



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.

Upcoming Events:

- Nov. 1: RLACEI Poetry Contest Deadline. See notice.
- Oct. 11: RLACEI annual meeting and elections, Sherman Oaks/Van Nuys Senior Center. Lunch at noon, meeting at 1 p.m.
- Dec. 5: RLAEI 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: RLACEI Nominations; Will Groups Merge?



By Phil Skarin,
RLACEI Publicity Chair

President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

RLACEI President Ed Harding reports that, at a recent Nominating Committee, the incumbent Directors were nominated for two-year terms beginning Jan. 1. They are Robert Wilkinson, Americo Garza, Hal Danowitz, Neil Ricci, Phil Skarin and Tom Stemnock. They will be voted on at the annual meeting Oct. 11, at the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center. Call one of the officers a week ahead for a free lunch at noon. Meeting and elections begin at 1 p.m.

The City Controller wants to commingle the Los Angeles Fire and Police

Pension System (LAFP) and the Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System (LACERS) Pension Fund create a new commission and staff to do all of the investing for both funds.

On Oct. 1, the City Controller and Mayor are to meet with LACERS at 9 a.m. and with LAFPP at 3 p.m. to discuss this proposal. Director Lee Kebler of LAFPP stated that all Fire and Police Associations, and active employees, are against this proposal.

The plan is to eliminate both commissions and create a new nine-member commission. Five members would be appointed by the Mayor, and two members from each pension system.

The auditor, Independent Fiduciary Services (IFS), a prestigious actuarial firm based in Washington, D.C., claims

it could save the City about \$7.8 million a year, with most of the savings from investment fees. IFS is also recommending an increase in salaries for the new board members. The current board members receive a fee only when they attend commission meetings.

Lee Kebler said that the County just hired a new investment officer for more than \$300,000 a year and hoped that the salaries of the new board would not be as high. He didn't know why anyone would take two of the most successful pension funds in the state, and try to tinker with them: Ken Spiker and I are both in agreement with Kebler and all of the Fire and Police.

See you at the annual meeting and elections Oct. 11 and at the Christmas Party Dec. 6.

Legislative Update:



Ken Spiker

Ken Spiker reports that Robert Aguillo Jr., LACERS General Manager, has notified the Board of Administration he is going to leave his job on Dec. 31. Robert has been General Manager for the last five years and plans to seek employment in the private sector.

The LACERS Board has unanimously approved an increase in the monthly subsidy maximum health care allowance by \$39. Current subsidy is set at \$983 per month and will be set at \$1,022 per month for 2008.

The average deduction for those retirees who have deductions will increase \$3.18 per month. My attempts to increase the subsidy to a higher legal amount were unsuccessful.

LACERS Health Plan Open Enrollment is planned for Oct. 15 through Nov. 15. This year, LACERS will not be holding a fair in order to create other events throughout the year that will give you more opportunities to meet with LACERS health carriers, staff and friends.

You will be receiving information on the Community Meetings listed to the right shortly.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

OCT. 17:
Sheraton Universal Hotel
Universal City

OCT. 23:
Rio Resort and Casino
Las Vegas

OCT. 25:
Doubletree Hotel
San Pedro

OCT. 30:
Hilton, San Bernardino

NOV. 1:
Marriott Hotel
Downtown Los Angeles

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 Nov. 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 Bright Angel trail from the South Rim.

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



Truly a Grand Canyon

■ Hal and his family drive and take a railroad to visit one of America's most magnificent sights.

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

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 num-

ber 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 late in the summer of 1960, I drove from Toledo, Ohio, to Los Angeles to spend the summer with my mother, who had moved to Los Angeles the previous year. I drove with a friend, and we stopped to see the Grand Canyon. Somewhere I had read that that the floor of the canyon was one mile below the rim, so I suggested that we walk down. So two not-too-bright college students started down the Bright Angel trail, only to discover that the trail is 10 miles long. Of course we had no water or decent walking shoes, and we made it to about the first rest stop before we turned around and headed back to the rim.

That was 47 years ago, and when I was thinking about where to take my three grandchildren this summer, my son-in-law, J.P., suggested that we visit the Grand Canyon. He had seen an ad for the Grand Canyon Railroad and thought that it would be a good experience for the kids.

There were a number of different packages available, and I choose the three-night package, which included two rooms for two nights in Williams, Ariz., and one night at the Grand Canyon; a round-trip train ride; and a two-and-a-half hour rim tour with a hot lunch and two dinners and two breakfasts. The cost was just more than \$300 per person for three adults and three children. Accommodations were basically three to a room.

We left Los Angeles early Sunday morning for the 450-mile drive to Williams. Traveling along the I-15, our first stop was for breakfast in Barstow. While I was planning the trip I looked for something we could do along the way, but was unable to find anything to see between L.A. and Williams. At Barstow we switched to I-40 and followed that to Williams. The route is the same as the old US 66, and there are lots of old historic Route 66 markers and historic buildings that you pass.

