

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

### 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

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



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

### 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.

## Upcoming Events:

- July 14: Desert Refuge for Peace Officers Golf Tournament. Information: Ann, (661) 406-6399 or (213) 202-5487, or e-mail: [abrunzell@msn.com](mailto:abrunzell@msn.com) (all retired peace officers)
- July 24: 9th annual LAFD Invitational Golf Tournament. Call Fire Relief: (213) 380-2900, ext. 14215 or ext. 14265. (LAFD)
- Aug. 10: Annual Picnic, Grace E. Simons Lodge (RLACEI)
- Aug. 12: 19th annual barbecue, sponsored by the Northwest Coeur d'Alene (Idaho) Retired LAPD group. Information: Arnie Moyens, [admoyens@aol.com](mailto:admoyens@aol.com); Gene McCloskey, [mccloskey@adelphia.net](mailto:mccloskey@adelphia.net); or Bud Arce, [roy187@aol.com](mailto:roy187@aol.com) or (208) 762-8155. (LAPD)
- Aug. 26: Shootin' Newton 75th Plus One Year Reunion. Information: Det. Kelle Baitx or Det. Rich Arciniega, Newton Homicide, (323) 846-6556, or Newton Watch Commander, (323) 846-6547. (LAPD)
- Oct. 2: 2nd annual LAFD Historical Society Charity Golf Tournament. Look in the June and July issue of the Grapevine for the application. (LAFD)
- Oct. 12: Annual Meeting and Elections - Van Nuys/ Sherman Oaks Senior Citizen Center - Lunch at noon, meeting at 1 p.m. (RLACEI)
- Dec. 12: Christmas Party, Grace E. Simonds Lodge (RLACEI)



## RLACEI Annual Picnic Aug. 10; 2007 Health Plan Slow to Start

By Phil Skarin, Publicity Chair, RLACEI



### Ed Harding, RLACEI President, reports:

"Our next big event will be our Annual Picnic, scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Aug. 10 at the Grace E. Simmons Lodge, 1025 Elysian Park Dr. Americo Garza, Picnic Chair, and his committee and I will be meeting with George, the owner of Chris and Pitts BBQ to pick a menu for the picnic.

Please call one of the officers on the Retirees Helpline to make reservations for the picnic so we will know how much food to



order. The Fire and Police Pensions retirees association had their picnic there and had more than 300 reservations. If they can call, so can you. Please call!

I just returned from our 28th annual Retirees Golf Tournament at the Alhambra Golf Course. We had 74 golfers. Afterwards we went to the Almansor Court banquet room for an awards luncheon.

Phil Skarin and Tom Stemmock, Tournament Co-Chairmen, presented trophies to the seven winners, plus golf caps from the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.

Prize sponsors also included: ACEBSA, RLACEI, LAFCU (a sleeve of balls for each golfer), The City Employees Club, Bob Okuda, Robert Jacques, Brad Smith, John Powell, Phil Skarin and Tom Stemmock. Bob Wilkinson and I gave out about 30 raffle prizes, which included a \$200 COSTCO gift certificate, eight expensive golf clubs, three great golf bags, and many more prizes. John Hawkins, CEO of the City Employees Club, donated \$50 gift certificates for Shell, Safeway and Lowes.

Phil Skarin and Tom Stemmock, Golf Co-Chairmen, did a great job as usual, and were assisted by Americo Garza and Alice Walder, who efficiently handled registrations; and Bob Okuda and his crew of handicappers.

Special guests at the luncheon included Robert Aguillo Jr., General Manager of LACERS and his assistant, Sally Choi; Lori Kozlowski, Editor of El Pueblo; John Hawkins, President and CEO, City Employees Club of Los Angeles; Robert Larios, Director of Communications; and Arlene Herrero, Member Services Counselor.

I would like to express my condolences to Helen Salgado, our Membership Chair, on the passing of her mother, Josephine, who was 96.

