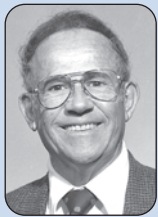


City Retiree Associations

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

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

- 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

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.

DWP Retirees Association



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

Los Angeles Retired Fire and Police Association (LARFPA)



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

For Retired Club Members

The Best Years

LARFPA

LA Retired Fire, Police Association Awaits Info on Pensions

By Lee Keebler,
LARFPA Director



Lee Keebler

Now that we have enjoyed the great holiday celebrations put on by the employee organizations and had the opportunity to make and break our New Year's resolutions, it's time we returned to the real world to see what's happening.

First, we will be hosting our general meeting at 10 a.m. March 7 at Grace E. Simons Lodge in Elysian Park. We will have coffee, donuts, and sandwiches with great guest speakers (Fire Chief Brian Cummings in March) and relevant information on the status of our Pension and Association. Next, our general meeting and annual barbe-

cue is scheduled for June 4, also at Grace E. Simons Lodge. There will be more information in our spring newsletter.

We were hoping to be able to let our retirees know the actuarial status of their pension fund, but the report normally accepted and approved in November has been delayed by the mayor's request to change assumptions in the 2010 actuarial report because of an increase in health care contributions by the active members of the system. We hope the 2011 actuarial report will be available by the end of January, and we'll have some indication of what may be occurring with funding and the health subsidy for the coming year.

Along with our local problems, Gov. Jerry Brown is trying to make our state number one in many other areas. We are the number-one state in population, and we are looking forward to being number one in sales tax, income tax, and corporate tax if his tax proposal passes in the November election. And if we don't look out, he may even try to make us number one in property taxes.

That's it for now, looking forward to seeing you at one of our meetings.

Editor's note: These opinions expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of Alive! or the City Employees Club.

States Looking to Limit Pension Plans

RLACEI

RLACEI
Legislative Report
by Michael Karsch



Michael Karsch

"Pension Reform Initiatives: As reported earlier, there are two ballot proposals not yet in circulation aiming to reform pension plans in the public sector in California. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) reported at the end of December that these proposals by the California Pension Reform group may wind up increasing costs on the government agencies. A labor coalition, Californians for Retirement Security, called them 'sloppily drafted and extreme.'

"One of the initiatives would put all future government hires into 401(k)-style plans instead of the defined benefit retirement guarantee

by employers. The other one would institute a hybrid of defined benefit for a lower percentage of a given pension, combined with a contribution program like the 401(k). The LAO notes that savings would not be realized for many years since the proposal is only for new hires. Investment planners for the existing pensions would see a reduction in their cash flow as new hires gradually take over the working membership of the pension fund. The hybrid plan would hike government costs by more than \$1 billion per year to cover pension costs of current and past employees. And government may feel compelled to offer higher salaries to new hires to offset the reduction in promised pensions.

"In New York State, the Retired Public Employees Association, repre-

senting 40,000 members, has sued the state for a rollback of the 2 percent increase in what retirees pay toward the cost of medical care. Currently the retirees pay 10 percent of the cost of health insurance, and 25 percent for family coverage. The governor has proposed a 2 percent increase.

"The New Hampshire legislature is considering eliminating that state's retirement system's defined benefit plan, and replacing it with a defined contribution plan.

"In a case from Orange County (California), the State Supreme Court has ruled that certain retirees' medical benefits are vested and thus protected from employer-sought reductions. The ruling hinges on how county ordinances or resolutions are written relative to the County's retirement system."

New Retirees: Joining RLACEI Is Worth It

2010 Club Excellence Award Recipient
By Ed Harding,
RLACEI President



Ed Harding

"Christmas and New Year celebrations are now memories.

"I was invited to attend the Retired Fire and Police Christmas party at the Sportsman's Lodge. They charged their retirees and their friends \$10, and 430 retirees showed up. We charge our retirees nothing (zero), and we are lucky if 200 show up.

"On Jan. 9, we had our first 2012 business meeting. Attending was our new appointed Director, Clifford Cannon. He retired after 31 years of employment with the City. See Mary Beetz' column for more information on Clifford.

"I have noticed that a large number of our new retirees are not joining our organization, the Retired Los

Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI). I don't know if they are not reading the materials we provide for LACERS to hand out to all new retirees, or that retirees do not know who we are. All RLACEI Board Members and Directors are retired City Employees.

"RLACEI is the only organization that represents Retired City Employees. You might say that "we are one," working together, achieving major improvements in our retirement system, including but not limited to:

- an elected Retiree to the Retirement Commission to represent us and to protect our Financial Interest and benefits;
- annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA);
- maintaining a strong health insur-

ance program, including a subsidy for the retiree and their dependents;

- Medicare Part B reimbursement for retirees with both A and B;
- a retired dental insurance program subsidy;
- continuation of a health subsidy for the surviving spouse;
- an increase of death benefits to \$2,500;
- a hearing aid and eyeglass program; and
- an increase in the monthly check for large COLA bank holders.

"Please become an RLACEI member – help us protect our benefits.

