

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: Changes Could Affect Spouses, Funeral Expenses



By Phil Skarin,  
RLACEI Publicity Chair

### President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"My directors and I were very disappointed in the turnout at the April 12 General Meeting at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center. Only 75 attended, which was the smallest group since we first started furnishing a free lunch to our Retirees. We had about 30 door prizes, which meant that almost half of the attendees walked off with either cash or a gift certificate.

"I never have to worry about getting

enough golfers to come out for our Golf Tournament, which is coming up Wed., June 6, at the Alhambra Municipal Golf Course. Phil Skarin and Tom Stemnock do such a fabulous job of getting golfers to come out for a great day on the course, followed by a great lunch at the Almansor Court Banquet Room. There will be many awards and door prizes. If you have been asleep or out of town and haven't sent in an entry, call Skarin and he may be able to squeeze you in.

"On May 4, I wrote to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa regarding an administrative code amendment to the funeral expense allowance for retirees. Since the mayor is the chairperson of the Executive

Employees Relations Committee, we are requesting that his Committee consider increasing the allowance from \$2,500 to \$5,000, and that a representative of RLACEI is authorized to address the committee on this issue.

"Don't forget our great picnic on Thursday, Aug. 9, at the Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park. Chris & Pitts will again serve a great lunch, and there will be entertainment and door prizes.

"It is my sorrow to report the passing of June Grose, past president and secretary of RLACEI. She was also known for her award winning rose garden."

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

"The Benefits Committee and the Board has unanimously approved a new benefit for retiree members.

"The change would permit a retired member to add a spouse or domestic partner to their retirement allowance plan after retirement.

"The mayor and City Council have already approved a similar plan for retired police officers and firemen. In their case, an approved charter change is required before implementation. In the

case for other City retirees, only an administrative code change is necessary.

"The new benefit will be self-funded at no cost to the retirement fund or City treasury. The plan will be expensive, but would allow those who wish to use it to fund a retirement continuance for their designee.

"The LACERS Board of Administration will adopt rules to administer the program and determine the cost to join."



## Upcoming Events:

- June 6: RLACEI Golf Tournament at Alhambra Municipal Golf Course
- Aug. 9: RLACEI Picnic at Grace E. Simons Lodge
- Oct. 11: RLACEI Annual Meeting and Elections at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center
- Dec. 6: RLACEI Christmas Party at the Grace E. Simons Lodge.

Please call one of the RLACEI officers for reservations for each event.

### RLACEI Website

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit the RLACEI Website at [www.rlacei.com](http://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

## ADVENTURES with HAL!



Picton Harbor.

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



## Wine But No Wind in Wellington

### ■ Hal's cruise Down Under continues.

Our travel group, Myrna and Don, Effie and Pierre, and Evelyn and I are on a 14-day cruise of Australia and New Zealand on board Holland-America's *MS Statendam*.

Yesterday, we sailed from Christchurch, New Zealand, and this morning, the 10th day of our cruise, we docked in Picton, New Zealand. Picton, the ferry port for the South Island, is a small town of about 4,000. I had booked a wine tour of the area, as the Marlborough area is the largest wine-producing region in New Zealand. The ship docked within walking distance of the center of town and, while the ladies decided they needed the exercise and walked into town, the gentlemen

age areas. We then had a tasting, which most everyone liked. The wines are sold in the United States under the label of Brancott Winery.

The weather started out overcast, but by the time we headed back to the ship the sun was shining, and it was very pleasant. That evening's dinner was a barbecue on the Lido Deck. It was a nice change from the dining room.

The show that evening featured a very good singer, Laura Compton, and we finished the evening by listening to karaoke in the Crow's Nest.

We sailed from Picton, South Island, in the

early evening, and three hours later we docked for the night in Wellington, North Island. The dock area has no nighttime security, so the gangway was not opened until 7 a.m.

Wellington, the second largest city and capital of New Zealand, has a regional population of 400,000, and 150,000 in the city itself. It is surrounded by a beautiful harbor with picturesque buildings up steep hills.

The ship docked about a mile from town, and it was an easy walk into town (or you could take the shuttle bus for the usual \$15NZ). There were a number of tour guides hanging around the gangway, and I asked if we could get a van for a tour. We booked a taxi for a two-hour tour for \$140NZ. If you consider that the shuttle would cost \$30NZ per person round trip, we got a bargain for our group.

We started our tour by going to the highest point, Brooklyn Hill, to see a wind turbine that are used to generate electricity for the city. The city's nickname is "Windy Wellington," and they take advantage of the wind with the turbines. There was no wind today, and we had a great view of the city and harbor areas. We drove back to the government area and stopped to see the Parliament buildings. We stopped at Old St Paul's, the former Cathedral Church. The foundation stone was laid in 1865, the year after



Old St. Paul's in Wellington.

