



RELAC newsletter

Your Pension and Health Care Watchdog

May/June 2017 Vol 52-3

President's Message

by Dave Muir



By the time you receive this I will have attended the spring conference of CRCEA, scheduled April 24-26 in Ventura. CRCEA is the acronym for the California Retired County Employees Association. There are 58 counties in California. Twenty of them, including Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Ventura and Santa Barbara, operate retirement systems governed by the County Employees Retirement Law. The retiree associations in these 20 counties banded together to create CRCEA to provide greater strength in promoting the interests of the retirees in their counties. Since 1969, CRCEA has fought for the benefits promised to 170,000+ California retired county retirees.

One of the most important functions of CRCEA is the sponsorship and advocacy of legislation. A prime example of CRCEA's effectiveness in this area was the passage of a bill drafted by CRCEA's Legislation Committee that added an additional retiree representative to the Board of Retirement. This legislation was suggested by RELAC after Bob Stotelmeyer, the retiree representative on LACERA's Board of Retirement, suffered a long illness and ultimately passed away. Bob's long illness left the retirees in L.A. County without representation on the retirement board for a very long period of time. CRCEA's bill added the alternate retired member to LACERA's Board of Retirement, a position I've been honored to hold since 2014. In the event Bill de la Garza, our elected representative on the Board, is not able to attend, I'm there to take over. Even when Bill is present at Board of Retirement meetings, I am able to make motions and participate in deliberations. CRCEA's legislation greatly expanded the level of representation that retirees have on LACERA's Board of Retirement.

I currently chair CRCEA's committee monitoring a class action lawsuit against CalPERS arising out of a huge premium increase (up to 85%) imposed on participants in CalPERS' long-term care insurance program. I have been able to confer with the law firm representing policy holders and keep CRCEA members up to date on the status of the litigation. The lead attorney representing CalPERS policy holders will be making a presentation on the status of the litigation at the conference I will be attending.

Thanks to all our readers for your membership in RELAC, your PENSION AND HEALTH CARE WATCHDOG.

Inside the Newsletter

Robbins New RELAC Director –The Board of Directors has appointed Les Robbins to fill the unexpired term of Mary Lou Bangar, who passed away in 2016. Page 3.

RELAC Website Redesigned – We've redesigned our website to make it more attractive and easier to use. Page 7.

Hammond Among First Black Marines -- RELAC Member Robert S. Hammond, 91, recalls his experience as one of the first black Marines. Page 14.

Former District Attorney John Van de Kamp Dies

Former Los Angeles County District Attorney John Van de Kamp, 81, died March 14 at his Pasadena home after suffering flu-like systems. Van de Kamp was the County's 37th district attorney, serving from 1975 to 1981.



In 1983 he became the 28th attorney general of California, serving from 1983 to 1991, then left politics after an unsuccessful bid for governor in 1990, returning to Pasadena to work in private practice.



Van de Kamp is survived by his widow, Andrea, and daughter, Diana.

The Board of Supervisors first appointed Van de Kamp as district attorney following the death of Joseph Busch in office. Van de Kamp had previously served as U.S. attorney and was the first federal public defender in Los Angeles.

He was credited for dramatically increasing the number of women deputy district attorneys in the office, and creating special units focused on gangs, sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, career criminals and crime in the entertainment industry. He also established programs to help victims and witnesses of crime, as well as special teams to quickly respond to cases of police officer-involved shootings.

Read tributes from District Attorney Jackie Lacey and Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas on page 11.

News From LACERA

by JJ Popowich

Assistant Executive Officer

I hope everyone is doing well.

It's been a busy "March Madness" season for LACERA this year. "March Madness" is our nickname for the period between December and March when we see the most members retire each year. This is the most popular time as members want to retire in time to be eligible for any April 1 cost of living adjustment (COLA). While the final numbers aren't in yet, we are projected to add 1,564 retirees to the payroll this "March Madness" season. That's higher than our five-year rolling average of 1,394 retirees during the same time period.

There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes at LACERA during "March Madness." Adding new retirees to the payroll is a "family affair" at LACERA as just about every division in the organization is involved in the process. I'd like to highlight a few of these divisions so you have an idea of what goes on:

Member Services helps educate our newly retired members and support our active and currently retired members. Both the Call Center and our Member Services Center (where members can visit us in person) are very busy helping members understand their benefits and answering questions as they elect to retire and complete all of their paperwork. As you all know, retiring is a big decision, and we do our best to be as available and helpful as possible.

Our Benefits team is busy generating estimates and processing retirement applications that come in to ensure we get retired members on payroll as quickly as possible. At the same time, Benefits staff ensures our current retirees get their monthly benefit checks on time and we respond to requests from active members (members still working) in a timely manner. LACERA's goal is to start our retirement benefit payment within 60 days of your retirement date. I can report that staff is doing an excellent job and most retirements are proceeding as expected and will be completed and begin receiving their allowance within the expected timeframe.

Benefits works hand in hand with our Quality Assurance division to make sure all new retirement benefit allowances are checked for accuracy. Part of our mission to provide the promised benefit means that every single new retiree's benefit is checked for accuracy before it goes out the door.

Our Retiree Healthcare division diligently processes the newly retired members' health care applications. There is a lot of coordination that goes on with the insurance carriers to ensure that those services are ready for you when you need them.

Administrative Services processes and mails an amazing amount of confirmation letters and forms while making sure to scan all incoming documents to your Member Document Library record so staff has access to them when they need them to assist you.

And, of course, our Systems team is busy assisting all of the divisions with their part of the process to set up the newly retired members and support our active and current members and keep LACERA running smoothly.

LACERA is your retirement organization, but we are also one big family, so getting everything completed during "March Madness" is truly a "family affair." I've just highlighted a few of the family units within LACERA; but every division, from Financial Accounting Services to Communications, has a part to play in bringing you your monthly benefit.

All of this action keeps our staff on its toes. Despite our best efforts, you may experience slight delays when calling in to our Call Center or when stopping by to visit the Member Service Center at our office. Staff works very hard to get to each member as quickly as possible.

Well, that's it for this month. Until we chat again, I hope you enjoy every day of your retirement. You earned it!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

February 2017 – March 2017

Animal Care and Control – John Embery
Board of Supervisors – Michael Cieplik
Children & Family Services – Alex Hernandez, Beverly Williams
Medical Examiner/Coroner – Diane Franklin
District Attorney – Carolyn Jones, Loren Naiman, Diana Yee
Health Services – Laverne Carbone, Barbara Hairston, Patricia Roberts, Laurie Tolbert
Human Resources – Jadyne Yonekura
Internal Services – Noel Gordon
LAC+USC Medical Center – Tony Guerra
Mental Health – Sharon Kajioka
Parks & Recreation – Sandra Taylor
Public Social Services – Keith Comrie, Juana Cornell-Ojalvo, Linda Smith
Public Works – Judy Rivera
Sheriff – Benjamin Jackson
Superior Court – Christine Fox, Susan Minnihan
Department Not Designated – Heesook Choe, Arthur Cruz, John Godbout, Carla Martin, Scott Muraoka, Mercedes Sanchez
New Affiliate Members – Marsha Jue-Barrett, Barbara Rankin
New Associate Members – Christopher M. Carbone, Thomas Choe, Sandy Comrie, Rosalva Embery, Gwendolyn Jackson, Anita Naiman



*Thanks for
New Member Referrals*

We would like to thank the eight members who recruited retirees to join RELAC during February and March. Our membership at the end of March was 18,769. We gained 54 new members since Jan. 1, but lost 250 (mainly due to death), so we continue to ask your help with recruitment.

