



## 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

**James R. Wilke, 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 8: Membership Meeting and Luncheon, noon at the Friendship Auditorium.**

**Call (800) 678-4145, ext. 701, for reservations to these events.**

## RLACEI:

# Attempts to Affect Pensions Headed to Calif. Referendum

### President Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"In reading the Fire and Police newsletter, Director Lee Kebler wrote about scary times, and he wasn't talking about Halloween. He was talking about the constant attacks on our pension system, health subsidy and the government initiating a universal health plan that may have devastating effects on our health plans and many other items that could affect our benefits.

"How scary are the attacks on our pension by persons like Paul McCauley and Keith Richmond, authors of several different initiative referendums to take benefits away or charge additional taxes on our pensions? I don't believe that Paul or Keith realize that many of our retirees were laborers and clerks who retired with low income, even below the poverty level, especially the surviving spouses. If they were receiving as

much money as Paul and Keith, they would be glad to pay the additional tax. So, Paul and Keith, lay off trying to hurt our retirees and their families!

"The referendum by Paul McCauley proposes a surtax on pensions for retirees who live in California, and an excise tax on California retirees who live in other states. It is still being circulated for signatures. We hope that it will be like his last referendum and fail to have enough votes to qualify.

"Our next general membership meeting and luncheon will be Thursday, April 8 at the Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr. Director Americo Garza and his committee are planning to make this meeting more interesting so that we will have a better turnout.

I hope everyone has a Happy Holiday and New Year."

### Director Mary Beetz reports:



Mary Beetz

"Form 1099-R: LACERS will mail retired members their IRS Form 1099-R (Distribution From Pensions, Annuities, Retirement, etc.) by the end of

January 2010. Retired members who do not receive their 1099-R by Feb. 15 should contact LACERS as soon as possible to request a new one. Regenerating a 1099-R may require a few working days to process. If you changed residences recently, be sure to contact LACERS to update the address information we have on file.

"Open Enrollment Changes: Any new health plan premium

**LACERS Update,**  
continued Page 43

### Legislative Update, Ken Spiker reports:



Ken Spiker

"I am pleased to report that our Retirement Fund is okay, folks! It's gaining a little and not losing. Our monthly checks are secure.

"The mayor has filled the two vacancies on the LACERS Board. One Commission appointment is Jeffrey J. Penichet. Mr. Penichet has a Bachelor of science degree from the University of Washington and an Master of fine arts degree in film from UCLA. The second appointment is Jerry Bardwell. Mr. Bardwell has a Bachelor of arts degree from UCLA. Mr. Bardwell was the General Manager of LACERS from 1983 to 1991. These appointments are subject to approval by the City Council.

**Survivor Benefits for LACERS Retirees' New Spouses, by Michael Karsch:** "On March 3, 2009, the Police and Fire Pension advocates got a ballot measure passed by the City voters to allow for a retiree whose spouse either dies or is separated by divorce to remarry and have the new spouse eligible for survivor benefits, the cost of such to be borne by the retiree by having his or her retirement benefit reduced to cover the new spouse.

"The non-sworn retirees (those covered by LACERS) would like to have the same benefit option. Such an option is governed by the City's Administrative Code and not the Charter, the latter covering Police and Fire. Hence, such a

change is up to the Council and mayor, and not dependent on a vote of the electorate. To have such a measure passed by the Council, however, would require review by the City Administrative Officer. That office, however, advises that an actuarial study would have to be done, even if the benefit is claimed to be cost neutral. That study would have to be done to be sure there is no cost on the City, and the study itself would trigger a cost. Considering the budget and pension crisis, there is no money to do such. Commissioner Spiker is asking the LACERS Board of Administration to pay for the study.

### 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

ADVENTURES  
with HAL!

Evelyn in the Coliseum.

By Hal Danowitz,  
Secretary, RLACEI

## Retiree Hotlines

Who to call? 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 below.

