

For Retired Club Members



# The Best Years

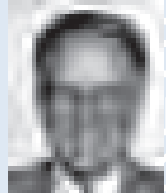
## City Retiree Associations:

### DWP Retirees Association



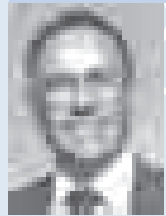
**Dolores Foley, President**  
Phone: (626) 445-7376  
E-mail: vinmar@altrionet.com

### 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:

**Dec. 4: Christmas Party, noon at the Grace E. Simons Lodge, 1025 Elysian Park Dr. Thomas Guide, p.594 F6. For reservations, call a week ahead to (800) 678-4145, x701.**

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

RLACEI:

## News of 2009 Changes, And Ella Garza's Passing



By Phil Skarin,  
RLACEI Publicity Chair

### President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"It is with great sorrow that I write about the passing of Ella Garza, wife of Americo Garza, Director and Chair of our Entertainment Committee. For many years, Ella has been of great help to our organization. When we needed someone to serve at our luncheons, cover our tables or make coffee for our group, Ella was always there to do the work. We are all going to miss her greatly.

"Ella was born in Los Angeles June 17, 1923, the only girl in a family with four boys. She was named Ella Marie Gasio. At the age of 13, she and her family moved to Mexico. She quickly fell in love with the country, and

changed one lucky man's life forever, for the better, when she fell in love with Americo Garza.

"Ella and Americo were married in 1945. After the birth of their first-born son, Rick, they returned to the United States, and in 1960 moved to their home in Downey, where they raised four children. In 1971 they celebrated the birth of their first grandson, and in 2004, they became great grandparents. All told, they have six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

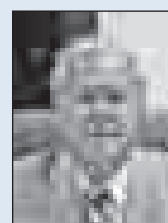
"Ella was a great seamstress, loved children and loved to go Christmas shopping with her daughter, Elsa. She worked with

Claret Ville, which helps an orphanage for girls in Mexico.

"Our heartfelt sympathies go to Americo Garza, who has been a Director on our Executive Board since 1995 and has made valuable contributions to our organization.

"I look forward to seeing you at our Christmas Party on Dec. 4 at noon at the Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park. Please RSVP by calling (800) 678-4145 ext. 701. You may bring a guest. A light lunch will be served. Free taxi service is available from the parking areas, and there will be door prizes. Come early!"

### Legislative Update:



Ken Spiker

Ken Spiker, our Legislative Representative, reports: "As your elected Commissioner representing retirees on the LACERS Board of Administration, I want to report and update you on our following achievements:

"As of July 1, all Retired Members or their beneficiaries received the maximum three percent Cost of Living Allowance. If you look back, you will see that the Board has approved the maximum three percent for the last three years.

"Another increase that is important to all Retired Members on LACERS health plans is the increase in the maximum health subsidy amount, from \$1,022 per month this plan year to \$1,120 for 2009.

"This is an increase of \$98, or 9.6 percent. Other upgrades in LACERS health plans for 2009 is the introduction of MetLife as the new dental PPO, replacing Wellpoint Blue Cross Dental PPO. The new MetLife plan offers a dental implant benefit, a benefit

previously not available, covering implants at 50 percent of cost.

"LACERS will soon be providing a new computer program, whereby retirees can access their personal LACERS file. Information will be available for us to double-check beneficiaries, payroll deductions, health plans, etc. LACERS will notify us when the program is ready, and then tell us how to use it. Your file will be available only to you and no other retiree."

### RLACEI Website

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit the RLACEI Website at [www.rlacei.com](http://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



Hal and Evelyn at the southernmost point in the Continental United States.



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
• Michael Karsch	Ext. 704
• Jerry Bardwell	Ext. 706
• Harold Danowitz	Ext. 707
• Jack Mathews	Ext. 712
• Helen Salgado (membership)	Ext. 713
• Americo Garza	Ext. 710
• Tom Stemnock	Ext. 708

**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  
Tom Stemnock, Audit  
Americo Garza, Picnic  
Americo Garza, Holiday Party and Installation  
Jack Mathews, Senior Citizens  
Neil Ricci, Health  
Neil Ricci, Nominating  
Phil Skarin, Parliamentarian

### Directors

Michael Karsch  
Americo Garza  
Helen Salgado  
Phil Skarin  
Jack Mathews  
Neil Ricci



# Going the Way of Hemingway

■ Hal and Evelyn travel to Florida to celebrate an aunt's 100th birthday.

In early March, my wife, Evelyn, received an email from a cousin in Florida about a 100th birthday party for her Aunt Katherine. Aunt Katherine is Evelyn's mother's oldest and last surviving sister. Being such a special occasion, we decided to make the trip, even though it meant going to Florida in August.

