

For Retired Club Members



# The Best Years



By Mary Beetz,  
RLACEI Publicity Chair

## 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.

## RLACEI Upcoming Events

Dec. 9: Holiday party, noon, Grace E. Simons Lodge, 1025 Elysian Park, Los Angeles.

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

## City Council Considers Serious Pension Reform

### President, Ed Harding reports:



Ed Harding

"It is with a heavy heart that I must report the passing of former Councilman Robert 'Bob' Wilkinson and also the passing of a very good friend and co-worker, Carl Widener.

"Prior to Bob Wilkinson resigning from RLACEI, he was my First Vice President, and we worked together for many years.

"Carl Widener and I worked together in Street Maintenance

Division for many, many years. I was General Superintendent I, assistant to Carl, who was General Superintendent II in charge of Street Maintenance Division during the 1970s.

"In all my 34 years with the City of Los Angeles, being Assistant to Carl was the best job I ever had. I knew that, no matter what I did, Carl was there to back me up. When Carl retired in 1979,

I replaced him in charge of the Street Maintenance Division.

"I report that our October General Meeting, a joint meeting with LACERS, was a great success. We had more than 250 attendees. I also want to remind you to call and make reservations for our Holiday Party on Dec. 9 at the Grace E. Simons Lodge."

### Legislative Update: Michael Karsch reports:



Michael Karsch

Council Considers Serious Pension Reform.

"On Oct. 8, two motions were introduced in City Council directing that an ordinance and research be done immediately by the CAO and CLA to address pension reform in LACERS. The motions were referred to the Personnel Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee. Committee hearings on the subject are likely in the closing months of the calendar year; final action by the Council could be at any time after the committee hearings.

"The first motion is by Council President Eric Garcetti, seconded by Councilmember Bill Rosendahl and five other Members. This motion calls for the CAO and City Attorney to draft an ordinance for Council review within 10 days to create a new retirement tier for employees covered by LACERS that includes the following reforms:

- Raising the retirement age to at least 60;
- Setting final compensation based on a three-year average;
- Prohibiting double-dipping;
- Lowering the consumer price index cap to 2 percent;
- Eliminating banking of increases over that cap; and
- Requiring a minimum of 2 percent contribution toward retiree health benefits.

"It also asks the CAO and CLA to report to the Council on a pension cap, with a parallel and optional defined contribution plan for higher-earning employees, and to report on options for adjustments to the total allowable formula calculations for salary and health benefits.

"The second motion is by Councilmember Bill Rosendahl and seconded by Council President Garcetti. This calls for a

report by the CAO and CLA to the Council within ten days on various increased pension benefits contribution amounts starting at 10 percent for all existing employees and the impact on the LACERS program, the General Fund and LACERS members of the following elements of reform:

- Setting a retirement age eligibility of 65;
- Reducing the retirement factor from 2.16 to 2.0;
- Setting a maximum retirement allowance at 75 percent;
- Setting a retiree healthcare contribution at 2 percent;
- Allowing the retiree healthcare subsidy for the employee only; and
- Setting final compensation on a three-year average."

### 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

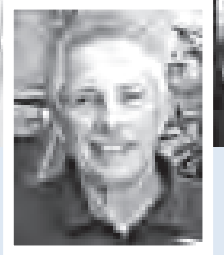
The Los Angeles City Employees Retirement System is at 360 E. Second Street, second floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Phone (213) 473-7200 or (800) 779-8328. Contact them to arrange direct deposit of your retirement checks, change your tax withholding or beneficiary, or for questions about your health plans.

# The Best Years

## ADVENTURES with HAL!



Evelyn with her new friend.

By Hal Danowitz,  
Secretary, RLACEI

### Retiree Hotlines

Who to call? Call the Helpline and reach the officers of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. If you move or change your address, contact Helen Salgado. Also notify LACERS, ACEBSA, and LAFCU.

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

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

• Mary Beetz	Ext. 711
• Hal Danowitz	Ext. 707
• Americo Garza	Ext. 710
• Edward Harding	Ext. 703
• Michael Karsch	Ext. 704
• Jack Mathews	Ext. 712
• Gary Mattingly	Ext. 702
• Neil Ricci	Ext. 714
• Helen Salgado (membership)	Ext. 713
• Phil Skarin	Ext. 709
• Ken Spiker	Ext. 705
• Tom Stemnock	Ext. 708
<b>RSVP:</b>	Ext. 701

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

### RLACEI:

#### Officers

Hal Danowitz, Secretary  
Edward Harding, President  
Michael Karsch, Treasurer  
Kenneth Spiker, First Vice President  
Tom Stemnock, Second Vice President

