

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



**Robin J. Welborn, 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  
Contact him: (800) 678-4145 Ext. 703 or via E-mail: postmaster@rlacei.com

### Change of Address?

If you change your address, notify Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, at (800) 678-4145 Ext. 713, 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 (800) 678-4145 Ext. 709.

## RLACEI: Summer, Fall Full Of RLACEI Events



By Phil Skarin,  
RLACEI Publicity Chair

### President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding  
those who called in advance to make reservations for the luncheon. It sure makes it easier to order the correct number of meals.

"Our next big event is our 29th annual Retirees Invitational Golf Tournament Wednesday, June 6, at the Alhambra Golf Course. Phil Skarin and Tom Stemnock do a great job in organizing this event. Americo Garza handles an efficient registration team at 7 a.m., and Bob Okuda and his handicapping team figures the handicaps and the winners. Bob's system gives everyone a chance

"Following the golf, we have an awards luncheon in the adjacent Almansor Court banquet room. Many valuable raffle prizes are passed out thanks to these generous sponsors: LAFCU, ACEBSA, The City Employees Club, RLACEI and several individuals. Additional sponsors are welcome. Call Phil Skarin or Tom Stemnock.

"Our annual picnic will be Thursday, Aug. 9 at 11:30 a.m. at the Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park. Chris & Pitt's Barbeque Restaurants will provide a delicious meal, and Ron Black will provide music. Call one of the officers on the Retirees Help-Lines a week ahead for reservations. You may bring one guest.

"Please note that we now have a toll-free 800 number. You can call any of our officers from anywhere in the U.S.A.

"Our annual Corporation Meeting and Elections will be at the Van

Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center Thursday, Oct. 11. We will elect six directors to our Executive Board. If you want to be considered for an office now, or in the future, send a resume of your qualifications to Nominating Chair, Neil Ricci, at 458 21st Place, Santa Monica, CA 90402

### Ken Spiker, our elected Commissioner to the LACERS Board of Administration, reports:

"The value of our Retirement Fund, as of Feb. 28, was \$10,494 billion. There are 14,966 retirees as of March 31 with an average monthly allowance of \$2,600.

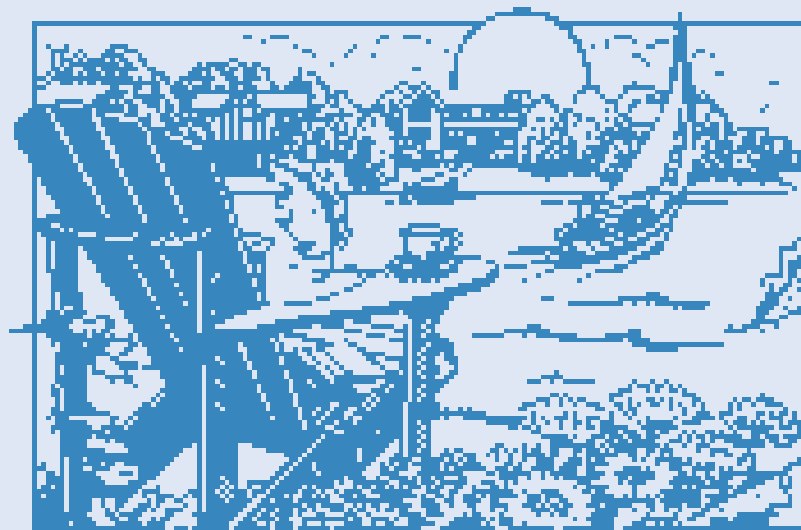
"The annual cost of living was 4.3 percent as approved by the LACERS Board, and therefore retirement checks will increase by 3 percent beginning with the July 2007 checks, and 1.3 percent will be banked for future use when needed.

"The Mayor and City Council have approved a charter amendment to allow retired members of the Fire and Police Pension Plan to purchase, at their own

expense, a survivor benefit for a spouse (or domestic partner) who they married after retirement. The amendment will be presented to the electorate at the next Citywide election.

"I intend to schedule a similar proposal for the LACERS Benefits Committee, which I chair, and if approved ask the full Board for approval. If approved, it would be self-funded through a reduction of his or her monthly retirement checks. The program would be cost-neutral to the LACERS fund and would require mayoral and City Council approval. It is not a charter change, so there is no need for a vote by the electorate." The LACERS Board has approved and sent to the mayor and City Council the following benefit increases for their consideration and action:

- Increase the current burial allowance from \$2,500 to \$5,000.
- Provide a dental subsidy for surviving spouses and domestic partners.
- Provide Medicare Part B reimbursement to surviving spouses and domestic partners."



