

For Retired Club Members



The Best Years

City Retiree Associations:

DWP Retirees Association



Dolores Foley, President
Phone: (626) 445-7376
E-mail: vinmar@altrinet.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:

As 2008 Approaches, Time to Look at Co-Pays



By Phil Skarin,
RLACEI Publicity Chair

President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"I just returned from our picnic. I wish to thank all those who called and made reservations. We had a great crowd. LACERS donated 20 \$10 gift certificates for door prizes, and the City Employees Club donated four City shirts and four watches. All together, we had 49 prizes.

Tom Moutes, Assistant General Manager, LACERS, introduced the

following members of his staff: Mark Blunk, Retirement Services; Alex Rabrenovich, Sarah Hill, Joe Salazar and Jennifer Wase, all of Health Benefits; and Linda Aparicio of Communications. Most gave a short talk, which we all enjoyed.

"I also wish to thank: Paul Joseph from the Credit Union; Robert Larios of the City Employees Club and Lori Koslowski of El Pueblo, who each took pictures for their paper; Americo and Ella Garza for putting on this great picnic; Independent Taxi for furnishing

us a cab; and Ron Black, DJ, who played and sang, along with Ivan Forbes."

Our Annual Corporation Meeting and Election of Directors will be Thurs., Oct. 11 at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center at 5056 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks. A free lunch will be served at Noon, only if you have called one of the officers for reservations a week ahead. The meeting is at 1 p.m. If you want to be considered for nomination for Director, now or in the future, contact the Nominations Chair, Neil Ricci.

Legislative Update:



Ken Spiker

Ken Spiker, our elected Commissioner to the LACERS Board of Directors, reports that the LACERS has earned a 19.4 percent investment return on its \$11.1 billion in assets for the fiscal year ended June 30, the highest annual return in its 70-year history. The fund returned 12.4 percent in fiscal 2006 and 10 percent in fiscal 2005.

The portfolio is divided among U.S. and non-U.S. stocks and bonds, real estate and private equity. This asset mix serves to diversify the portfolio and minimizes portfolio volatility. The portfolio contributes to the overwhelming majority of the money that is used to fund retirement and post-employment health benefits.

LACERS is responsible for the administration of the City's pension plan to more than 28,000 active employees and 15,000 retirees and beneficiaries.

Health Plan Renewal: The LACERS Benefits Committee and the Board of

Directors have approved, unanimously, the retention of current medical insurance and benefit design for the 2008 calendar year. Contracts for current dental and vision insurance carriers were also authorized for renewal.

Competitive proposals from other carriers did not favorably compare with current carriers, and the disruption of service to our members resulting from changing carriers would not justify the relatively minor potential in savings.

LACERS will experience a medical rate increase of approximately 5.9 percent from last year, which compares favorably to our six-year trend rate of about 9 percent. Our overall health plan rate increase (including dental and vision plans) for 2008 is estimated to be 5.7 percent, compared to 12 percent for 2007.

At the time of this writing, the health care subsidy for 2008 has not yet been determined. I plan, where permitted by ordinance, to favor those retirees most impacted by any premium increase.

Maintaining Current Co-Pays: LACERS, like many plan sponsors, continues to pursue strategies to contain health

care cost increases in order to provide our members affordability, choice and access to quality health care. Medical cost inflation continues at the double-digit level, yet the LACERS plans have been aggressively managed to keep cost in check over the years. LACERS' medical cost trend over the last seven years is only 9.1 percent. Through LACERS' medical plan bid conducted this year, the overall increase in premiums for 2008 is much lower than comparable public sector organizations and this has been accomplished without rising co-payments for services.

Holding 2008 co-payments at their current levels can be viewed as a benefit improvement. Increases in LACERS' medical costs for 2008 translate into increases in the cost of medical services (such as office visits or prescription drugs). However, LACERS will not be passing down these additional costs to Members by increasing co-payments. In other words, Members will be paying less of the costs for their medical services because the value of each dollar of their co-payments has increased.

Upcoming Events:

- Oct. 1:** Poetry Contest deadline. Send entries to Phil Skarin
- Oct. 11:** Annual Meeting and Elections at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center
- Dec. 6:** Christmas Party at the Grace E. Simons Lodge, at 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.



Poetry Contest Deadline!

The Annual Retirees Poetry contest deadline is Oct. 1. Send typed copies to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411. There will be separate categories for members and spouses. You may write on any style or subject; everyone wins. Start writing, and send 'em in!

