

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

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: General Meeting at the Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr., L.A., 90027. RSVP by calling (800) 678-4145, X701.

June 3: Golf tournament at the Alhambra Municipal Golf Course, 700 S. Almansor St. in Alhambra. (626) 570-5052. "Shotgun Start" at 7:30 a.m. Board Meeting at 12:30 p.m.

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

RLACEI:

RLACEI Board Changes; City's Deep Budget Woes

President, Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"The New Year, 2010, has brought several changes to our Board.

"Congratulations to LACERS' new Board Commissioner, Jerry Bardwell. The mayor appointed our Board Director-Treasurer, Jerry Bardwell, as Commissioner to the LACERS Board. The City Council approved and confirmed his appointment Jan. 19.

"Jerry was General Manager of the City Employees Retirement System from 1983 until his retirement in 1991. He was RLACEI treasurer for the past 15 years. He and I worked very close for these years. I have lost not only a great

coworker, but also a good friend.

"Jerry is the kind of person who you like the first time you meet him, and although he says he is only a telephone call away, we will really miss him. Good luck to you, Jerry.

"I appointed our new director, Michael Karsch, to replace Jerry as Treasurer, and the RLACEI Board ratified his appointment at our Jan. 11 meeting. Michael worked for Ken Spiker in the CLA's office.

"Gary Mattingly is the new RLACEI Board Director, replacing Dave Wilkins, who resigned due to health problems. The Board approved his appointment

at the Jan. 11 meeting. He will serve one year and will come up for reelection on our October meeting. Gary comes well qualified. Prior to his retirement, he was General Manager of the Fire and Police Pensions System.

"Mary Beetz is our new RLACEI editor, due to new methods of submitting our articles to *El Pueblo and Alive!*

"Ken Spiker will run for reelection as a retired member of the LACERS' Board of Administration. The Board and I endorse Ken for reelection and encourage you to vote for him."

Director, Mary Beetz reports:



Mary Beetz

"On Jan. 31, Lita Payne rejoined the LACERS family as Assistant General Manager. She will oversee the operations of Retirement Services, Health Benefits Administration, and Communications. Ms. Payne's background includes a vast array of

experience with the City. She joined the City in 1988 and served Public Works, DWP, Building and Safety and Fire and Police Pensions, and was the Director of Health Benefits for LACERS from 2006 to 2008. Most recently, Ms. Payne was the Director of Retiree Health Care for

the Los Angeles County Employees' Retirement Association (LACERA).

"Lita earned a Bachelor's degree in English from Cal State LA, and a Master's degree in business administration from Pepperdine.

"Please join our staff in welcoming back LACERS alumni!"

Legislative Update, Ken Spiker reports:



Ken Spiker

"I have been either actively participating or monitoring the City of Los Angeles' Budget for the last 50-plus years. This year may present the worst financial predicament for City officials in modern times. It is estimated that the 2009-10 budget ending June 30 may be as much as \$300 million short. Estimates for the 2010-11 budget range in the \$400 million deficit level. Reasons for the current fiscal crisis include: the affect of the recession on revenue estimates; state preemption of previous City revenue sources; and providing non-charter required and non-revenue producing services.

"In previous fiscal budget crisis years, corrective actions included closing existing City Departments includ-

ing Civil Defense and the Health Dept. During one of those years, the City closed an operating City Hospital and demolished the Health Department's eight-story building on City Hall ground near Temple Street.

"Current efforts by City officials to address the fiscal problem provided an early retirement program for 2,520 City employees and 418 'grandfathered' participants. Discussions are being held to increase this program to allow for more early retirements. LACERS is processing more than 350 retirement applications per month to expedite the transferring of salary costs to retirement costs. Previously, LACERS retirement workload averaged 500 retirees per year.

"Current discussions by City

officials include not only extending the early retirement program, but also processing the laying off of more than 1,000 employees. This may require the closing of certain City Departments.

"The impact on current retirees is still unknown, but it could include not providing a COLA (cost of living adjustment) for the next fiscal year. However, current law will permit those retirees who have a reserve COLA bank to borrow up to 3 percent of their reserve amount. I will prepare a chart of the COLA bank amounts, by retirement year, for your review in the near future. We may also be facing a reduction in our current health care premium subsidy, especially for spouses

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.