**City Employees Retirement System:** (213) 473-7200

**RLACEI Retirement Counselors and Retiree Helplines: (800) 678-4145**

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| • R.S.V.P.                   | Ext. 701 |
| • 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 |
| • Mary Beetz                 | Ext. 711 |
| • Neil Ricci                 | Ext. 714 |

**DWP Retirement Plan Office:** (213) 367-1722

## RLACEI:

## Officers for 2009

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

## Committee Chairpersons for 2009

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  
Mary Beetz



## Off to Roma

■ In part two, with the plans made, Hal and Evelyn head off to their European cruise.

Evelyn and I took a 35-day trip, which included a week in Italy and then a 28-day cruise that included Italy, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Morocco and Portugal, before we crossed the Atlantic to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (For the details on planning the big cruise, read last month's installment.)

We departed LAX at 4:30 p.m. Sept. 28 on Air New Zealand. The flight was uneventful, and we arrived at Heathrow Airport almost an hour early. The time difference from LA to London is (usually) 8 hours, so it was 2 a.m. LA time. We both slept a little on the plane. The food was good, and we enjoyed the flight. We cleared immigrations and customs without a problem and then took the underground from Terminal 1 to Terminal 5 to catch our British Air flight to Rome.

The underground is a good way to get between terminals because it is free and you don't have to go outside or onto London. You can't take baggage carts on the train, so you have to move your own bags on and off the train and then get a new cart, which are free. Terminal 5 is for British Air only and very easy to deal with. I booked our flight to Rome in business class so that we could use the BA lounge. Our flight to Rome was at 2:45 p.m., and we were very comfortable in the lounge until our flight was called.

The entire Terminal 5 is quite new. For those waiting for the first "shopping" update, here you go: the duty free shop in the terminal is quite extensive. However, remember that, if it is made in America, is it still priced better at home. Evelyn priced some Bobby Brown cosmetics and they were all more expensive than if purchased at home.

There are also other "tax-free" shops along the concourse, including Bally's, Tiffany's and Prada, not very many shoppers.

We landed at the Rome airport (FCO) at about 5 p.m. and, other than a slightly surly immigration officer, we gathered our bags and found the driver to drive us to our hotel. The cost of the ride was 60 (when we were in Europe, the euro exchanged at

about \$1.50). It was rush hour, and the traffic was much like it is in LA, except with smaller cars. They may have small cars, but the horns work as well as the larger ones; the results don't seem to be any better than at home. Our driver seemed to know the shortcut into Rome, and we

arrived at our hotel in about an hour. The reality that many of the intersections in Rome at rush hour are gridlocked was not a big surprise.

Rome is the capital of Italy and the country's largest and most populous city, with more than 2.7 million residents (there are more in the entire metro area). It's in the central-western portion of the Italian peninsula on the Tiber River.

The history of Rome, the eternal city, spans more than 2,500 years; it's one of the founding cities of Western Civilization. It was the center of the Roman Empire, which dominated Europe, North Africa and the Middle East for more than 400 years, from the first century BC until the fourth century AD. Rome has a significant place in Christianity. The city surrounds Vatican City, an independent city-state that is the home of the Roman Catholic Church.

As one of the few major European cities that escaped World War II relatively unscathed, central Rome remains essentially Renaissance and Baroque in character. Rome is the third-most-visited tourist destination in the European Union. As a modern city, it has been capital of the unified Italy since 1870, and grew mainly in two periods either side of World War II.

Our hotel, the Vittorio Veneto, was just a block from the Via Veneto (a main street) and near the Villa Borghese park. I choose this hotel because it had a parking garage and was close to the Villa Borghese, where we could pick our car up from Hertz. The hotel's nightly rate was 235, which included a buffet breakfast, which was very good. The room was nice size and well appointed with a queen size bed and a large bathroom. Before we left home, we put all of our first week's clothes in one bag so we could leave the other two closed.

After we settled in, we walked to the Via Veneto to have dinner. At the top of the Via Veneto is Harry's Bar, made famous by Ernest Hemingway but too touristy for our first dinner in Rome. We walked around for a while and couldn't make up our minds when we were approached by a person with a menu who convinced us



Hal in St. Peter's Square.



