



61 Years of Dedicated Service to L.A. County Retirees

# RELAC newsletter

Your Pension and Health Care Watchdog

Sept/Oct 2019 Vol 54-5

## President's Message

by Dave Muir



As many of you may have read in the L.A. Times, the LACERA Boards of Retirement and Investments terminated LACERA Chief Executive Officer Lou Lazatin after she had served in the position for only six months.

The decision to dismiss Ms. Lazatin was carefully considered, and followed a diligent and legal process during several board meetings. The vote to dismiss Ms. Lazatin was 8-1 on the Board of Retirement and 6-0 on the Board of Investments. The CEO serves as an at-will employee and may be discharged at any time without cause.

Ms. Lazatin's termination received extensive coverage by the media. This has been frustrating to the Board of Investments and Board of Retirement because confidentiality laws covering personnel records prevent LACERA from commenting on the reasons for Ms. Lazatin's dismissal.

On July 29 the L.A. Times published an article that questioned travel by LACERA trustees. The article pointed out that LACERA spent \$400,000 on educational travel during fiscal year 2018, which was three times the amount spent by CalPERS, the pension system for state and many local government employees.

On July 30 the County Board of Supervisors directed the County's auditor-controller to conduct an audit of LACERA's travel and training operations and instructed the County's legislative advocates in Sacramento to request an audit by the state's Joint Legislative Audit Committee. LACERA will fully cooperate with the County audit and with any state audit that may be undertaken.

LACERA will likely remain in the press spotlight for some time. As a public entity, this scrutiny is part of the process. The Boards will listen and move forward as appropriate in the interest of members.

LACERA Chief Counsel Steven P. Rice has been assigned the duties of CEO until a new CEO is hired. Mr. Rice, in his July 31 report to the Boards of Retirement and Investments, sets forth the manner in which the Boards will respond to future events:

"Public service organizations such as LACERA have a unique and solemn duty to work in the public's interest at all times. We have a duty to be open and transparent about our policies, procedures, and how we administer the funds we are entrusted to manage to pay the promised benefits. We also have a responsibility to respect the roles and rights of the press and our plan sponsor, as well as members and the public, to ask hard questions and review our operations. We recognize this scrutiny is for the public good, and we welcome constructive feedback that helps LACERA continue to be the premiere public pension fund we have always strived to be.

With this in mind, I have made it my goal to be open, transparent, and responsive to all press requests, within the limits of the obligations and exemptions provided in the law. In short, I believe that a cooperative approach benefits LACERA and our members and lives up to the expectations of being a public servant.

We will apply the same approach to the County's recent audit decision. LACERA's relationship with the County is solid, and we respect their right as a plan sponsor

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## Bill de la Garza Resigns from RELAC Board

by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor

Bill de la Garza, a member of RELAC's Board of Directors for more than 20 years and five-term president, has resigned.

De la Garza, who was deputy director of the Department of Parks and Recreation when he retired in 1991, joined the RELAC Board on Jan. 1, 1999 and served as president 2001-02 and 2011-13.

He represented retirees on the LACERA Board of Retirement for 15 years, serving as chair and numerous terms as secretary. When his last term expired Dec. 31, 2017, he chose not to seek re-election, instead lending his support to the successful campaign of fellow RELAC Director Les Robbins. He said he enjoyed serving on the LACERA board, but felt it time to let someone else have an opportunity to serve.

De la Garza, 84, said the decision to resign from RELAC was bittersweet.

"Bitter because I will miss many of my lifetime friends that RELAC afforded me the opportunity of meeting and working with. Sweet because RELAC is the only association that is totally committed to serving its retired members with information concerning their medical and pension plans...I am convinced that with the leadership of the current Board of Directors, RELAC will continue serving County retirees as its most important goal and priority."

RELAC President Dave Muir, a member of the LACERA Board of Investments and formerly the alternate retiree representative on the LACERA Board of Retirement and LACERA's first chief counsel, said de la Garza worked tirelessly for retirees.

"Every L.A. County retiree owes a huge debt of gratitude to Bill for his lengthy and dedicated service in looking out for the best interests of retirees. Bill's concern for the financial and operational success of LACERA was evident during his long tenure on the Board of Retirement. His dedication to the best interests of retirees was primary, second only to his family."

