

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:

April 9: General membership meeting at the Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr.

June 2: Retirees golf tournament at the Alhambra Municipal Gold Course.

RLACEI:

Budget Shortfall Could Affect City Employment

President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"We had our annual Christmas party at the Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park Dec. 4. We filled the lodge. Chris & Pitts served barbecued beef and turkey sandwiches, cold slaw, fruit salad and carrot cake.

"We had a great raffle thanks to: LACERS, which furnished 20 ten-dollar bills; John Hawkins of the City Employees Club, who raffled off nine \$25 gift certificates and two City wristwatches; and RLACEI, which gave away 10 20-dollar bills and 10 boxes of See's Candy.

"I wish to thank LACERS for

allowing Assistant General Manager Tom Moutes to install our officers and for providing three experts to answer questions about our Health Plans.

"Thanks also to Ken Spiker and Associates for arranging for taxi service to help many up the hill to the lodge from the parking area. Beth Figuls, editor of *El Pueblo*, also attended.

"Lana Hayak and her assistant did a great job of entertaining us with Christmas songs. She is a lovely gal.

"Our next membership event will be on April 9, which will be our

first general membership meeting of 2009. It will be held again at the Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr., just east of Los Feliz Boulevard. This place is so much nicer than the Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Senior Center, where we used to meet.

"Phil Skarin informed me that our annual retirees golf tournament will again be at the Alhambra Municipal Gold Course in Alhambra Tuesday, June 2. Thanks to Phil and Tom Stemnock for putting on a great tournament every year."



By Phil Skarin,
RLACEI Publicity Chair

Legislative Update:



Ken Spiker

Michael Karsch, filling in for Ken Spiker, reports: "Cities all over the nation are facing severe cutbacks due to falling sales tax revenue and other local tax decliners. The City of Los Angeles is facing a deficit of

\$110 million by the end of the current fiscal year, with a larger deficit likely for the upcoming fiscal year.

"The Mayor has asked all City departments to submit two budget proposals by Dec. 8, 2008, one that is flat with the current fiscal year, and another that shows a 6 percent or 9 percent reduction, depending on department size. The mayor has said this may result in layoffs, and he wants suggested strategies to encourage voluntary workforce reductions. This could mean furloughs or buy-

outs of employees who been on the payroll for a minimum number of years.

"The City of Sacramento is considering implementing a citywide buyout program for any employee with at least five years service. It would be voluntary and would be based on one week of pay for every year the employee has worked for Sacramento, the maximum payout being \$50,000. The Sacramento City Council was set to vote on this proposal Dec. 9, 2008. The unions are in agreement with the proposal. While neither of these issues in Los Angeles or Sacramento affect retirees in either city, these tight fiscal times will lead to review of ways to cut the budget in every corner of government.

"The City Council voted to put on the March 3, 2009, election ballot a charter amendment that will change the Fire and Police Pension System to allow their retirees to provide a pension for a surviving spouse who the member had married

after retirement.

"The member would take a reduction in their pension to fund this new benefit. If it passes, we will ask the Council to amend the Administrative Code to provide similar benefits to members of LACERS."

The 2008 Retirees Poetry Contest winners are (Members):

- *First place:* Frances A. Cota-Schulz
- *Second place:* Marcella Butler; and
- *Third place:* Micaela Alvarez.

All of the winners received cash prizes for very worthy efforts.

An information sheet titled "What to do upon the death of a Retired City Employee" is available by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to Phil Skarin, 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411-3910.

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.

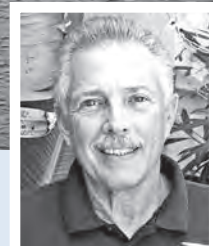
Contact LACERS

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 Chicago skyline from the Navy Pier.

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 Stenmoeck	Ext. 708
• Mary Beetz	Ext. 711

DWP Retirement Plan Office: (213) 367-1722

RLACEI:

Officers for 2009

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

Committee Chairpersons for 2009

Bob Wilkinson, Audit
Jerry Bardwell, Budget
Hal Danowitz, Bylaws
Ken Spiker, Legal and Legislative
Helen Salgado, Membership
Phil Skarin, Publicity
Tom Stenmoeck and Phil Skarin, Golf
Tom Stenmoeck, 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



Beef, Beer and Bugs

■ Part 2: Hal and Evelyn continue their drive to Michigan for his 50th high school reunion.

