



By Mary Beetz,  
RLACEI Publicity Chair

## RLACEI:

# Will State Deficits Push Pension Reform?

## City Retiree Associations

### DWP Retirees Association



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

### Los Angeles Retired Fire and Police Association

Bill Quinn, *President*  
Phone: (323) 283-4441  
Fax: (626) 285-1461  
9521 Las Tunas Dr. #4,  
Temple City, CA 91780  
www.larfpa.org

### 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:  
rlacei@verizon.net

## 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:

**April 12:** General meeting, 1 p.m., Friendship Auditorium, 3201 Riverside Dr., Los Angeles.

**June 7:** RLACEI Golf Tournament, Alhambra Golf Club

**Aug. 9:** Picnic, 11:30 a.m., Grace E. Simons Lodge, 1025 Elysian Park, Los Angeles

**Oct. 4:** Annual corporation meeting and elections, 1 p.m., Friendship Auditorium

**Dec. 6:** Holiday party, noon, Friendship Auditorium

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

## President Ed Harding reports:

2010 Club Excellence Award Recipient



Ed Harding

"The holiday party we had Dec. 1 was a great success!

"We had a 'full house,' with some great people attending (to name a few): LACERS Commission President Rick Rodgers and Vice President Jerry Bardwell; LACERS General Manager Tom Moutes and Assistant General Manager Lita Payne; ACEBSA President Fred Dowell and his CEO/Executive Director Roslyn Carter-Phillips; and

the Club's CEO John Hawkins and Director of Operations Robert Larios.

"I would like to thank Commission President Rick Rodgers for installing our Directors, who were elected by the members at our October annual corporation meeting and elections. Rick also installed Clifford Cannon as a new director for a one-year term. Clifford was appointed to fill a vacancy left by Jerry Bardwell when the mayor

reappointed Jerry to LACERS Commission. Clifford will come up for election along with Directors who are up for election this October.

"On another note, I would like to apologize for the late serving of our lunch at our holiday party due to a miscommunication, but we all know that Chris and Pitts' lunch is well worth the wait!

"I wish you all a Happy New Year."

Let's start 2012 by honoring Phil Skarin, former RLACEI Publicity Chairman for more than 16 years, with a "Phil Skarin Poetry Contest." Winner will receive \$25.

Submit all poems to Mary Beetz by email at [mbeetz4841@aol.com](mailto:mbeetz4841@aol.com) or general mail to 137 Westmont Dr., Alhambra, CA 91801. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2012!

## Poetry Contest

Deadline: Jan. 15, 2012

## Legislative Report by Michael Karsch:



Michael Karsch

"The State of California faces increasing deficit projections for the current and next fiscal years. In mid-November the State Legislative Analyst Office said the end of the current fiscal year deficit as \$3.7 billion and a projected deficit for fiscal year 2012-13 of \$10 billion. The continuing deficits will increase pressure to enact pension reform for the state pension systems for teachers and state and local employees (this does not include jurisdictions with their own pension systems, like Los Angeles).

"On Dec. 1, the governor appeared before a joint legislative committee to pitch his reform proposal in general terms; a fully detailed proposal is still in the

works. Initially he asks for an increase in the retirement age to 67 and to enroll state workers in a partial 401(k) savings plan, a smaller benefit-defined pension (i.e., continuing the traditional pension but for only a portion of the retiree's income), and social security.

"In addition, he seeks an increase in taxes: a half-cent increase in the sales tax, and gradual percentage increases in the income tax for those making more than \$250,000 as individuals (from 1 to 2 percent increases, depending on how much more the income is). Some of the governor's plan can be enacted by the legislature, but other pieces will have to be approved by the voters in November. The ballot

measures will have to be first approved by the legislature for placement on the ballot.

"Commentary reported at the hearing reflected strong disagreements from both parties on various elements of the general plan. Some cautioned that many talked-about changes could not be done due to legal obstacles, namely the constitutions at both the state and federal level's protection of the right of contract, which is the pension, promised to each government employee when he or she began working for the government agency. It is still too early to have a detailed reform, but one could emerge within several months."

## 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

## 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 LAFUCU. For information on problems, activities, meetings or membership. Each officer's extension is listed below.