The party was in Miami on Saturday, so we decided to fly down on Tuesday and go to Key West for a few days and then attend the party and return to Los Angeles the next Monday. We have been to Miami a number of times and have been as far south as Key Largo, but I always wanted to go to Key West.

We flew out on American Airlines and arrived in Miami pretty much on time. To me, Miami has one of the worst airports in the country, and this trip did nothing to change my mind. The wait for our luggage was almost one hour, and then waiting for the bus to take us to the Hertz office was almost as long. When we arrived at Hertz office, they were out of cars, and they said we would have to wait about a half-hour for a car. This didn't seem so bad, considering the number of people who were already in the office waiting. Luckily we only waited about 10 minutes, and we got our car and started our drive south to Key West.

Key West (population 25,000), which is closer to Havana, Cuba (90 miles) than to Miami (150 miles), is the southern-most point in the United States. It has known many stages; in 1889 it was the richest city in America per capita, and in the 1930s it declared bankruptcy.

Old Town is the heart of the city, and it is bisected by Duval Street, called the longest main street in the world because it goes from coast to coast – from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico.

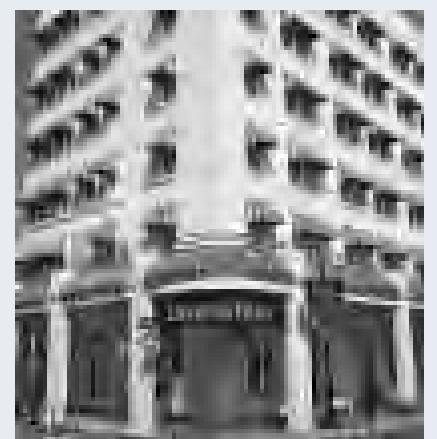
The drive to Key West took about three-and-a-half hours and was quite scenic. The road, for the most part, has two lanes, and the speed limit keeps changing from 45 mph to the maximum of 55 mph. I had heard stories about speed traps along the way, so we were very careful to stay within the speed limit.

I had no idea of where to stay in Key West, and the first hotel I picked out was

by the airport, which was about as far away from Old Town as you could get. Doing a little research, I discovered that all of the attractions and nightlife were centered in Old Town and around or on Duval Street. After getting some advice from our cousins, Myrna and Don, we selected the La Concha Hotel (430 Duval St.). The La Concha was built in 1926 and was the first luxury hotel in Key West. Over the years it has been upgraded and remodeled to keep up with the times. While the rooms were small compared to newer hotels, they were very comfortable, and the bathrooms had been remodeled. But the best of all was its location. The hotel is right in the middle of the activities on Duval Street and in Old Town. Once we parked our car in the hotel lot, we just walked for the rest of our stay. Parking is very difficult and, when found, very expensive. There was a daily charge at the hotel, but it was worth it.

We got to the hotel about 9 p.m., and after checking in we had a quick bite in Jack's Seafood Shack, attached to the hotel. Because of the time change it still felt early, so we took a walk going north on Duval Street toward the Gulf of Mexico. I was unprepared for the activity of the street. There were people everywhere --

young people, older people and many families. I heard many different languages because Key West is a prime destination for Europeans. It reminded us of a combination of Bourbon Street in New Orleans, Cabo San Lucas, and Maui, all rolled into one. It is five blocks to the north end of Duval Street from our hotel, and each block had restaurants, bars with music blasting, and more souvenir shops that even Evelyn needed. I couldn't wait until the next day to start exploring the area.



La Concha Hotel.



The Little White House.





I had been worried because August is hurricane season in Florida, but even though Tropical Storm Fay was forming off the coast of Africa, we had clear skies and temperatures in the high 80s, with very high humidity while we in Key West. Fay finally caught up to us in Miami, but I'll save that for the end of the story.

The next morning we had breakfast at Starbuck's and then walked south on Duval Street for about 10 blocks until we reached the Atlantic Ocean. Along the way we saw that this end of Duval was not quite as active as the north end. Once we reached the ocean we walked one block west to Whitehead Street, the southernmost point in the Continental United States, and asked a couple from England to take our picture in front of the landmark. I reciprocated by taking their picture.

Walking north along Whitehead Street, our first stop was the Hemingway Home and Museum (907 Whitehead St.), where Ernest Hemingway lived and wrote for more than 10 years during the 1930s. It is open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children.

You can wander through the house and grounds on your own or take a 45-minute guided tour, included with the price of admission. The grounds are home to approximately 60 cats and include a number of six-toed cats that are the descendants of a cat given to Hemingway by a ship's captain.