Evelyn and I took a three-week road trip on our way to my 50th high school reunion in Lansing, Mich. We took a more southern route on the way there and the northern route on the way home. So far we have traveled from Los Angeles to Arizona and New Mexico. During the trip, Evelyn and I kept a daily log, which we e-mailed to friends, and I have decided to share this log with you to tell the tale of our trip. We left off last month in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Day 3 – Sept. 19

Today we drove from Santa Fe to Oklahoma City, about 530 miles. We stopped only to get gas and for Evelyn to see the Cadillac Farm on the west side of Amarillo, Tex. The Cadillac Farm features 12 late 1950s/early '60s Cadillacs stuck in the ground, tail up. I first saw them in 1963 on my way to L.A. They are now covered with graffiti. People come to add graffiti, and we saw some "artists" while we were there.



The Cadillac Farm.

The weather has been very good – starting in Arizona it was hot, but since then it has been in the low 80s and we had only a little rain outside of Albuquerque.

To back up for a moment, on the drive to Santa Fe we ran into the motorcade of (then) Senator Barack Obama, but luckily it was on the other side of the interstate. There must have been 50 motorcycle cops escorting him. Talk about tying up traffic and wasting gas.

And, just as a point of information – you may have read about the government study on cows always pointing north when in the pastures. Well, in Texas and Oklahoma, the cows point every which way, mostly toward what they are eating. That study was more of our tax money at work. We will continue to update you on

the cow study as we travel.

Evelyn became a very efficient interstate driver. This took some work on my part, but I have knocked off the hard edges, and she is now thinking of coming out of retirement to become a long-haul trucker.

We had dinner at the Cattlemen's Café, the best steakhouse in Oklahoma City. It's in the stockyard area and has continually operated since 1910. It's a real slice of Oklahoma.



Hal and Evelyn at the Cattlemen's Café.

Before we left Oklahoma City, we did a little sightseeing.

Day 4 – Sept. 20

Evelyn wanted to go to the Alfred P. Murrah Building. She had been there after the bombing [perpetrated on April 19, 1995, for which Timothy McVeigh was convicted – Ed.], but before the Oklahoma City National Memorial was built. Evelyn said: "It's a very moving experience, with a reflecting pond and facing the pond a chair for each casualty of the explosion – organized by floor, with small chairs for the children. Take a hanky; it's very emotional."



Chairs at the Oklahoma City National Memorial.

On to Kansas City: The drive from Oklahoma City to Kansas City, Mo. is very



Oklahoma City National Memorial.

flat. We saw a lot of signs that warned us to "watch out for deer," but we didn't see any actual deer. We killed a million bugs on our windshield, but we never saw a sign about them.

We drove about 345 miles that day, and we were making good time until we hit a traffic jam just outside of Kansas City, which cost us about an hour. The car's GPS was finally able to find a way around the problem and got us to the Hilton in Independence, Mo., about 20 miles east of Kansas City. We stayed in Independence, as it is close to the Truman Library and home, which were destinations later in the week.

That evening we drove back into Kansas City to go to the Country Club Plaza's art festival. This is a three-day event, and there were a lot of people. We were able to find a free parking place after looking for a while. There were food stands, lots of entertainment and as many artist displaying (from all over the world) than I have seen in one place. We ate dinner from the food stands and walked around for about an hour, but it was too crowded for me.

Day 5 – Sept. 21

We drove back to Kansas City from Independence to visit the World War I Museum. It is built under the original Liberty Memorial (built in 1926), and the museum opened a couple of years ago. It has a very extensive collection of WWI items and is laid out well. After we finished with the museum, we took the elevator to the top of the monument, where you get a great view of Kansas City. We spent about two-and-a-half hours at the museum.

Our next stop was the Harry S Truman Presidential Library, back in

ADVENTURES with HAL!



Evelyn in front of the Truman Library in Independence, Mo.

Independence. The main part of the library is about Truman's presidential years, and the lower part is about his life. There is a replica of the Oval Office and also the actual gravesites of both Truman and his wife, Bess. On the way back to the hotel, we drove by Truman's home.

That night we had dinner with some



The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City.

friends from Kansas City. We ate at Jack Stack Barbecue. The dinner was good – not the best barbecue I've eaten, but a place I would return to if I lived in Kansas City. Evelyn and I both enjoyed the time with friends.