## Upcoming Events:

- June 6: RLACEI Golf Tournament
- June 6: Fire and Police Pensions Annual Picnic and Barbecue
- Aug. 9: RLACEI Picnic
- Oct. 11: RLACEI Annual Corporation Meeting and Elections
- Dec. 6: RLACEI Christmas Party

### RLACEI Website

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit the RLACEI Website at www.rlacei.com to find the latest retirement news. If you find it helpful, or have suggestions for improvement, call Hall at (800) 678-4145 Ext. 707.

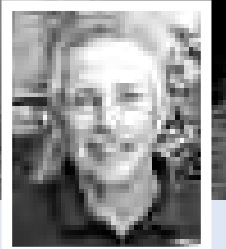
### Contact LACERS

The Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System is at 360 E. Second Street, second floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Phone (213) 473-7200 or (800) 779-8328. Contact them to arrange direct deposit of your retirement checks, change your tax withholding or beneficiary, or for questions about your health plans.

# The Best Years



Milford Sound.

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 and Retiree Helplines: (800) 678-4145**

• Edward Harding	Ext. 703
• Phil Skarin	Ext. 709
• Robert Wilkinson	Ext. 704
• Jerry Bardwell	Ext. 706
• Harold Danowitz	Ext. 707
• Jack Mathews	Ext. 712
• Helen Salgado (membership)	Ext. 713
• Americo Garza	Ext. 710
• Neil Ricci	Ext. 714

**DWP Retirement Plan Office:** (213) 367-1722

## RLACEI:

### Officers for 2007

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

### Committee Chairpersons for 2007

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, Nominating  
Phil Skarin, Parliamentarian

### Directors

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



# Backbreaking Fun in New Zealand

■ In Part 3 of Hal's cruise to New Zealand, the adventure fells him for a spell.

Our travel group -- Myrna and Don, Effie and Pierre, and Evelyn and I -- took a 14-day cruise of Australia and New Zealand on board the Holland America's *MS Statendam*. The next two days were at sea, sailing to Milford Sound in the South Island of New Zealand.

The seas continued to be very rough, and after breakfast in the Lido I found a quiet place in one of the lounges and used the computer to check my e-mail. After that I went back to the cabin to write in my trip log. While I was in the cabin I began to have back spasms. I have had back problems before, but nothing like this. I rested in the cabin the rest of the day, and by dinnertime I felt good enough to go to the dining room. After a very bad night, I decided to see the ship's doctor. He gave me some muscle relaxers, and I continued to rest in the cabin the rest of the day. I was still having a difficult time walking, but I could get around. Our room steward was great; he kept bringing me ice for my back. Luckily we had two more days at sea and I hoped to get better for our first port in New Zealand: Dunedin. I saw the doctor twice and was billed about \$200 for the visits and medication. I requested reimbursement from Kaiser when we returned and received a check for the full amount.

Being cabin-bound was boring, but they had movies on the TV, and the room service was good. I was able to get a good night's sleep and awoke as we were entering Milford Sound. It rains 280 days a year in this part of New Zealand, but today the sun was out and the temperature in the low 70s. Our on-board guide kept reminding us how lucky we were with the weather.

New Zealand is a country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean comprising two large islands (the North Island and the South Island) and numerous smaller islands. It is 1,250 miles from Australia across the Tasman Sea. New Zealand was the last land parcel on Earth (other than Antarctica) to be colonized by human beings. The population of 4.2 million is principally of European descent, with the indigenous Maori being the largest minority. The capital is Wellington, and Auckland is the largest city. Queen Elizabeth II is head of state, but has no real power. Political power is held by the democratically elected Parliament under the leadership of the Prime Minister. New Zealand eliminated the penny and nickel last July, so prices are either rounded up or down to the nearest dime.