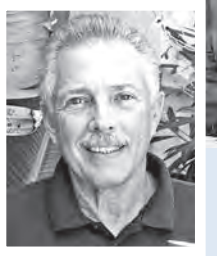
Contact LACERS

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!

A street in Dubrovnik.

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

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

Committee Chairpersons

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



Venice, and Then to Sea

■ In part four of their European adventure, Hal and Co. head out to sea.

Evelyn and I took a 35-day trip, which included a self-guided week in Italy before a 28-day cruise with ports in Italy, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Morocco and Portugal, and then an ocean crossing to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. This month, we pick up our travels in Venice, Italy, as we boarded our Holland-America (HAL) ship the MS Oosterdam.

We left the hotel late morning and had a porter take our bags to the bus terminal. It took us a while to figure out which bus would take us to the cruise terminal. The distance from the bus terminal to the cruise terminal is about a mile and a half, but it was an impossible walk with the bags we had. After checking in for the cruise and going through security, we boarded the ship. It was about 12:30 p.m., and we were directed to the Lido buffet on deck nine to have lunch and wait until our stateroom was ready, which took about an hour. I had the pizza, which was good.

The *MS Oosterdam* was built in 2003 and holds 1,916 passengers, with a crew of 817. The ship weighs just more than 82,000 gross tons and is considered a medium-sized ship. The majority of the staterooms have verandas.

We had a veranda stateroom on deck six (there are 10 decks) just aft of the center of the ship on the port (left) side. Don and Myrna (our cousins) were next to us. The room was larger than I remembered from other HAL ships, with a queen-sized bed, a small couch, a flat-screen TV and good closet space and storage.

We waited until our luggage arrived at our stateroom, and then left the ship and took the shuttle bus back to the bus terminal (Piazza Roma), just across the main canal from Venice. The four of us planned to visit the Jewish ghetto of Venice, the oldest ghetto in the world, and which features the oldest European synagogue. We had asked the concierge at the hotel for directions, and we followed his instruction until we got lost and I had to ask a local to help us, which they did. We found the ghetto only a short distance away. We visited three of the five synagogues in the ghetto, the oldest dating from 1528. The two remaining synagogues are still used for services

and not open for tours; one is used in the summer to accommodate larger attendance (because of Jewish tourism), and the other is used in the winter. Approximately 400 Jews live in Venice today, but not in this original ghetto area. The Jewish ghetto is now a mixed residential and retail area of Venetians, students and others.

A side note: One Florentine we spoke to mentioned the mosquitoes in Venice. They were not kidding. I'm not sure if it was the water; the humidity, which wasn't particularly bad; or the time of the year. But when the sun goes down, the little guys came out! They didn't seem to bother the locals. I guess they have a taste for foreigners!

passengers on stage with prizes. The prizes were not worth the embarrassment. So then we were off to bed for our first night on the ship.

We didn't leave Venice until 2 p.m. the next day, so after breakfast Evelyn and I took the shuttle to Piazza San Marco (St. Mark Square), about 35 minutes away. Although there were people there, it wasn't nearly as crowded as on a Sunday. But still, there were a lot of pigeons. We were able to go inside St. Mark's Basilica, and then we walked around the Doge's Palace towards the Grand Canal, where we could see the Bridge of Sighs, which connected the



Myrna and Evelyn in Venice.

We took the shuttle back to the ship and had dinner on the Lido deck. In addition to the buffet, this deck had one of the pools, the spa, exercise facilities and too many bars to count. As it was an informal night in port, there was a barbecue on this deck with ribs, chicken, salmon, steak, and all the fixins. We just were not ready for the dining room. After dinner, we went to the "intro" show in the main theater. The cruise director introduced the singers and dancers and gave us a preview of what some of the entertainment was to be. Well, the jury is still out. They also had three very dumb and silly contests, with volunteer

prison with the interrogation room in Doge's Palace.