Wellington became the capital of New Zealand. In 1954, Old St. Paul's was replaced by a new and larger cathedral, and the old one was scheduled to be demolished. After 12 years of debate, the building was taken over by the government and is now nondenominational and used extensively for weddings, concerts and cultural events. Inside the church are the flags of the United States and of the Second Marine Corps Division, which was stationed in the Wellington area during World War II, and was presented to the church when the U.S. troops left New Zealand.

We finished our tour by driving around the harbor area and the old warehouses that Peter Jackson uses for a film studio. We even saw a mockup of *King Kong*, another film he directed (the recent remake, of course, not the original).

Our guide dropped us off in the center of town, and Myrna and Don walked back to the ship. Effie, Pierre, Evelyn and I decided to do a little more sightseeing. First we walked to the closest Starbucks so Evelyn could buy a mug. We then took the cable car to the botanical gardens. We had a great view



Evelyn in Wellington.



Art Deco style in Napier.

took the free shuttle bus. We met our guide, Nigel, at the information center and started with a drive around the surrounding area. The town sits at the end of Queen Charlotte Sound and reminded me of a small fishing village. The area has a number of hiking trails, called tracks, and attracts a large number of backpackers.

As it was still early in the day, we stopped at the Aviation Heritage Center in Omaka, which has one of the largest private collections of World War I aircraft and artifacts. The museum, called the Knights of the Sky and which opened in December 2006, is funded by Peter Jackson, the director of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and other major works. The museum has a very impressive collection of planes and dioramas.

We had a very good lunch at the Montana Winery before we took the tour. It wasn't the harvest time, so the winery had little activity, but we could self-tour the bottling and stor-

## ADVENTURES with HAL!

from the top and we walked around the gardens for a bit. Returning to street level, we had lunch at a Japanese fast-food restaurant. After lunch, we did some souvenir shopping and ended up in the harbor area of Queens Wharf and found the Wellington City Museum. We toured the museum, which provided a good history of the city.

We took a taxi back to the ship, and Evelyn had time to play Bingo before dinner. That evening's entertainment was a pianist, Jon Darsk, who was excellent. Overall I would give Holland-America high marks for their entertainment and activities provided by the cruise staff.

In the morning we docked in Napier, a small port city, halfway up the west coast of the North Island in Hawke's Bay. It is an important manufacturing and fishing center and serves as an exporting point for wool, processed meat and dairy products. The town was founded in 1856 and is named for Sir Charles Napier, a British official in India. The town was destroyed by a 1931 earthquake that measured 7.9 on the Richter scale. Napier and its neighbor, Hastings, were rebuilt in art deco and Spanish mission style. The art deco architecture and colorful palate are clearly visible in the central business district today.

I booked a tour on the Internet, and our guide, Hamish, picked us up at the pier. We really were lucky to have gotten Hamish, as his family has been in the area for a long time. Besides running a small tour agency, he also has vineyards, apple orchards and sheep.

Hamish gave us a quick tour of the town, and we stopped a wholesale wool outlet. We picked up a few items of wool, and it was nice to get there before the tour buses. We stopped to see a few of the art deco building and then drove to the highest lookout point for a great view of the area. The weather was the best yet, sunny, no wind and temperature in the mid-70s.

Hawke's Bay is another large wine growing area, and we stopped at the Selini Winery for lunch. We ordered a sampler plate, and we were very pleased with our choice. I had a wonderful selection of local cheeses, meats, fruits and breads. Being at a winery, I had to have a cold beer with my lunch.

One of the things that we wanted to see was sheep shearing, and I had specifically requested that when I made the reservation with Hamish. As it turned out, Hamish's brother owns a sheep ranch, so after lunch we stopped there and Hamish changed into his sheep shearing clothes and sheared three sheep for us. Evelyn was the only one brave enough to give the shearing a try.

After the shearing, we stopped at the area's oldest winery, Mission Estates, for a short tasting. The winery has a large open field, and each year they put on a concert. Last year

it was Rod Stewart and there were 28,000 people in attendance. It's a little like the Hollywood Bowl, with festival seating, but only one performance.

As we drove back to the ship, we realized we had circled the whole area. Napier and the surrounding area reminded us of Santa Barbara near the coast and Napa Valley when we were inland. This was our favorite stop in New Zealand.

Tonight, after dinner there was a special dessert "extravaganza" on the Lido Deck by the pool. It looked nice, but we were about "fooded" out.

Tomorrow we will be sea, before stopping at Tauranga, before we end our cruise in Auckland.



The great lunch at the winery.



