

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 8372 Arnett Dr. Huntington Beach, CA 92647. 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:

Aug. 7: Annual picnic at Grace E. Simons Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

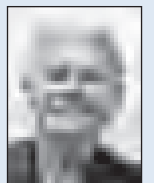
Oct. 23: Annual Corporation Meeting and Elections at the Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr., LA, CA 90027. It's just east of Los Feliz Boulevard, Thomas Guide p. 594, C2.

Dec. 4: Christmas Party at Grace E. Simons Lodge, 11:30 a.m.

For reservations to above meetings and lunches call (800) 678-4145 x 701.

RLACEI:

City Pays Retirees Fund In One Full Payment



By Phil Skarin,
RLACEI Publicity Chair

President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"Get out your calendars and mark the new date and location for our Annual Corporation Meeting and Elections. Thurs., Oct. 23, at the Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90027. It is just east of Los Feliz Boulevard, with plenty of parking on the west. A free lunch is available, if you have made a reservation. Meeting is at 1 p.m.

"Our annual picnic will again be at the Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park on Thurs., Aug. 7, with a delicious BBQ provided by Chris & Pitts. Call for reservations a week ahead. Entertainment will be provided.

"I was sad to hear that David Wilkins has submitted his resignation as a Director on our Executive Board due to

health concerns. David has been our board for 13 years and has contributed in a variety of ways, as a parliamentarian and numerous committees. I will propose that we make him an honorary Director in appreciation for his many years of service.

"Our Nominating Committee will be carefully scrutinizing potential nominees for election to our board to fill any vacancies. If you are interested in being available for a director position, send a resume of your qualifications to Nominating Chair Neil Ricci at 458 21st Pl., Santa Monica, CA 90402, or call him.



Legislative Update:



Ken Spiker

Ken Spiker, our elected Commissioner, reports that the City has agreed to pay the LACERS Fund the required \$370,186,868 in one payment by July 15. LACERS will now have the opportunity to invest the amount for the full year, instead of receiving the original quarterly payment plan. In exchange, LACERS has agreed

to give the City a \$13 million discount.

Due to economical conditions the LACERS Fund has lost money over the last 12 months. However, the fund is still healthy, and your retirement check is secure.

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 Hal 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!



The Playa Grande Resort pool.



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 2008

Edward Harding, President
Kenneth Spiker, First Vice President
Tom Stemnock, Second Vice President
Hal Danowitz, Secretary
Jerry Bardwell, Treasurer

Committee Chairpersons for 2008

Bob Wilkinson, Audit
Jerry Bardwell, Budget
Hal Danowitz, 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
Neil Ricci, Nominating
Phil Skarin, Parliamentarian

Directors

Michael P. Karsch
Americo Garza
Helen Salgado
Phil Skarin
Dave Wilkins
Jack Mathews
Neil Ricci



Cabo Starts With a Sales Pitch

■ Hal and entourage head to Cabo San Lucas but first attend a sales pitch.

So it was time for our annual trip to our timeshare in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. We bought our timeshare at the Playa Grande Resort a few years ago. Our timeshare week is around spring break, and we usually take the three grandkids with us. Our daughter's in-laws (Effie and Pierre) also bought a unit that adjoins ours, and together we can handle the three of them.

This year was different, as our week didn't match up with spring break. So it was going to be just Evelyn, myself and Effie and Pierre. I wasn't sure we would have enough to do without the kids.

Cabo San Lucas is approximately 1,100 miles south of Los Angeles at the tip of the Baja California Peninsula. The best way to get there is to fly, but if you really want to drive, you can take the two-lane Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas Transpeninsular Highway, which opened in 1973.

Los Cabos is two distinct areas: Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo, two vastly different towns, separated by the 20-mile tourist corridor on the Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez).

We flew down on a Saturday on Mexicana Airlines and, unlike last year, our plane was on time; we arrived and cleared immigration

and customs without problems. I had made a reservation for a car to pick us up and take us to the resort. I stopped at one of the information desks to ask where we might find our car and driver and was immediately hit with an offer of a timeshare presentation. We had been through this before and really didn't want to do it, but after they offered a dinner cruise, which we had wanted to go on, and two \$100 dinner certificates, we decided to do it. It was scheduled for Sunday morning. We had to put \$40 per couple to guarantee we would attend and which would be refunded to us after the presentation. They told us the presentation would take about three hours, including travel time and a brunch. For the four of us we received approximately \$700 worth of stuff. I found out later that the upscale timeshare properties budget approximately \$1,200 per couple, and what the salesperson doesn't give you they get to keep. I guess we sold out too cheaply.

We found our car and driver and began the 40-minute drive from the airport. The driver asked if we wanted to stop at Costco and pick up a few things, and we thought it was a great idea. We got water, beer, sandwich ingredients and a few snacks.

The Playa Grande Resort was at the far



Hal, Evelyn, Effie and Pierre.

end of Cabo San Lucas, almost at the tip of the peninsula. Its beach was on the Pacific side and was not good for swimming, but with four swimming pools, it wasn't an issue. We each had a one-bedroom unit that slept five people. Each unit had two full bathrooms and a full kitchen with a purified water system. This year they added wireless Internet access. There were a number of restaurants either on the property or nearby, and there's a very good spa. We were far enough off the beaten track for it to be quiet, but close enough to walk into the main area of Cabo San Lucas.