Day 6 – Sept. 22

We got on the road about 8:45 a.m. and drove straight through to Champaign, Ill., stopping only to refuel and eat the leftover ribs. We left the interstate and drove on US 54, a two-lane highway going through every small town between Kansas City and Champaign – but it was a change of pace and interesting to see small-town America. We covered 379 miles that day and arrived at the Hilton at 3:45 p.m.

We met my cousin and his wife for dinner.

Day 7 – Sept. 23

Last night we had dinner with my cousin and his wife and daughter. He is the son of my Uncle Hy, who was my father's youngest brother. My aunt and uncle took care of me while I attended the University of Toledo. They passed away a few years ago. Champaign is a collage town (University of Illinois), and it seems unaffected by the current economic problems.

It is a short drive to Chicago (two hours) and we took our time that morning. We were to be in Chicago for two days.

Evelyn called a cousin she has not seen since she was 11, and we had dinner with them that night in Niles, about a 30-minute drive from our hotel. I think they were suspicious when Evelyn called them, but they finally understood who she was. She wanted to give them a picture of them taken in 1955. We think they are in their 80s.

The drive to Chicago was an easy two

hours. Gas prices in Illinois were higher than home – more than \$4.10 per gallon for regular. It was 80 cents less in Missouri.

We stayed at the Seneca Hotel. We had a queen-size room, more like a small apartment with a full kitchen. The location was great – one block from west end of Michigan Avenue. We were next to the John Hancock building.

We checked in about 2 p.m. and took a long walk down Michigan Avenue, stopping at Starbucks for a snack.

We drove out to Niles to have dinner with Evelyn's cousins. Because of the traffic we gave ourselves an hour, and we needed it all because the GPS got confused due to all the new construction. This became apparent when I went through the same tollbooth twice. But we found the restaurant (Omega). When you walk in, the first things you see are many large display cases filled with pastries. The powdered sugar was a half-inch thick.

Dinner was going back to the 1950s – large portions of middle-American food – with some Greek and Jewish food thrown in for good measure. It was great meeting them, and I think they enjoyed it, too.

Okay: Why is it called it a king-size bed? Shouldn't it be a presidential-size in the United States and the queen-size should be vice-presidential-size or maybe



Hal and Evelyn at the Michigan state capital building.

lights come on. We then had dinner at Mike Ditka's – it was a short walk from our hotel. Evelyn and I split a tomahawk steak (30 ounces), and we still had too much food.

Day 8 – Sept. 25

Took our time that morning and left Chicago about 10:15 a.m. for the 230-mile drive to Lansing. On the way we stopped in Battle Creek, Mich., where I was born, and took a picture of my old house.

We stayed at the Marriott in East Lansing and had a great room, but they charged \$10 a day for Internet. Just outside of the hotel was a free Internet access site, which I attempted to use. So far everywhere we have been has offered free Internet. I'll hold out as long as I can. Good news – I was able to get on the East Lansing free site from our room.

We had dinner at an Irish pub a short walk from the hotel. East Lansing is a college town and the home of Michigan State University (the largest land grant college in the United States). The population is about 45,000, and I think there as many students.

Evelyn and I split a hamburger and shared a basket of fries. I think we have made a turn in life – this is the second meal we split in two days. But we each had our own beer. We decided to spend our saved money on dessert and found a Cold Stone Creamery – it was "make a wish day," and they were giving free ice cream for a donation if you wanted to. Saving money had nothing to do with dessert; Evelyn was going through ice cream withdrawal, and when she saw a familiar establishment, wild horses couldn't keep her away. Giving a donation to the Make a Wish Foundation and the small free portions made it all good.

Day 9 – Sept. 26

That day I gave Evelyn the tour of the Lansing area. We started with breakfast at Theio's. When we walked in they asked if we wanted smoking or non-smoking, but you couldn't tell the difference with all the second-hand smoke. But the breakfast wasn't bad and I didn't even have to split it with Evelyn.

Next we washed the car to get rid of all the dead bugs, and then we picked up our laundry, which we dropped off the night before.

We drove around Lansing and saw the apartment I grew up in; my elementary school, which is now a community center; and some of my old haunts.

I called my friend, Don, and we drove downtown. He walked us around the downtown area. I saw where my father had his shoe store (it's something else now), and the Mr. Peanut Store, which was next to it, is still there. We also walked to the Capital building and did a quick tour on the inside. We were to Don and his wife later.