Evelyn shearing her new friend, Napier.



At the wool store in Napier.



The Chef's Dinner on the ship.

## RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

**Sid Dallas** said, "I enjoy your column." Sid's wife and my wife are both retired City school nurses and see each other at reunions.

**Grady Mullen** is at the Country Villa Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 9655 Sepulveda Blvd., North Hills, CA 91343. Phone (818) 892-8665. He has diabetes and heart problems.

**Charles and Maxine Tichenor** live at 516 N. Vine Ct., Jenks, OK 74037. Phone (918) 299-0282. They would like to have a reunion of other retirees who are Okies. Contact them if interested. They are very active in the Tulsa Historical Society. They present programs to schools about "Early Cattle Trade of Tulsa" and dress up in period attire.

**Roselynn Castelberg** writes from Henderson, Nev., "I retired from the City Attorney's office in November 1972. I just turned 90. I live with my daughter and play bingo and Scrabble and do cryptograms."

**Robert Taplin** writes, "I retired as a Building Inspector 22 years ago. I am in good health for 88 years young and am active in two bowling leagues. Thank you for your efforts for the retirees."

**Jane Hanson**, Hemet, writes, "Your 'Thought For the Day' is always welcome and appreciated. They give us all a lift. Many thanks."

There are a number of groups of retirees that get together for breakfast or lunch regularly, in various areas. I would like to hear about them. Is anyone interested in one for **engineers in the Van Nuys area**? Call me at (818) 784-0130.

The **LACERS office** is at 360 E. Second St., Los Angeles, CA 90012. Phone (213) 473-7200 or (800)779-8328. Call them for questions about your health plans or retirement checks or withholding.

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

**If you have news** about yourself or other retirees that you'd like to share, send it to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411, or call (818) 784-0130.



### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: *Touch all the Right Bases*

*In the game of baseball, you try to get a hit,  
then touch all of the bases, before reaching home base.*

*In the game of life, in our daily or weekly routines, we also touch many bases.  
The types of bases we touch are indicators of our character.  
Some bases provide uplift and encouragement.  
Others cause disappointment and despair.*

*Some bases become essential parts of our lives, such as  
bases of love and friendship  
bases of fun and games  
basis of social engagements  
bases of prayer and worship  
we feel a void in our lives if we miss any of our essential bases.  
So, if you want to be a winner in the game of life, be sure to  
touch all the right bases.*

- 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 movie?

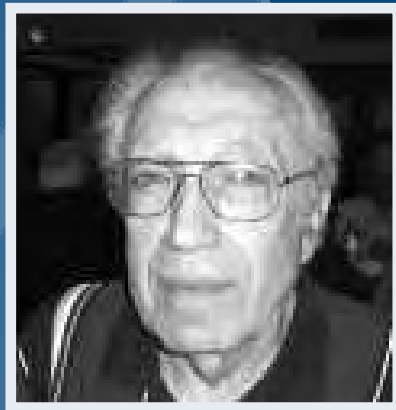
# The Best Years



"Cool Hand Luke."  
- Fred Hoepfner, retired from Public Works/ Engineering in 1996



"Any movie with Ginger Roberts and Fred Astaire."  
- Trudy Kaye, retired from City Planning in 1990. Her Aunt Minnie was married to Sidney Chaplin, Charlie's brother.



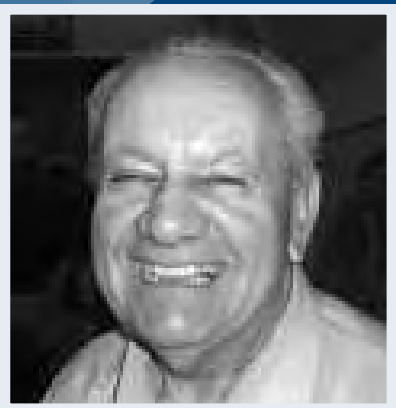
"The Departed."  
- Leo Rosen



"In the Heat of the Night."  
- Quentall Webb, retired from Public Works in 1989



"Any cowboy movie!"  
- Joe Kaye



"Casablanca."  
- Tony Alvarez



"Pirates of the Caribbean and Find Me Guilty with Vin Diesel."  
- Norma Rose



"The Illusionist."  
- Art Minazzoli, retired from Public Works in 1994



"The Blues Brothers."  
- Jack Rosen, son of Leo and Norma Rosen



"The Doors, with Val Kilmer."  
- Joel Rosen, son of Leo and Norma Rosen



"The Pride of the Yankees, with Gary Cooper."  
- Phil Skarin



"Casablanca."  
- Ella Garza, wife of Americo



"Casablanca."  
- Cliff Rich, retired from Transportation in 2006