A few months ago, Phil Skarin mentioned in a news article that I had hurt my back. I wish to thank Ed Longley, retired Director of Street Maintenance, and 150 others who called to express their sympathy. Well, two shots relieved the pinched sciatic nerve, and now I'm feeling great. Thanks to all who called.

I met with representatives of the following organizations: Retired Fire and Police Association: Lee Kebler; Robin Welbor and Jame Chastain, President; Retired DWP President Dolores Foley and her husband, Vince; and John Hawkins, President of the City Employees Club. These meetings provide an opportunity to share information to help our respective organizations.

### Legislative Update:

Ken Spiker, our elected commissioner to the LACERS Board of Directors, has expressed his concern that negotiations with our health care providers for services and fees for next year have not begun.

He has instructed the LACERS consultants to bring two reports to the committee: One, the premium cost of proving the current coverage's we now have; and two, the premium cost of adding certain coverages not currently provided.

Ken reports that the providers are not prepared to discuss next year's coverage at this time, as they are still confused with the Medicare Part D program. They are waiting for federal clarification of certain regulations of the new drug program.

Though Ken expresses his disappointment on the lack of progress, he is assured that he will be able to secure contracts in time for 2007 coverage.

Visit [www.rlacei.com](http://www.rlacei.com) to find out the latest retirement news.



# The Best Years



Shopping.

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 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



# Okinawa on the Rise

This is our sixth day on the Diamond Princess, and we are on our way to Okinawa. It is late October, and the weather has turned very nice, with calm seas, no wind, and temperatures in the high 70s. I took advantage of the good weather and spent the day lying around the pool.

When the ship is at sea, there are all kinds of activities available for the passengers. The one we enjoyed the most was the morning trivia contest. We had our team of six players and competed against other teams. I must say that the trivia was much harder than most cruises I've been on. One day we tied for the most correct, but lost in the tiebreaker. Just to give you a taste of the various activities, here is a sample list: a culinary demonstration, a ceramics class, a scavenger hunt, bingo (morning and afternoon), golf, line dancing and the ever-present art auction.

That night was a formal night, so we all got dressed up. I wore my tux and Evelyn wore one of the three different dresses she brought. Usually part of the ritual of formal night is meeting the Captain, but because of the "anytime dining" we were to meet the Captain the next evening, and the set dining passengers would meet him that night. It seemed a waste of time to get dressed up for nothing.

We docked in Naha City, the capital of Okinawa, at 7 a.m. Okinawa is the largest island in the Ryukyu Archipelago, which lies halfway between Taiwan and Japan. In its history, the island has been: an independent kingdom; a tributary state of China; a possession of Japan; a U.S. military possession after World War II; and, since 1972, an integral part of Japan. One of the last battles of World War II was fought here, and the island was left in ruins. The island is a mixture of Ryukyuan, Chinese and Japanese traditions, with a large influence of American culture due to the long U.S. military presence on the island.

The ship offered an Okinawa sightseeing tour, which lasted the whole day, but by the time we got around to booking it they were sold out. Because of the size of our ship, we docked about 30 minutes from Naha City. We (Evelyn, Effie, Pierre and I) decided to do a tour on our own. I asked at the tour desk, and they told me that taxis would be available at dockside to take us into town and the cost would be about \$40. This seemed like a lot, but there were four of us, and that would be only \$10 a person. I really wanted to see the Japanese Imperial Navy Headquarters, which has a

large number of tunnels built into a hillside. We decided to have the taxi take us to the Navy site and then to Kokusai Street, the shopping area. We stood in the taxi line, and when it was our turn for a taxi, I asked what it would cost to go to the Navy Headquarters. He said \$8, to which I asked each, and he said no, for everyone. At that point I knew the Princess tour staff knew less than me about our ports of call.

When he dropped us at the Navy H.Q., he asked if we wanted to be picked up and he said he would be back in an hour and a half, which gave us enough time to tour the tunnels. The tunnels were where the Japanese commander conducted the battle of Okinawa, and the area was very interesting.