Evelyn, having climbed over another tourist to get closer to the Trevi Fountain.



that his restaurant had good food and reasonable prices. We decided to try it and walked a short distance off the Via Vento to La Fontana (Via Liguria). In much of Continental Europe, most everyone eats dinner late, usually around 10 p.m., so the restaurant had only a few people in it. We were not too hungry and had an antipasti, pizza, beer, wine and water, and the bill was 38 euro. With a weak dollar, prices were very high compared to what we were used to at home. We paid for water; the large beer was 4, and the wine was 6. The food and service were good, and we enjoyed our first meal in Rome.

The weather was balmy and beautiful, and the next was the first day that Evelyn would be in search of the perfect roasted banana gelato (she never found it, but she ate a lot of gelato along the way).

Given the time change and the new environment we both slept well and felt we were

back on a schedule the next morning. The breakfast, included in the price of our hotel, was very good, and we felt ready to begin our day of sightseeing.

#### Sites of the Central City

Prior to leaving LA I purchased ([www.viator.com](http://www.viator.com)) a two-day pass on the Rome hop-on-hop-off bus. The bus, which included a narration of the sights, stopped at 17 locations and was a good way to get around Rome and see the main sights. The stop closest to us was the Piazza Barberini, about a 15-minute walk from our hotel. We caught the bus and got off at the Coliseum stop. The area was very busy, and the wait to get into the Coliseum was about an hour and half. We were approached by a number of tour agents and decided to take a 45-minute tour, which cost 23 each but included admission. By taking this tour we got to by pass the line waiting to enter the Coliseum. As a special that day with the Coliseum tour, we also received a tour of the Palatine Hills and the Forum.

We finished at the Forum around 1 p.m. and then took the bus to the Pantheon. It was past lunchtime, so we decided to have a gelato to hold us until dinner. From there we walked to the Trevi Fountain and finally to the Spanish Steps. It seemed that October was

still a heavy tourist period in Rome, and everywhere was crowded. The Trevi Fountain was so crowded that Evelyn had to step over people to get near it so I could take her picture. From the fountain, we walked to the Spanish Steps, so named because the Spanish Embassy was at one time at the top of the steps. We walked back to our hotel, and even using the bus, we did a lot of walking. The weather was great, with bright blue skies and warm temperatures.

We found another local restaurant for dinner, La Fontanella Sistina (Via Sistina) just off Piazza Barberini, and of course it had pasta. The food was delightful, with fresh produce, simple preparation and wonderful flavors and, of course, served with a bottle of good Italian white wine.

#### The Vatican

The next morning, we toured the Vatican Museum that I booked with [Viator.com](http://Viator.com). The first tour of the morning started at 8 a.m. and was guaranteed to host no more than eight people. The three-hour tour included the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's Rooms and finished in St. Peter's Basilica, the main church. Our guide was very knowledgeable, and it was well worth the extra money to get the early tour. The Vatican receives more than 20,000 visitors per day on its official tours and another

20,000 walking through St. Peter's Square and in the Basilica.

We had a light lunch in a restaurant near the square, where a glass of beer cost 6. We spent the afternoon back on and off the bus, touring locations we had not seen yesterday.

We had planned to pick up our car so that we could leave for Florence first thing in the morning. The Hertz location at the Villa Borghese was just a short walk from the hotel. Because of the one-way streets, I wasn't sure how to get back to the hotel, so Evelyn and I walked around the block and planned our drive back to the hotel.

I had booked a Ford Focus C-Max with a GPS system, and I was worried that the car would not be big enough for our luggage. When we got to Hertz, they gave us an Alfa Romeo with a diesel engine and a six-speed transmission, which was more than enough for us. I had heard of cars being broken into and items stolen, so I wanted to make sure our luggage was out of sight. We drove back to the hotel without a problem. The worst part of it was paying 38 for over night parking. Evelyn kept reminding me that we could have picked up the car the next morning and saved the 38. Oh well.