Our thanks to RELAC members (shown in bold) for referring new members (shown in italics):

Susan Alvarado, *Sharon Kajioka*, Mental Health
Cheryl Davis, *Barbara Rankin*, Child Support Services
Joyce Galyardt, *Diana Yee*, District Attorney
Robin Guerrero, *Michael Cieplik*, Board of Supervisors
Judy Hammond, *Keith Comrie*, Public Social Services
Carol Maldonado, *Linda Smith*, Public Social Services
Simon Russin, *Barbara Hairston*, Public Health
Ora Wilson, *Laurie Tolbert*, MLK Medical Center

For membership applications and brochures, call the RELAC office at (800) 537-3522, e-mail admin@relac.org or go online at www.relac.org



Robbins Appointed to RELAC Board of Directors

by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

Leslie W. Robbins, a member of LACERA's Board of Investments and Retirement for 19 years – during which time he was elected president 11 times – has been appointed to the RELAC Board of Directors, effective March 7.



He fills a vacancy created by the death of Mary Lou Bangar. The term expires Dec. 31.

RELAC President Dave Muir said Robbins, who chaired LACERA's Insurance, Benefits and Legislative committees for 12 years, is a recognized expert on retiree health care matters, which will make him a great asset to the RELAC Board.

"A primary mission of RELAC is to assure the continued success and sustainability of the retiree health care program," said Muir. "Les was the acknowledged expert on health care matters when he was a member of the Board of Retirement. He has dedicated himself to staying current on regulatory developments at the national and state levels and on best practices in providing health care that is sustainable and cost effective."

Robbins, who worked for the Sheriff's Department for 30 years, was first elected to the LACERA boards in December 1997, serving as the elected safety member until he retired in December 2004. Upon retirement, he was appointed by Supervisor Don Knabe to the Board of Retirement, where he served until Knabe's retirement in December 2016.

Robbins joined the Sheriff's Department in 1975 and worked out of the Lakewood Station after serving four years in the custody division. While a deputy, he was elected seven times as president of the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs - the most in the union's history - and was a founding board member of the California Coalition of Law Enforcement Association. He received numerous awards and commendations from the California State Assembly and California State Senate for his work with the California State Legislature and the County of Los Angeles during his tenure as president of ALADS.

After being promoted to sergeant in 1987, he was assigned to the East Los Angeles Station for 10 years and the Headquarters Personnel Bureau for seven years. Upon retirement, he was awarded the department's most prestigious award, the Distinguished Service Award.

Robbins served as a city councilman in Long Beach, where he has lived his entire life, from 1988 to 1998.

He remains active in numerous civic organizations, as well as the alumni association at California State University, Long Beach, where he graduated in 1975 with a major in geography and criminal justice. In 2008 he was inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame at Long Beach City College, where he received his associate of arts degree in 1969.

In 2014 he was among seven persons appointed by the Board of Supervisors to the Working Group for the Civilian Oversight Commission for the Sheriff's Department, charged with making recommendations regarding the creation of the commission, its authority, size, structure and relationship to the office of the sheriff and the Office of the Inspector General.

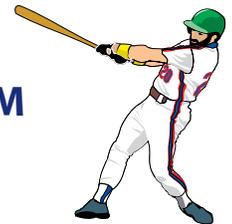
In 2015 Robbins was executive director of ALADS

He served in the U.S. Army from 1971-73, with one tour of duty in Vietnam. In his leisure time, Robbins enjoys photography.

He and his wife of 41 years, Cynthia, lost their only child, daughter Kristin, in March when she died unexpectedly at age 36.

RELAC NIGHT AT DODGER STADIUM

by Mary K. Rodriguez
Chair, Recreation Committee



Friday, July 21, 2017

The **Los Angeles Dodgers will be playing the Atlanta Braves**. Following the game there will be a spectacular fireworks show.

This year the actual ticket price is \$38 per person; however, with RELAC's subsidy, **your net cost is \$35 per ticket**. Our seats are in a great spot in the lower reserved section over home plate. It should be an awesome game!

This event has always been very popular and a limited number of seats are available. Bring your family and friends and enjoy a fun evening. Fill out the coupon below and send it along with your check to the RELAC office. **The deadline for reservations is July 6.** The tickets will be mailed to you on July 13.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible.

Hope to see you there!

DODGERS VS. ATLANTA BRAVES

Friday, July 21, 2017

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Number of Tickets: _____ @ \$35 each

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Make checks payable to RELAC and mail to:

RELAC
1000 S. Fremont Ave., #15
Alhambra, CA 91803-8802

DEADLINE – JULY 6, 2017

Retirement Notes

Turning Over a New Leaf

by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

Fifth District Senior Health Policy Advisor Fred Leaf, receiving a retirement scroll from the Board of Supervisors, was being lauded for his illustrious 44-year County career: Current boss Supervisor Kathryn Barger noted that Leaf started as an accountant in the Department of Hospitals in 1972, and went on to become deputy director, chief deputy director, chief of staff, chief operating officer, and ultimately acting director of the Department of Health Services before joining Supervisor Mike Antonovich's staff in 2008. "He will be remembered by all who worked with him for his leadership, wisdom, humor and style," she said.

But it wasn't his public service that resonated with Supervisor Sheila Kuehl; she was impressed to learn of Leaf's past film career as actor Burt Reynolds' stand-in. And that he was so good at it, he appeared on the "Tonight Show." (In fact, he appeared on all the national talk shows, including a joint appearance with Reynolds on the Merv Griffin show.) "I can certainly see the resemblance, especially since both you and Burt have aged so well," Kuehl told Leaf.

Supervisor Hilda Solis joined in: "I remember my staff telling me that your second job was a stunt man. And I thought, 'Oh, my God, this is incredible that someone would want to leave that job and come work for the County Board of Supervisors.'"

In accepting the scroll, Leaf said he was going to make another admission. "When I was about 10 years old, I had a real childhood crush on you," he told Kuehl, who as a teen-ager co-starred as Zelda in the "Dobie Gillis" television series.

Leaf's acting career began in the late '70s. He was working in the Department of Hospitals as an accountant when he decided to find an agent and see if he could work as a Reynolds look-alike since everyone kept telling him how much he looked like the actor. He was a hit, becoming one of the nation's top celebrity clones.

He began moonlighting 15-20 hours a week – and could have worked full time if it hadn't been for his daytime County job – working primarily as a stand-in for Reynolds and even doing voice-overs for the actor. He did roles for television and commercials that needed a Reynolds look-alike. He was master of ceremonies at conventions, where his presence alone was said to cause a stir because of Reynolds' enormous popularity at the time. He was interviewed by the national media, including the New York Times and United Press International.

It was like leading a double life. "You come to work in a three-piece suit, but you leave in tight jeans, a shirt unbuttoned half-way down and cowboy boots, which is what people think Burt Reynolds should wear," he told a reporter at the time. "It's crazy."

But it paid well. He earned as much in eight hours as he made in 30 hours at the County, yet was never tempted to quit his day job. Working for the County provided security and a challenge; moonlighting provided glamour and easy money. "I have the best of both worlds," he told the reporter. Show business was fun, he said, but superficial. "And as Burt himself said to me once, 'What are you going to do when Burt Reynolds goes down the toilet?'"

RELAC member Tom Hibbard, then health deputy for Supervisor Pete Schabarum, said he would occasionally have lunch with Leaf and people would come up to their table, thinking Leaf was Reynolds.

Despite the advantages of looking like Reynolds, it also made Leaf extremely self-conscious. "You feel kind of like a spectacle in a zoo. People scrutinize every little thing about you, every part of your body. You see women walking back and forth in front of your office when you know they don't need to be there. It makes you feel weird."

"People don't want to know your name," he told another reporter. "They just call you Burt."

Deputy Public Defender Couple Retire Together

Deputy Public Defender John Montoya, receiving a retirement scroll from the Board of Supervisors, disclosed that his domestic partner, Cathy Gardner, also a deputy public defender, was also retiring the same day.



Top: Leaf receives retirement scroll from Board of Supervisors. Bottom: Leaf, at left, with actor Burt Reynolds on Merv Griffin Show. Leaf's early crush: Zelda, AKA Sheila Kuehl



Supervisor Kathryn Barger presents retirement scroll to Asst. Sheriff Richard J. Barrantes, who served 42 years in LASD.