The Best Years

ADVENTURES with HAL!



The entrance to Legoland.



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



Legoland and the Midway

■ Hal puts the pieces together at Legoland, and visits the *USS Midway* in San Diego.



The U.S. Capital, made out of Legos.

Southern California is a great place to live. We have great weather most of the time, and if you draw a 300-mile circle from the Los Angeles City Hall, the area would contain more activities that you could do in a lifetime. While everyone knows about Disneyland, Universal City and Magic Mountain, there are a number of smaller attractions that are well worth visiting.

Over the past six months, I have had a chance to visit two of them: Legoland in Carlsbad and the *USS Midway* in San Diego.

In May I visited Legoland with my grandchildren, Maddie, 10; Isabelle, 8; and Coco, 6. Legoland is on One Legoland Drive, just off Interstate 5, in Carlsbad. It is about 30 minutes north of San Diego and about one and half hours from Los Angeles. The park Website www.legoland.com has information on park hours and ticket prices. Currently, the one-day admission is \$57 for an adult (13-59) and \$44 for child/senior (3-12)/ (60-plus). Check with the Ticket Guy at the City Employees Club for current discounts. The park does sell multi-day tickets, but in most cases you can see the park in one day.

Like most theme parks, Legoland is laid out by grouping like attractions together. Starting from the entrance, we walked to the right in the Imagination Zone and then on to Castle Hill. The Imagination Zone has two

very good rides: the Aqua Zone wave rider and Lego Technic Coaster. Castle Hill had two good rides: the Dragon coaster and the

Royal Joust. The kids also enjoyed the Hideaway, which was like a big tree house and slide area for kids. It took us about two hours to see the two areas, and it was time for lunch and we ate at the Garden Restaurant, which offered a nice selection of sandwiches and pizza. The prices were on par with other theme parks, but I felt the service inside the park was not up to the standards of Disneyland.

After lunch was Pirate Shores, the park's newest attraction. Be prepared to get wet. "Splash Battle" is a boat ride with water guns with which you can squirt the other boats. There is also Treasure Falls, a large water slide area where you get really wet. I passed on these rides, but the kids liked them. Next on the agenda was Fun Town. We saw the show at the Fun Town Fire Academy, which was also another chance to get wet and fun for the kids. The kids really enjoyed the Volvo Driving School, which let them drive cars around a city layout. This area has the Lego clubhouse, showing how Legos are made, and there was a large Lego play area and a retail store.

One of the more interesting areas is Miniland USA, which has large Lego displays



The fire show at Legoland.

of American cities, which included Las Vegas, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans (pre-Katrina), to name a few. Very impressive.



on the flight deck.

The first part of the tour provides a history of the ship and has a number of exhibits about the operation of the aircraft. There are a number of aircraft stationed on the hangar deck. Not included in the tour are flight simulators, which you can test your flight skills for a fee.

Our last stop was Explore Village, where we took the Safari Trek.

I did enjoy my visit, but I would not have come if it weren't for my grandkids. This park is basically for children 4 to 12 years old, with a few attractions for adults. For me it was a one-time event.

A couple of weeks later, I went to San Diego for a day with Evelyn. While she attended a meeting, I decided to visit the USS Midway, an aircraft carrier that opened as a museum in 2004.

Over the years I have visited a number of decommissioned navel ships, both in this country and overseas. Some are presented better than others, and I was very impressed with the USS Midway.

The USS Midway was commissioned in 1945 and was the largest ship in the world for the next 10 years. It served 47 years from the end of World War II until the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. No other aircraft carrier served America as long as the USS Midway.

The USS Midway Museum (www.midway.org) is located alongside the Navy Pier on the Embarcadero in downtown San Diego. The ship is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors (62-plus) and \$8 for children (6-17). Children five and under and active-duty in uniform are free.

The price of admission includes an audio tour, which, if you follow, will take about three-and-a-half to four hours to see the complete ship.

The tour starts on the hangar deck and forecandle and then proceeds to the lower decks of the ship, and you complete the tour



A plane aboard the USS Midway.

On the lower decks you see the operation of the ship, including crew quarters, dining halls, kitchen, laundry and all the areas that help support the ship's activities.

The flight deck had about 25 aircraft, which, at one time or another, flew from the ship. You can also visit the flight operations area in the ship's operations island and see the admiral and captain quarters.

At the rear of the hangar deck is a small café and a gift shop.

