

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: LACERS Reps Plan to Be At October General Meeting



By Phil Skarin, RLACEI Publicity Chair

President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"By the time you read this article, our Aug. 9 picnic at the Grace E. Simons Lodge may have been over. Chris & Pitts puts on a great lunch. Ron Black always does a good job entertaining us.

"Our next event will be our Annual Corporation Meeting and Election of Directors on Oct. 11. LACERS representatives were sorry they missed our last general meeting but promised to be at our Oct. 11 meeting to answer any of our questions about our Health Plans. Lita Payne, Chief Benefits Analyst, who took Sandra Dyson's place, promises to be there to answer any questions and to talk

about new things that are taking place.

"On a personal note, I have a son, Bill, and three daughters who live in Minden, Nev., which is about 30 minutes down the hill from Lake Tahoe. I purchased a second home in the same subdivision as my kids. The home is 2600 square feet, built in 2003, with a great view of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

"My kids want me to move up there permanently, but I like Simi Valley and my new large home there. I especially enjoy being your President. I enjoy talking on the phone with those retirees who



call. Most have problems, which I try to help them with. I know that there will come a day that you will want a new President. Then I will move to Minden.

"Thanks to John Hawkins and Robert Larios from the City Employees Club of L.A., for the publicity in their *Alive!* newspaper. They also donate door prizes at our special events.

"Thanks also to Lori Kozlowski, editor of *El Pueblo*, the publication of ACEB-SA. Lori comes to most of our special events to take pictures and also includes our news articles in her paper."

Legislative Update:

Ken Spiker LACERS Commissioner reports that his Committee is finishing its negotiations with health care providers for LACERS 2008 contracts.

Bids were open for all providers with Aetna, Health Net and PacifiCare joining our current providers in competition for the awards. None of the new companies was able to provide lower premiums or services superior to our current companies. Thus, at this stage of the negotiations, it appears all current providers will have their contracts renewed.

Initial health care costs, with current coverages, were bid at an 8.5 percent

increase over 2007. Negotiations with each company have resulted in reducing the overall cost to 5.7 percent.

The Benefits Committee is now discussing certain new services; i.e., acupuncture, and receiving cost proposals from bidders.

The committee will have finished its work by the time this is printed. Final Committee recommendations will be submitted to the LACERS Board by mid-August.

LACERS'S fund level is at \$11.3 billion as of July 13, 2007.



Upcoming Events:

Aug. 9: Picnic at Grace E. Simons Lodge, Elysian Park, 11:30 am

Oct. 11: Annual Meeting and Elections at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center. Lunch at noon, meeting at 1 p.m.

Dec. 6: Christmas Party at the Grace E. Simons Lodge, Elysian Park, 11:30 a.m.

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 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!



Hal fishing.

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



In Cabo: Fish, Food and Fun

■ Hal takes the family to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, for spring break.

Two years ago on a trip to Cabo San Lucas, Baja Mexico, we purchased a week timeshare at Playa Grande Resort and Spa. In fact, Effie and Pierre, our traveling companions and our daughter's in-laws, also bought one that was connected to ours. These were one-bedroom, two-bath units with full kitchens, sleeping five each. Evelyn and I had a timeshare in Hawaii, which we used as a trade-in on the new one.

We picked a fixed week around April 1 of each year in hopes that spring break would fall within our period and we could take the grandkids for a week's vacation.

Last year we had to change our week to take the grandkids, and then, because Aero California was grounded by the Mexican government, we were unable to use our week.

This year, our week was the one before Easter, and we would leave Los Angeles on Saturday and return the next Saturday, the

day before Easter Sunday.

Michelle and JP, daughter and son-in-law, said they weren't going (I think they were happy not to have the kids for a week), so we made reservations on Mexicana Airlines for the four adults and three children. We would leave at 11 a.m., getting into Cabo around 3 p.m. and returning on a 4 p.m. flight a week later.

Last year, when I tried to charter a boat for deep-sea fishing I was too late. I decided to make a reservation early for this year. On our last trip we had chartered the *Guerita II* and had enjoyed the experience. I contacted them and booked two days of fishing (Monday and Wednesday). One of the reasons I picked that boat was because it can take seven people, when most of the other boats of its size take only six. The cost per day was about \$800, including bait, lunch and crew tip.

Besides fishing, which all the kids wanted to do, we would spend most of the time around the pool. Evelyn planned on taking the girls horseback riding, which I thought was a fine idea as long as I didn't have to go.

As it got closer to our trip, Michelle and JP decided to go for a few days and would fly down Saturday and return on Tuesday. They got a mini-suite at the Playa Grande. They have a small number of accommodations available for hotel rental.

Saturday morning, I had a limo pick us up and take us to the International Terminal at LAX. I had notarized consents to take the



Evelyn and her fish.

grandkids out of the country, but no one asked to see them either here or in Mexico. We had no problems checking in and getting our luggage through the security process. We had about an hour before our flight was to board. We had to take a bus to a remote terminal and then board our plane, and after we all were aboard, the captain announced that there was a ground hold in Cabo and we would have to wait for clearance before we could leave. The hold lasted about three hours before we were able to re-board the flight to Cabo. It was already early evening when we landed, and we cleared immigrations and customs with no problem.

I had booked transportation to the hotel from Transcabo for less than \$200 round trip. The Playa Grande wanted more than \$500 for the same service. Transcabo was waiting for us as we exited the terminal. The drive from the airport to the hotel took about an hour.