Letters To The Editor

Write On!

The Recognition Luncheon was beautiful! You guys did a great job. Greg Walia cracked me up vis-a-vis the drawing. The keynote speaker was very good...and, of course, the TSA chorus was awesome!
Ida Ramos, Alhambra, California

Thank you, RELAC, for the nice newsletter. I always enjoy the news. It is written in a friendly way, and I am smiling after reading through the different articles.
Darlene Tyler, Florence, Oregon

Thank you so much, Judy Hammond, for your excellent and extraordinary contributions to RELAC and the newsletter. County service and its exemplary, dedicated employees were an important part of our lives for many years. As a retiree, I very much appreciate reading your overviews of County happenings and articles of how retirees are doing in their lives after the County. Also, as a former legislative advocate for the County, I very much appreciate the especially challenging efforts of RELAC to protect our retirement funds. Gratefully yours,
Gerri Kariya, Genoa, Nevada

I want to thank you so much for the birthday card on the occasion of my 91st birthday. I enjoy the RELAC newsletter so much. It keeps me up to date. Thanks again for your thoughtfulness.
Virginia Smith, La Habra, California

Thank you Board Member Evelyn Gutierrez and RELAC for helping us celebrate 100, the beautiful certificate of recognition, the wonderful article in the RELAC magazine, and for sending us extra copies.
Robert Truman, Altadena, California

Dear RELAC Board and Outreach Committee. Thank you for remembering my birthday. It is a great card - and I did celebrate!
Patricia McGrath, Oro Valley, Arizona

A big thank you for the birthday card sent to me on my big "94". Continue with your good work for the retirees. With sincere thanks and warm wishes!
Genevieve Minjarez, Los Angeles, California

Dear RELAC Outreach Committee: Thank you very, very much for your nice card, especially since you must have a lot of work to do other than taking care of birthdays. I am sorry for my delayed "thank you." I was under the weather for some time. I am gradually getting better and hope to continue improving. Again, thank you.
Anne Motoyoshi, Redondo Beach, California

Thank you, RELAC, for such a nice gesture of sending me a birthday card. I feel very fortunate as I have reached and passed my 97th year. Been retired from the Fire Department for 39 years. Retired in March 1978. Thanks again.
Marvin Paske, South El Monte, California

Thank you so much for remembering me on Valentine's Day with the winnings of \$25. I retired in 1992 and have lost touch with my old friends. The only exception is my monthly lunch at Steven's Steak House in Commerce with the retired homicide investigators. I would love to hear from old friends. My telephone number is (626) 570-1054. You do a great job for retirees. I look forward to your newsletter.
Catherine Wills, Monterey Park, California

My sincere thanks for the most welcome surprise – the \$25 check from the valentine drawing. You made my day as I recently lost my valentine, best friend and husband of 65 years. Thank you for all you do for us retirees. My 20 years in Probation left me with a great retirement and the greatest blessing of great health insurance coverage, for which I am so thankful.

Dorothy Karsen, Orange City, Iowa

What a nice Valentine's Day surprise to be a winner in the \$25 drawing! Thank you very much. Although it has been 21 years since my retirement, I still manage to see my former colleagues from the office of County Supervisor Mike Antonovich. The 16 years I spent in that office were very enjoyable and interesting. I now reside in Camarillo. Thanks again.

Linda Shannon, Camarillo, California

Thank you, RELAC, for the valentine winnings!
Theodore Potter, Saint Paul, Nebraska

What a pleasant surprise to find that I am one of the winners in the valentine drawing.
Betty Stout, Columbia, Missouri

Thanks for the valentine's winnings. It keeps us in touch - so far away and yet so near.
Jackie McGlinchey, Columbus, Missouri

I wish to thank you all for the \$25 check. What a pleasant surprise! I have lived in Bend since 1993 and absolutely love this town; so much to do - winter and summer. Thank you again. God's blessings to all.
Marian Cosner, Bend, Oregon

What a pleasant surprise it was to receive the \$25 valentine drawing prize in the mail. Thank you for all your efforts. Also, thank you, RELAC Outreach Committee, for the birthday and Christmas cheers you send us. You do a wonderful job.
Emiko Matsuno, San Gabriel, California

Just dropping a short note to thank you so much for your gift. I look forward to using the 18-month calendar every year. I take it everywhere I go and keep myself somewhat organized because of it. I also want to thank you for all the work you do to keep all retired County employees informed and to ensure that our interests are protected.

Rose Esquibel, Covina, California

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

by Diane Sandoval, Chair

Regional Support/Special Events Committee

As I write this article I am looking forward to seeing those of you living in the Palmdale/Lancaster area on April 6. For my husband and me, it is a little over a two-hour drive, but well worth it because we enjoy visiting with our loyal members who come to our meeting each year.

I am also looking forward to listening to our featured speaker, Robert Hill, LACERA assistant executive officer, who will update us on the latest issues impacting our pension and medical benefits.

ANNUAL RELAC PICNIC-Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017

Mark your calendars now so you don't miss this event. If you've never attended the picnic - you are missing out. Our caterer feeds us well and the weather has never disappointed us. And, by the way, did I mention our picnic area is near the lake? Stay tuned for specific details in our next issue.

ANNUAL RECOGNITION LUNCHEON - Jan. 17, 2018

Please note that our luncheon meeting next year is on a **Wednesday** and not Thursday as in previous years. The location remains the same - the Almansor Court in Alhambra. The committee hasn't selected the menu yet, however, I can assure you one of the entrees that won't change is the prime rib.

I hope you are planning to attend. This event is the highlight of the year and the committee and RELAC staff make every effort to make it an event to remember. Past speakers include Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey and Los Angeles County Fire Chief Daryl Osby.

To date, the committee has not scheduled other meetings for 2017; however, we are open to your suggestions. We are looking at holding future meetings in Orange County, Riverside County or San Bernardino County. If you live in any of those counties and know of a good location to hold a meeting, please, please let us know.

Contact the RELAC office with your recommendations. The committee will do all the work; all we need is for you to suggest where to hold the meeting. We're also interested in your suggestions on topics that interest you. As I always say, WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU!



RV Outing Notes

Jeanne Klauk,
Assistant Coordinator
of the RV Club



Once again, Banning KOA welcomed our RELAC group. We were not a large group, but we had a grand time. Dian and Leon Stegall hosted this campout, with Janet Cerato and Bill and Janice Hayhurst assisting. Attending this outing was our new president, Mike Reyes, and his wife, Veronica; Bob and Linda Reyes; Al and Diana Medina; Ron and Betsy Morgon; Ernie and Cristina Blanchard; Dorie Fregeau, and me.

On Sunday, Betsy had a nice medical issue, so her first camping night was spent at the hospital. During the day, the Morgons were joined by their son Brian and his wife, Daniela, and their two cute boys, Charlie and RJ. The boys showed us their little car magic track -- with wild cars flying about. Randy Forney joined us for another sumptuous hors d'oeuvre meal. Our kitchen crew provided us with two great breakfasts. Mike led his first very successful meeting and we discussed some changes -- mainly that our Wednesday night out will now be called "LEO", Let's Eat Out, as opposed to ladies' night out -- as the men eat out as well. Ron distributed the financial report, which he seems to have a handle on.

Our potluck on Tuesday was, again, excellent. Wednesday, we went to Gramma's Country Kitchen, where Fred Weinberg and Randy Forney joined us -- I think, mainly, to check on Betsy. Phyllis and Jesse Murph joined us on Tuesday afternoon for a nice visit. We had our 50-50 drawing on Tuesday night. The Medinas won the draw and donated it back to the club coffers. Mike won the gas card. Of course, many games of cards were played. We were even successful at getting Diana to join us, even though she had a bit of a problem with the 7 of clubs. Even Bob and Bill joined us for some 7-up. Al likes 7-up the best, although we started him on Shanghai. We missed Ed Clifton, but he is having some major work done on his house, and could not attend -- maybe next time. So, next time is May 21-25, with me as wagon master, and we are going to Buellton. Let me know if you are interested in going. You can reach me at (562) 896-8904. The next trip will be Sept. 18, 19, 20 to Chula Vista. One of our favorite places.