"In closing: 'May your troubles in the New Year be as short-lived as your resolution.'



The Best Years



Evelyn in Plaka.

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
- Cliff Cannon Ext. 715
- 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
- Ken Spiker Ext. 705
- Tom Stenmcock 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
- Cliff Cannon: Director
- Hal Danowitz: Secretary/Treasurer
- Edward Harding: President
- Michael Karsch: Treasurer
- Kenneth Spiker: First Vice President
- Tom Stenmcock: 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 Stenmcock: Audit
- Tom Stenmcock and Phil Skarin: Golf

Directors

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



2010 Club Excellence Award Recipient



By Hal Danowitz, Secretary, RLACEI

Onto Capri

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 accommodates only slightly more than 600 passengers and a crew of 250.

As we pick up the story, we were anchored in the port of Sorrento in southern Italy.

Our tour to Capri was scheduled for 7:45 a.m., so we had to be in the tour lounge by 7 a.m. We ordered breakfast for 6:30 a.m. We got to the lounge on time, but the Italian authorities were late in clearing the ship, so we started late. This port is the only one where

we used tenders, and with the wind blowing at 30 knots, it made for a bumpy ride to the dock. We met our guide, who looked like either Ben Kingsley or Howie Mandel, depending on who you asked, at dockside. We boarded a hydrofoil to take the 25-minute ride to Capri. Even in the choppy water the ride was almost smooth. Capri is an island in the Tyrrhenian Sea 8 miles from Sorrento on the south side of the Gulf of Naples. It has been a resort since the time of the Roman Republic.



There were 24 people on our tour, which made it very crowded on the small bus that we took from the dock to the town of Anacapri, the highest point of the island. We

visited the Villa San Michele, which was built around the turn of the 20th century, by a Swedish physician on the ruins of the Roman Emperor Tiberius's villa. The gardens have panoramic views of Capri town and its marina, the Sorrentine Peninsula and Mount Vesuvius. After a short shopping break, we boarded the bus for the ride to the town of Capri. We visited the Garden of Augustus and then had lunch at the Hotel La Residenza, which was one of the better tour lunches we have had. After more shopping time, we took the cable car down to the marina to take the hydrofoil back to Sorrento,



Evelyn at the lookout in Capri.



The Parthenon.



Don is a very good bartender.



Hal and Evelyn at Villa San Michele.



Looks like Howie Mandel to me.

For Retired Club Members

RLACEI MEMBER NEWS:



"Life After Retirement: I am sure you are going to enjoy this letter from a Retired family RLACEI member.

"Jack Ward writes: 'Just a note about a fellow City employee retiree and dear friend Paul Barquin. Paul will be 90 years old on Feb. 5 and will be celebrating his

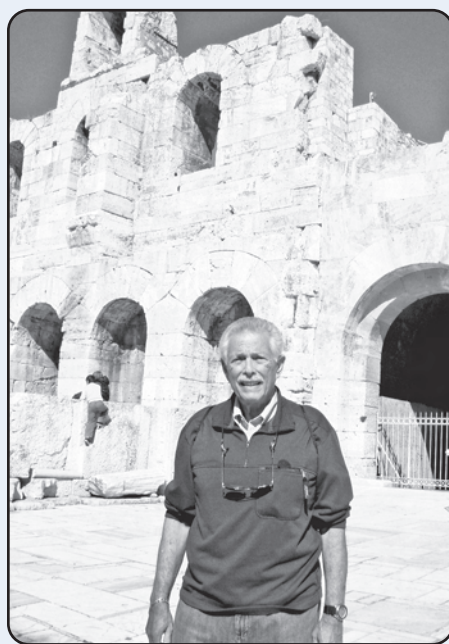
birthday in a nursing home in Torrance, where he has been living for the last couple of years.

"Paul and I worked in the Port of Los Angeles for the Port Warden's Division for many years. Paul also worked in the Harbor Commission Office. For many fellow City employees who remember Paul, and would

care to send him a card, I know he would be delighted to hear from you! Thank you.

Send it to: Paul Barquin, 23536 Evalyn Ave., Torrance, CA 90505-4514.'

"Thank you, Jack. I will send him a card and I know that our retired family members will do the same."
– Mary Beetz



Hal at the Acropolis.

where we caught the last tender to the ship.

The ship sailed at about 4:30 p.m., heading to Athens. The next day was at sea, and Athens was the day after that.

This trip we didn't try to sneak booze on board, but bought it from the ship. It was more expensive, but easier. So we had cocktails in Don and Myrna's cabin before dinner.

At dinner, the missing couple showed up. They were from New Hampshire; the husband was born in Ireland and the wife from England. They fit well with our group.

We decided to see the show, which was Dan Hagger (singer/jokester). We sat in the front row, which I knew was a mistake when I became part of his act as a member of the Jordanares, who were Elvis' backup singers. I got very good reviews for my performance.

At about 4 a.m., the winds reached about 50 mph and the ship was like a cork in the ocean. At some point the captain got on the public address to assure everyone it would not go on forever, although all the doors on decks that have access to walking areas like the promenade deck were not accessible until about 1 p.m. Not many people showed up for break-

fast. By early afternoon things had calmed down.