Cater-corner from the Hemingway House is the Key West Lighthouse Museum (938 Whitehead St.), built in 1847 to replace the original wooden tower on Whitehead Point that was destroyed by a hurricane. The lighthouse location is 14 feet above sea level and is constructed of brick. It was originally 66 feet high, but in 1894, 20 additional feet were added. You can climb the 88 steps to the balcony and have a spectacular 360-degree view of the island and surrounding waters. We both made the climb, and I will have to admit that I'm not as young as I think I am. I had to stop a few times to catch my breath, but I did make it to the top.

You can also tour the Light Keepers Quarters that was built in 1887 and houses the museum's collection of artifacts and the maritime history of the Keys. It is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and costs \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

After lunch at the Grand Café (314 Duval St.), we walked to Mallory Square, at the north end of Duval Street. It has a



A lighthouse.



Evelyn at Hemingway's House.



Evelyn and her new best friend.



Hal and his new best friend.

number of tourist attractions that we would visit the next day.

We spent the rest of the afternoon relaxing around the pool at the hotel and then had dinner at Kelly's Caribbean Bar (301 Whitehead St.), where we ate on an open patio. The weather was mild, and I thought the food was pretty good.

After dinner, we walked around Duval Street and then over to the Marina, where there are a large number of restaurants and bars.

In the morning, I felt like having a real breakfast, so we stopped in at the Flamingo Café (703 Duval St.). The food and the service were great, and I enjoyed having grits again.

One of the places that were on my list to visit was the Harry S Truman Little White House (111 Front St.). From 1946 to 1952, President Truman used the house 175 days as both a retreat and functioning White House. The house was built in 1890 by the U.S. Navy to house the base commander, and is on a Navy base that dates back to the late 19th century. After it became the Little White House, it was remodel to better suit the President, but it still retained a very homey atmosphere. Whenever the President was there, the Presidential yacht was anchored offshore to provide communications with Washington and also to provide all the food preparation. The house's kitchen was too small and poorly equipped. The house is still used by the government, and almost every President since Truman has stayed in the house. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children. This includes a guided tour and a visit to the small museum. We both enjoyed the Little White House. It gave a lot of insight into President Truman.

Our next stop was the Key West aquarium (Mallory Square), built in 1934 as Key

West's first tourist attraction. The 50,000-gallon exhibit gives visitors a view of many native species, including game fish, tropical fish, lobsters, alligators, sea turtles and birds. The aquarium has a large touch tank, where you can interact with number of creatures that don't bite. Ticket prices are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children.

Instead of lunch, we decided to just have dessert, which in Key West that means Key lime pie. I have had key lime pie in a number of places and just recently in Los Angeles, and I thought it was like lemon meringue pie. The real key lime pie is not like that; it is more of a stiff pudding with whipped cream top and is served very cold. To be honest I liked the other version better.

On the walk back to the hotel, we did our shopping for T-shirts for the grandkids and bought a few things for ourselves.

This was our last night in Key West, and I wanted to make sure we had a good dinner, so I asked the hotel concierge to recommend a good seafood restaurant. He made a reservation for us at A&B Lobster House (700 Front St.). We had a great dinner: I had hogfish, which I had never had before, and Evelyn had grouper, which is native to the area. It was a great way to end our visit to Key West.

The next day we drove back to Miami for the 100th birthday festivities. We had a great time visiting with relatives, and they really treated us well. The weather was starting to turn as Tropical Storm Fay was getting ready to hit the southern part of Florida.

During our drive to the airport on Tuesday it was raining, but our flight left on time and we arrived by in Los Angeles happy that we made the trip.

## RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

**Ben and Betty Pratt** celebrated 66 years of marriage June 5.

**Phil and Miriam Skarin** will celebrate 58 years of marriage Nov. 18.

**Jack Jordan** retired in 1980 after 30 years with the DWP and Airports. Last year he was mugged and developed a hematoma, which required brain surgery. He lives in Crown Point Assisted Living Facility in Corona.

**Dean Lawrence** retired in 1987 from Building and Safety. His hobbies are photography and flying. He is still an active pilot. He raised three children in his first marriage, and four more in his second marriage after his retirement. He is hoping for a change that will provide his new wife with a retirement income after his death.

**Glen (Mac) McCloskey** retired in 1988 from Airports after 22 years of City service. Four months after retirement, he suffered a major stroke, leaving him paralyzed on the right side. He then assisted other stroke victims and their families by giving motivational speeches and counseling. He is still able to drive and has driven his RV to Alaska and has revisited the beaches of Normandy and the WWII memorials in Washington, D.C. "Travel and volunteering" must be a great motto for a retiree.

**Rosalie Jackson** is a fine example of a widow of a retiree. She has been active in church and charity work, loves gardening and has traveled to Brazil, Turkey, Vietnam, Spain, Costa Rica, Australia, South Africa, China and Russia. She exercises three times a week to keep in good health.