Annual Memorial Day Tribute to Veterans and Military Families Set for May 27

Los Angeles County's 20th Annual Memorial Day Tribute to Veterans and Military Families will be held Saturday, May 27 at Arcadia County Park, 405 S. Santa Anita Ave., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

County Supervisor Kathryn Barger will be joined by KNBC-TV weathercaster Fritz Coleman and other special guests for a Memorial Day tribute ceremony at 11 a.m.

The event, which offers free admission and parking, will showcase veteran talent, opportunities for veterans, resources, wellness and history. Other highlights include skydivers, military vehicles and equipment displays, a children's area, live entertainment and a food court with both food trucks and booths.

The event is co-sponsored by Supervisor Barger, the County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the County Parks and Recreation Department, and the Association of the United States Army.

Just Saying:

Quote of the Day

"Pray not for lighter burdens, but for stronger backs."

Theodore Roosevelt

(Submitted by Bill de la Garza, RELAC Board Member)

RELAC NEWSLETTER

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9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday - Thursday

Closed Friday,

Saturday, Sunday &

Public Holidays

Golf News

By *Gil Sandoval*
RELAC Golf Director



La Mirada Golf Tournament - March 20, 2017

We had a decent turnout for this tournament as 30 players competed. We still need more players for the ladies flight and players in general.

The "A" flight was close. Michael Hernandez beat his playing partner, Mike Barreras, by one stroke at net 67 to win. John Madrid finished in third place at net 70, and he was followed by Benny Martinez at net 72.

Luis Martinez followed his third place finish from the last tournament to edge out Jim Meek, who was the winner in the last tournament, by one stroke as he won the "B" flight with a net 65. Jim took second place at net 67 with Rex Loughran following in third place with a net 68.

The "C" flight was a battle between Terry Blacks and Richard Duran again, with Richard winning with a net 71. Terry came in second at net 73, well ahead of Frank Martinez's third place finish with a net 83.

The ladies flight was won by Kay Barents over her good friend Charlene DeBie as Kay brought in a net 74. Charlene repeated last month's net 77 for second place. We only had two female participants, so they were both guaranteed winners.

The next tournament is at Santa Anita Golf Course on June 5 at our normal 8 a.m. start.

Please note that the golf entry form can be obtained on the RELAC website at www.relac.org under the Calendar of Events tab. If you cannot download it from a computer, call the RELAC office to have it mailed to you.

LA MIRADA RESULTS:

"A" Flight Winners (19 and under)

1st Michael Hernandez (67)

2nd Mike Barreras (68),

3rd John Madrid (70).

"B" Flight (20-27 Handicaps)

1st Luis Martinez (65),

2nd Jim Meek (67),

3rd Rex Loughran (68).

"C" Flight (28 up Handicaps)

1st Richard Duran (71),

2nd Terry Black (73),

3rd Frank Martinez (83).

Women's Flight

1st Kay Barents (74),

2nd Charlene DeBie (77),

3rd None.

Closest to the Pin on Par 3's

Men

3 - Don Hughes

5 - Luis Martinez

9 & #11 - No Winner

#13 - Don Hughes

#17 - Mike Barreras

Women

No Winner

NEXT TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2017

Santa Anita Golf Course, 8 a.m. Start

Entry Deadline - May 18

DPSS Seeks Volunteers

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is seeking volunteers to provide clerical support on a variety of short or long-term assignments. Volunteers are also invited to various outreach events countywide.

The time required each week generally ranges from 20 - 40 hours. Volunteers are required to be fingerprinted. For more information, contact Anthony Leoni, DPSS volunteer coordinator, at (213) 744-4590 or DPSSvolunteers@dpss.lacounty.gov.

We've Redesigned Our Website



Take a look at RELAC's new website at www.relac.org. We've redesigned the site to make it more attractive and easier to use.

Among the items you will find on the site are news announcements, calendar of events, most recent In Memoriam list, names of recent retirees, past newsletters, membership application, and supplementary insurance information.

There is also information about RELAC, its history, mission, Board of Directors, and representation on the LACERA Boards of Retirement and Investments.

Any ideas for improvement? Let us know. Send your ideas to admin@relac.org.

Library Opens Second Veterans Resource Center

The Los Angeles County Library has opened a Veterans Resource Center at its La Puente branch, offering information on benefits, state and federal education, health, disability, housing, finance and employment. A similar center is also available at the Lancaster Library.

Veterans or their families can call the library regarding one-on-one consultation with a trained volunteer or drop by to view the collection of library books and materials selected especially for veterans.

The La Puente Library is at 15920 E. Central Ave. The phone number is (626) 968-4613. The Lancaster Library is at 601 W. Lancaster Blvd. The phone number is (661) 948-5029.

The center is offered in partnership with the California Department of Veterans Affairs and the County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Keeping Up With Retirees

We asked four RELAC members to let us know what they have been doing since retirement. Their articles follow.



Pam Everett

Retirement is delightful, but so was my County career. After getting a degree in psychology from Occidental College, I went to work as a social worker for the Department of Public Social Services and worked in the San Fernando and Glendale offices. After seven years, I moved into a staff position, working for Stephanie Klopfleisch, the director of the Bureau of Social Services. She was a wonderful mentor, and taught me the protocol of working with politicians and managers in other departments. When Stephanie moved to a higher position, I went to work for Gordon Todd in the Glendale service office as the administrative deputy. Another great learning experience preparing me for future responsibilities.



When Nadia Looper-Wiggins needed someone to help her at the Public Information Office in the Chief Administrative Office, she hired me as the assistant director. That was in 1981, and that was where I was still working when I retired in 1998. I started out when Harry Hufford was the CAO and ended my career when David Janssen was in charge. I was so lucky to work for both of them. There were some CAOs between the two, so it was a constantly changing atmosphere. It was a fun time to work at the Hall of Administration. My job involved working directly with the Board of Supervisors and many individuals in most departments. One of the things we did was to plan the various ceremonial functions that kept the county growing and changing. My office window looked to the courthouse on the south, and when I arrived there were no tall buildings in downtown L.A. I got to watch the skyline change dramatically. In 1984 the Board was very involved in the Olympic festivities. I had been to the 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck and was a real fan. I bought tickets for the opening ceremony and many of the athletic contests and was also able to attend the closing ceremony and some of the celebratory gatherings, including one at Bob Hope's home. Also in 1984, President Reagan spoke at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and I had the opportunity to watch him speak and observe the Secret Service do what they do.

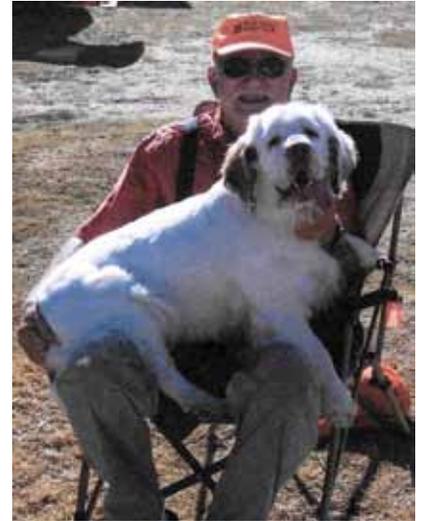
After I retired, I was pleased to work as a rehired retiree at Community and Senior Services. Stephanie Klopfleisch was the director when I started and it was wonderful to work with her again. I stayed on after she retired and love the department and what they do. The department handles the Adult Protective Services for the County, along with many specialized programs, so, in a way, I was back at the beginning of my career.

For the last six years, I have been having lots of fun working part time as a cashier at a local car wash. Just trying to keep the old mind working! I have wonderful nieces and nephews and enjoy spending time with each of them. Fortunately, they all live either very close to me or only a few hours away. I can't believe it, but I actually have a great-great niece. How quickly the years fly by. This year is the 49th anniversary of living in my home in Burbank. Life is good!