The only other aircraft carrier that I have visited is the USS Intrepid in New York City (currently undergoing a renovation). The tour of the USS Midway was far better, and I think it gave a very good view of how life was aboard one of our premier warships.

I highly recommend a visit the next time you're in the San Diego area.



Officer's Quarters aboard the USS Midway.

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Ralph and Blanche Brookins celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary June 7th;

Victor and Pat Aprea celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary Aug. 10.

Ralph Brookins has written a book about Amelia Earhart titled, *Golden Goddess* (she disappeared in her world record-setting flight in 1937 in the Pacific). He visited many islands in the Pacific in research for his book. It is available for \$12.95 through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and others.

Bob Okuda has been awarded a complimentary lifetime membership in the L.A. City Employees Golf Club. They also have an annual competition named the Bob Okuda Cup.

Kenneth Pierce has raised money by recycling trash, which he donates to the West Valley Eagles, a track team.

Sylvia and Heber Cunliffe have been very active in their retirement. I wrote them asking for some info, and Sylvia sent me a 10-page letter. Here's chapter one: "I suggested a T.V. sitcom based on some of my experiences, CBS and J.J.M. bought the idea, and the result was a TV series that included Valerie Harper, Estelle Getty, Zsa Zsa Gabor and a host of other stars. Working on the series was fun and interesting."

These kind folks have all expressed their thanks for this column: **George Weiss, Kenneth Pierce, Ralph Brookins, Yvonne Camen, John Lane and Bill Haley**. I appreciate their comments.

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 you health plans, retirement check or tax withholding.

If you move, notify Membership Chair Helen Salgado at 8372 Arnett Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647. If you need a new green membership card, send her an S.A.S.E.

Visit www.rlacei.com to find out the latest retirement news.

If you have news about yourself or other retirees, send it to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Faults and Feelings

*Often in telling people about their faults,
we don't consider their feelings.*

*This isn't about right or wrong. It's about sensitivity
to their feelings. Being honest serves no purpose,
if the intent is to hurt.*

*Compassion and tact will help to prevent ill will.
Apologize if what you said hurt feelings. We know
you don't intend hurt your friends, so when in doubt, keep quiet.*

— Phil Skarin

Medicare Easy Pay

Upon turning age 65, LACERS requires that you and your dependents enroll in all parts Medicare that you are eligible for (Parts A and B, or Part B only) to remain enrolled in a LACERS medical plan and receive a LACERS medical subsidy.

Most LACERS members pay their Medicare Part B premium in one of two ways: 1) Medicare bills you for your Medicare Part B every three months and you mail your payment by check; or 2) you receive a monthly Social Security benefit check and your Medicare Part B premium is deducted from it. Every month, LACERS is notified that retired members and/or their dependents have lost their Medicare coverage due to nonpayment of premiums. Usually the affected members are those who pay their Medicare premiums by check (payment method #1 above).

LACERS staff identified the *Medicare Easy*

Pay program as a way to help members avoid losing their Medicare coverage due to late or lost premium payments.

Medicare Easy Pay is an electronic payment option that allows you to have your Medicare premiums automatically deducted from either your savings or checking account free each month. In July, LACERS mailed information about *Medicare Easy Pay* to its members.

This information was sent to all Medicare-eligible members because LACERS has no way of knowing how individuals pay for their Part B coverage and wanted to assist as many eligible members as possible. In fact, LACERS sent this information only to assist members in maintaining their coverage and LACERS medical subsidy. For more information, please contact LACERS at (213) 473-7200 or call Medicare (800) 633-4227.



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



John Gomez, Rec and Parks, Retired in 1998, with his wife, Carmen.



From left: Sharon Sloan, Retired, Rec and Parks, 31 years of service; and Jason Sloan, Retired, Rec and Parks, 27 years of service.



From left: Chig Arima, Retired, Planning, 26 years of service; and George Binder, Retired, Planning, 37 years of service.



Cathy and Ralph Burquist, Retired, General Services, 13 years of service.



From left: Bill Turner, Retired, Street Services, 39.5 years of service; with guest Jennie Smith.



From left: Cleone Vrabel, Retired, LAPD, 26 years of service, with her husband, Michael.



From left: Bill Lillenberg, Retired, Planning, 38 years of service; and Reginald Foster, Retired, Planning, 40 years of service.

RLACEI Picnic



■ Retirees Association gets together for summer fun.

Photos by Robert Larios, Director of Marketing and Communications

RLACEI — The Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. association held its annual summer picnic Aug. 9 at the Grace E. Simons Lodge near Dodger Stadium.