Our driver picked us up on time and asked where we wanted to go. We said to the shopping area, and he suggested we go to the Shuri Castle first. The castle was the home of the Ryukyu King and was the political, economic and cultural center of the Ryukyu Islands until 1879, when Okinawa became a prefecture of Japan. As was our luck, today was a special once-a-year ceremony honoring the Ryukyu Kings, and we were able to see it. We also toured the buildings and grounds before our taxi picked us up and drove us to Kokusai Street. It was just a little after noon when he dropped us off and he asked if we would like him to meet us later and drive us back to the ship, which we agreed to.

After a quick rest stop at a large department store, we had lunch. We found a local restaurant where you cooked your food on a hibachi at your table Japanese-style. The cost was about \$12 each, including a couple of beers.

Kokusai Street is about a mile long and the shopping center of the island. The shopping was mostly stalls inside long tunnels the length of the block. We walked along each tunnel until I became separated from the others (I guess I stopped in one of the stalls too long), but it wasn't long before I found them again. We didn't see a lot of bargains, but Evelyn found some sandals that she wanted to buy, and we negotiated for two pairs in dollars and then wanted to pay in yen. That is where the deal fell apart because of the exchange rate. It turned out to be a good thing because we found the same sandals in Vietnam for half the price.

At the set time, our driver picked us up and we drove back to the ship. It was a very

good experience and, after we gave him a very good tip, the whole day of being driven around only cost about \$60, a lot less than any ship tour.

There is a lot of Okinawa that we did not see, and with its good climate and beautiful sand beaches, I think that this island will become a tourist destination once it is more developed.

Late in the afternoon we set sail for Keelung, Taiwan, but we never got there. The winds and seas picked up and it started to rain. The winds reached 50 miles an hour and the seas reached 12 feet. The ship was very stable, and we did not feel the rough waters. Early in the morning before we were to dock in Keelung, the Captain announced that, because of the high winds, we could not dock in the harbor. The direction and velocity of the wind was such that the ship was not powerful enough to dock. The Captain tried

to get us into Hong Kong a day early but could not get approval from the harbor agents. So we spent the next two days sailing to Hong Kong. We were not happy about losing a port, but that is the chance you take on the weather. The ship's staff and crew did a great job keeping us occupied during our extra day at sea.

We ate lunch usually in either the buffet or the grill on the pool deck, though a couple of times we ate in the main dining room. I thought the food in the buffet was very good, but was not so happy about the grill. One day there was a big announcement about having sushi for lunch, and we all were excited. The day came and we just couldn't wait to see what it would be like, but were we disappointed. They laid out a very meager offering of some California rolls and not much else. It just so happens that this was the day the staff sent out comments cards, and Evelyn wrote about how disappointed she was about the sushi. After we sent it off we didn't think much about it because I figured they get read then filed in the circular file. About three days later, we returned to our cabin and found a plate of chocolate-covered strawberries and a hand-written note from the dining room manager, thanking Evelyn for her comments. I thought that was a classy thing to do, and it made us a fan of the dining room manager.

I'll pick up next month with our stops in Hong Kong and Vietnam.



With our taxi driver.



Hal and Evelyn at the Shuri Castle.

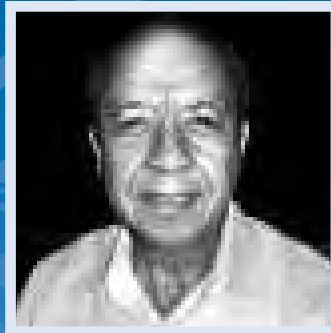


Effie, Evelyn and Pierre in a Navy tunnel.

# Retiree Question of the Month

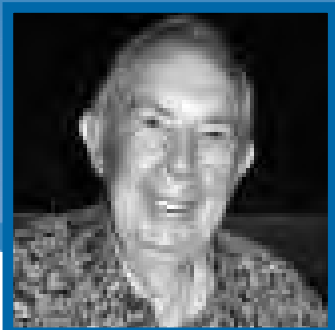
Alive! asked retirees...