Most of my close friends who I hang out with now are folks that I worked with, some from the very beginning of my career. Several of us skied together for years. We might as well be family. I love Yosemite and have been there several times. I camped there when I was a kid, but now stay in the hotel or lodge. Palm Springs has also been a favorite destination. I don't usually take trips lasting more than a few days at a time because I don't like to leave my dog and cats, but a friend and I are going to Denali and an Alaskan cruise in June. It has been on my bucket list, so 2017 is the time to do it.

John Hammargren

I retired as a commander with the Sheriff's Department in 2000 at age 60, after having served 38 years. My career was varied and always interesting and challenging. My specialty, if I had one, was contract law enforcement. I had responsibility for several mergers, most notably the MTA and Marshal's mergers. I was fortunate to have been mentored during my career by members of the "Greatest Generation." Through them I learned that it is not enough to be busy, you must be "necessary."



Hammargren and Tori, a 1-year-old Clumber Spaniel show champion he is helping train.

While working with contract cities, I met my wife, Sara Ann Hanlon, who at that time was mayor of Signal Hill. We were married in 1995. She was an artist and designed, and had built, the memorial flame at the Sheriff's Memorial at STARS Center at no cost to the County.

I have always been an outdoorsman: fishing, hunting, and skiing. Prior to retiring, I guided at the High Desert Hunt Club on the Tejon Ranch, specializing in guiding new hunters and their parents. I continued after retirement, and expanded my hobby by helping friends train their hunting dogs, in addition to my own.

Following retirement, I was a contract services consultant to cities for several years. Then Supervisor Don Knabe asked me to serve on the Sybil Brand Commission, inspecting custody facilities, jail and court lock-ups, probation camps, and group homes. I readily agreed and served for nearly six years. A friend asked if I would volunteer at the Interfaith Food Center in Santa Fe Springs. My role was to pick up unwanted food at area markets to provide for those in need. The food center provides services to more than 1,500 families weekly. I subsequently left the commission and volunteered at the food center for three years.

My wife was diagnosed with cancer in 2014 and for the last three years I devoted myself to her. She passed in June of last year. Sara and I both had a passion for skiing and heli-skied the "steeps and the deeps." We skied Europe, Canada, and most of the Western U.S. Our home mountain was Mammoth Mountain and we had a timeshare in Snowbird, Utah. We traveled extensively, often on small cruise ship venues.

I continue to enjoy fishing and have a small boat that I use to ocean fish locally. Fly fishing is a passion and I go on several trips yearly, often with retired Supervisor Pete Schabarum, who at 88 just won't slow down. When I grow up I want to be just like him.

I have lived in the same house in La Mirada for the past 42 years. I'm active in two local spaniel clubs, and have two dogs: Buster Brown, an 8-year-old Boykin spaniel, and Danny Boy, a 3-year-old English cocker spaniel that already is an AKC Master Hunter. We train weekly and help others train their dogs.

Be necessary!

Brian Berger

It was June 1967 when, fresh out of college, I accepted an offer to be an administrative assistant with the County Assessor at what seemed an un-spendable salary of \$624 month, before deductions. I knew nothing about the County or the Assessor and since I was on a student deferment, I was certain I was just a few months from being drafted and happy anyone would hire me. Within months I was lucky to find a slot in the National Guard and become an officer for the six-plus years I served. The Assessor's Office let me meet an amazing mentor, Jack Davis, who said, "We want you to come back to us after your basic training. We want you." In less than three years I was a division chief in that department, and Jack was saying, "The County is bigger than this one department." With his urging I was soon involved in countywide public speaking organizations, management groups, multi-departmental committees and sports activities, all of which I stayed active in for all of my county career. The speakers group led to my next mentor, Doug Steele, and an invitation to join the Chief Administrative Office.

Within a few years I left the CAO as a chief analyst. Then came a few years as a deputy with the Mechanical Department, and then a chance to work with new County Supervisor Mike Antonovich to help his staff understand how to work most effectively with County operations. This short-term loan from Mechanical extended as I became the supervisor's acting chief deputy; however, my heart was still with the county line, so when the opportunity arose I became director of the Department of Animal Care and Control until mid-1989. During this span, I was twice the president of the County Management Council. My last stop was the Department of Children and Family Services, where I was director of special services. In all, I navigated six different departments and many interdepartmental working committees over 30-plus years, with a wide range of changing and exciting assignments. I so enjoyed understanding and being a part of what "The County" and all of its obligations meant. I tried and I hope I succeeded in passing on to some the mentoring gifts that were shared with me.

The County family also gave me my wife, Gene, in what is the continuing adventure of my life.

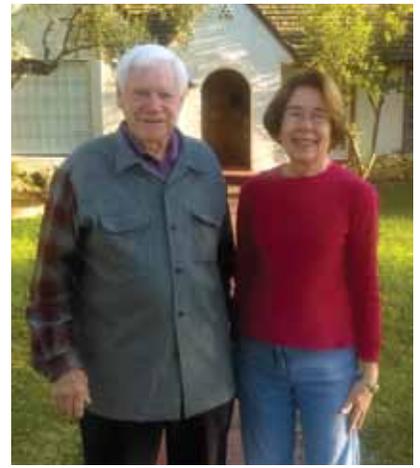
I retired in 1999. In 2004 Gene and I moved to a home near the Rose Bowl and my early retirement years were absorbed by consulting and volunteer work as I "needed to be needed" and waited for Gene to retire, so much so that I was saying to some, "I'm working longer hours...for less pay." The Rose Bowl area had an aquatic center and gym, which helped me fight, and still does, the impact of age and rich foods. Then Gene and I were free and we started to and continue to see those parts of the world that were only stories or pictures in our working years: Machu Pichu, the glory and beauty of this nation's national parks, Paris, London, Berlin, Quebec, Vienna, Egypt (when it was still safe), Africa with its animals...and on and on with more to come. And then came the grandkids and day care needs, and school pickups, and after-school activities, and one type of adventure has blended with one that is even more rewarding.

Working for Los Angeles County was a great adventure. It has provided me with a wealth of governmental knowledge that will last me forever and will allow me to continue to bore those people who don't understand the breadth and responsibilities of L.A. County government and are innocent enough to ask me a question.



Lester Swancutt

I graduated from high school during the Korean Conflict and left the family farm (which was homesteaded in 1878 at Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory) to join the Army. After three years, first in Korea and then Japan, I returned to the U.S.A. and attended San Francisco State, graduating with a degree in business administration, while also working a night shift at the Rincon Annex Post Office. During my last semester of college, the Civil Aeronautics Board offered me an administrative analyst position in Washington, D.C. The job was fine, but the weather horrible, so after one year I returned to California, only this time to Los Angeles.



Lester Swancutt and wife, Pat

I took the first job offered as a social worker in the County Bureau of Public Assistance. This was interesting, but not what I wanted to do for a career, so I accepted a position as an appraiser in the Assessor's Office and from there a position in the Personnel Division of the Chief Administrative Office (CAO), which was responsible for employee compensation issues. We were a small group, including senior analyst Richard Dixon, who later became chief administrative officer. We spent hours on end meeting with the various employee organizations and had contentious meetings with Eleanor Glenn, who represented many of the employees of the hospitals. This occurred prior to the establishment of the County's employee relations ordinance and the advent of today's collective bargaining.

In 1966 I was offered an administrative position at the General Hospital, where I worked for several years as the area administrator for medical/surgical services. I received a promotion and transferred to the Women's Hospital, and then in 1971 I was promoted to the administrator of the Psychiatric Hospital. I retired in 1993, having spent 38 years in government service, the last 32 years with Los Angeles County.

Before leaving the CAO I met Patricia Haven, who worked in the Office of the Civil Service Commission. Later we were married and our 50th wedding anniversary will be this year. We have three children. After retiring several years ahead of Pat, I enjoyed traveling to elder hostel programs within the United States, attending many of their one-week educational programs. Visiting the historical Civil War sites I found very interesting. The trip to New Orleans during the Mardi Gras was my favorite.

