

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:

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

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

RLACEI: Is Combining Two Funds a Good Thing?



By Phil Skarin,
RLACEI Publicity Chair

President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

RLACEI President Ed Harding reports: "I wish to thank all those who voted to retain our incumbent directors for another two-year term on the Executive Board.

They have all done a great job in the past, and I am looking forward to working with them in the future.

"The Mayor and Controller met Oct. 1 with representatives of LACERS and Fire & Police Pensions to discuss the pros and cons of combining the investment activities of both pension systems.

See Ken Spiker's report to the right for more details.

Keith Richman is again sponsoring a bill to eliminate pension systems as we have today. He is circulating petitions to have employees contribute to 401k or other similar programs and stop pension systems like ours. Do not sign these petitions.

See you at our Christmas Party Dec. 6. Americo Garza has again hired Chris & Pitts to feed us, and hired some great entertainment. We will be raffling off about 40 door prizes. Be sure to call to reserve your lunch.

Legislative Update:



Ken Spiker

Ken Spiker, our elected Commissioner to the LACERS Board of Directors, reports that the Mayor and City Controller's offices are currently studying an independent fiduciary audit recommending combining the investment functions of the Los Angeles Fire and Police Pensions System (LAFPP) and the Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System (LACERS), creating a new Department of Pension Investments (not to include the DWP).

A new Board would consist of nine members, five appointed by the Mayor and two representatives from each of the existing systems. (There is no mention of a retired representative). There would be no change to the benefit structure for the members.

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Here's a quick analysis of the proposed merger:

Upside:

- Provides reduced investment and operational expenses.
- Increases efficiencies by avoiding current duplication of the following areas:
 - Custodian bank
 - Consultants
 - Investment managers
 - Legal counsel
 - Technology
 - Office space
 - Asset allocation studies.
- Benefits members, City employees and taxpayers.
- Widens the base of membership and more balanced investment portfolio without changing the benefits members enjoy.

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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!



Hoover Dam.



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



Starting at Hoover, Ending With LOVE

■ Hal and his family visit Hoover Dam and Las Vegas.

The last part of my summer trip with my grandkids (Maddie, Isabelle and Coco) was stopping at our home in Las Vegas for a few days.

We left Williams, Ariz., on a Wednesday morning for the 240-mile drive to Las Vegas along Interstate 40 until we reached Kingman, Ariz., where we changed to US93. The highway crosses over Hoover Dam, and I wanted to stop and take the kids on a tour.

Since 9/11, the security on the dam has been greatly increased, and prior to reaching the dam you must stop at a security checkpoint. We must have looked okay because they waved us on through.

Hoover Dam was completed in 1935 and at 726 feet high is one of the highest concrete dams ever constructed. The dam's completion created Lake Mead, the largest man-made lake in the United States. A few years ago they built a new visitors center and parking structure on the Nevada side, but I decided to park (\$7) on the Arizona side,

which let the kids walk across the dam from Arizona to Nevada. This was the week before Labor Day, but there was no line. After we paid our tour entrance fee (\$11 for adults, \$9 for seniors and \$6 for kids 7 to 16), we took the 45-minute tour. After we watched a movie on the dam's construction, we took an evaluator down 500 feet to view the generators that provide power for much of Los Angeles and the rest of the southwest. After the tour, I walked back to the car and picked up everyone on the Nevada side.

We stopped in Boulder City to have lunch at the Coffee Cup Café (512 Nevada Highway). A few months ago I saw a program on the Food Channel about the best breakfast places, and this was one of them. My wife, Evelyn, and I drove out on our last trip to Las Vegas and enjoyed the breakfast.



Coco, Isabelle and Maddie enjoy their trip to Arizona and Nevada.

The lunch with the kids was also very good.

On the way into town, we dropped my son-in-law, J.P., off at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas to catch his flight home. My daughter, Michelle, and the girls would fly home Friday, and then Evelyn was flying in Friday to spend the rest of the Labor Day weekend in Vegas with me.

We spent the rest of the afternoon in the pool and took in a movie that evening.

The next day we took the kids to the Las Vegas Mini Prix (1401 N. Rainbow Blvd.), which has lots of rides and arcade games. The kids love the go-kart road course, which Maddie was able to enjoy by herself, and Michelle and I each took one of the other girls with us. Isabelle and Coco showed their driving skills on the "kiddie karts." After they ran out of ride tickets, we spent the rest of the time playing video games.

On Friday morning, we visited the Spring Preserve (www.springspreserve.org), once home to ancient Indian tribes and the resting



Isabelle at the Spring Preserves.

place for Spanish explorers. It now tells the history of the Las Vegas Valley and showcases methods to maintain the lifestyle in the desert. The preserve is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and until 10 p.m., Friday through Sunday. Admission is \$18.75 for adults, \$10.75 for those 5 to 17 years old, and \$17.05 for seniors. The girls found the Ori*Gen experience interesting. There were a large number of interactive galleries that told the stories about the development of the Las Vegas area. If you want to learn about the how and why Las Vegas became Las Vegas, it is well worth the visit.