#### Committee Chairpersons

Hal Danowitz: Bylaws  
Americo Garza: Picnic, Holiday Party and Installation  
Jack Mathews: Senior Citizens  
Neil Ricci: Health and Nominating  
Helen Salgado: Membership  
Phil Skarin: Publicity and Parliamentarian  
Ken Spiker: Legal and Legislative  
Tom Stemnock: Audit  
Tom Stemnock and Phil Skarin: Golf

#### Directors

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



## Betting on Vegas for Kids

### ■ Hal and Evelyn take granddaughter Coco to Vegas for family fun.

Every year we take one of the grandchildren to Las Vegas. This year it was our youngest one, Caroline, better known as Coco. We invite them to take a friend, so Coco, who is almost 10, asked her friend, Nicky, to come along. Over the past years we have found many activities for kids, and each year we try to find new ones.

We drove up on a Sunday and returned home the following Friday. We arrived in the early afternoon, and the kids spent the rest of the afternoon in the swimming pool. One of the big challenges is finding a place to eat that is acceptable to both 10-year-olds and us. A new burger place had opened that Evelyn and I liked, so we took the kids to Smashburger (7541 S. Lake Mead Blvd.), and everyone was happy.

Monday, we decided to go to the Mini Gran Prix (1401 N. Rainbow Blvd.), which is always fun. They have go-karts and sprint karts, and also a number of fun rides including a Dragon Roller Coaster and a pretty neat arcade. You can get a one-hour megaride wristband for \$18 per person, which is a good bargain. The girls spent most of the time driving the go-karts. We ordered a pizza for lunch, and we gave each kid \$10 to play the arcade games. The girls were interested in winning the games to get points to redeem for prizes worth about 50 cents; go figure.

Evelyn belongs to all kinds of Websites that offer discounts to various attractions. She had found one for a place called Flip-n-Out ([www.flipnoutfun.com](http://www.flipnoutfun.com)), which has a very large trampoline area. We got there just as they opened at 2 p.m. Evelyn had a coupon for two hours for \$10; the price is normally \$10 per hour. We had two coupons, but the girl at the front let us use one coupon for one hour for each girl. This place is a find; the girls burned off so much energy that they were actually tired. The trampoline is at least 100 feet by 40 feet, with high walls you can bounce off of.

A friend who lives in Las Vegas had told us about a zoo called Roos-n-More ([www.roosnmore.com](http://www.roosnmore.com)) in Moapa, about 45 minutes north of Las Vegas on I-15. Once a month they have an open house, and we were lucky that it was taking place while we were in Las Vegas. The cost to enter was \$10 per person. Our friends advised us to bring vegetables to feed the animals, so we picked

up corn on the cob, apples, cabbage, carrots and celery. What an amazing place – the animals are up close, and you can hold and pet them. Some of them I had never seen, including a bearcat and a capybara. You can stay as long as you like. There is a tour that takes you into the kangaroo pens. There were also camels, donkeys, goats and pigs. One of the monkeys climbed up on Evelyn

and took an ear of corn and peeled it as it sat on her shoulder. I liked this place so much I would go back without the kids.

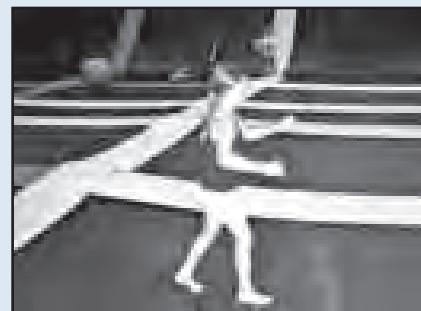
That evening we took the kids to a real restaurant and, because we had our “grand-dog” Rex with us, we picked Grape Street (7501 W. Lake Mead Blvd.), which has an outside patio. Because of the heat we were the only diners on the patio, and both the kids and Rex enjoyed the experience. Grape Street has been around for more than 20 years and is a great Italian restaurant and wine bar.

On Wednesday we wanted to take the kids to Indoor Skydiving (200 Convention Center Dr.), which is always on the list of things to do in Vegas. That evening we wanted to take the kids to a Las Vegas show, so we stopped at the half-price ticket place to see what was appropriate for kids. We picked Criss Angel, a magician at the Luxor. We bought the tickets at a half-price location, and then we had to go to the Luxor to pick up our tickets and get specific seats (the earlier you redeem your reservation the better the seat location). We purchased tickets for a middle location, and when we got to the ticket booth at the Luxor we received front-row seats. With that settled, we headed over to Indoor Skydiving. The cost is \$75 per person, but the Website has a \$10-off coupon. The whole flight time was about 20-minutes, and the kids really loved it.