Thanks to Ed Harding, Phil Skarin and the other directors for inviting the Club.



From left: Frances Amrozch, Retired, Mayor's Office, 30 years; and Helen Salgado, Retired, Housing, 35 years of service.



From left: Xena and Fred Coleman, Retired, LAPD/DOT, 33 years of service.



John Mora, Retired, Department of Pensions, 32 years of service.



RLACEI President Ed Harding.



Arlene Tom, Retired, Planning.

LACERS Gives Away An iPod



From left: LACERS Commissioners Rick Rogers and Eric Holoman, Jean Childs, Commissioner Shelly Smith, General Services Public Safety Deputy Chief David Aguirre, and Commissioners Steve Uranga and Ken Spiker celebrate Jean Childs, who won an iPod from the Retirement System.

■ Jean Childs, Sr. Security Officer, General Services, wins an iPod for taking an interest in her retirement.

LACERS — City Employee Jean Childs was presented with an iPod by the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System Board of Administration at their Board meeting July 10. Childs won the MP3 player after visiting the LACERS booth at the Public Service Awareness showcase at the Los Angeles Mall held May 23 and 24.

At the showcase event, Childs, a 32-year City employee planning to retire within the next few years, approached the LACERS

booth to sign up for the "Planning for Retirement" seminar. LACERS staff assisted her in signing up for a seminar and calculating her LACERS retirement benefit. That is when Childs learned about the drawing for the iPod.

Childs is a Senior Security Officer for the Department of General Services Office of Public Safety, holding the rank of Sergeant. She is a recipient of the "Uncommon Jobs for Women" award, presented to her by former Mayor Tom Bradley. Childs' commanding officer, Deputy Chief David Aguirre, joined her at the Board presentation and said, "This only cements my pledge to make sure all officers under my command keep LACERS up to date with their personal information."

Congratulations, Jean!

New LACERS Officers

■ LACERS Board elects new officers.

LACERS — On Aug. 14, the Board of Administration of the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) elected the board officers for the 2007-08 fiscal year.

Commissioner Eric Holoman was reelected to President with a unanimous vote by fellow board members. He is President of Johnson Development Corporation, one of the nation's leading urban development companies, chaired by basketball legend and entrepreneur Earvin "Magic" Johnson. Prior to joining Johnson Development Corp., Holoman served as President of Holoman Food Services, Inc., overseeing the operation of multiunit fast food franchises in innercity Los Angeles. Appointed to the LACERS Board of Administration by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Holoman's term expires in 2012.

Commissioner Shelley I. Smith, an elected trustee of the system for more than 13 years, was elected to Vice President with a unanimous vote by fellow board members. Smith,

an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Los Angeles, is President of the Los Angeles City Attorneys Association. Smith is a member of the Board of Directors of the Council of Institutional Investors and Treasurer of the Pacific Pension Institute, and serves on the Executive Committee of the Labor and Employment Law Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. Elected to the LACERS Board of Administration by Active plan members, her current term expires in 2009.

LACERS is responsible for the administration of the City's pension plan to more than 28,000 active employees and 15,000 retirees and beneficiaries. LACERS has \$11.1 billion in assets.



Eric Holoman



Shelley Smith

Medical Plan Rates Okayed

LACERS — On July 24, the Board of Administration of the Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) approved the medical insurance rates for its 2008 plan year, holding the total rate increase to only 5.9 percent while maintaining its comprehensive medical benefits package. Over the last six years, the cost for LACERS to provide medical benefits for its retirees increased at an average rate of 9.7 percent.

A Request for Proposal for medical insurance plan carriers released earlier this year opened the competitive bidding process. LACERS staff, along with health and welfare specialists Deloitte Consulting, LLP, conducted interviews with the finalists and visited some of the finalists' office facilities.

After negotiating premium rates and per-

formance standards, which resulted in a \$1,814,000 savings from the initial premium quotes, LACERS and Deloitte staff presented their recommendations to the Board's Benefits Administration Committee July 9, who made their recommendations to the Board.

"Our staff and Deloitte did an outstanding job negotiating these rates, considering that medical costs continue to increase at double-digit levels," said Eric L. Holoman, President of LACERS Board of Administration.

"This is really good news for our retired Members and for the organization. Our negotiations kept cost increases to a minimum, without impacting the high quality medical services our Members expect," said LACERS General Manager Robert Aguillo Jr.