RELAC Director Robbins, who is vice chair of the LACERA Board of Retirement, said de la Garza will be missed by all who worked with and for him. "Bill de la Garza is one of those rare people who come along during our lifetimes. A commitment of public service for all of the right reasons."

RELAC Vice President Brian Berger said that de la Garza was one of the reasons he asked to be part of RELAC's Executive Committee. "I think I only met him a few times, face to face, but that was incidental to all I learned about him, and his commitment to all of what we are."

De la Garza, in his resignation letter, said he wanted to share with members one of his favorite quotes:

"Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." -- General Douglas MacArthur

# Retirement Board

by Les Robbins  
Retiree Representative  
LACERA Board of Retirement



In a follow-up to the President's Message in this issue, I want to give everyone an update on the process that is underway to recruit and hire a new chief executive officer (CEO) at LACERA. I am one of the members of the ad hoc committee that has been given the responsibility to begin the recruitment process that will ultimately end with a presentation and set of interviews before the joint boards of LACERA, where we will choose a new CEO. The ad hoc committee has six members: two appointed, two elected from the active membership and two representing the retirees of LACERA.

We have hired an executive search firm and it is already at work. We have put forth a relatively aggressive timeline for this process, and it is our intention to have a finalist list for interviews that will take place no later than November, with the hopes of having a new CEO on board by the first of next year, schedules permitting. I am acutely aware of what is at stake here and firmly believe that with our nationwide search we will find some outstanding candidates who will want to come to work for what is, in my opinion, the best pension system anywhere in California, if not the country.

In a perfect world, I would hope that we will find someone who has some extensive public sector pension experience because I think that this is one of the criteria for this position that makes for a candidate or applicant that will work best with our organization. However, we will look at all applicants, regardless of their professional background and experiences. LACERA has always been a great place to work within the County of Los Angeles Family and I know that our endeavors in this hiring process will reap good rewards.

## County Gets Higher Credit Rating

Fitch, one of the three largest credit rating agencies, raised the County's long-term rating from AA to AA+. Fitch attributed the credit ratings upgrade to the combined strength of the County's continued solid revenue streams, strong economic base, moderately low long-term liability burden and the ongoing progress toward addressing unfunded pension liabilities. Each of the big three has assigned to the County the highest rating possible in the double A category. The next highest category is the triple A category. Only three counties in California are rated triple A by the big three: Alameda, Marin and San Diego.

# News From LACERA

by JJ Popowich  
Assistant Executive Officer



I hope everyone is doing well and staying cool.

This month I would like to take a moment to share a current event and talk about two things that are always front in center in my mind: providing the best service we can to our members and the terrific staff members who provide that service. I also want to take a moment and encourage some members who have not yet signed up for direct deposit to take a few minutes to do so. It's all related – so let's get started.

Let me start with our incredible staff members. LACERA spends a lot of time and effort to make sure that we hire staff members who will fit the LACERA culture of placing our mission front and center while they are at work. This means we look for highly diligent people who are compassionate, empathetic and really care about providing service. Our dedicated and caring staff members are one of the reasons (besides our members) I love about working here.

Here is an example of what this looks like. I know I have mentioned this before, but it is worth recapping for this story. Our specialists go through a year-long core benefits training program. The program is a mix of classroom instruction alternated with periods of supervised "production" where they process real member requests normally processed by our Benefits Division. During this production period, 100% of their work goes through a quality check before we send it to you. If the staff member is going to work in Member Services, they also receive about three months of customer service and side-by-side training with veteran staff members. It's an investment in time, but it pays off in our ability to provide the best service we can to our members.

I just left a meeting with the current class of trainees who were preparing for a major test. I was meeting with them to ask them to take a break from training and help our Member Services Call Center. We are experiencing a second day of extremely high volume of calls, which is creating an unacceptable wait time for members. All of the trainees were extremely willing and excited to be able to help the Call Center. Our Call Center supervisor put together a crash course and specific instructions on how to answer the calls. Since most of the calls coming in right now relate to one subject (I will address that next), we could prepare the trainees to assist members effectively. As soon as we are past this spike, they will go back to training and complete their course.

What I loved the most about this example is how it demonstrates the commitment of new and current staff members to work together to make sure that we provide the best service we can. In addition to the trainees, we have staff from other areas of the Member Services Division also taking calls. It's an "all hands on deck" event – and everyone is chipping in and doing so with a smile. That's what we're all about!