**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
• Gary Mattingly	Ext. 702
• Neil Ricci	Ext. 714
• Helen Salgado (membership)	Ext. 713
• Phil Skarin	Ext. 709
• Ken Spiker	Ext. 705
• Tom Stennock	Ext. 708
• Michael Wilkinson	Ext. 712

Questions: Ext. 0

RSVP: Ext. 701

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

## RLACEI:

### Officers

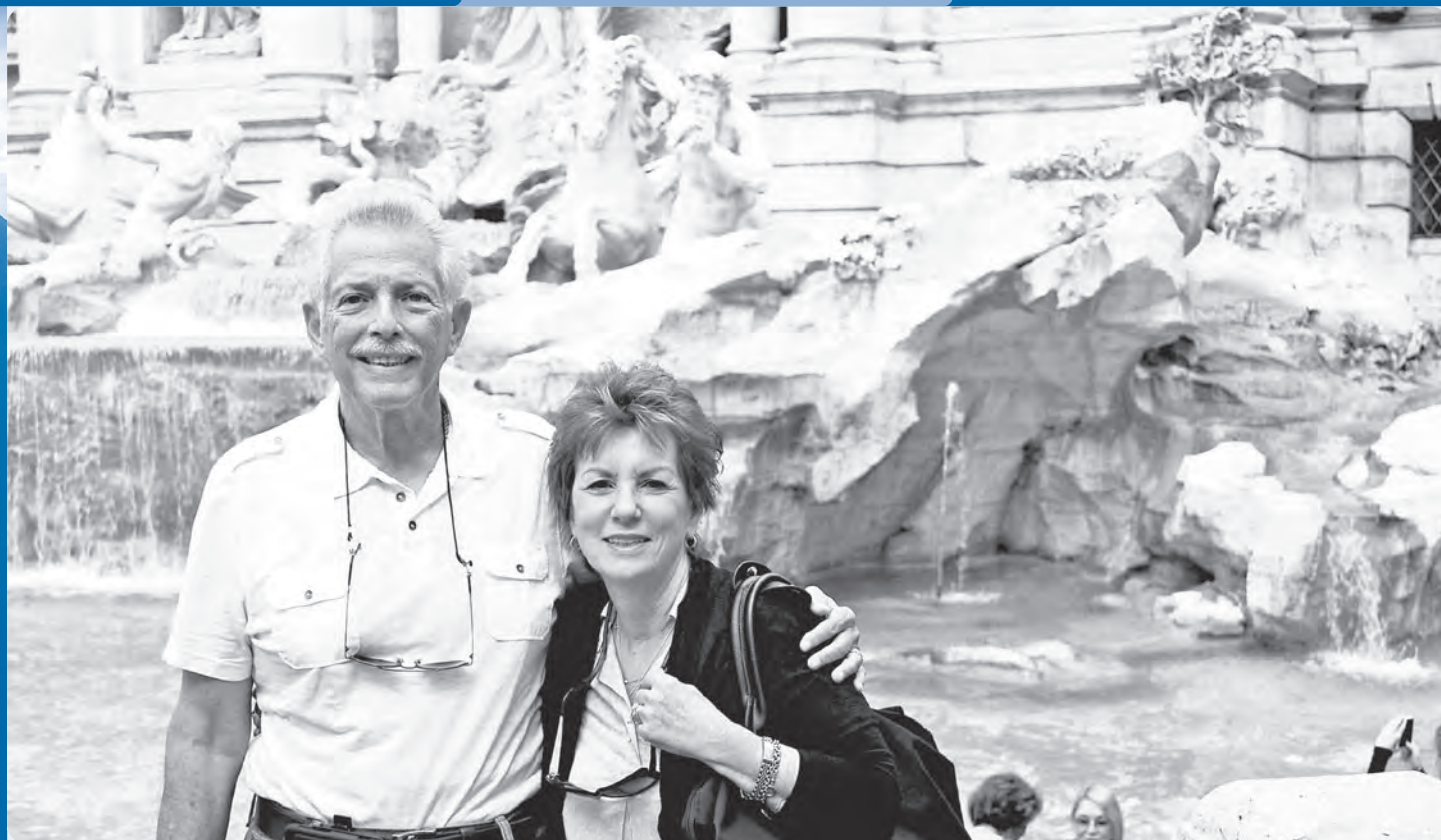
Mary Beetz: Publicity Chair  
Hal Danowitz: Secretary/Treasurer  
Edward Harding: President  
Michael Karsch: Treasurer  
Phil Skarin: Director  
Kenneth Spiker: First Vice President  
Tom Stennock: Second Vice President