In the late afternoon, I put the girls and Michelle on a plane for Los Angeles and picked up Evelyn at the airport.

We get to our house in Las Vegas a number of times each year. The following are recommendations for a couple of restaurants we have been to and the one show we saw recently on the Las Vegas Strip.

On this trip, Evelyn wanted to eat at Bouchon [(702) 414-6200] in the Venetian. The restaurant is owned by Thomas Keller, who owns the French Laundry Restaurant in Napa, Calif. We have been trying to eat at the French Laundry for years and have never been able get



Coco drives her "kid-die kart."



Maddie drives her go-kart.



Maddie at the Spring Preserves.



The Coffee Cup Café in Boulder City.

a reservation. When I made the reservation for Bouchon (using Opentable.com), I told them it was Evelyn's birthday. When we got to the restaurant, we were seated on time and the waiter congratulated Evelyn on her birthday. We had dinner, and I must say that the food was great. After we finished dinner, I waited for them to bring the normal cake with a candle for Evelyn's birthday. We were surprised when they brought four different desserts to the table and then they brought four more desserts. In all, they gave us every dessert on the menu. Then the pastry chef came to our table to see if we liked them. It was a great experience, and even without the desserts I would go to the restaurant

again.

The next night we had dinner at Nora's Wine Bar (1031 S. Rampart, [702] 367-4636). The food was great and served family style. As the name implies, the restaurant has a lot of wine, with more than 60 different varieties that you can order by the glass. It was another great experience, and I would eat there again.

For the past couple of years I have been looking for a good barbecue restaurant in Las Vegas, and I finally found one: T.C.'s Rib Crib (8470 W. Desert Inn Rd., [702] 451-7427) is great. It is well worth the drive from the strip.

We don't normally go to the Strip to see a show, but we had heard good reviews about LOVE, the Cirque du Soleil production (at the Mirage) that celebrates the music of the Beatles, so we decided to brave the Strip. LOVE is one of the best shows we've seen on the Strip. If you can only see one show while in Vegas, this is the one to see.

Vegas still is a great place to visit, and if you stay away from the gambling tables, it can be easy on your wallet.

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Ben and Bette Pratt celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary June 5. They celebrate each year by going to Maui.

Nick and Liliana Buckroff will celebrate their 24th wedding anniversary Nov. 25. Nick had been the Director of the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center.

Cliff Albright lost his wife of 64 years, Mildred, Sept. 15, due to heart problems. Give him a cheer-up call at (951) 244-0611.

Sylva Natalie Manoosian writes, "Since my 'retirement' from the Library Dept. in April, 1999, I've been volunteering as a consultant to libraries in Armenia and in the Armenia Patriarchate of Jerusalem. At 70, I am also a doctoral student at UCLA." Give her a call at (323) 974-5676.

Shirley Fisher, Hanford, writes: "I enjoy reading the 'Report to Members.' Your articles are very enlightening. Keep up the good work."

The following members all express thanks to the RLACEI officers for all the work they do for retirees: **Ivan Forbes, Dennis Vander Hook, Catherine Weber and Angelo Ruscito.**

Hynda Rudd, former records management officer, with the help of three dozen historians and scholars, has compiled a 1,000 page book titled, "The Development of Los Angeles City Government – An Institutional History 1850-2000."

Jim Shields passed away Sept. 23 in Mesa, Ariz. Jim and his wife, Linda, moved to Mesa in 2001 following Jim's retirement in March after 30 years of City service as a Programmer Analyst for ITA. In addition to his wife, Jim is survived by his daughters, Lynda and Lori; his son, Vance; his brothers, Chuck and Hal; and his grandchildren, Alexandra, Spencer, Cameron and Lleyton. Jim attended Pepperdine University on a tennis scholarship and continued to play tennis weekly throughout his life. He was also very passionate about arches. Jim enjoyed hiking through the national parks and canyon lands of Utah and Arizona in search of undiscovered arches and natural bridges. He was an active member of the National Arches and Bridges Society.

The LACERS Office is at 360 E. Second St., Second Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Phone: (213) 473-7200 or (800) 779-8328. Call them with questions about your health plans, retirement checks 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 a S.A.S.E.

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 phone (818) 784-0130.

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.

You're Invited!

RLACEI Holiday Party in December

The RLACEI's annual Christmas Party and Installation of Officers is scheduled for noon Thursday, Dec. 6, at the Grace E. Simons Lodge. The Lodge is at 1025 Elysian Park Dr., near Dodger Stadium. There will be a light lunch (sandwiches, salad and drinks), entertainment and valuable door prizes. You must make reservations at least a week ahead. Guests welcome. Call one of the officers on the Retirees Helplines. Free taxi service can take you from the parking lot to the lodge.



