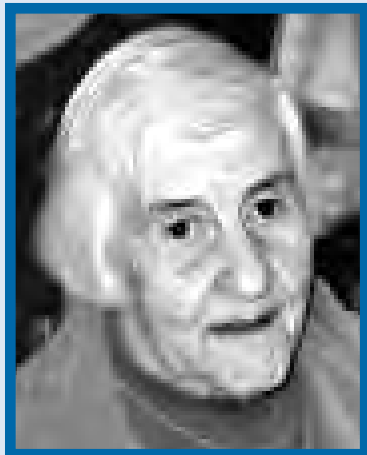


"My husband of 40 years."

- Gilda Forrester

"I'm wearing it."

- Frank Hobbs



"Lucky Charms are for kids."

- Jill Ball



"I still have my first dime I ever made in my wallet. I earned it yesterday."

- Henry Knox



"I'll let you know when I find it."

- Tom Gin

### RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

**Sampson and Ruth Wilson** celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary Feb. 13. Wow! They will be moving to Las Vegas soon to be closer to their son.


**Sonja Hairston** is a grandmother of a two-year-old granddaughter. She works on family pictures and loves selecting flowers for her yard.

#### Ego boosters:

- "Annabelle and I enjoy reading your Thoughts of the Day. Good stuff." – John Powell
- "I love your column." – Bob Bobo.

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




### Reverse Mortgages For Senior Homeowners

*"You've worked hard to own your own home, now let it work for you!"*


- Receive monthly payments instead of making them
- Make no repayment of your loan as long as you live there
- Use the money for home repairs, healthcare, buying a car - whatever you choose!

Please call for a Reverse Mortgage Guide.



**Jerry T. Cohen**  
Reverse Mortgage Consultant  
818-947-7865 Direct • 818-831-1110 Cell  
jerryt.cohen@wellsfargo.com

\*Must be at least 62 years old. Call for more details! Program information only. Fargo Home Mortgage is a division of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. ©2006 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. 034229 2/16/06



## 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

## Benefiting From an IRA Rollover

Like many Americans, you are probably working hard to build wealth in the form of retirement savings. Undoubtedly, you also appreciate the importance of strategies to help preserve those assets when you change jobs or retire. One of the best ways to do so is through an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) rollover, which can help maintain your retirement funds' tax-advantaged status and may provide you with better control over your asset allocation strategy and the distributions you will ultimately take from the account.

Unfortunately, many individuals fail to take advantage of the rollover option. In July 2005, Hewitt Associates, a consulting firm in Lincolnshire, Ill., surveyed nearly 200,000 U.S. workers and found that 45 percent took their 401(k) plan distributions in cash. The costs of that decision are substantial because the IRS imposes income taxes and a 10 percent penalty on most pre-retirement distributions. The distributed funds also lose the long-term advantage of tax-deferred growth potential inside a retirement account.

## Benefits of IRA Rollovers

An IRA rollover offers other benefits in addition to preserving tax deferral. These include:

- Increased investment flexibility. Most employer-sponsored retirement plans offer participants a limited number of investment options. In contrast, a rollover to a self-directed IRA gives you a much broader selection of investments, including stocks, bonds, exchange traded funds, certificates of deposit and real estate investment trusts, among others. This flexibility allows you to customize your retirement portfolio to help meet your financial goals and risk tolerance levels.
- Increased control of estate distributions. Employer-sponsored plans typically limit beneficiary designations. With an IRA you retain much more control over the account's distributions from your estate,

which allows you to integrate the IRA with your overall plans. For example, you can name younger family members as beneficiaries to stretch out the required distributions. If you wish to contribute to your favorite charities, an IRA allows you to designate those organizations as beneficiaries. You can also leave your IRA to a trust to help reduce potential estate taxes while distributing the funds among multiple recipients.