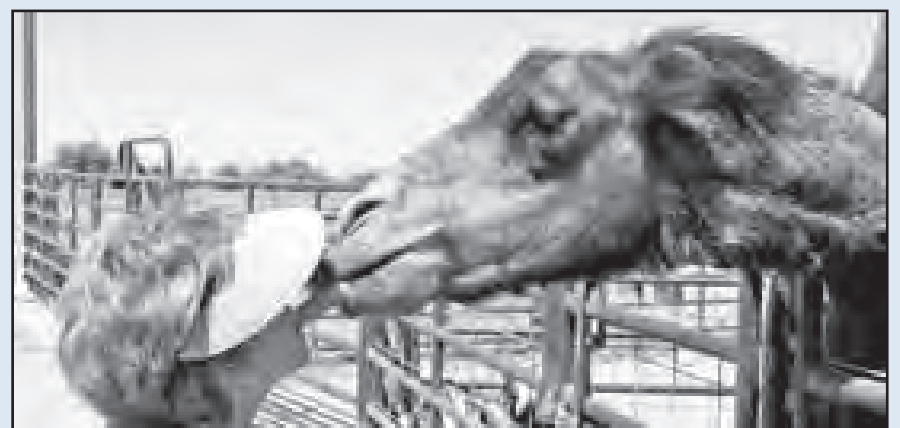
We let the kids spend the rest of the day in the pool.



Coco and Nicky.



Coco at Flip-n-Out.

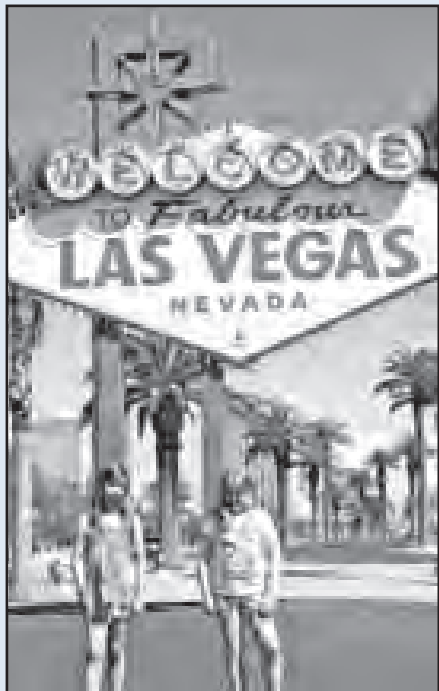


Evelyn and her really new friend.



We drove to the Luxor and had dinner in the coffee shop, which was good but somewhat pricy. The show was good and the kids seemed to enjoy it. I would rate it as PG-13, but most of the stuff the kids didn't understand.

Thursday we had a reservation to visit the Eldorado Canyon mine in Eldorado Canyon, Nev. Our reservation was for noon, so we took the girls to the Sun Coast Hotel for the breakfast buffet; with a casino card it was \$7 per person. The kids had a great time when they found out ice cream was included in the breakfast buffet, but it filled them up enough for a late lunch.



Coco and Nicky at the Las Vegas sign.

Eldorado Canyon Mine Tours is based in Eldorado Canyon at the Historical Techatticup Mine. It's the oldest, richest and most famous gold mine in Southern Nevada and just 45 minutes outside Las Vegas. The guided mining tour, both above and below ground, took us into the mine and the history of the oldest gold mine in Southern Nevada. The tour started with a history of the area, and then we walked about 200 yards to the old mill site where the ore was brought out of the mine to the stamp mill, then crushed to a powder and mixed in cyanide tanks where the gold and silver were separated. Then we went into the Savage Mine, saw the veins of silver and gold and got a good understanding of the mining conditions. This mine was once owned by Sen. George Hearst and was claim-jumped in 1874, which resulted in numerous murders. The air temperature in the mine is a cool and comfortable 70 degrees year-round. This was our second time on the tour, and I think that it is much improved from our last visit.

We finished the tour around 2 p.m., and the kids wanted to go back to Flip-n-Out on the way home. We used our last coupon, and the kids spent an hour working off breakfast.

Some friends were in town from L.A. and wanted to go to dinner and didn't mind the kids. The place they selected was Sammy's LA Pastrami and Burger (2191 Tropicana Ave.). It's a small place with five tables and a drive-through, but it has good food. The owner, Bryan Hargrave, was very accommodating and let us try a lot of different menu items. I had the LA pastrami and it was good; it's not really a deli, though, and not the same type of food. It's more like a sub shop. It was good enough to go back to, even with the long drive from our house. The portions were large and the atmosphere was fun; it is a joint with local color.

We returned home Friday. The kids had a great time, as did Evelyn and I. Vegas has a lot to offer families, beside the strip. It's fun to be able to do the stuff that the kids do, even if you're an adult, or just young at heart.