My hobbies of hunting and fishing started at a very young age when I was living in South Dakota, where everyone hunted pheasants and enjoyed fishing. Many years later, I joined the El Monte Chargers Fishing Club. We would travel to San Diego to fish in the Mexican waters for albacore and yellowtail. I went skeet shooting many weekends at the Whittier Narrows shooting range with friends from the CAO and the Psychiatric Hospital.

My retirement hobby is to manage the family farm in South Dakota. I am fortunate to have a neighbor who custom farms for me. I usually return during planting and again when harvesting and am amazed at the changes that have been made with the use of modern tractors, combines, and other field equipment. My father used a team of horses to pull farm equipment until I was 5 years old, when he bought a John Deere tractor and taught me how to drive it. Farmers now use 24-row corn planters instead of two-row planters, 12-row harvesters instead of four-row harvesters, and all the motorized equipment is guided by GPS. In addition, they use drones to fly over the fields to check the crop conditions rather than walking the fields, which leads me to wonder what farming will be like in the future. During these trips, I always visit my high school classmates and, of course, never miss my high school reunions.

Pat and I now spend our time at our condominium in Pompano Beach, Florida, as well as our home in San Marino, with fond memories of the good old days in the County,



Borda Parker Iverson Alsop Pestrella Davis Taylor Van de Kamp Wapner

PASSAGES

Compiled by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

APPOINTMENTS:

PUBLIC WORKS: **Mark Pestrella**, chief deputy director of public works who was named acting road commissioner/director after Gail Farber resigned in December, got the permanent nod, at a salary of \$292,230. **Kerjon Lee**, who headed media relations, is the new public affairs manager, succeeding **Ryan Alsop**, who in January became CEO of Kern County. Alsop had been assistant CEO under Bill Fujioka, but was transferred to Public Works when Fujioka retired. **Bob Spencer**, who was the public affairs manager when Farber headed the department, is now a senior public information officer under Lee, working on the employee news blog and writing speeches for the executive team. **Susan Herman**, hired originally by the Chief Executive Office about 10 years ago to implement a County television channel, has transferred to Public Works to support the Business Relations and Contracting Division, a newly formed group designed to encourage small and minority-owned businesses to contract with Public Works. Herman's CEO telecommunications staff has relocated to the recently renovated Public Information Office in Room 358 at the Hall of Administration.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS/EXECUTIVE OFFICE: **Jeremy Gray**, who was assistant registrar-recorder/county clerk and formerly chief information officer for the Departments of Human Resources and Parks and Recreation, is the new assistant executive officer overseeing information resource management and planning. **Jeff Levinson**, previously building manager and then acting public information officer, has been appointed as the Executive Office's first public information officer. **Camille Townsend**, assistant executive officer over operations and commissions since September 2016 and formerly acting director of the Countywide Equity Oversight Panel, has returned to the County's Counsel's Office. **PHILHARMONIC:** **Gail Samuel**, executive director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, has been named acting president and CEO while a search is under way for a replacement for **Deborah Borda**, who accepted appointment as president and CEO of the New York Philharmonic. **BOARD OF EDUCATION:** Supervisor Sheila Kuehl appointed **Monte Perez** and **Judy Abdo** to the County Board of Education. Supervisor Janice Hahn removed **Gabriella Holt** from the board and named **James Cross** to replace her, and appointed **Lucia Galante Johnson** as rotational member (two-year term.) **COMMISSIONS:** Supervisor Janice Hahn initially removed her predecessor's appointee **Jacqueline Bacharach** from the Quality and Productivity Commission, then reappointed her. Hahn named her deputy **Jayne S. Wilson** to the Economic Development Corporation.

RETIREMENTS:

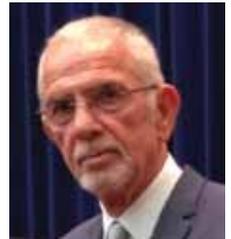
Fred Leaf, senior health policy advisor to Supervisor Kathryn Barger; 45 years with the County, including serving as acting director of health services. **Neal Tyler**, executive officer to Sheriff Jim McDonnell. Assistant Sheriff **Richard J. Barrantes**. Sheriff Commander **Mike Parker**, Personnel and Training section, former head of the Sheriff's Headquarters Information Bureau. **Sid Kikkawa**, senior assistant chief executive officer, 38 years of service. Assistant Auditor-Controller **Robert A. Davis**. Auditor-Controller division manager (countywide payroll) **Gregg M. Iverson**. **John Rau**, Internal Services Department. **Al Shaw Jr.**, head of the Homeland Security grant program section in Chief Executive Office. Deputy Public Defender **John F. Montoya**, past president of the Latino Public Defender Association. **Joe Mendoza**, Parks and Recreation's deputy director for the South County Community Services Agency. **Mary Savinar**, program manager, Quality and Productivity Commission, Board of Supervisors. **Rosy Alaniz**, secretary to chief deputy director, Regional Planning. **Howard Choy**, general manager, Office of Sustainability, Internal Services. **Judith Fries**, County Counsel. **David L. Fender**, chief of the custody division, 42 years with Sheriff's Department.

DEATHS:

John Van de Kamp, district attorney from 1975 to 1981, died at age 81 after developing flu-like symptoms. Former Superior Court Judge **Joseph Wapner**, 97, who became so widely recognized from presiding over "The People's Court" on television for 12 years that a Washington Post poll in the late '80s found that two-thirds of those surveyed could not name one Supreme Court judge, but 54 percent knew Wapner. Former Superior Court Judge Pro Tem **Barry Harlan**, 74. **Stephen Reinstein**, 64, founding member and chair of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Photographic Council. Dr. **Richard E. Horowitz**, 85, assistant professor of pathology and associate director of the laboratories at USC County General Hospital. Sheriff's Lt. **Ricky Doan**, retired in 2008 after 33+ years. Sgt. **William H. Eden**, retired in 1980 from Norwalk Sheriff Station. Former Deputy District Attorney **Stephen Haworth**, 82. **Dr. Sol Bernstein**, 90, former director of health services and medical director of LAC+USC Medical Center.



Samuel



Leaf



Savinar



Kikkawa



Lee



Spencer

Los Angeles Sheriff's Department
37th ANNUAL RETIREES' REUNION
June 18, 2017 - June 24, 2017
 Inter-Mountain Fairgrounds
 McArthur, California

All retired members of the Sheriff's Department, including civilian, and traveling companions are invited to gather at the Inter-Mountain Fairgrounds in McArthur, California for the 37th Annual Reunion.

The location is on Highway 299, approximately 70 miles east of Redding. This beautiful valley lies between the peaks of Mt. Lassen and Mt. Shasta.

Attendees can bring their RV, tent or stay in one of the local motels in Fall River Mills. Full hook-up camping, showers, laundry and 30 amp and some 50 amp service are available at \$15 per night starting Friday prior to the event. Early camping arrivals (prior to Friday) will pay the normal campground rate. These camping fees are good June 17-June 24. The reunion registration is \$10 per person, paid upon check-in.

Activities include golf at a championship 18-hole golf course, horseshoes, lawn darts, Bocce ball, card tournaments, potluck dinners, steak fry, a catered dinner, a pancake breakfast, fishing, sightseeing or just kicking back and relaxing. Plenty of war stories, tales of then and now, and lie-swapping may be heard daily. Newly retired and surviving spouses are especially welcome.

Adult participation only.

To RSVP or obtain additional information, contact:

Paul or Debbie Larson (360) 730-2425, paulndeb@whidbey.com
 Tom Sargent (530) 243-8982, tsgr907@charter.net
 Richard or Judy Smith (626) 444-0686, retiredstars@earthlink.net

Retirement is...

An opportunity to give back to community and country, time and expendable resources. That is the real gratification in retirement.