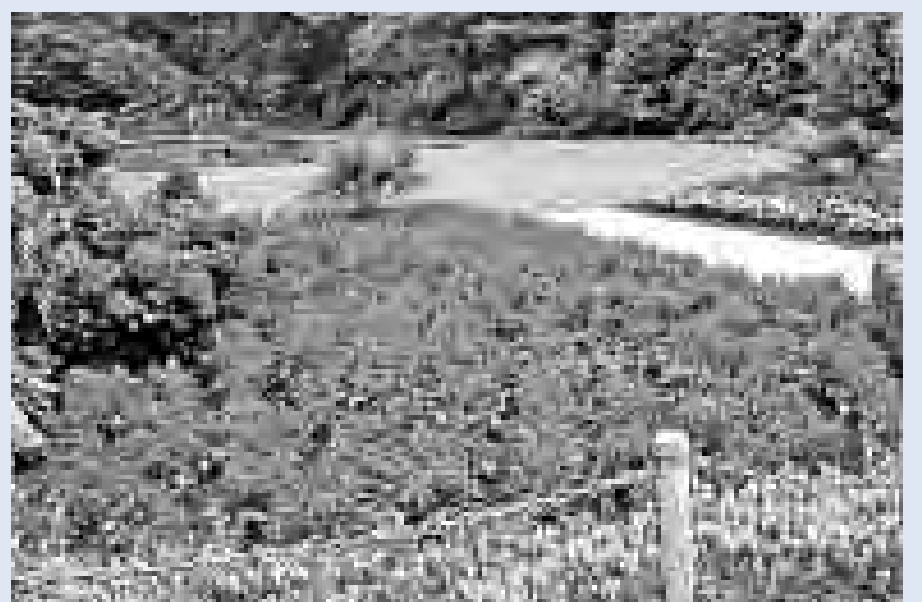
Our guide in Christchurch.

Milford Sound is the most dramatic of the South Island's glacially carved fjords. We saw magnificent scenery with waterfalls cascading from cataracts all along its length. The area is covered with green rain forests and lofty peaks that jut straight up from the sea. The 10-mile round trip in the sound took about two hours. We also sailed into Doubtful Sound and Dusky Sound, and at about 5 p.m.

we headed toward Dunedin.

While we were sailing from Burnie to Dunedin, immigration and custom officials from New Zealand were aboard to clear us for visiting New Zealand. This allowed us to get off at each port and also to get off at our final destination, Auckland, without clearing customs or immigrations each time.

We docked at Port Chalmers, the deep-sea



Mar Valle Park in Christchurch.



harbor for Dunedin. The first permanent European settlers arrived here in 1848. Gold was discovered in 1861, which assured the growth of the area. Today, Dunedin is predominantly a site of higher education, and there are about 12,000 students attending various schools here; this represents about 10 percent of Dunedin's population of 113,000. Another very evident feature is Dunedin's distinct Scottishness – the name is Scottish Gaelic for Edinburgh.

weather was too good for the birds. I was still nursing my back, so after dinner I decided to skip the evening show. During the night the seas became calm, and in the morning we awoke in Christchurch. Christchurch, with a population of 308,000, is often described as the most English of the New Zealand cities. The first Europeans in Christchurch began building huts along the Avon River in 1851, but it was not until 1862 that it was incorporated as a city. The name Christchurch comes from Christ Church College at Oxford, as one of the lead-



The "steepest street in the world," Baldwin Street in Dunedin.

Port Chalmers is about 20 minutes from Dunedin, and the ship provided a shuttle bus for \$10US round-trip to take us into town. The shuttle bus dropped us off at the Visitor Center in the Octagon Plaza in the center of town. We booked a city highlights "hop on hop off" bus tour for \$20NZ each. It was a one hour bus ride around Dunedin with stops at local attractions. We stopped at Baldwin Street, billed as the steepest street in the world; the railway station; and the Cadbury Chocolate factory, where we took a tour of the facilities. We were only a short ways from the Octagon and we walked back to the Visitor Center. I was walking okay, but I wanted to buy a walking stick. First we decided to have lunch at the Lemon Café, where we had great seafood chowder and mussels and very good local beer. After lunch we walked around the shopping area until I finally found a nice walking stick.

The weather turned nice, with some sunshine and the temperature in the low 60s, but no rain. We took the shuttle back to the ship and hung out in the Crows Nest as the ship lifted anchor, and we sailed out to the open sea. This area is the home to many sea birds, and we hoped to see a Royal Albatross, but the

ers of the early settlers was educated there.