What is the reason for the high call volume? About 96% of retired members and their survivors receive their monthly benefit payment through a direct deposit into their bank account. This leaves about 4% who receive their monthly benefit via check. Every month a handful of the 4% report that their check has been delayed. A delayed check is a check the member has not received within five business days of the mailing date (the U.S. Post Office first class mail delivery promise is three to five business days). If a check is delayed or lost in the mail, we cancel the original check (to make sure it cannot be cashed if someone unauthorized intercepted the check) and work with the member to get them a replacement check.

This month we are receiving calls from a higher than normal number of these members. Staff members from several divisions in LACERA are working to determine what is causing this delay. In the meantime, it's an "all hands on deck" event to help members who are reporting this delay get their checks as soon as possible.

*continued on p.6*



## Three Directors Re-Elected

RELAC Directors Evelyn Gutierrez, Judy Hammond and Dave Muir have been elected to new three-year terms beginning Jan 1, 2020.

No RELAC member filed a petition to run as a candidate for the Board, resulting in the automatic re-election of the current directors whose terms expire Dec. 31, 2019. All three had been endorsed for re-election by the Board of Directors.

Gutierrez, who was director of workplace programs and marketing in the Chief Executive Office when she retired in 2003, was appointed to the RELAC Board on April 5, 2016 to fill a vacancy and won election later that year. She serves as chair of RELAC's Special Events Committee and has been a member of the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission since 2003.

Hammond was elected to the RELAC Board in 2013, beginning her term in January 2014, and was named editor of the RELAC newsletter in November 2015. The County's director of public affairs when she retired in 2011, she was a newspaper reporter and editor for more than 20 years before joining the County in 1988 to serve as press deputy, and later assistant chief deputy, to then-Supervisor Pete Schabarum.

Muir, who was chief counsel for LACERA when he retired in 2009, became a RELAC director in 2011 and has served as president since 2014. He is a member of the LACERA Board of Investments, elected in 2017 by retired County employees to serve as their representative. He had served prior to that as the alternate retiree representative on the LACERA Board of Retirement.

## RELAC Exceeds March of Dimes Goal

by Evelyn Gutierrez  
Community Support Committee

Thanks to our RELAC members who donated and support by our Board of Directors, our RELAC March for Babies Team co-chaired by Linda Hopkins and Brian Berger exceeded our 2019 fundraising goal and raised \$5,306!!!

This money will help fund additional research and medical support for premature babies and their moms. RELAC member Sharon Marsh, our last donor, made a special donation in memory of Anna Shafer. What a great tribute to a treasured family member or friend. We appreciate your continued support for RELAC programs that support our communities and enrich the lives of others.



## Happy Birthday, RELAC Centenarians

Happy birthday to our members who will be 100 and older in September and October.

**Josephine V. Moreno**, 100, County Clerk, Sept. 26, 1919

**Willie B. Brooks**, 100, Parks and Recreation, Oct. 30, 1919

**Pandora Cook**, 100, Probation, Oct. 31, 1919

**Hollice A. Favors**, 101, Assessor, Sept. 17, 1918

**Eleanore J. Reed**, 101, Superior Court, Oct. 3, 1918

**Virginia Maltby**, 101, Community Health, Oct. 12, 1918

**Carolina L. Moreno**, 102, Flood Control District, Sept. 17, 1917

**Lillian F. Morris**, 102, associate member (wife of Gerald Morris), Sept. 22, 1917

**Helen M. Walker**, 103, Adoptions, Oct. 1, 1916

**Lillian E. Seaver**, 104, Health Services, Oct. 17, 1915

## For the Record:

We apologize for the following errors in recent editions of the newsletter:

Raymond H. Dortch was incorrectly listed as director of the roadside tree division of the Parks and Recreation Department at retirement. He was deputy director of the department's Facility Services Agency. (May-June newsletter)

Norman Van Arsdall was incorrectly identified as "Norma" in the Department of Public Works section of the "In Memoriam" listing. (July-August newsletter)

New member Carmen Chan-Fong was incorrectly listed as Chan-Feng. (July-August newsletter)

RELAC member Barbara Sanchez was listed as a non-member. (July-August newsletter)

## RELAC Supports L.A. Found Program

by Evelyn Gutierrez  
Community Support Committee

The RELAC Board of Directors has partnered with the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services by joining the L.A. Found team, sponsoring five tracking bracelets used by the Sheriff's Department to locate missing or wandering individuals with dementia, autism or Alzheimer's disease.