*Greg Walia, Retired 2000
 Personnel Officer, Public Works Department*



Library Offers Free Passes to Museums

The L.A. County Library is offering free family passes to Southern California museums through its new Discover & Go program.

Library cardholders above the age of 18 can go online to reserve passes to museums and cultural institutions participating in the program. Tickets are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, until all tickets are exhausted for the month.

Museums currently participating in the program include Autry Museum, Craft & Folk Art Museum, Japanese American National Museum, Kidspace Children's Museum, La Brea Tar Pits and Museum, LACMA, La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Muckenthaler Cultural Center, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Pasadena Museum of California Art, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, and Skirball Museum. County Library Director Skye Patrick said the goal is to expand the program and involve all Southern California museums and cultural institutions.

For more information on this program, or to reserve free family passes, visit colapublib.org/DiscoverGo/.



DA Jackie Lacey



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Reflections:

On the Passing of Former District Attorney John Van de Kamp

District Attorney Jackie Lacey:

John Van de Kamp was one of the most ethical and kind-hearted people I've ever met. He was an admired public servant who dedicated his life to seeking justice. He cared deeply about the District Attorney's Office. Among his lasting legacies was his devotion to helping victims of serious and violent crimes. As district attorney, he established one of the nation's first victim services programs. We, as an office, are indebted to him for his innovative and straight-forward leadership and his enduring sense of fairness.

On a personal note, I am thankful for John's wisdom and gentle guidance throughout my tenure. I frequently sought his advice and looked up to him as a stalwart of the justice system. Like many, I mourn his passing, and I will miss his wisdom, his wit and his kindness.

Board of Supervisors Chair Mark Ridley-Thomas:

We have lost a brilliant legal mind and a dedicated public servant with the passing of John Van de Kamp. When I was a state senator and he was chairman of the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, we worked together in pursuit of legislation that would reform California's criminal justice system. I was deeply impressed by his commitment to ensuring that justice is administered fairly and accurately so that the guilty are convicted and the innocent remain free. He was a man of integrity who will be deeply missed.

FOR SALE

CEMETERY PLOTS - Three grave plots in Forest Lawn Cypress, Tender Promise area, valued at \$4,200 each. Will pay transfer fee. Call Verne or Ann Handy at (208) 775-4573.

LAKE COUNTY PROPERTY - Lot for sale, Lake County near Lucerne, California, undeveloped subdivision in Clear Lake. Ideal for camping, boating and fishing. \$1,800 or best offer. Taxes are up to date. Plot map provided upon request. Contact Denis McGrath at mcdenis@gmail.com or call (626) 794-8444.

CERRITOS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Photos by Linda C. Hopkins

"Seniors and Safe Driving" was the topic of the day at the recent RELAC general membership meeting in Cerritos. Tressa Thompson of the state Department of Motor Vehicles was well received and provided lots of information to our members.

Did you know:

Driver tests are now given with touch-screen electronic devices.

It is illegal to lend a disabled parking placard to anyone, and you may not use another person's placard for your personal use.

You may not drive with the disabled parking placard displayed.

Thompson will also be the featured speaker at the RELAC general membership meeting in Granada Hills on Sept. 28, so mark your calendars.



Sophy Eskander



Retired District Attorney employee Ivone Naab and husband, Earl, a Navy veteran.



Albert Nahum wins a drawing prize



Veteran Tony Farindlla



James O. Epperly, 90



Corine Thornsburg



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New England & Canada
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September 22, 2017

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Saint John, New Brunswick - Bar Harbor, Maine -
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Karen Ammons, Jeannette Owens and Mark Ammons



Army Veteran Sam Combes



Drawing prize winner Guadalupe Sotelo and RELAC Board Member Diane Sandoval.



Jeannette Owens and Carolyn Cobb

Inside LA County

by Judy Hammond
Newsletter Editor



Los Angeles County shoppers will pay 9.5 percent sales tax beginning July, following the approval by voters of a ¼ cent hike to pay for homeless services. Of the 17.09 percent of eligible voters casting ballots in the March election, 69 percent gave the thumbs up to the increase. The 10-year tax is expected to raise \$355 million annually. Though the County could not legally fund a campaign to promote Measure H, the Board of Supervisors approved spending \$1 million for outreach, including television ads, “to inform voters with a fair presentation of the facts.” Now supervisors must decide how to use the new revenues, so have formed a 50-member planning team to make recommendations for the first three years. One thing the Board said it does want included is eviction defense services, in light of a recent finding that 14 percent of the County’s homeless lost their homes due to foreclosure or eviction.

The District Attorney’s Office has created a Bureau of Victims Services K-9 unit to provide support for child abuse and sexual abuse victims. The DA says allowing victims to pet dogs during interviews and court testimony can give a sense of calmness, providing a sense of security in an intimidating environment.

Small world: Dr. Michael Jimenez, medical director of the new Pomona Valley Medical Hospital Trauma Center, was an intern for Supervisor Hilda Solis when he was in high school.

The Association of Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs sued to keep Sheriff Jim McDonnell from providing to the District Attorney’s Office the names of about 300 deputies with a history of misconduct to allow prosecutors to decide if the information needs to be disclosed to defendants in criminal trials.

The Board of Supervisors is considering amending civil service rules to allow discharges, reductions, reassignments, and blocking of promotions of employees who have lied, misrepresented or omitted material facts in an internal investigation. Supervisors will also assess whether to keep track of different classifications of employees who should be held to a higher standard of honesty in the workplace. At a hearing on the proposal, Max Huntsman, the inspector general for the Sheriff’s Department, said the department has been unable to fire a deputy who has admitted to falsifying hundreds of police reports because of the “dysfunctional discipline system.”

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl and her staff celebrated National Reading Month in March by sharing their favorite books each day on her Twitter page. Kuehl kicked it off with her personal copy of the “Lord of the Rings Trilogy,” which she said she had read 27 times.

Metro reduced the role of sheriff’s deputies patrolling its trains, buses and stations, contracting also with Los Angeles and Long Beach police departments. The agency said the change would make riders feel safer.

The Board of Supervisors, noting that one in three girls in the County’s foster care system will give birth by the time they reach 21, has implemented a policy to require social workers and probation officers to provide reproductive health care information to those in foster care.

The County has filed legal action to overturn a new state law that took away the Board of Supervisors’ power to draw supervisorial district lines and gave it to a citizens committee. Supervisors contend the law, which affects only Los Angeles County, discriminates against independent voters, strips local control from voters, and makes the process more political.

The State Bar is recommending disciplinary action be taken against former District Attorney prosecutor Carmen Trutanich after a federal judge last year threw out a 1985 murder conviction and death sentence, saying Trutanich’s “deeply troubling” behavior had deprived the defendant of a fair trial. Trutanich was said to have suppressed important information and allowed a witness to give false testimony.

Sheriff Lee Baca, 74, is scheduled to be sentenced May 15 after being convicted in his retrial of obstructing a FBI investigation into abuse of jail inmates and lying to cover up his involvement.

Four social workers were ordered to stand trial on child abuse and other charges

in a case that ended in the death of an 8-year-old boy. The judge said the workers mishandled evidence of escalating abuse and failed to file timely reports on what was happening in the boy’s home, conduct she said amounted to criminal negligence.

Renovation has begun on the Ft. Moore Pioneer Memorial on Hill Street in downtown Los Angeles after County supervisors set aside \$5.5 million and the City of Los Angeles another \$500,000. Plans include turning the water back on the 77-foot-wide waterfall, which has been dry since 1977.

A new County policy stipulates that capital projects over \$2.5 million must use apprentices for 20 percent of the construction hours, and that at least half of apprentices be from targeted groups that face barriers to employment.

Supervisors have voted to fund a dedicated courtroom for commercially sexually exploited children, equipped with a dedicated judge and County Counsel and staff trained in best serving the unique needs of these young people.

Noting that nearly half of inmates in the County’s jails are being held while awaiting trial, usually because they cannot pay bail, the Board of Supervisors asked the policies on bail and pretrial release be studied to see if a more equitable system can be implemented.