We arrived in Williams at approximately 3 p.m. and checked in to the Grand Canyon Railway Hotel. We had two adjoining rooms,



Caroline, Isabelle and Madeline with a cowboy.

which were nicely furnished. There was an indoor swimming pool and the kids couldn't wait to get in for a swim. The train station is across from the hotel and I went over to pick up our tickets and meal vouchers.

That evening we had dinner in the hotel restaurant. Our meal vouchers were valued at \$16 for adults and \$8 for children. That was the price of the buffet, or we could apply the voucher to the regular menu. All of us except for my daughter, Michelle, had the buffet. It wasn't gourmet food, but it was well prepared and there was a good selection of items.

After dinner we walked the few blocks to the main street of Williams, which happens to be Route 66, for a "Wild West" shootout. This shootout is conducted each evening along Route 66. The kids enjoyed the show and posed for pictures with the cowboys afterward.

During the night a thunderstorm came through the area, but by the time we were ready for breakfast it had passed. Breakfast was the buffet in the hotel restaurant. We dropped our luggage off in the hotel lobby and it would be trucked to the canyon and be in our rooms at the hotel when we arrived.

The train was to leave at 10 a.m., and at 9:30 a.m. there was another "Wild West" show near the train. The cowboys looked very familiar, as if we had seen them before.

The train had a number of different classes, and I had booked first class because it was air-conditioned. It was also the best car that allowed children. The domed car and the club car didn't allow children. We had reserved seats and the car was very comfortable. There were complementary snacks and soft drinks and adult beverages for purchase. The ride was about two hours and very enjoyable. Just before we arrived at the rim we were given a bottle of water.

The Grand Canyon National Park is 277 river-miles long, an average of ten miles wide and nearly one mile deep. It is considered one of the natural wonders of the world. The fee to enter the park is \$25 per vehicle. If you're a senior over 62 you can get a senior National Parks pass for \$10, good forever at all National Parks. The south rim is 7,000 feet in altitude, and this makes the climate very good. The days we were there, the temperature during the day was in the mid-70s and very comfortable.

A tour bus was waiting at the station, and our first stop was the Maswik Lodge for a buffet lunch. It was raining when we arrived at the station, but by the time we finished lunch, the skies had cleared. While you can drive to the Grand Canyon, private cars are not allowed outside the village area. To move around, there are three shuttle bus routes to get to the points of interest. Our tour bus took the Hermits Rest Route, and we stopped at three different viewpoints along the canyon rim. It is hard to put into words what the canyon looks like so I won't, but I found it very



majestic.

The tour bus dropped us back at the Maswik Lodge, where we were to spend the night. Again we had two adjoining rooms and our luggage was there as planned. I was a little concerned about the lodge, but the rooms were very nice and we were very comfortable.

The kids found a dead butterfly and decided that it needed a decent burial, which took about an hour, so I watched the kids while JP and Michelle took a walk.

We had dinner in the Arizona Room at the Bright Angel Lodge, where the food was good and very reasonably priced. We wanted to see the sunset, so we hurried to catch the shuttle



Isabelle, J.P., Madeline, Caroline and Michelle at a viewpoint for the canyon.



Michelle and J.P. on the train.



Local wildlife.

to the viewpoint. We arrived about five minutes before sunset and were very well rewarded with a great sunset.

The next day, Michelle and J.P. awoke at 4:30 a.m. to see the sunrise. The kids and I slept in. After breakfast at the hotel, J.P., Michelle, Maddie and Isabelle hiked down the Bright Angel trail to the first rest stop about 1.5 miles. It took them about two hours to complete the round trip. While they were hiking, I took Caroline for a walk around the rim. She was more interested in the gift shop than walking, but we had a good time.

After lunch at the Bright Angel Restaurant, we took the shuttle to the Park Headquarters and listened to a very interesting talk by a Park Ranger on traveling down the Colorado River.

By then it was time to board the train for our return trip to Williams. The train ride was uneventful, even though we were "robbed" by outlaws who again looked very familiar.

We used our meal vouchers to eat in the hotel's bar, where we had pizza.

In the morning after breakfast, the kids got to spend the \$60 in vouchers that came as part of the package. I think it was one of their best times. We left mid-morning for Las Vegas, which I'll tell you about next month. The Grand Canyon is a wonderful family adventure as the USS Midway.

The USS Midway Museum (www.mid-

way.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 fore-castle and then proceeds to the lower decks of the ship, and you complete the tour 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.

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.

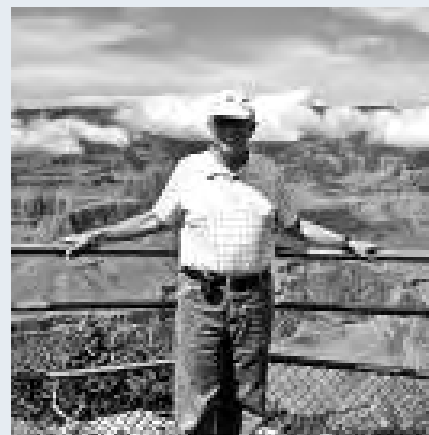
The flight deck had about 25 aircraft, which, at one time or

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.