**Russ Bennett** has had six different jobs in his 25 years of retirement. He enjoys traveling. He lives with his son in St. George, Utah. The whole family is involved with the St. George Musical Theater. His son has had the lead in about 10 productions and is the music critic for the local paper.

**These members have expressed appreciation** for this column, my poetry and the efforts of RLACEI on behalf of retirees: Lorraine Anderson, Douglas Nakamura, Irene Gochean and Selma Hasiganian. Thank you.

Hal Danowitz asks you to visit our Website at [www.rlacei.com](http://www.rlacei.com) to find out the latest news. You can also e-mail us at [rlacei@verizon.net](mailto:rlacei@verizon.net).

**If you change your address**, notify Helen Salgado, Membership Chair, at (800) 678-4145 x 713, or write her at 8372 Arnett Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647. Also notify LACERS, ACEBSA, LAFUCU and the City Employees Club.

**If you have news about yourself, or other retirees** that you'd like to

# You're Invited!



The RLACEI's annual Christmas Party and Installation of Officers is scheduled for noon Wednesday, Dec. 4 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: (800) 678-4145, x701. 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

Wednesday,  
Dec. 4, 12 noon

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

## LACERS

### ■ Open Enrollment Thru Nov. 15

LACERS has announced that the open enrollment period for health plans lasts until Nov. 15 to make any additions or changes to your plans.

The Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System is at 360 E. Second St., second floor, Los Angeles, Ca 90012. Phone: (213) 473-7200 or (800) 779-8328. E-mail is [www.lacers.org](http://www.lacers.org). Contact them to arrange direct deposit; change your tax withholding or beneficiary; or for questions about your health plans.



## LACERS

### ■ Economy Not Affecting Benefits

Because of the market's volatility, many Los Angeles City Employees' Retirement System (LACERS) Members have wondered if their benefits are affected. LACERS Members have a defined benefit plan. The Retirement benefit is calculated by a formula (based on age, service and highest final average salary) as defined in the Los Angeles Administrative Code.

If you are a LACERS Member, your monthly allowance is *not* affected by market fluctuations.

Information: Christal Chacon, LACERS: (213) 978-6840.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

## Take It Off

*Conformity in our society is considered to be a virtue.  
Don't make waves. Don't be different from the crowd.*

*So, in order to conform to variety of situations,  
We develop a Virtual Wardrobe of conformity clothes—*

*A suit for the office*

*A suit for social life,*

*A suit for Church, and*

*A suit for politics.*

*But, we've each been created with our own uniqueness, skills and talents.*

*How can we be true to ourselves and others*

*If we pretend to be someone we're not?*

*Be proud of who you really are. If you always show your  
true self, it'll help us relate more honestly to you.*

*So, if you're wearing a conformity suit,*

*Take it off!*

— 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  
Harold Danowitz x707  
Phil Skarin x709

Jack Matthews x712  
Michael Karsch x704  
Jerry Bardwell x706  
Tom Stemnock x708

Americo Garza x710  
Neil Ricci x714  
Helen Salgado x713



# Retiree Question of the Month

*Alive!* asked retirees...

## What are you most thankful for?

# The Best Years



"Being happy!"  
- Rose Torres, wife of Julian Torres



"Waking up every morning, my great family and being retired from the City and getting a pension."  
- Charlie B. Lavender, Retired from Public Works/Street Services after 30 years



"Being alive and healthy!"  
- Julian Torres, retired from Building and Safety after 15 years



"Being alive and that the Russians are out of Georgia."  
- John Bogdanoff, Retired from Rec and Parks after 35 years



"That I'm up and walking and vertical, for my good health and for my family."  
- Quintel Webb, Retired from Public Works/Street Services after 30 years



"For my great physical and mental abilities, and especially for being married to Eva for 64 years!"  
- George V. Lopez, Retired from Planning after 31 years



"Family and friends."  
- Rene O'Malley



"For my health, for being retired and not having to work."  
- Robert Howard, Retired from the Convention Center after 38 years



"Being alive!"  
- Wilma Reebe, LAPD



"My kids and grandkids!"  
- Tony Alvarez, retired from General Services after 28 years

## Life's Important Moments

# Share Your Good News!



Everyone reads Life's Most Important Moments in **Alive!** Share your news... and send in a photo! Have you gotten married? Had a baby? Graduated? Has someone in your family had a quinceañera? Is a family member in the military? Send in a photo and a paragraph, telling us the details. We love to share your good news.

### We're looking for:

- Weddings
- Babies
- Graduations
- Quinceañeras
- Special Achievements
- **Alive!** in the Military

Send digital photos (as high a resolution as you can send) to: [moments@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:moments@cityemployeesclub.com)  
OR send paper photos (please don't send the only one you have!) to:

Life's Moments - **Alive!**  
City Employees Club of Los Angeles  
120 W. 2nd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