RLACEI Holiday Party

Thursday, Dec. 6, 12 noon

Grace E. Simons Lodge
1025 Elysian Park Drive
(near Dodger Stadium)

LACERS Employee of the Quarter

■ Debra Fleming named Employee of the Quarter for Spring 2007.

LACERS — The Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) has named Debra Fleming as its Employee of the Quarter for Spring 2007.

Fleming, a Management Assistant, worked for LACERS for two years in the Member Communications Unit. Recognized as a team player, Fleming was recognized for her hard work and dedication. Her duties include developing, organizing and presenting retirement seminars; serving as editor for the LACERS newsletters; and assisting with other publications produced by the organization.

Employees nominate their co-workers for Employee of the Quarter based on their notable contributions over and above the scope of normal duties. Senior staff members vote on the nominees and the winning Employee of the Quarter is announced and recognized at a staff luncheon. LACERS General Manager, Robert Aguillo Jr., presented Debra Fleming with a commemorative desk plaque and a \$200 savings bond.



Debra Fleming.

Congratulations, Debra!

LACERS Welcomes the World

■ Retirement System welcomes delegations from Japan and Russia.

LACERS — The Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) hosted two international delegations of pension officials in early September at LACERS headquarters building in downtown Los Angeles. The first seven-member delegation from Japan was welcomed Sept. 10, followed by the five-member Russian delegation Sept. 14.

As a premier pension plan, LACERS is frequently sought out by international officials as an example of a successful defined benefit plan.

Tom Moutes, LACERS Assistant General Manager, and Li Hsi, Administrative Services Division Manager, welcomed both delegations and presented a comprehensive look at how LACERS administers its retirement plan.

Moutes and Hsi responded to questions from the participants relating to investments, risk aversion, and union negotiations. Of particular interest to the visitors was the relationship between government plan sponsors and private pension funds as well as how the City Charter and State Constitution protect the funding of pension benefits.

LACERS is responsible for the administration of the City's pension plan to more than 29,000 active employees and 15,000 retirees and beneficiaries. LACERS has \$11.1 billion in assets.



LACERS recently welcomed a best-practices delegation from Japan.

Delegates from Russia present a souvenir of their visit to Tom Moutes, LACERS Assistant General Manager.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

A Sense of Peace

*Someone did something to you
that caused hurt and anger.
You couldn't be forgiving at the time,
so you allowed resentment to fester.
This can damage your quality of life.*

*Forgiveness can reduce stress and anger,
and allow you to move forward and be more creative.*

*It's about coming to peace internally.
Forgiveness is not giving up or giving in.
Forgiveness leads to strength and empowerment
and will give you a sense of peace.*

— 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

Legislative Update

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- Boards will be more focused on their respective missions.
- Current interested parties will keep their stake in the management of the investments by having representatives on the new Board.
- New fund (more than \$25 billion) will improve the rank to approximately number 50 of all U.S. plans, which may improve our ability to negotiate better terms and/or improve access to investment opportunities.
- Creates possibility for greater diversity with investments.
- May make it difficult to attract Board members to participate on the current Board and maintain quorums due to the greater emphasis on disability cases.
- Could create disenfranchisement of elected pension representatives on investment matters. Also, a Board that considers both investments and benefits has trustees and staff who can see the impact of decisions on the members they serve.
- The two systems have different funded ratios that should be considered when developing investment strategies, including asset allocation.

Downside:

- If it's not broken, don't fix it.
- Adds another layer of administration as the new "department" would still need administrative support in the areas of:
 - Accounting
 - Personnel administration
 - Board support (travel, agendas, etc.)
 - Information technology support
 - These may reduce or eliminate proposed savings.
- Both Departments also function similarly with regard to benefits administration and support functions. If there are efficiencies in merging investments, wouldn't there be greater efficiencies in merging the two departments entirely? Also, if this is such a great idea, why isn't DWP's retirement plan included?
- Could produce negative reaction from employee groups, fearing that the City is going after their pension funds to make political investments; could pit elected officials against unions in a Citywide election.
- Could weaken Fire and Police position in the Defined Benefit vs. Defined Contribution debate.

As of this writing, the LACERS fund is at a healthy \$11.8 billion. Why can't the mayor and City Council give the survivors of the City's 15,000 retirees an increase in our burial expense, from \$2,500 to \$5,000?

It will cost the fund only \$1 million a year. Cast overnight investments make that much in one day. Most other government retirees already have this benefit or more.

Payments to LACERS Fund:

In accordance with the City contribution rate adopted by the Board for Fiscal Year 2007-08, LACERS received the following amounts from City sources:

- Harbor: \$11,586,593, received July 3
- Airports: \$46,954,914, received July 9
- Controller's Office: \$338,914,033, received July 18

The City received a \$15,328,277 discount by paying LACERS early in the fiscal year. LACERS, therefore, has investment opportunities of the total \$397,455,540 rather than waiting for partial payments throughout the year.