Next month: Florence.

## RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

**Are you planning to retire soon?** If you are, Membership Chair Helen Salgado invites you to join the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) which is the only one exclusively serving the interest of L. A. City retirees for only \$1 a month. Call Helen or one of the officers for more information.

**Phil Skarin's daughter,** Barbara Hunt, volunteers regularly at the Monrovia Canyon Park, giving tours. The City of Monrovia recognized her as the Outstanding Volunteer for 2009.

**Victor Jimenez** worked as an upholsterer at the 36th Street Yard from 1960 to 1980. He would like to hear from his coworkers. Call him at (760) 247-7416, or write to him at 22028 Isatis Ave., Apple Valley, CA 92307.

**Jane Hanson** writes: "I sincerely appreciate your Monthly Report and your very special Thought for the Day."

**If you have any news about yourself, or other retirees,** send it to Phil Skarin at 5301 Norwich Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91411-3910, or call him at (818) 784-0130.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

### Second Chances

*A runner, if he "jumps the gun,"  
is given a second chance to start again.*

*The New Year is a good time to see if  
there is still time for a second chance to:*

- ◆ Keep some unfulfilled promises
- ◆ Resolve old grudges
- ◆ Seek forgiveness for wrongdoings, or
- ◆ Show more love to your neighbor

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

**Have a Happy New Year!**

— Phil Skarin



Phil Skarin



## LACERS Update

■ **Mary Beetz, continued from page 41**

deductions or changes to your health plan that take effect Jan. 1 will be reflected in your December payroll check. You will receive a health plan confirmation letter of your health plan selections early next year.

"Basic Medicare Part B: LACERS reimburses basic Medicare Part B premiums to retirees who are enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that effective Jan. 1, the basic Medicare Part B premium for 2010 will remain at \$96.40 for those members who currently receive a Social Security check from which they withhold their Medicare Part B premiums and have adjusted gross incomes of less than \$85,000 (or less than \$170,000 for joint filers).

All other members, including those who are new Medicare enrollees, lapsed in their Medicare Part B enrollment, have an adjusted gross income greater than \$85,000, or do not receive a Social Security check, will see their basic Medicare Part B premium increase to \$110.50. For more information on the 2010 Medicare Part B premiums, please visit the Medicare website at <http://questions.medicare.gov>.

"LACERS cannot determine which basic Medicare Part B premium our members will be charged in 2010. Those members that are eligible to receive reimbursement of their basic Medicare Part B premiums will continue to be reimbursed the amount of \$96.40. However, if a member's basic premium increases to \$110.50, LACERS will reimburse the full amount if proof of premium payment (such as a copy of your Medicare Part B invoice, bank statement, or Social Security check stub showing your withholding amounts) is provided.

"Contact LACERS at (800) 779-8328 if you have any questions."



John Hawkins, Club President and CEO, presents John Bogdanoff, Club Member, retired Sr. Director, Rec and Parks, with a life-sized copy of the cover commemorating his outstanding service and commitment to youths in creating a mentoring program to turn to boxing rather than gangs, drugs and violence. The story was published in the February 2009 issue of *Alive!*. Pictured, from left: John Hawkins; Tony Alvarez, Club Member, Parking Manager; and John Bogdanoff, Club Member.



Victor Aprea, retired, Principal Administration Assistant, and his wife, Pat. They've been married 60 years.



John Shadle, retired, Building and Safety, and his wife, Marguerite. They've been married 63 years.



From left: Hal Danowitz, Club Member, retired, Director of Systems, Controller's Office, and newly re-installed board member; and Ed Harding, Club Member, retired, Public Works/Engineering.



Tony Alvarez, Parking Manager, Club Member; and Louis Paul Robles, Title Guardian.



From left: Leroy A. Richards, Club Member, Heavy Duty Truck Operator; Quentell Webb, Motor Sweeper Operator; and Henry Starks, Public Works/Street Services Supervisor.