### Committee Chairpersons

Mary Beetz: Publicity  
Hal Danowitz: Bylaws  
Americo Garza: Picnic, Holiday Party and Installation  
Neil Ricci: Health and Nominating  
Helen Salgado: Membership  
Phil Skarin: Parliamentarian  
Ken Spiker: Legal and Legislative  
Tom Stennock: Audit  
Tom Stennock and Phil Skarin: Golf

### Directors

Mary Beetz  
Americo Garza  
Michael Karsch  
Neil Ricci  
Helen Salgado  
Phil Skarin  
Michael R. Wilkinson



Hal and Evelyn in front of the Trevi Fountain.

2010 Club Excellence Award Recipient



By Hal Danowitz,  
Secretary, RLACEI

## Rome, the First of 28 Days

**Hal and Co. begin their 28-day cruise from Europe to Singapore.**

On Oct. 11, Evelyn and I, with our cousins Don and Myrna, left for Rome, where we were going to board the *Ocean Princess* Oct. 15 to sail for 28 days to Singapore. On the cruise we were scheduled to visit Sorrento, Italy; Athens; Ephesus, Turkey; through the Suez Canal; two ports in Egypt; Aqaba, Jordan; Dubai in the United Arab Emirates; Muscat, Oman; and India. In India, we were scheduled to take a side trip to the Taj Mahal. Finally, the cruise would take us to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, before ending in Singapore. We both had reserved mini-suites on deck eight. The *Ocean Princess* is a small ship, which only accommodates slightly more than 600 passengers and a crew of 250.

We flew on Air New Zealand to London and then British Air to Rome. Our flight out of LAX left at 4:30 p.m., and we arrive in London around 11 a.m. the next day.

As usual, Evelyn and I pushed the weight limit on our bags, but we made it. We flew premium economy on a Boeing 777. The seats were like a module office, with lots of private space. We landed in London about 15 minutes early after we circled for about 20 minutes. Evelyn and I thought the flight was very good, but some in our group were unhappy with the seats. In London, we transferred from Terminal 1 to Terminal 5. We have done this before and it is very easy using the underground. We could not check our luggage all the way through to Rome because of the way I purchased our tickets. Oops!

We made it to Terminal 5, but we had a surprise when we found out we were allowed only one bag each on British Air, because we were on an "internal" flight in the European Union. I thought I looked it up on the BA's Website, and it said two bags. Anyway that cost us 35 pounds each bag. Oops again! (*No shame in that Hal; I've made the same mistake, although on a different European airline. - Ed.*)

I also got stopped at security. I forgot I had water bottles in my carry-on bag. They took everything out of my bag and even tested for explosives.

We arrived in Rome about 6 p.m. The time change from LA is nine hours later. Going from one EU country to another is easy. They stamped our passports, we picked up our bags and left the airport. We had a car waiting for us (€90), and it took about an hour to get to the Hotel Savoy.

The hotel is very well located, one block off the Via Veneto, two blocks from Harry's Bar and within walking distance of the

Spanish Steps. Evelyn and I were here two years ago and stayed in the same area, so we were familiar with this part of Rome. We were upgraded to a corner room with lots of space and a completely updated bathroom.

After we settled in, we walked up the Via Veneto and then about three blocks to the right to Il Pomodorino for pizza. It was very good.

We had our breakfast in the hotel, which is included as part of the room, and caught the hop-on-hop-off bus.



Myrna and Don on the hop-on hop-off bus in Rome.

We used the Ciao Roma bus (\$27 per person) because it was close to the hotel, and we received a small discount. The bus makes 12 stops as it travels around Rome. It's the easiest way to see the sights. We got off at the Trevi Fountain and then walked to the Spanish Steps. We then got back on the bus to go to the Jewish Quarter. We were told there are 17,000 Jews in Rome and 38,000 in all of Italy. We had lunch at a small



Hal at the fish stall in the food market.



cafe and walked around the synagogue, which was closed. Most of the restaurants in the area are kosher. We caught the bus back to the hotel to rest up before dinner.

The weather had been overcast, with some sun. The temp was in the middle 70s, but there was no rain so far.