We actually docked at Port Lyttelton, a 30-minute ride to Christchurch by the shuttle bus (\$10US). The shuttle bus dropped us off by the Tourist Information Center, but we were too late to get the one-hour bus tour. I spotted a taxi that could hold six passengers and asked the driver if she could give us a tour of the city. It was one-hour tour for \$60NZ and it turned out great. Our first stop was not on the regular bus tour, and we felt very fortunate to get to see the 9/11 Memorial established by the New Zealand firefighters who went to New York to assist in the recovery effort. The memorial includes girders from the Twin Towers.

Christchurch has a lot of open green space, and one of the best is "Mona Vale," which was once a private estate that was saved from development and turned into a beautiful park. Our driver dropped us back at the central plaza and we walked over to the flea market to see if we could find local items to take home. The three husbands waited patiently while the wives looked for bargains.

After a quick lunch we took the shuttle back to the ship.

Next month we will continue our trip.



Hal at the Cadbury Factory.



Waiting for the shoppers (their wives) in Christchurch.

## RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

**RLACEI Member News:** Ken Kochakji has just completed the L.A. Marathon for the 16th time! When he was working as a Traffic Control Officer at previous marathons, he caught the running bug. After he retired, he married Ann five years ago. They enjoy taking cruises.

**John and Marguerite Shadle** will celebrate their 61st wedding anniversary June 22. Their secret is to always listen attentively to whatever the other is saying.

**Jay Sloan**, past ACEBSA President, and his wife, Sharon, both retirees from Rec and Parks, have been enjoying their retirement on cruises and traveling. They will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary June 6 with a cruise to Alaska. Sharon says, "We enjoy reading the Retirees' Review."

**Colleen Patton** writes, "I enjoy the updated info you give us. Good job!"

**Carol Young** writes, "Keep up the good work. I enjoy the columns and poetry."

**Esther Kosche** writes, "I have been retired for 30 years. I have joined a weekly discussion group at the Valley Storefront in North Hollywood. We discuss the good and the bad parts of our lives. Phil, I enjoy your input."

**Richard McIntosh** writes, "We moved to McDonough, Ga., about a year ago to be near the children and grandchildren. We are really enjoying being near them."

**Wayne Peterson** writes, "We have spent nine Julys in Yosemite, volunteering for the month, but had to give it up. We gave our motor home to our son in Salt Lake City. They have four children. We have been married 54 years and have nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Thank you for all you do."

**If you move**, notify Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, at 8372 Arnett Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647.

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

**If you have news** about a retiree that you'd like to share, send it to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411.



### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: *Second Chances*

*A runner, if he "jumps the gun,"  
Is given a second chance to start again.*

*In life we don't always get  
a second chance to correct mistakes, or undo wrongs.*

*Today is a good time to  
Examine our lives to see if  
There is still time for a  
Second chance to keep some unfulfilled promises,  
Resolve old grudges,  
Seek forgiveness for wrongdoings, or to  
Show more love to your neighbor.*

*Then after cleaning up any of the  
Leftovers, you can begin tomorrow with a clean slate.*

- Phil Skarin

## RLACEI's Toll-Free Number

RLACEI — The Retired Los Angeles City Employees Inc. group has established a new toll-free helpline number that can be accessed free of charge throughout the United States.

**The number is: (800) 678-4145**

Call the Helpline to reach the officers of RLACEI. For information on problems, activities, meetings or membership, call the helpline. Each officer's extension is listed.

Edward Harding x703	Jack Matthews x712	Americo Garza x710
Harold Danowitz x707	Robert Wilkinson x704	Neil Ricci x714
Phil Skarin x709	Jerry Bardwell x706	Helen Salgado x713

# Retiree Question of the Month

Alive! asked retirees...