L.A. Found, launched in February 2018 in partnership with Project Lifesaver, provides a tracking system focused on locating missing persons with cognitive impairments. Caregivers or family members report the missing individual by calling 911 to file a missing person report with the Sheriff's Department.

RELAC fully supports this successful program. Since the program's launch, twelve missing individuals have been located and returned to their families or loved ones.

If you are interested in requesting a tracking bracelet for a family member, visit [lafound.com](http://lafound.com) or call (833) 569-7651 to enroll a loved one.

RELAC is proud to be an L.A. Found program partner and will continue to explore partnerships with L.A. County departments dedicated to enriching the lives of our County retirees, their families and loved ones.

## REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

by Diane Sandoval, Chair  
Regional Support Committee



Now that our Anaheim Regional Meeting is behind us, I thought those of you who were unable to attend might be interested in our speaker's presentation. Our speaker was Elizabeth Yetzer, a volunteer and registered nurse who serves the community by sharing her 30 years of experience with practical facts about home safety.

Ms. Yetzer gave those of us who were fortunate to attend the meeting a treasure of useful tips to make our home safer. She mentioned only buying throw rugs with a non-slip backing, install grab bars in the tub and shower, moving frequently-used items to lower shelves, and date leftovers when you store them in the fridge to avoid eating contaminated food.

Ms. Yetzer suggested we go online to the AARP and Office on Aging websites to download a home safety checklist to use as a guide. Remember it's up to us to make our homes a safe place.

I hope you enjoyed my Readers Digest version of Ms. Yetzer's remarks. Thank you for supporting our events. We are here to serve YOU!



Prize winners at the Anaheim meeting were, from left, Jason H. Williams, Health Services Administration retiree; Marianne Reich, Auditor; Joan Zousel, wife of Internal Services Department retiree Ronald Zousel; and Ronald Allen, Agricultural Commissioner. (Photo by Linda C. Hopkins)

## Update Contact Information to Stay Connected

by Greg Walia, Chair  
Office Management Committee

All experts will tell you that one of the most important contributors to a long and healthy retirement is to stay connected – stay informed, involved and participate in the things that matter to you! For Los Angeles County retirees, RELAC is the number one resource to achieve all these goals.

One mechanism RELAC has in place to communicate with you is our E-mail Advisor program. However, a review of our records indicates that we do not have e-mail addresses or correct e-mail addresses for many of our members. We are certain that far more of you use e-mail than our records would indicate. On June 13, we sent an e-mail advisory to remind our members of RELAC's Dodger Night on July 5. If you did not receive this reminder, it is because we did have your correct e-mail address on file. Please assist us in updating our records.

If you did not receive an e-mail from RELAC in June and have not received a phone call or letter from the RELAC office in this regard, please contact us and provide this information. Of course, the obvious way to do this is to e-mail us at [admin@relac.org](mailto:admin@relac.org). In doing so, please also confirm your current address and phone number (these are also areas where we may have incorrect or missing data). If you prefer, you may call us at (626) 308-0532 or (800) 537-3522. We are open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and closed on Fridays. You may also send this information by mail to RELAC, 1000 S. Fremont Ave., Unit 15, Alhambra, CA 91803-8802.

A percentage of our membership chooses to receive the newsletter by e-mail rather than mail. If you are interested in taking advantage of this convenient way to receive the newsletter, please e-mail us and let us know!



## RELAC Night at the Dodgers: It was Earth-Shaking

It was an "earth-shaking" experience for the 200 RELAC members, their families and friends who attended RELAC Night at Dodger Stadium on July 5 – they were enjoying the game against the San Diego Padres during the fourth inning when the 7.1 –magnitude Ridgecrest earthquake rocked the Southland at 8:19 p.m. It was California's biggest earthquake in nearly two decades. Luckily, there was no damage at the stadium and the game went on.

Ruben Ramirez & family



Sean & Conner Rodriguez



Diane Trujillo



Tony & Maya Vasquez, Ernie & Shiella Perez



## What's Happening?

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Chair  
Special Events Committee



The RELAC Annual Picnic will be held on Saturday, Sept. 28 at the Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area #5 in Irwindale. We have planned a great barbecue for you, your family and friends. We hope to see you line dancing and playing bingo.