Bridge has started with a lesson that morning, and we played duplicate that afternoon. Being the first time on the trip, it was a little disorganized.

That night was formal dress and after dinner we watched the show called Stardust, a singing and dancing performance of oldies but goodies. The songs were from the 1940s through Elvis. It was fun.

In the morning we docked in Piraeus, the port for Athens. Athens is the capital and largest city of Greece. Athens dominates the Attica region and is one of the world's oldest cities, as its recorded history spans around 3,400 years. We booked an "Athens on Your Own" with the ship, where the bus from the ship dropped us near the Acropolis and picked us up about 6 hours later.

Our first stop was the new Archaeological Museum (€5; at the time we were there the euro was about \$1.40), which is a good starting point for our visit to Parthenon. The Parthenon is a temple on the Athenian Acropolis, Greece, dedicated to the Greek goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens considered their virgin patron. Its construction began in 447 BC, when the Athenian Empire was at the height of its power. It was completed in 438 BC, although decorations of the Parthenon continued until 432 BC. It is the most important surviving building of Classical Greece. The Greek Ministry of Culture is currently carrying out a program of selective restoration and reconstruction to ensure the stability of the partially ruined structure. After the visit to the museum, Don and Myrna went on their own as they were here 30 years ago. Quote of the day from Myrna: "I'm not paying €12 to see a pile of rubble I've seen before."

Evelyn and I paid the €12 each and climbed to the top. It was a beautiful day, with clear skies, and in the high 60s, with no rain in sight. The view is 360 degrees of the City of Athens and the surrounding area. The ruins are beyond words; there is restoration going at most of the sites. There are areas where large number of marble and other carved stone sections are stored waiting for fitting back into one on the temples.



Here we started to see dogs sleeping along the pathways and in general almost anywhere.

These dogs were all over 50 pounds each. Some had collars and later we found out they have radio transmitters in them. Athens seems to have the unique situation of having many thousands of dogs (one article on the internet reported 15,000 of them before the 2004 summer Olympics) that appear to be in good health, are fed and are just about everywhere.

After our climb down, we walked the short distance to the old town of Plaka, a 19th century shopping district. Plaka is the old historical neighborhood of Athens, clustered around the northern and eastern slopes of the Acropolis,

and incorporating labyrinthine streets and neo-classical architecture. Plaka is built on top of the residential areas of the ancient town of Athens. It is known as the "Neighborhood of the Gods" due to its proximity to the Acropolis and its many archaeological sites.

We had lunch at a small cafe and then walked the shopping area to buy some souvenirs.

Our guide on the bus spoke about the ongoing demonstrations, but we didn't see any. When we talked to Don and Myrna, they did see some on the taxi ride back to the ship.

The next day we docked in Kusadasi, Turkey, where we were to visit Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, depending on which list you use.



Evelyn helped put the pieces back at the Parthenon.

"Anthem Blue Cross and SCAN prescription coverage is no longer available at Walgreens. Effective Jan. 1, LACERS Members enrolled in Anthem Blue Cross or SCAN (Senior Care Action Network) plans are no longer able to fill prescriptions at Walgreens pharmacies or their sister stores, Duane Reade, Happy Harry's, and Option Care. Walgreens terminated its contract with Express Scripts Inc., Anthem Blue Cross and SCAN's pharmacy vendor.

"Anthem Blue Cross and SCAN members may switch to another pharmacy that contracts with Express Scripts, including CVS, Rite-Aid, Ralphs, and Target. To find a participating pharmacy near you, call Express Script's voice-activated phone system at (877) 885-3409.

"To transfer your prescription from Walgreens to another pharmacy, you may:

- Bring a prescription bottle to the new pharmacy and the new pharmacy will transfer your prescription for you;
- have Walgreens call your new pharmacy to transfer your prescription; or
- see your doctor to receive a new prescription and bring the new prescription to a participating pharmacy.

"Your pharmacy benefits remain the same at your new pharmacy, and your medications are still covered by Anthem Blue Cross or SCAN.

"For more information regarding your Anthem Blue Cross or SCAN pharmacy benefits, please see your 2012 LACERS Health Benefits guide or visit www.LACERS.org and select Retired Members, Publications, Health Benefits Guide.

"Meet Our New RLACEI Director, Clifford

Cannon: Clifford Cannon retired after 31 years working for the City – 10 years with the Data Service Bureau as Sr. Systems Analyst and 21 years in the Controller's Office as Fiscal Systems Specialist II. After retirement, he was employed as District Director for Congresswomen Juanita McDonald, 37th Congressional District. His professional involvements include: a 20-year Board Member for the Los Angeles Federal Credit Union; a member of the Los Angeles Board of Deferred Compensation Administration; a board member of California State University Dominguez Hills Foundation; a former Carson Planning Commissioner (1989-2006); and a former Board Member of Carson Dominguez Family Shelter for Battered Women.

"He is married with two sons and three grandchildren. Welcome, Clifford, to RLACEI!"

By Mary Beetz,
RLACEI Publicity Chair



LACERS Update