We returned to the ship with some time to spare before sailing. The mandatory lifeboat drill was held just before we sailed at 2 p.m. for Dubrovnik, Croatia, across the Adriatic from Venice. That night was to be our first dinner in the dining room.

We requested late seating (8 p.m.) and a table for eight, and we found two Canadian couples seated with us. (They were very nice people, and we enjoyed their company until they left the ship in Barcelona.) The table was rectangular, so it was hard to talk to everyone at the same

ADVENTURES with HAL!

time, so next time I'll request a round table. The food and service were very good. Not rushed -- we finished dinner in about an hour and a half. The waiter and busboy were very attentive.

Croatia). About 45 Jews still live here. The city is in a bay on the Adriatic Sea, with beautiful blue water and green palms, olive and Italian cypress trees; it's a very Mediterranean city. As you may remember, Dubrovnik was under siege by the Serbs for about 90 days in 1991 during the Bosnian war. The city of approximately 50,000 was shelled daily, had no water or electricity or commerce. It wasn't until a United Nations ship came into the port that forced negotiations and the lifting of the siege.

The locals are fiercely independent and value their freedom and liberty. Croatia has



Myrna, Evelyn and Don in Piazza San Marco, Venice.

The next morning, we docked in Dubrovnik.

Dubrovnik (nee Ragusa) began as a Roman settlement. From the Middle Ages on it was a prize sought by Venice, Hungary, Turkey and others who recognized the city's logistical value as a maritime port. But liberty has always been uppermost in the minds of Dubrovnik's citizens, and through the ages their thirst for independence repeatedly trumped other nations' plans to conquer their city.

In 1667, another kind of assault leveled Dubrovnik when an earthquake destroyed almost everything except a few palaces and church buildings in Old Town. The city was quickly rebuilt in the baroque style of the time.

We booked the Historic Dubrovnik Tour, a walking tour around the old city. Dubrovnik is beautiful and a very old walled city on the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic. In addition to the many churches, we visited the Jewish Museum and Sinagoga (as it is spelled in



Myrna at the Sinagoga in Dubrovnik.

been independent since shortly after the siege was lifted. They are now a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and are working towards joining the European Union. The weather was beautiful, and Don and I sat in a small café and had a beer while Evelyn and Myrna looked for ice cream.



Myrna, Don and Evelyn at the Jewish ghetto in Venice.



Aboard the ship: A diner in the dining room on formal night, with Hal's tablemates.

That first night in Dubrovnik was to be our first formal night, so we dressed in our best -- tuxedos and evening dresses. The captain gave his welcome-aboard speech -- they no longer have a handshake line because of the various illnesses that seem to find their way onto

cruise ships. After the captain's welcome, we enjoyed a show by the ship's song and dance group. It was billed as a movie musical concert featuring costumes by Bob Mackie, a noted Hollywood designer.

There were two shows each night, at 7 and 9 p.m. Our dinner setting was 8 p.m., so if we wanted to see the show, we had to go to the 7 p.m. performance, which cut into our cocktail hour. On the second half of the cruise, we had open seating and were able to enjoy the 9 p.m. show.

The next day, we stopped in Corfu, Greece. I'll save that for next month.

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Phil Skarin's grandson, Timothy Williams, spent a week in Haiti as part of a Child Protection Assessment Team from the Harvard School of Public Health. He was on a similar team that went to India a year ago. Tim recently received his Master's degree from Harvard.

Are You Planning to Retire Soon?

If you are, you are invited to join the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI). RLACEI is the only known organization exclusively serving the interests of all Los Angeles City retirees. The dues are only \$1 per month. If you would like additional information, contact Membership Chair, Helen Salgado at (800) 678-4145, X713.

Are You Interested In Becoming a RLACEI Director?

If you are a retired City Employee and are interested in being considered for a RLACEI Director, send a resume with your qualifications to Neil Ricci, 458 21st Place, Santa Monica, CA 90402, or call our toll-free number (800) 678-4145 X714.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

Happy St. Patrick's Day

May luck be our companion
 May friends stand by our side
 May history remind us all
 Of Ireland's faith and pride.
 May God bless us with happiness
 May love and faith abide.

— An Irish blessing