We checked in, and the bellman brought our baggage and Costco supplies to our rooms. After we unpacked, we decided to walk into town and have dinner. Last year we found a number of good restaurants on Hidalgo Street, a short walk from the resort. As we were walking up the street, there were hawkers trying to get us to come to their restaurant. The hawker in front of Pancho's Restaurant and Tequila Bar (Hidalgo and Zapata) offered a free beer with dinner, an offer I couldn't refuse. We had eaten there last year and we liked the food, so it was not a surprise that we enjoyed the food this year.

On Sunday morning, we were up early to meet our driver, who was to take us to the presentation at the Grand Mayan in San Jose del Cabo. We had to walk to the main road because the driver wasn't allowed to pick us up at our resort. We were told the driver's name and to make sure it was he and not someone else who would take us to a different presentation. When we got to the main street, there were at least 15 to 20 drivers



Evelyn on the beach in front of the Playa Grande Resort.



waiting to pick up people. We found our driver and drove about 40 minutes to the Grand Mayan Resort. At the resort we were welcomed and matched with a sales person who happened to be a very nice young lady.

Our next stop was breakfast at one of the better breakfast buffets that I have had. There was lots of food and small talk as we ate, but there was nothing about buying a timeshare or, as they like to call it, a "vacation interval." You have to understand that the four of us had no intension of buying another unit, and we were only there for the free gifts. Our plan was to eat breakfast, see the resort and then leave as quickly as possible. The sales person's intent was to sell us a unit and to keep us there until she had.

The resort was very pretty; the grounds were landscaped beautifully, with a number of swimming pools and beach access. The units were well done, but their one-bedroom units had only one bathroom, while ours at the Playa Grande had two.

After the tour we went to the sales room for the pitch, and she went through a number of different purchase plan options, none of which interested us at all. We were now about three hours into this presentation with no end in sight. When we finally convinced her that we were not interested, she brought over her boss, who also gave it a try. We then got his boss. By this time we had seen so many pricing options that we couldn't keep them straight. Finally we told them we were leaving, and they agreed. Our last stop was a debriefing by a manger who wanted to know why we didn't buy. He then offered us another type of package, where you could buy just a number of interval weeks, and they even offered us a free cruise. After our final "no," we rode back to the main building where we got our gifts. We received four sunset cruise dinners and two \$100 restaurant certificates, plus our \$80 cash back. By the time we got back to our resort, we had been gone at least seven hours and were exhausted. We all promised not to do this again, but I had a feeling that next year we would, anyway, even though Evelyn said no! If you can withstand the sales pressure, it is a good way to save money on your trip.

We spent the whole next day by the pool recovering from our presentation experience. In the evening, we walked into town along the Marina. We have eaten at most of the restaurants in the area, and they are too touristy. We were looking for a hamburger and finally picked the Hard Rock Café. The food was good, but the service was very slow and the loud rock music made it too noisy to talk.

After dinner we walked around the shopping center and stopped for ice cream. The shops were mostly upscale, with prices aimed towards the tourists.

As this was not spring break, we found the area much less crowded and not full of partying twenty-somethings everywhere.

More on Cabo next month.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Two Kinds of Walls

Walls are usually part of a structure that provides support for a floor above, or separate one room from another.

But there are also walls we can build. Some walls can provide support to people who are burdened with heavy loads, and walls that provide safety and security.

There are also walls we erect to separate us from people who have different religious or political views are of a different racial group are of a different social status are ill or handicapped.

When you are building walls, try to build one that provide support, not separation.

— Phil Skarin



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	Michael Karsch x704	Neil Ricci x714
Phil Skarin x709	Jerry Bardwell x706	Helen Salgado x713

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Jim Dodds was the popular manager of the Balboa and Encino Golf Courses in Van Nuys for many years. He just retired.

Bill Schbert spent three weeks in China, including Hong King and Shanghai, and nine days on a river-boat up the Yangtze River.

Hilton J. "Paa" Brodie plays in two orchestras, and is taking two teaching courses in calculus and Einstein's theory.

Bob Packard does consulting on the Plate Boundary Observatory project.

Leon Mikulchik writes: "Thanks to you for the services you've provided to retirees over the years."

Dennis Harding writes: "Thanks for all the work you and the others do."

Shirley Horton, retired librarian, passed away March 12. She had been a member of my church and had served as the librarian.

Neil Ricci and Rosemary Walker took a two-week vacation to Russia in June, beginning in Moscow. Then took a river cruise up the Volga and several smaller rivers, ending in St. Petersburg. They had a small cabin on the third deck of a cruise ship. During three days in Moscow they visited Red Square, the Kremlin, the subway system (very beautifully decorated with marble tile. Huge brass chandeliers and art work), Gum (a famous department store) and numerous churches. "One evening we attended a concert where traditional folk instruments were used." To be continued ...

An information sheet titled "**Upon the Death of a Retired City Employee**" is available by sending A.S.A.S.E. to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA. 91411.

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit our Website at www.rlacei.com to find the latest news. You can also e-mail us at rlacei@verizon.net

If you change your address, notify Helen Salgado, Membership Chair at 800-678-2145 x 713, or write to her at 8371 Arnett Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647. Also notify LACERS and the Club.

The Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System is at 360 E. Second St., Los Angeles, CA 90012, 2nd Floor. Phone: (213) 473-7200 or (800) 779-8328. Contact them to arrange Direct Deposit of your retirement check, change your tax withholding or beneficiary, or for questions about your health plans.

Poetry Contest: The 14th annual Poetry Contest will be held this year. Choose a style or subject that will be of interest to retirees. There will be separate categories for members and spouses and family members. Send typed entries, including your address, phone, and category to Phil Skarin by October 15 to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411. There will be valuable prizes.

If you have news about yourself or other retirees that you'd like to share, send it to Phil Skarin, or call him on the Helpline.