## Rollover Techniques

Your circumstances will determine which IRA rollover technique to use. In a full rollover, your employer transfers 100 percent of your retirement plan balance directly to the IRA's custodian. Some employer plans do not permit rollovers,

A partial rollover combines a lump-sum distribution with a rollover and works well in several instances. If you own company stock in your retirement plan and that stock has appreciated in value, the net unrealized appreciation (NUA) distribution strategy may reduce your tax liability when you sell the shares. You instruct the plan to distribute the company stock to a traditional (i.e., non-IRA) brokerage account. At the time of distribution, you'll pay income tax on the average cost of the shares, not their full market value. The difference between your average cost and the market price at the time of distribution is the NUA; when you sell the shares, you'll pay capital gains taxes on the NUA and any subsequent appreciation. The top long-term capital gains rate is 15 percent versus 35 percent for ordinary income, so the tax savings can be substantial.

If you are age 55 or older and are separating from your employer's service, a partial rollover from a 401(k) plan can give you access to additional income. Most distributions before age 59.5 are subject to a 10 percent penalty, but distributions from a 401(k) are penalty-free if you meet the age and separation from service conditions. If there is a chance you'll take withdrawals before 59.5, leave some funds in the 401(k) to cover those withdrawals and roll the balance to an IRA.

## Avoiding Rollover Mistakes

Because rollover amounts can be substantial, it's important to avoid mistakes when setting up the transfer from your employer's plan. One common mistake is instructing the plan administrator to distribute the funds to you instead of a direct transfer to the IRA custodian. If you do that, the administrator will send 20 percent of the distribution to the IRS, even if you subsequently roll the remaining 80 percent into an IRA. A second mistake is naming your estate as the IRA's beneficiary. That designation will expose your IRA to probate and limit your heirs' control over the timing of distributions. Naming specific beneficiaries—individuals, trusts, or charities—avoids those problems.



though, so you'll need to ask your human resources department about the plan's details. For example, defined benefit plans—also known as pension plans—frequently allow only periodic payments to you and your beneficiary. Other plans, however, such as 401(k)s, 403(b)s, 457s, and profit-sharing plans, allow rollovers.

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

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*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

# Retired Fire, Police Celebrate

## ■ Retired association hosts holiday party.

*Photos courtesy Ed Allen, Retired Firefighter*

RETIREES — More than 500 people attended the annual L.A. Retired Fire and Police Association's holiday party, held Dec. 11 at Sportsman's Lodge in Studio City.

This year's event will be held Dec. 17, again at Sportsman's Lodge.

The Club thanks Violet Delgado for her assistance.



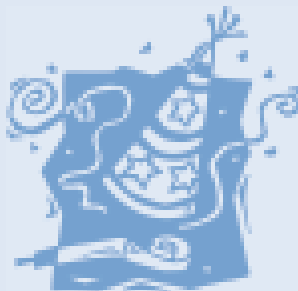
From left: Mr. and Mrs. Art Johnson, and Dan, Kip and Patty Downen.



Jim Chastain, Association President.



Ray Case, Association Director.



Virginia Van Houtte, Association Director.



Will Gartland, Association Director.



Ray Case, Association Director.



Noreen Henderson.



From left: Ken and Carol Brondell, and Kitty and Lyle Hall.