The newly renovated A C Bilbrew Library in Los Angeles has reopened. Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas provided \$5 million to upgrade and expand the facility.

The County implemented its own temporary services registry in April, hoping to provide training to targeted groups to qualify them for full-time County jobs.

The Board of Supervisors is supporting state legislation to designate the duck-billed dinosaur (*Agustynolophus morrisi*) the official state dinosaur. The County’s Natural History Museum is the home to the only known two specimens and the holotype is on display in the Dinosaur Hall. The dinosaur is named after museum donor Gretchen Augustyn, and Dr. Luis Chiappe, vice president of research collections, was on the team that named the dinosaur.

The Medical Services Bureau of the Sheriff’s Department is now part of the Health Services Department, with the transfer May 1 of 1,586 ordinance positions and \$28 million.

Three deputy probation officers – Sergio Cano, Carlos Portillo and Timothy Boundy -- have been charged with assault under color of authority in a 2016 incident caught on tape in which a 17-year-old Sylmar Juvenile Hall inmate was punched and kicked. Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald said an internal investigation turned up seven other incidents at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall in which employees appear to have used unauthorized or excessive force, being misleading/untruthful, or both.

The governing board of Metro rescinded a policy it adopted only in December that allowed corporations to pay to rename train lines, street stations and buildings, after being advised they legally could not refuse sponsorship because of a company’s business practices or political affiliation. The Board decided names should reflect streets, neighborhood, city or landmarks.

Veteran's Corner



Robert S. Hammond: One of first blacks in Marines

RELAC member Robert Stanley Hammond was chief of environmental health in the West Los Angeles District when he retired in January 1993, receiving many commendations from the cities within his district. He was among one of the first African-American employees to work for the L.A. County Department of Environmental Health Services when it merged with the City of Los Angeles Health Department in 1964. In 1973 he directed the childhood lead screening program for sickle cell anemia among African-American children. As chief of environmental health, he was responsible for training food service operators during the 1984 Olympics.



Now 91 and living in Long Beach, Hammond is doing research for a book on early America and the Caribbean on the African-American diaspora. In searching for his roots, he found that one of his ancestors was a Buffalo soldier and a famous bandmaster for the U.S. Army 9th Calvary.

The following account describes racism and discrimination that Hammond and other blacks encountered in the Marines during World War II. The Marine Corps was the last branch of the military to accept African-Americans, forced to do so in 1942 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. But the blacks were not allowed at white training grounds; they were trained at a segregated facility in Montford Point, North Carolina. Hammond said his naval experience was one of strict segregation and separation, yet he looks back with pride at serving his country and remains a proud Marine.)

Robert Hammond was 7 when his father passed away in 1933. He went to live with his uncle and aunt in Charleston, South Carolina, while his mother completed her education. There he learned the sea as his uncle took him aboard his fishing boat, and visited places like Cuba, Haiti and Jamaica. He had a great fascination for boats, the sea and the environment (the foundation for his environmental career). He learned to read and write at an early age, reading "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the Bible, Shakespeare and "Gone With the Wind." In 1938 Hammond was among 100 black students selected to attend the John E. Burke Industrial High School, the first modern non-white school in South Carolina, on the condition that the school would revert to white students if all of them did not achieve a "C" average the first year. They exceeded that goal, all receiving "A" and "B" averages, and the school still exists today.

Because of racism, bigotry and segregation in Charleston, Hammond returned to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to be with his family. At the age of 17, he enlisted in the Navy and was sent to boot camp at Camp Lawrence, a segregated naval training camp at Great Lakes, Illinois. In 1944 Hammond was among 22 black sailors selected to attend Hospital Corps School. He was not aware that this class was established for African-American corpsmen; he later learned that black sailors and Marines received very little attention from the white naval medical staff at that time, so black corpsmen were needed. After graduating in March 1944, Hammond was sent to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital in New York for further training as a medical technician. However, he and the other black corpsmen were assigned to kitchen duties until staff officers inspecting the facility demanded they be assigned duties the same as white corpsmen.



During the course of World War II, as a result of a presidential directive, the Navy had to accept African-Americans and non-white recruits. They were sent to Montford Point Camp, New River, North Carolina, and as the numbers grew they were assigned to all African-American companies commanded by white officers. The medical facilities at Montford Point had no black medical personnel and the black Marines received little or poor medical attention. They received APC (all-purpose capsules) and Brown's mixture (mineral oil, castor oil and a brown syrup) for all illnesses except cuts or fractures. After this was brought to the attention of the Navy Department, Hammond and other African-American corpsmen in training at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital were assigned duties at the medical dispensary at Montford Point in 1944. The recruits for the first time received adequate medical attention. Brown's mixture and APCs were no longer dispensed unless a person was constipated. Hammond identified and worked to improve the camp's infrastructure, environmental and sanitary problems, including directing latrines to be installed downstream from the wells and clearing the swamp areas to help prevent disease from the various insects and hazards from snakes.

Hammond became ill with appendicitis and returned to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital for treatment. He received little care from white corpsmen; a close friend, a black corpsman, bathed and gave him bedside care. Blood at the time was segregated by race: X for white, XX for black, XXX for Latino, XXXX for Asian. For convalescent, Hammond was sent to a hospital in Asbury, New Jersey, and here he endured racial segregation, insults, bigotry and discrimination. He was not allowed to swim in the pool or the ocean. He could not lie or sit at the beach; he was refused service at many restaurants. He was one of the few black sailors at the hospital, and the whites wanted them hidden away. Segregation and bigotry was not the law of New Jersey, but it was heavily practiced at the time.

Hammond was sent to Guam in 1945 and assigned to the medical dispensaries at Camp Wise supply depot and Barracuda Village, where he worked under the supervision of the first black naval medical doctors. In June 1946 he was honorably discharged from service.

In 1965 he was one of the founders of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Montford Point Association, an organization of African-American Marines. He was its first president and was elected three times as president.

In 2012, nearly 70 years after the Marines of Montford Point became the first African-Americans in the Corps, they were finally recognized for their services in World War II, receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor awarded to civilians. Hammond was among roughly 370 of the approximate 420 surviving Montford Point Marines to travel to Washington, D.C., to receive the medal.

"Allowing blacks to serve the Marine Corps was seen as an experiment," Speaker of the House John Boehner told the crowd. "If it was an experiment, it didn't last any long. Before the end of the war, the Marine commandant at the time said the experiment was over. The men trained at Montford were Marines, period."



IN MEMORIAM

This list includes retired employees, both RELAC members and non-members.

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Workforce Dev. Aging & Comm. Svcs. – Ethel L. Levy, Luis A. Quezada
Department Not Designated – Marie Hastings, Dorothy E. Nichols



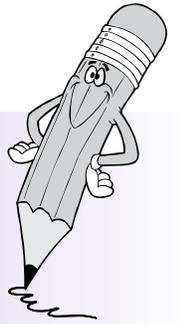
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General Membership Meeting

Mary K. Rodriguez, Chair, Program Committee



Thursday, June 29, 2017

**Ayres Hall
Los Angeles County Arboretum**

301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

9 a.m. - Complimentary Refreshments

10 a.m. - Meeting Begins

Our keynote speaker will be:

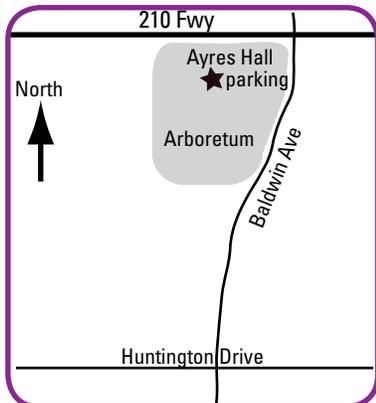
DR. HARLEEN HAYREH

"Critical Issues Related to Breathing"

~ **DOOR PRIZES** ~

Please bring your RELAC membership card.

At the end of the program, members are welcome to tour the Arboretum at no cost.



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