Hal at the Grand Canyon.

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Don Fisher called from Oregon to say that he and his wife, **Minnie**, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary Sept. 4. Don has a teaching credential and is a Bible teacher for his church. Their son, Darryl, works for Tom Stenmoch's planning company. Call them at (541) 582-0174.

Ken Sobel's wife, **Gloria**, called me Sept. 4, the first day of school, to say that it was really like the first day of retirement after teaching for 40 years at the Topeka Drive Elementary School. Ken just bought an Armada RV to haul his restored 1934 Dodge all over the country to auto shows and win awards.

Sylvia Cunliffe's retirement story, Chapter 2: "My phone rang one day, and the Chairman of the Board of the International Federation of Festival Organizers told me that I had been invited to be the lead judge in an international music competition that was to be held in Cairo, Egypt, under the sponsorship of Egypt's First Lady, Suzanne Mubarak. The competition featured the original music of composers and lyricists who teamed up with singers from many parts of the world.

"With great trepidation, Heber and I went to Egypt. They took us to Egyptian treasures, mummies and historical insights. The music competition was great. It was televised throughout the Mideast and parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. The judging was difficult because the competitors were so talented and unique."

Clayton Todd plays golf on Tuesday and helps with Meals on Wheels on Friday and sculpts.

Phil and Kathi Johnson helped to move a 70-foot yacht from Fr. Lauderdale, Fla., to Jacksonville to avoid the hurricane season.

Marty Rashoff is a volunteer tutor at the Monterey Vista School.

Kathleen Murphy had a freak accident with her car and injured her leg pretty badly. She's getting it treated.

Nick and Liliana Buckroff will celebrate their 24th wedding anniversary in November. Nick was the Director of the VN/SO Senior Center. He is currently restoring a 1941 Chevy coupe.

The deadline for this year's **Retirees Poetry Contest** is Nov. 1. Send typed copies to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411. Separate categories for members and spouses or family members. Everyone will win a prize.

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.

On the Move

Alive! catches up with Retirees who are active, involved ... Alive!

Ken's on the Move

Ken Kochakji, Retired, Transportation, won first place in his age group at the ninth annual Ovarian Cancer 5K Run/Walk Race Sept. 9 in Studio City. Good going, Ken!



Are you On the Move? Write to us and tell us what you're up to! It's even better if you send us a photo. We'll print what we can! talkback@cityemployeesclub.com

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 |

LACERS' Aguallo to Retire

■ **LACERS General Manager to leave City service at the end of the year.**

LACERS —The Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) General Manager Robert Aguallo Jr. announced Aug. 31 that he is retiring from public service at the end of this year to explore career opportunities in the private sector.

During his five years at LACERS, Aguallo presided over the significant growth of the investment portfolio and expansion of the customer service program for LACERS' 43,000 members and their beneficiaries. The portfolio was at \$6 billion when Aguallo took over the helm in 2003. Today, the LACERS trust fund for retiree benefits is \$11.2 billion.

"Under his leadership, Robert has advanced the way public employee retirement systems pursue investments. On behalf of the Board of Administration, I want to congratulate and thank Robert for all that he has done in support of our Members," said Eric L. Holoman, President of the LACERS Board of Administration.

"LACERS has enhanced its portfolio by taking on new opportunistic strategies, including urban infill, workforce housing, clean tech, and environmental investments that will yield great returns and give something back to the community," Holoman said.



Robert Aguallo Jr., General Manager, The Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS)

"I want to thank the LACERS Board of Administration for their support and forward thinking when considering expansion of new investment strategies and promoting diversity of investment managers," Aguallo said.

"As part of our strategic plan, we determined that LACERS needed to make our Retired and Active Members priority one. In addition to growing our portfolio, it was important that LACERS is a customer-driven organization that our Members can rely on for their pre-retirement and post-employment needs."

Aguallo led the effort to upgrade customer service and public outreach at LACERS. Members can calculate their retirement allowance and health care subsidy, schedule retirement seminars, monitor the portfolio and keep up to date on retirement news at www.lacers.org.

Members also receive regular communications from LACERS through correspondence, newsletters, special events and health open enrollment fairs.

His retirement culminates 33 years of combined public service with City and state levels of government, including 15 years at CalPERS.

The LACERS Board of Administration will begin soon the search process for a general manager.

Congratulations, Robert, on your retirement.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Be My Friend

I want you to be my friend
 But I don't know
 If you want me
 To be yours.
 Being friends can be hazardous
 To your image,
 And images are very sacred
 To people.
 Images are created with great care,
 And Guarded
 With a passion.
 Images give protection
 To the fragile egos,
 And keep people at a safe distance
 Friendship requires sincerity,
 and truth and respect.
 Friendship means exposing
 Your strengths and your weaknesses,
 Your desires and your fears.
 Friendship is sharing-
 Friendship is caring-
 Friendship is loving-
 Will you be my friend?

— Phil Skarin