## What do you remember most about the Fourth of July when you were a kid?



"I remember the neighborhood picnics in Huntington, Tenn. These picnics sort of became a homecoming of sorts where we would see a lot of old friends."

— Jerry Bardwell, RLACEI Treasurer



"I grew up in Universal City, and I remember setting off fireworks in the Hollywood Hills."

— Phil Skarin, RLACEI Publicity Chairman and Alive! columnist



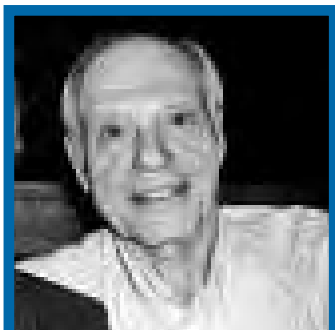
"When I was around 10 in Ansely, Neb., I remember the carnival coming into town and then going to see the fireworks at night."

— Bob Wilkinson, RLACEI Committee Chairperson



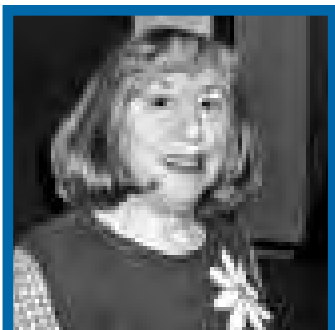
"I grew up in San José. I remember spending 50 cents on 'cherry bombs' and zebra fireworks."

— Henry Gervais, Public Works Engineering, retired in 1997



"I grew up in Manes, Mo., and I remember spending all of my 25-cent allowance on the Fourth of July. I spent five cents on a coke, five cents on a hot dog and five cents on an ice cream, and the remainder would be devoted to fireworks."

— Helena Gervais



"We'd go to the beach, Coney Island, to watch the fireworks."

— Norma Rosen



"As teenagers, in Milwaukee, Wisc., I remember setting off 'cherry bombs' in the local taverns."

— Leo Rosen



"I grew up in Toledo, Ohio, and I remember playing baseball then going to a barbecue. After that we'd watch a parade and then fireworks."

— Jack Mathews, RLACEI Chairman



"On the Fourth of July, I was jumping roofs in Harlem. I used to live on 100th Street between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues, which is where I raised pigeons and then flew them."

— Tony Alvarez



### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: A Worthy Goal

*Our goal in life should be to follow a middle path, taking the ups and downs in a balanced way, look inward, and love and accept ourselves, just as we are worthy, respected children of God.*

— Phil Skarin, RLACEI

### RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

About 200 friends of **Jack Mathews** helped him celebrate his 80th birthday April 28 at the South End Racquet Club. Other Board members attending included **Hal Danowitz**, **Neil Ricci** and **Phil Skarin**, plus many LAFCU staff members.

**Neil and Teresa Denering** will celebrate their 55th anniversary Aug. 4.

The City of L.A. has a new program where participating households will split the cost of sidewalk repairs. 535 agreed, but 137 of them were in Councilman Rosendahl's district, thanks to the effort of **George Wolfberg**, President of the Santa Monica Canyon Civic Association.

**Phil Skarin** called Street Services about the deteriorating condition of his street in Van Nuys. Within a few days, a City employee came to inspect the street and observed Phil's wife, **Miriam**, digging up weeds in the garden and said to her, "Why don't you get Phil to help you do that."

**Gil Garnas** and **Irving Leemon** recently wrote letters to the editor of the L.A. Daily News. Their comments reflect an intelligent understanding of City government.

**If you have any news about a retiree that you would like to share, or constructive comments about this column, send them to:**  
**Phil Skarin**  
5301 Norwich Ave.  
Van Nuys, CA 91411-3910  
or phone (818) 784-0130.

## Poetry Contest

The 11th Annual Retirees Poetry Contest deadline is Oct. 1. Send your typed entry to Phil Skarin. Separate categories for members and spouses. Everyone will win a prize.