## What's your favorite See's candy?

# The Best Years



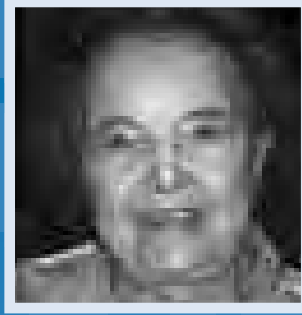
"The nuts and chews!"  
—Ken Kochakji, retired in 2000 from Transportation



"Peanut Brittle for me. By the way, do you have any now to share?"  
—Robert Perry, Retired, Sanitation, 31.5 years of service



"All of them!"  
—John Shadle



"Dark chocolate-covered cherries."  
—Trudy Kaye



"All dark chocolates."  
—Mico Rousso, Retired, Engineering, 28 years of service



"Pecan turtles with dark chocolate."  
—Charlie Lavendar, Retired in 1990 from Public Works



"Strawberries and cream."  
—Fred Hoepfner, retired in 1996 from Public Works



"The one with marshmallows and caramel."  
—Armando Flores, Retired, Building and Safety



"Marzipan."  
—Ella Garza, wife of Americo Garza

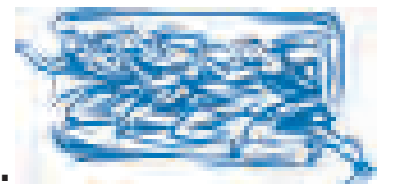


"Anything with the creamy fillings."  
—Ted Lerchenmuller, Retired, 31.5 years of service, Contract Administration



Ken Kochakji completes his 16th LA Marathon in March.

# Retiree Runner



■ Ken Kochakji, Retired Traffic Officer, completes his 16th LA Marathon.

RETIREES — Sixty-four-year-old Ken Kochakji, Retired Traffic Officer, Transportation, completed his 16th Los Angeles Marathon March 2.

"I can't tell you how inspired I was, seeing you guys and hearing your wild cheers and I crossed

the finish line," he told his family when they gathered after the race at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel.

"It was real cool meeting some of my old coworkers, who were doing traffic control at the

Marathon," he told *Alive!* "Thanks for the clearing the way, dudes!"

Congratulations, Ken. We look forward to your report on your 17th marathon next year.



Retired Traffic Officer Ken Kochakji, runner extraordinaire.



The family of Ken Kochakji congratulates him after the race at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel. Pictured, from left, are Ken's brother, Bob; Ken's wife, Ann; his cousin, Lorraine; his sister-in-law, Anne; Ken; his brother, Gary; and his sister, Christine.



Armando Flores, Retired, 40 years of service, Building and Safety.



Tom Pelton, Retired, 28 years of service, LAPD.



Wilma Reebe, Retired, 46 years of service, LAPD, with her daughter, René O'Maly on the left.



Frank Pincherli, retired, 37.5 years of service, Contract Administration.



Ted Lerchenmuller, retired, 31.5 years of service, Contract Administration.



Leroy Richards, retired, 37 years of service, Sanitation.



Mico Rouso, retired, Engineering, 28 years of service.



Robert Perry, retired, Sanitation, 31.5 years of service.



Committee Chairperson Tom Stenrock reminds meeting attendees about the upcoming RLACEI golf tournament on June 6.

# RLACEI Spring Meeting

■ Retirees group has fun at get-together.

*Photos by Club staff photographer*

RLACEI — The Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) held its annual spring meeting April 12 at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center. As always, there was much catching up, information-sharing, socializing and a good lunch. Thanks to the RLACEI board for inviting the Club to their meeting.



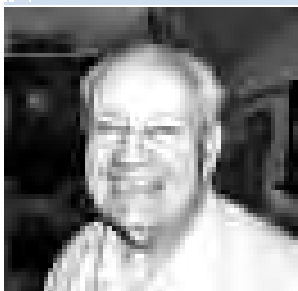
RLACEI Second Vice President, Ken Spiker, delivers his Legislative Update.



Ed Harding, RLACEI President.



Allison Chung, Business Development/Marketing Associate, representing the Los Angeles Federal Credit Union, was in attendance.



Tony Alvarez.



Americo Garza.



Phil Skarin.



John Shadle.



Trudy and Joe Kaye. Trudy retired from City Planning in 1990.



Art Minazzoli, retired from Public Works in 1994.



Quentell Webb, retired from Public Works in 1989.



Charlie Lavendar, retired from Public Works in 1990.



Norma Rosen.



Leo Rosen and his son, Jack.



Joel Rosen, son of Norma and Leo Rosen.



Martha Harding, wife of E Harding, and Ella Garza, wife of Americo Garza.



Ken Kochakji, retired from Transportation in 2000.



Cliff Rich, retired from Transportation in 2006.



Fred Hoepfner, retired from Public Works/Engineering in 1996.



Joe Etheridge, Retired in 1993 from Airports.