Curtis Hopson, Street Maintenance Supervisor, Club Member, and his wife, Altrechia, married four years; with Elvie Walker, Truck Driver.



From left: Lillie and Benjamin Mills, Sr. Building Repair, Club Member; and Lee Burrell, Refrigeration Air Conditioning Supervisor.



From left: Henry Starks, Public Works/Street Services Supervisor, Club Member, and Luis Starks.



John Peterson, Plumber, and Sam Peterson.



John Gomez, Park Supervisor, Club Member, and his wife, Carmen.



Margie Uruski, guest; Darlene Parker, Secretary; and Rosie and Julian Torres, Building Inspector (congratulations, Rosie and Julian, on 56 years of marriage!).



Cleone Vrael, retired, Clerk Typist, LAPD, Club Member, with her husband, Michael.



From left: Barbara Bass, Club Member; Dorris Bass, Heavy Equipment Engineer, Club Member.



Vivian and Henry Jackson, Airport Lighting Department, married 42 years; and Joe Etheredge, Airport Industrial Maintenance, Club Member.

## Retirees Holiday Party

■ The Retired Los Angeles City Employees held its annual event.

Story by Eboné Moses, Club Counselor; Photos by Angel Gomez, Member Services Manager

RLACEI — The Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) held its annual holiday shindig Dec. 3 at the Griffith Park Lodge.

Longtime friends and past co-workers had a chance to catch up, share a meal and win a prize or two. Americo Garza coordinated the event and invited wonderful Christmas musical entertainment. A buffet style lunch was served, featuring various sandwiches, sides and carrot cake.

The newest inductees of the RLACEI Board took their oath of office. The new board members are Micheal Karsh, Americo Garza, Neil Ricci, Hal Danowitz, Tom Stemnock, Gary Mattingly and Phil Skarin.

The City Employees Club contributed raffle prizes and gave recognition to City Retiree (and recent *Alive!* cover story subject) John Bogdanoff for outstanding service.

*The Club thanks Ed Harding and Americo Garza for their invitation and assistance in producing this article.*



Ben Davis, Street Maintenance Supervisor, and his wife, Joyce.



Gary Mattingly, Club Member, General Manager, Fire and Police and Pensions.



From left: Americo Garza, retired, Sr. Civil Engineer; Ed Harding, retired, Public Works/Engineering; and Jerry Bardwell, retired, General Manager, Retirement Services, Club Member.



James Tom, Controller; John Morea, Fire and Police Pensions; and Arlene Tom, Planning Pension System. James and Arlene are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.



From left: Bob Knox, Sr. Personnel Analyst, with Brent Urban, Club Counselor.



Board Members of RLACEI, top, from left: Michael Karsh, Ed Harding, Club Member; Helen Salgado, Club Member; and Americo Garza, Club Member. Bottom: Jack Mathews, Club Member; and Phil Skarin, Club Member.



The new board members take oath, from left: Micheal Karsh, Americo Garza, Club Member; Neil Ricci, Club Member; Hal Danowitz, Club Member; Tom Stemnock, Club Member; and Gary Mattingly, Club Member. Not pictured: Phil Skarin, Club Member.



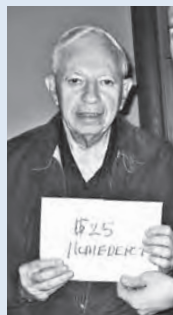
Thomas Tsuchiyama, Assistant Land Surveyor.



Ernestine Johnson, guest of Jack Mathews, Club Member.



Robert Horsting, husband of Janet Iwaki-Horsting, Sr. Management Analyst.



Howard Steinberg, Principal Deputy Controller.



Victor Aprea.



Curtis Hobson, Club Member.



Carol Warsaw, wife of Sylvester Warsaw, Heavy Duty Equipment Operator.



Bill Turner, Club Member, Street Maintenance Superintendent.



William Ramirez, husband of Lauren Ramirez, Sr. Clerk Typist Supervisor.