For dinner we walked back to the Spanish Steps (20 minutes) for dinner at a restaurant that was recommended by Myrna. The name is Number 34, and I think overall we enjoyed the food. The service was a little iffy, but a good experience. The place was very busy and the price seemed reasonable. With tip it was €120 for the four of us.

We had no sense of Italy's debt problems and saw little evidence of the economic slump. Prices were not cheap, and we saw a lot of people in stores and restaurants.

We took a taxi back to the hotel. I wasn't about to climb those steps again. We took a little walk around the Via Veneto to settle dinner and then went to the roof bar of our hotel for a drink.

The next morning it was hard to get up (7 a.m.). We must have been a little jet-lagged. We took a walking food tour, and Don and Myrna went to the Vatican.

## For Retired Club Members

We left the hotel about 9:15 a.m. and caught a taxi to Piazza Testaccio, where we were to meet for our food tour ([www.eating-italyfoodtours.com](http://www.eating-italyfoodtours.com)) – \$120 for the both of us. The taxi ride was about €12. Our guide, Kenny, was from the United States (Philadelphia, to be exact) and had lived in Rome for about four years. We made seven stops and tasted fresh *mozzarella de bufala*, a tomato selection, *culatello* and *pecorino* with truffles, *tiramisu*, a sit-down pasta tasting (three pastas, with wine), and *suppli alla Genovese* (like a croquette). We finished off with really good old-school gelato. We also visited the non-Catholic cemetery, first used in the 1400s, where Keats and Shelley are buried. We also stopped by the old slaughterhouse. This was a great tour.

That night we had dinner at Nino by the Spanish Steps. This restaurant came highly recommended. It was more expensive than last night. I had the bean soup, a specialty, which was good, and a lamb stew, which,



Evelyn in front of our hotel.



Evelyn samples the food.

while tasty, wasn't for me. Everyone else enjoyed their meal, but we agreed that we would not return. The cost with wine and service was €154, with no dessert or coffee. Frankly it's interesting how you order, what you are familiar with and what you expect can influence your judgment about a meal. This particular establishment was highly recommended. Thinking about the meal and the food tour earlier in the day, I found the pasta that was part of the tour to be a small piece of heaven. Next trip to Rome we will include some of the food tour recommendations; they are local, longstanding and off the tourist path.

The next day, we were scheduled to board our ship. We had a car picking us up at 11 a.m. to take us to Civitavecchia, which is the port for Rome.

We haven't really done any shopping, although we did pick up a couple of bottles of good Italian reds to take on the ship.

The weather reports were no more accurate than at home. Today was supposed to be cloudy with showers. It was beautiful, with a blue sky and a temperature in the mid-70s.

We then knew my phone wasn't working. Last night we got a call from our alarm company, saying there was a fault in the system (no alarm ringing); as we had not heard any more, we assumed there was no more problem. Our niece was housesitting, and we assumed she handled whatever problem there was.



Hal and Evelyn on the *Ocean Princess* waiting to sail.

We were picked up a little before 11 a.m. for the drive to Civitavecchia. We were told to allow more than two hours, and we were there in just more than an hour. We were able to board immediately after checking in. The cabin was bigger than the mini-suites on the larger Princess ships. There was lots of space, a queen bed, a sofa, a table and chairs, a desk area and good closet space. The bathroom was okay, with lots of storage and a tub/shower.

It didn't seem they were ready to board passengers yet. There were no robes, and some of the information and normal first-day items were missing. We were told they had stormy weather the day before and were unable to complete some of these things. The Internet was unavailable.

We had lunch with a couple from Australia, who we found out later had the cabin next to ours. We spent the afternoon unpacking. The good news was that all of the bags were delivered quickly. I felt a lot more organized. Basically we had everything we needed for Rome in one bag, so it was nice to be surprised by what you packed almost a week ago.

The lifeboat drill was scheduled for 5 p.m., and then we were to go to the first cocktail party for the elite, platinum and suite passengers, where they have complimentary hors d'oeuvres. They featured a different theme at each party, with a special drink. All cruise lines have loyalty programs for their passengers.

Princess has three levels: gold, which you get after your first cruise; platinum, which takes six cruises; and elite, which takes 16 cruises. At each level there are benefits: with platinum, you get Internet minutes free, and with elite, in addition to the Internet minutes, you get free laundry. I like the idea of free laundry.