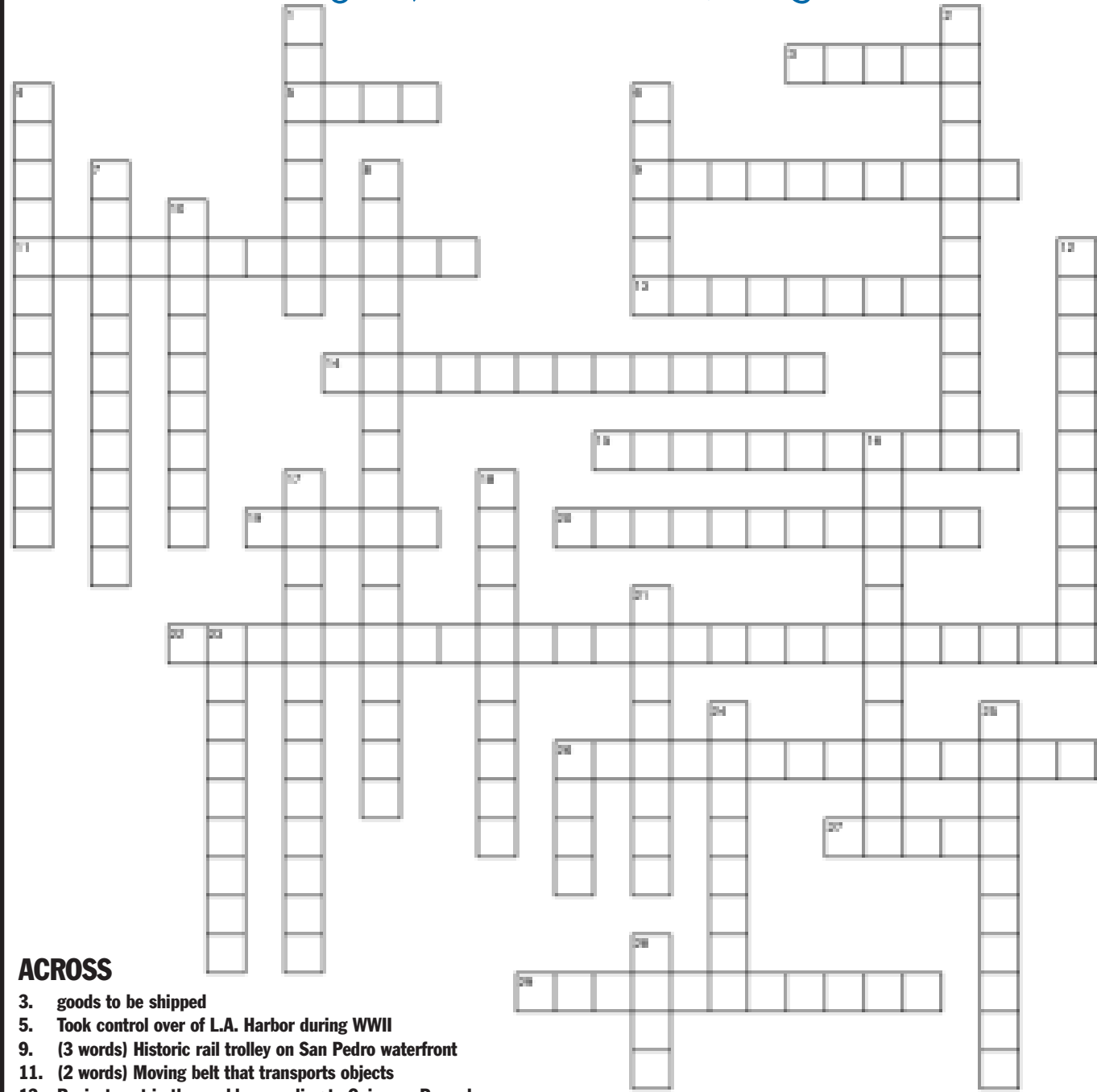
From left: Bob Henderson, Association Director, with Mr. and Mrs. Les Evans and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Morrison.

The Best Years

# The Alive! Crossword Puzzle

Created by Club Events Guru Michelle Moreno

Grab your pencil, and let the fun begin!