### 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, health care, 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  
jerry.t.cohen@wellsfargo.com

\*Must be at least 62 years old. Call for more detailed program information only. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is a division of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. ©2006 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. 034224 07/06



The Best Years



From left: Tom Stemnock, Chris Stemnock, Lilly Esparza and Ed Harding.



From left: Robert Aguillo, LACERS; Sally Choi, LACERS; Hal Danowitz, Controller; and Neil Ricci, Street Maintenance.

# RLACEI Golf Tourney



From left: Phil Skarin, Joe Nagano and Archie Estrada.

■ Retirees Assn. hosted 28th annual summer tournament.

Photos by Robert Larios, Director of Communications and Marketing

RLACEI — The Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) held its 28th annual golf tournament June 3 at the Alhambra Municipal Golf Course. The tournament was open to retired and active employees and friends. The Club thanks Ed Harding and Phil Skarin for their assistance.

## WINNERS LIST

Member, men low gross (trophy):  
75, Sho Fukuma

Member, men, low net (trophy):  
59, Joe Nagano

Member, ladies, low net (trophy):  
95, Lilly Esparza

All ladies, low gross (trophy):  
107 Chris Stemnock

Guest, men, low gross (trophy):  
75 Leon Gottlieb

Guest, men, low net (trophy):  
59 Max Cardenas

Member, men second low net, (trophy):  
Stephen Hill

All golfers, low gross front 9 (\$20):  
37 Bob Rodgers and Dick Hovious

All golfers, low gross back 9 (\$20):  
36 Harry Yamatsuka

Closest to pin (three golf balls each):

- 7th hole: Gail Draper
- 8th hole: Al Tsuyuki
- 11th hole: Robert Jacques
- 13th hole: Earl Gales
- 15th hole: Walt Naydo

Longest drive, second hole (three golf balls each):

- Men: Kevin Rodriguez
- Ladies: Genevieve Briasco

High gross, Men (three golf balls):  
Neil Ricci

High gross, Ladies (three golf balls):  
Sally Choi



From left: Ezio Briasco, Retired, Building and Safety; Genevieve Briasco; Earl Gales, LAX; and Charles Clement, Rec and Parks.



From left: Gail Draper, Retired, LAPD; Jim Hamilton, Retired, LAPD; Dennis Frady, Retired, ITA; and Guy Bourgeois, LAPD.



From left: Jack Mathews; Stan Horowitz; Tom Moutes, LACERS; and Larry Miller, Retired, Sanitation.



From left: Leroy Plummer, Convention Center; Kevin Rodriguez, Convention Center; Art Rios, Convention Center; and William Jones.



From left: Adam Birkenbach, Retired, Harbor; Sheldon Russel; James Slayden; and Paul Bella.



From left: Tom Stemnock, Chris Stemnock, Bob Rodgers and Doug Dow.

# DWP Retirees Have Fun

■ DWP Retirees Assn. hosted picnic.

Photos by Robert Larios, Club Director of Communications and Marketing

DWP RETIREES ASSN. — On June 3, the DWP Retirees Assn. hosted its 53rd annual picnic. The picnic was held at Whittier Narrows at the Meadows.

The event is an annual gathering and reunion for the DWP retirees and their families.

The Club thanks Dolores and Vince Foley for inviting us along!



From left: Marcie and George Irigoyen, 30 years.



From left: Club CEO John Hawkins with his son, Isaiah, and Delia Romoer, 32 years.



From left: Barbara and John Irigoyen, 22 years.



From left: Frank Mageno, new Club Member, 35 years, and Joe Piper, 30 years.



Henry Jingle, retired since 1998.



From left: Elaine Nelson, 32 years, and Larry Young, 23 years.



From left: Stan Smith, 28 years, with Ann Duva and Bruno Rozanski, 25 years.



From left: Lee Spencer, 30 years, and his wife, Marian.



From left: Connie Mack Laskey, 31 years, and Anna Marie Laskey, DWP Credit Union, 34 years.



From left: Crystal, 18 years, and Thomas Lucier, 28 years.