The current population of Lansing is about 100,000, which is about 25,000 more than when I lived there in the 1950s. If you want to grow up in an idyllic small town, Lansing and East Lansing are it.

We also drove over to the west side of Lansing, which has some lovely homes along the Grand River. The trees were beginning to turn, and some already were a dazzling shade of gold. Later we walked around the Michigan State campus.

Evelyn said: "As a side note, having grown up in a large urban city (Los Angeles), I can see what a special childhood Hal must have had to grow up in such a small town. I can't say it was better, just different, and maybe a little more Norman Rockwell-like."

Next month I will pick up with the next stage of our trip.

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Alex Vidaurrazgya retired a year ago as Division Head of the Structural Engineering Division. He has a real estate brokers license.

Frank Bonoff works as a consultant for Public Works/Engineering writing manuals. He is also taking comedy improv workshops with the Groundings. It is a lot of fun but probably will not be a new career.

Brian Griffith took two trips to Maui and a trip to Las Vegas for the Consumer Electronics Show. He takes classes in film and computers at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Cal State Long Beach.

If you have news about yourself that you'd like to share, send it to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411 or phone (818) 784-0130.

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

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. ("Please include "Are You Planning to Retire Soon")



The City Parties



The new RLACEI Board takes its oath of office from Tom Moutes, LACERS Assistant General Manager. New RLACEI Board Members are (from left): Michael Karsch, Ed Harding (President), Jerry Bardwell, Helen Salgado, Jack Mathews and Mary Beetz.



Entertaining on guitar and vocals was Lina Hayek, and on piano was Gayane Simonyan.



LACERS reps were in force as always. From left: Sarah Hill, Kristal Baldwin and Debra Fleming.



Evelyn Akerman, Public Works/Sanitation, 20 years of service.



RLACEI President Ed Harding.

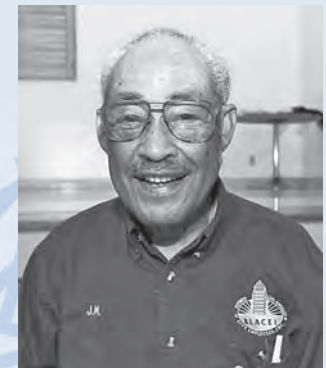
A Retirees Holiday

■ Retirees Assn. hosts annual holiday party.

Story by Robert Larios, Club Director of Operations; Photos by Robert Larios and John Hawkins, Club CEO

RLACEI— The Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) held its annual swearing-in of new officers and holiday party Dec. 4 at the Grace E. Simons Lodge near Dodger Stadium.

The Club thanks the RLACEI leadership for inviting us to their annual festivities!



The "Friendliest Man in the City," Board Member Jack Mathews.



Cathy and Ralph Burquist, Club Member. Ralph retired from General Services in 2004 after 13 years of service.



"The Good Guys" (from left) Americo Garza and Phil Skarin. Both are RLACEI Board Members



From left: Henry Starks, Retired from Street Services, 40 years of service; and Lorenzo Porter, Street Services, 35 years of service.



John Shadle, Retired from Building and Safety, 18 years of service.



From left: Alvin Williams, Retired from the LAFD in 1987; Virginia Williams, Retired from the CAO Office in 1987; and Icle Davis, Retired in 1981 as a Chief, Public Works/Management Employees.



From left: Rosie Delgado, ITA, 33 years of service; and Barbara Williams, Fire and Police Pensions, 29 years of service.



Jose Montes Jr., Rec and Parks, and his mom, Juanita Montes. The late Jose Montes Sr. was Jose's dad and Juanita's husband, and worked for Sanitation until 1984.



From left: Joel Rosen; John Hawkins, Club CEO; and Norma Rosen.



Club Members Les and Sharren Iden. Les was our first contributor to the "Car Club" column in *Alive!* He retired in 2001 as an Assistant General Manager, General Services. Sharren also retired in 2001 as a Senior Management Analyst II, Public Works/Street Services. The Club looks forward to another "Car Club" feature from Les soon!

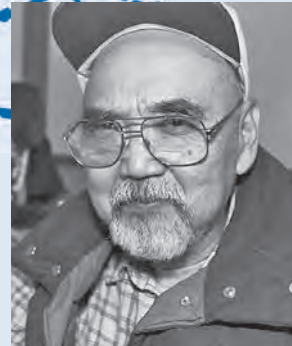
The City Parties



Bill and Nellie Deom, Mayor's Office, 31 years of service.