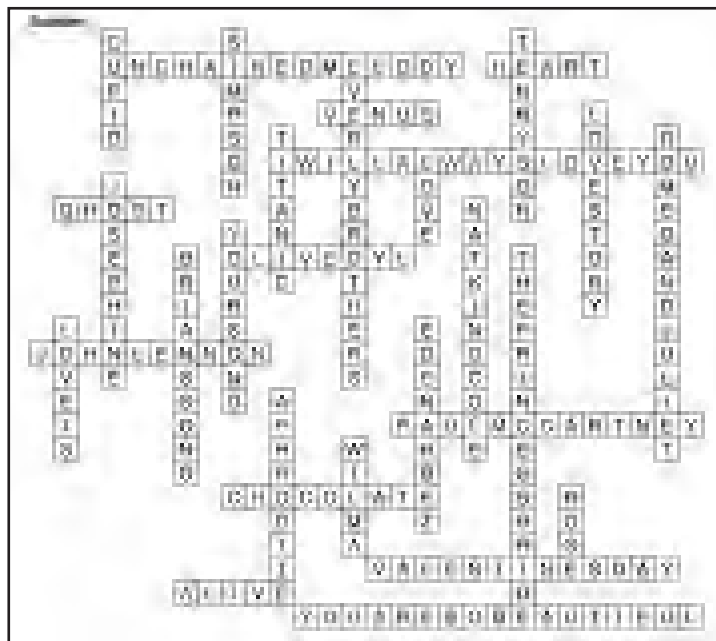
**ACROSS**

- 3. goods to be shipped
- 5. Took control over of L.A. Harbor during WWII
- 9. (3 words) Historic rail trolley on San Pedro waterfront
- 11. (2 words) Moving belt that transports objects
- 13. Busiest port in the world, according to Guinness Records
- 14. (2 words) World's largest shipping line
- 15. (2 words) San Pedro Lighthouse
- 19. Structure on which to receive and discharge cargo
- 20. (3 words) Place where foreign goods are cleared
- 22. (3 words) AMP
- 26. (2 words) First port developer
- 27. Where a ship lies when at anchor
- 29. (3 words) Bahia de los Fumos

**DOWN**

- 1. (2 words) Location of Port of L.A.
- 2. (2 words) Harbor employee and Club Board Member
- 4. (2 words) Discovered Bay of Smokes
- 6. Part of body of water used for anchorage
- 7. (2 words) It's opening in 1914 was important for the port of L.A.
- 8. (3 words) 10-year political battle from 1890-1899
- 10. (2 words) First known American trading ship in San Pedro
- 12. (2 words) Attacked by Kamikaze pilots during WWII
- 16. Currently known as Terminal Island
- 17. Popular Winter boat excursion
- 1. (2 words) March 18th night activity (see Events 411)
- 21. World's largest cruise line
- 23. (2 words) L.A.'s twin port
- 24. Island removed in 1929
- 25. Tower with powerful light
- 26. Harbor town
- 28. Largest port in U.S. in tonnage

**Last Month's Answers**



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:  
*Degrees of Perfection*

*Perfection is defined as being without defects, faultless, expert, complete.*

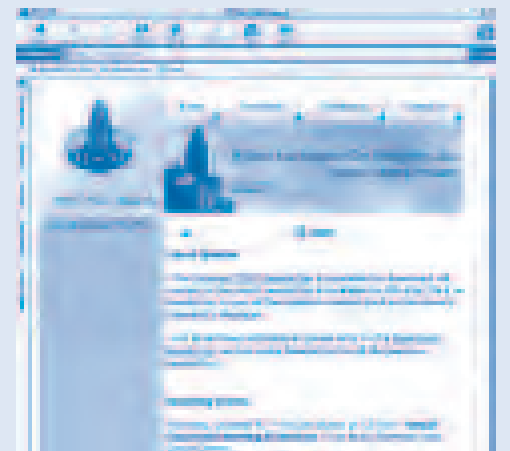
*Realistically, we know that we can never achieve perfection in all areas of our lives and activities.*

*So, we become content with being less than perfect in some areas.*

*Unfortunately, in our contentment, we resent any suggestions for improvement in areas of our imperfection.*

*But, listening to people's suggestions is courteous and respectful and demonstrates a commendable, humble attitude.*

-- 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.