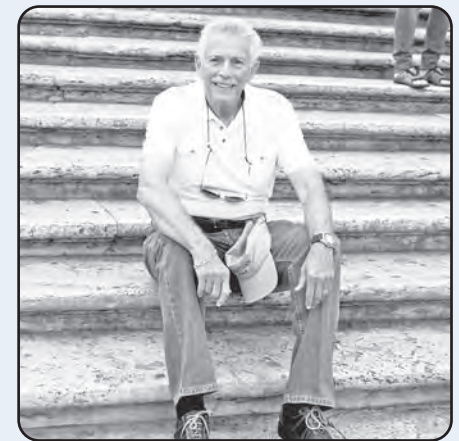
The next day was our first stop, Sorrento. The Internet service began, and we had good wireless service in our cabin.

We had the late seating for dinner (8:15 p.m.) and were seated at a table of eight. Two of our tablemates were a couple from Canada, Don and Barbara. He had a large cattle ranch before retiring, and she was a social worker who worked with abused women. They seemed like a nice couple. The other couple must have eaten somewhere else. So now we had two Dons at the table and, later when the other couple joined us at the table, we had two Barbaras.

We skipped the entertainment that night. It's when they introduce the staff and officers and tell you what the entertainment is going to be during the cruise. We will be surprised.

We had to get up early the next day as we tender into Sorrento at 7 a.m. for our tour of Capri.

We'll pick up our story next month.



Hal rests at the Spanish Steps.

# Asking Our Retirees



"Keep the house tidier!"  
– Marilyn McPherson



"Be there next year!"  
– Gene McPherson,  
Public Works/  
Engineering



"Be a good son!"  
– Jose Montes,  
Rec and Parks



"Do more for the world."  
– Bob Cutler



"Enjoy retirement and become a better artist with oil and water painting."  
– Mic Bacon, Housing



"Keep myself healthy so that I can retire healthy!"  
– Faith Mok,  
Controller's Office

"Relax more" (Bill). "Eat less chocolate" (Lois).  
– Bill and Lois Pickens, Retired



## What is your New Year's resolution?

*Alive!* asked Retirees what their New Year's resolution for 2012 would be.



"To be happy and healthy."  
– Mei Yee,  
Controller's Office



"More traveling."  
– Larry Tamashiro



"Get better at making a complete stop at stop signs" (Armando).  
– Armando and Alice Tapia, Retired



"Get in touch with all my friends!"  
– Carol Takafuji, ITA



"Making thousands of people smile!"  
– Robert Larios,  
Club Director of Operations



"Do more things with my daughter."  
– Beverly Anderson, LAPD



"Stop procrastinating."  
– Mico Rouso, Retired,  
Public Works/Engineering



"Stop lying" (Joel). "Donate more of my time" (Eggie).  
– Joel and Eggie Rosen, Retired



"To find fun things to do, like watching movies and plays."  
– Mariam Skarin



"I don't have one... maybe next year!"  
– Carole Milemore



Special thanks to Ed Harding and Americo Garza, RLACEI

Photos by  
Gedita Bergstrom,  
Club Counselor

## For Retired Club Members

By Mary Beetz,  
RLACEI Publicity Chair



# LACERS Update

*"CMS Announces New Medicare Part B Premiums for 2012:* Each year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) establishes the annual basic Medicare Part B premium rate for the following calendar year. For 2012, CMS announced there will be a single basic Medicare Part B premium rate of \$99.90 per month. This basic rate will apply to all retirees enrolled in Medicare, even if their 2011 Medicare Part B basic rate was higher.

"The Los Angeles Administrative Code requires that all retired members, upon turning age 65, enroll in all parts of Medicare for which they are eligible. Retired members must provide proof of enrollment to LACERS in order to receive a LACERS medical plan premium subsidy.

"Only Retired Members who are enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B; and a LACERS medical plan or the Medical Premium Reimbursement

Program (MPRP), are reimbursed their basic Medicare Part B premium.

"The retired member pays any income-related monthly adjustment amounts or penalties. Surviving spouses/domestic partners are not eligible for reimbursement of their basic Medicare Part B premium.

"Note: Your Medicare Part B reimbursement for 2012 will be automatically adjusted by LACERS and will be reflected in your monthly retirement allowance beginning in January 2012. Approximately 88 percent of our members will see a slight increase in their Part B reimbursement while the rest will see a decrease.