Helen Salgado and Ed Harding, having fun as usual!



Wayne Kudo, Club Member, retired from Public Works/Engineering in 2001.



Double trouble – (from left) Neil Ricci and Hal Danowitz. Hal, of course, writes *Alive's* "Adventures with Hal" column. Both Neil and Hal are RLACEI Board Members.



Marian and Robert Jacobs, Street Maintenance, 30 years of service.



Sam Hochberg, Retired from Convention Center, Superintendent of Shows, after 35 years of service.



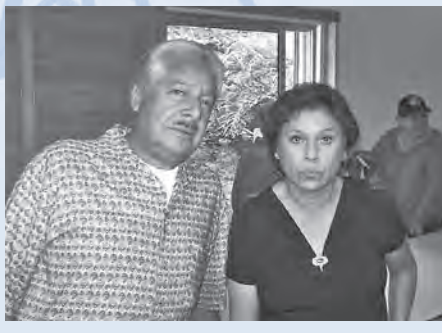
Ben Reyes, a Club Member who retired from the Controller's Office in 2002, pictured with his good friend, Helmar Anderson.



From left: Hilda Husted and Ruth Gaynes. Ruth retired from Public Works in 1958, and Hilda is her friend.



Betty McMaster, ITA, 30 years of service.



From left: Armando Tapia, Public Works/Street Services, 31 years of service, with his wife, Alice.



The illustrious John Bagdanoff with his beautiful "fourth" daughter, Joanne Ortiz.



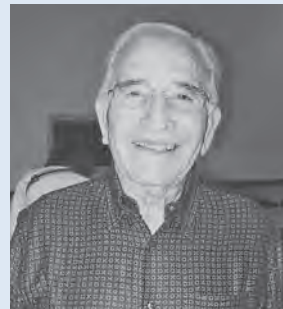
Alice Walder, RLACEI Board Resource Associate.



"The Ladies of the Board" -- (from left) Helen Salgado and Mary Beetz.



Julian and Rose Torres. Julian retired from Building and Safety in 1992 and is a Club Member.



Joe Govea, Building and Safety, 25 years of service.



Fred and Xenia Coleman. Fred retired from Police and Transportation in 1980 and is a Club Member.



From left: Martha Clegg, Retired from Library; Rosa Lee Herrera, Retired from the LAUSD; and Toni Alvarez, who is 94!



Robert Larios, Club Director of Operations, with Martha Harding, wife of RLACEI President Ed Harding.



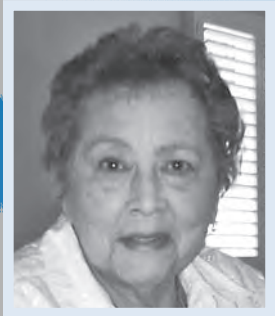
From left: John Hawkins, Club CEO, and RLACEI President Ed Harding.

Retiree Question of the Month

Alive! asked retirees...

If you were given a roundtrip ticket to anywhere in the world, where would you go?

The Best Years



"Rome."
— Rose Torres



"Africa and Egypt, and then I'd head to South Africa."
— James Y.H. Smith



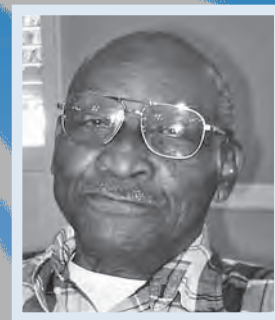
"Europe."
— Laura Ramirez



"Panama Canal."
— Wilma Rebbe



"On an African safari."
— Rene O'Malley



"New York."
— Quintel Webb



"Australia."
— Mary Beetz



"Europe."
— Robert Howard



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Second Chances

A runner, if he "jumps the gun," is given a second chance to start again. In life, we don't always get a second chance to correct mistakes, or undo wrongs,

- keep some unfulfilled promises
- seek forgiveness for wrongdoings
- resolve old grudges, or
- show more love to your neighbor.

Then, after cleaning up any of the leftovers, you can begin with a clean slate.

*Have a Happy New Year!
—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 Stennock x708

Americo Garza x710
Neil Ricci x714
Helen Salgado x713