I had activated international service on my Verizon cell phone and was able to call JP and let him know we had landed and were on our way to the hotel. The Verizon cell service worked very well.

Playa Grande Resort is on the south side of the tip of Baja on Solmar Beach on the Pacific Ocean. The amenities include air conditioning, satellite TV, in-room safe, a modern kitchen and ocean views. The resort has its own purified water system, so you can drink the water. There are three pools, one of



One of our Marlin.

ADVENTURES with HAL!

which is for adults only. There is an upscale restaurant and a pool restaurant and bar. They have a full service spa, state-of-the-art fitness center, and putting green and tennis courts.

At check-in we were assigned a host, who provided us with free drink tickets and discount coupons for use in the hotel. We were invited to an owner's breakfast for the next morning. Owner's breakfasts are common at timeshare resorts. The goal is to sell you another week.

In the morning, Michelle went early to the pool area to reserve lounges. Because of spring break, the hotel was full and they didn't have enough lounges around the pool area. The owner's breakfast was fine and included a pitch to upgrade our membership to a flexible one, but we didn't bite. Each family got a \$75 credit and Michelle and Evelyn immediately made spa reservations.

We spent the rest of the day around the pool. The weather was great, with the temperature in the low 80s and lots of sunshine. That evening we had dinner at the Peacock's Restaurant, which is JP and Michelle's favorite. I wasn't impressed and won't go again.

Early Monday morning (6:30 a.m.), we made our way to the marina, a short five-minute taxi ride from Playa Grande. On board were Effie and Pierre; JP; Mattie, 10;

Isabelle, 8; Coco, 6; and I.

The *Guerita II* is a 34-foot Crystaliner Sportfisher. There were a captain and a deckhand, who handles the fishing duties. Our first stop was for live bait, and then we headed north up the coast of Baja on the Pacific side. The water was a little rough, and both Coco and Pierre got seasick. We traveled for almost an hour before we slowed and put out our lines.

When I looked around, all I could see were fishing boats, so I thought that this must be a good area. We were fishing for striped marlin, and it wasn't long before we hooked our first fish. JP had the honors, and he landed a fish that weighed about 150 pounds. When the fish was alongside, we could see that its bill had been broken off, so the crew brought it into the boat. Normally we do catch and release, but because the fish was injured (not from catching it), the crew decided to keep it. When it died it turned a brilliant blue with stripes.

We caught five marlin, with JP getting two, Pierre one and I two. It was a very successful day on the water; except for the first fish that JP caught, we released the others. We got back to the dock around 3 p.m. and took a taxi back to the hotel.

That evening we walked to Pancho's Restaurant for dinner. All of us really liked the food, and the prices were reasonable. On the walk back to the hotel we stopped at a small market and picked up groceries. The hotel has a small store, but the prices at the market were much better.

In the morning we took a taxi to The Office for breakfast. The Office is on the other side of the marina on the Gulf of California. We have been here before, and the breakfast was very good. The tables are on the sand, and the kids could play in the water while we waited for our food. After breakfast, the two younger girls had their hair braided, and Mattie talked her mother into letting her get a temporary henna tattoo.

We decided to walk back to the hotel and started down the beach. About half way, I noticed that I didn't have my cell phone. I retraced my steps

back to the restaurant and everyone looked and they even let me use their phone to call my number, but the phone was gone.

I walked back to the marketplace by the hotel to meet Evelyn where she was in negotiations for a silver necklace. She brought the necklace and we headed to the hotel. I wanted to call Verizon and let them know I had lost my phone. After a couple of tries using Evelyn's phone, I asked the concierge for help. They had a Verizon number that switched me to the right one to report my loss.

JP and Michelle left that day, and for dinner we took the kids to the Crazy Lobster. We had been there on the last trip, and I still think the food is good and prices really inexpensive. Nobody else liked it.

Wednesday was our second day on the boat. On this trip were Pierre, Evelyn, Mattie, Isabelle and I. It was much rougher on this trip, and Pierre spent most of the time lying down. Evelyn caught the first fish, a 35-pound Dorado, a very good eating fish better known as mahi mahi. The rest of the day we just couldn't catch anything, but on the way home we hooked a marlin, which I brought into the boat. I had caught three fish in two days and I was very happy, the biggest was about 120 pounds and I'm not sure I could handle one much bigger. We took Evelyn's fish back to the hotel and had it cooked in the restaurant by the pool. They charged \$10 per person. The fish was perfect.

The next morning, Evelyn took the three girls horseback riding. In the afternoon we spent more time around the pool. The hotel has a golf putting course, and Mattie and I did a couple of rounds.

Friday was our last full day in Cabo, and we just relaxed around the pool. That evening we walked to the Marina and had dinner at



Kids in the pool.



Isabelle and Mattie.



JP and Coco.



Evelyn, Mattie, Isabelle and Coco horseback riding.

Alexander's, a place where we had eaten on our last trip. I was very disappointed in both the food and the service. The restaurants in the Marina are too touristy, and I won't be eating there again.

We had our last breakfast at Mama's Royal Café, which was very good. Our flight home was at 4 p.m., and we were picked up at the hotel at 12:30 p.m. The airport was packed. We had no problem checking in, but the security line was a 45-minute wait. It didn't matter, because all flights were backed up and we waited almost four hours for our flight.

They are adding another runway to the airport, but from now on I'm taking the earliest flight out, both coming and going.

Cabo is still a great vacation place; you get the flavor of Mexico with the comforts of the United States. It is a very safe place, and you can drink the water.