## LACERS Update: Mary Beetz, LACERS representative, reports:



Mary Beetz

"Open Enrollment Ends Nov. 15. LACERS Open Enrollment began Oct. 15 and will conclude Nov. 15. If you wish to make plan changes, please do so by Nov. 15. If you have not received your Open Enrollment packet, please contact LACERS immediately at (800) 779-8328. Visit the LACERS Website ([www.lacers.org](http://www.lacers.org)) for more information and to find out what's new for Open Enrollment and the 2011 plan year.

"Anthem Announces New Website, Wellness Calendar and Phone Number: Anthem Blue Cross launched its newly redesigned Website ([www.anthem.com/ca](http://www.anthem.com/ca)) in August. Anthem subscribers will find it easier to get answers to everyday questions, securely view health account summary 24/7 days a week, and view their claims history or check the status of a claim. They can also access their health assessments, find support communities, and take advantage of health and wellness discounts. To view this information, subscribers will need to register at [www.anthem.com/ca](http://www.anthem.com/ca). Those who were previously registered will have to re-register.

"Additionally, Anthem has a 360-degree health wellness calendar that subscribers can now access at <http://wellness-calendar.anthem.com>. Although designed for employers, the calendar has valuable health information that retirees may also find useful. Each month features a different health topic with links relevant to 360-

degree health programs and tools, including wellness flyers, newsletters, and health screening information.

"Effective Jan. 1, the new contact number for Anthem HMO and PPO is (866) 940-8303.

"Traveling and Your LACERS Medical Plan: If you plan to travel, contact your LACERS medical plan to find out what benefits and nearby facilities are available to you before taking your vacation. The contact information for your Member Services health plan's can be found on the back of your medical plan ID card.

"LACERS' medical plans cover *only* emergency, urgently needed, or pre-approved care while you're traveling. You may have to pay for your medical care in advance and be reimbursed by your medical plan carrier later.

"If you are a Kaiser subscriber, Kaiser has a *Travel Guide* that explains where and how to get care in other Kaiser Permanente regions outside your service area.

"Always take your medical ID card and discuss your travel plans with your doctor. If you are on prescription medication, make sure you have enough to last your entire trip. Also, pack your medications in a carry-on so that you will have them in the event your luggage is lost or delayed. Make non-urgent routine medical appointments before or after your trip. For traveling outside the

United States, make sure you have the contact details for the U.S. Embassy and Consulates. They can assist you in finding medical care abroad.

"Contact numbers for LACERS medical plans are:

- Kaiser HMO, (800) 464-4000.
- Kaiser Senior Advantage, (800) 443-0815; (800) 777-1370 TDD.
- Anthem HMO, (800) 227-3771.
- Anthem PPO/Medicare Supplement, (800) 288-2539, (800) 735-2929 TDD. *New number effective Jan. 1: (866) 940-8303.*
- SCAN, (800) 559-3500, (800) 735-2929 TDD.
- SecureHorizons, (888) 867-5548.

"Your Health Matters E-Wellness Newsletter: To save on publishing and mailing costs, LACERS will no longer mail retired members a printed copy of *Your Health Matters* newsletter. However, members can now view the Summer 2010 Your Health Matters wellness newsletter online in the Publications section of LACERS Website ([www.lacers.org](http://www.lacers.org)). Members can also be kept up to date by having an electronic copy of LACERS newsletters delivered to their email address. To subscribe to this service, members simply enter their name, email address, and member status in the *eBulletin Subscription* section, which is located on the LACERS home page."



Here's Ken standing next to Coach Fernandez of the Reseda High School cross-country team.

## In Another's Shoes

■ Retiree Ken Kochakji's running club gives away shoes to those who need them.

Every year the New Basin Blues Running Club provides running shoes for under-privileged high school cross-country team members. This year the club gave away new running shoes to the student athletes of Reseda and Monroe High School.

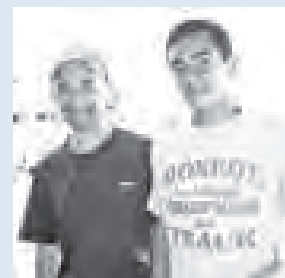
Longstanding member of the running is Club Member Ken Kochakji, Retired, Transportation. Thanks for sharing the story, Ken!



Quality shoes for our student athletes.



Some of the New Basin Blues Running Club volunteers.



A proud father after his son received his new shoes.



The coach and some of the student athletes of Reseda High cross-country team.



Students of the Monroe High School team wait to be fitted for new running shoes.



Expressions of joy from the kids.



We are The New Basin Blues Running Club, We believe in community service, we are Americas volunteers.

## RLACEI HOLIDAY PARTY

Thursday,  
Dec. 9, 12 noon

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

# You're Invited!

The RLACEI's annual Christmas Party and Installation of Officers is scheduled for noon Thursday, Dec. 9 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.