"For more information on the 2012 Medicare Part B premium rates, please visit the Medicare Website at <http://questions.medicare.gov>.

"Form 1099-R: LACERS will mail retired members their IRS Form 1099-R (Distribution

from Pensions, Annuities, Retirement, etc.) by the end of January. Members who do not receive their 1099-R by Feb. 15 should contact LACERS to request a new one. Regenerating a 1099-R may require a few working days to process. Also, retirees who recently moved should contact LACERS to update their address information.

"Poetry Contest: The poetry contest is becoming a great success. Keep on sending them in! We're starting 2012 by honoring Phil Skarin, former RLACEI Publicity Chairman for more than 16 years, with a "Phil Skarin Poetry Contest." Winner will receive \$25. Submit all poems to Mary Beetz by email at [mbeetz4841@aol.com](mailto:mbeetz4841@aol.com) or general mail to 137 Westmont Dr., Alhambra, CA 91801. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2012."



From left: Trisha Currie; Sharylon Davis; Irene Keys; Mildred Dixon; Sandra Gibbs; and Michael Hones. Seated: Janet Glasgow.



From left: Americo Garza, Director; John Hawkins, Club President & CEO; and Martha Harding, wife of RLACEI President Ed Harding.



Jose Montes, Rec and Parks.



From left: Leo Rosen, Joel Rosen, Norma Rosen, Evgie Rodes, and Jack Rosen.



From left: Lee Burrell, Sam Hochberg, and Robert Jacobs.

Representing the Los Angeles Federal Credit Union were Mariam Levy and Robert Aguirre.



Maria Ream and Tony Alvarez.



Marilyn McPherson.



Gene McPherson, Retired, Public Works/Engineering.



From left: Phil Skarin, RLACEI with John Hawkins, Club President and CEO.

## RLACEI Holiday Fun

Retired employees association hosts annual holiday party.

Photos by Angel Gomez, Club Member Services Manager

The Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI) celebrated their annual holiday party Dec. 1 at Friendship Auditorium.

Longtime friends and past co-workers had a chance to catch up, share a meal, and win a prize or two if they were lucky.

Americo Garza coordinated the event and invited wonderful Christmas musical entertainment. A buffet-style lunch was served, featuring various sandwiches, sides, and carrot cake.

As always, the Club thanks Ed Harding and Americo Garza for their welcome.



Bre and Maurice Jacobs.



From left: Robert Larios, Club Director of Operations, and Carole Milmore.



From left: Ed Shum, Jerry Bardwell, and Rick Rodgers. Seated: Icle Davis.



From left: Leroy Richard, Sylvester Warsaw Sr., and Carol Warsaw.



Robert Jacobs and Rosalinda Johnson.



From left: Renee O'Malley and Wilma Rebbe.



From left: John Hawkins, Club President & CEO; and Miriam Skarin, wife of Phil Skarin.



From left: Bob Cutler; Mic Bacon; Faith Mok; Mei Yee; Larry Yamashiro; Dorothy; Carol Takafuji; and Beverly Anderson.

## RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:

Mary Beetz reports: "I received an email from **Don Beach**, a retired City Employee who writes: 'In 1998 during my 30 years of service with the City, I was mainly employed by Public Works/Street Services as a Management Analyst under the supervision and direction of Ed Harding.

"After retirement, I have kept busy with several things: I am a magician and mem-

ber of the Hollywood Magic Castle; I am also a singer, and have performed at various opera companies throughout the Southern California area and also sing at musical theaters and enjoy singing Al Jolson songs. I am also a writer who writes poetry and novels. I have written and published six books (four books of poetry and two novels). My books are available under my name at [www.BN.com](http://www.BN.com).

"My other interests include studying philosophy and linguistics. I am a scholar of everything from Plato to the modern philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty. Yes, Mary, there is life after retirement!"

**"If you are a retiree and have interesting news about yourself, your family or other retirees, send them to**

[mbeetz4841@aol.com](mailto:mbeetz4841@aol.com). I am sure your co-workers or friends you made during your employment with the City will enjoy reading about your life after retirement.

"As a wise man once said: 'I shall retire and grow old, but never lose life's zest, Because the road's last turn will be the best.'"