A number of additional events are featured for your enjoyment with family and friends.

### Pomona Fair - Closes Sept. 22

Pomona Fairplex -Senior Wednesdays, FREE Noon to 3 p.m. for ages 60+, proper ID  
Concerts: Marshall Tucker Band, Sept. 13  
Charlie Wilson, Sept. 20 & Old Dominion, Sept. 21

### Food Truck Festival – Rose Bowl

Friday, Sept. 27–4 p.m. to 7 p.m. - FREE  
Food trucks, games and stadium tour  
1001 Rose Bowl Dr., Pasadena, CA 91103  
FREE parking - Enter through North Lot K

### County Library Summer Concerts – FREE

De'Anza – Anthony Quinn Library, Sept. 7–1 p.m.  
Brasil Brazil – Stevenson Ranch Library, Sept. 14–2 p.m.  
Trio America – Culver City Dixon Library, Sept. 14–2 p.m.  
Gloria Arjona – El Monte Library, Sept. 21–2 p.m.

### Natural History Museum – FREE admission

FREE on Tuesdays in September. – 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Visit new exhibits and the Butterfly Pavilion  
FREE admission for active or retired military  
900 Exposition Blvd., LA 90007 - Call (213) 763-3466

### Marina Spooktacular – Marina del Rey – FREE

Experience haunted pirate ships and spooky entertainment by night. Burton Chace Park, Oct. 26-27

For additional information on special events, visit our website at [www.relac.org](http://www.relac.org)



### County Day at Fair is Sept. 1

L.A. County Day at the L.A. County Fair is Sept. 1. County residents may purchase tickets for \$8 online or \$12 at the gate. The County parade is at noon. For information, and to buy tickets online, go to: <https://lacountyfair.com/visit/resident-discount-day>.

### RELAC Gets Clean Bill of Health

The Board of Directors initiated an annual financial and management review by an independent auditing company, which was given access to all books, records, and accounts maintained by RELAC for the calendar year 2018. We are pleased to advise that the review has been completed and the findings revealed no irregularities or discrepancies of any kind.

# WANTED

A STAMPEDE OF RELAC MEMBERS TO ATTEND THE

## RELAC ANNUAL PICNIC

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2019

11:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.

**\$25 INCLUSIVE**

COUNTRY-WESTERN MUSIC BY

### "The Bobby Z Band"

Line Dancing, Bingo & FREE Country-Western Bandanas

Wildlife Exhibit by Whittier Narrows Nature Center

SANTA FE DAM - RECREATIONAL AREA #5

15501 ARROW HWY, IRWINDALE, CA 91706

**FREE PARKING**

LUNCH SERVED 11:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

St. Louis Style Ribs ~ Tender Chicken Strips ~ Hot Dogs ~ Baked Beans ~  
Fresh Fruit ~ Cole Slaw ~ Potato Salad ~ Gourmet Cookies ~ Brownies ~  
Soft Drinks & Beer

Catered Lunch by Picnic Services

**BRING A FOLDING CHAIR** (Optional) ~

Country-Western Attire (Optional)



### Sept. 28, 2019 ANNUAL ADULT PICNIC REGISTRATION FORM

Member \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Guests/Names \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PROVIDE NAMES OF GUESTS — ATTACH LIST IF NECESSARY**

No. of tickets \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total

#### Mail to:

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

#### For More Information

Phone: (626) 308-0532 or  
(800) 537-3522  
E-mail: [admin@relac.org](mailto:admin@relac.org)

**NO ADMISSION WITHOUT ADVANCE REGISTRATION**

**PICK UP TICKETS AT THE EVENT**

**RSVP by September 12, 2019**

# Golf News

by Gil Sandoval  
RELAC Golf Director



## Los Verdes Golf Tournament – Aug. 5

We played golf after the cut-off date for the newsletter. So, I wish to congratulate those of you who won. All the results of the tournament can be found on the RELAC website at RELAC.org/activities; follow the link to golf.

We had a nice-size group signed up to play, including the ladies, and for that I thank you. We could always use more players for our tournaments and I encourage all of you to talk to your friends that play golf and get them out there on the links to join us for the friendly competition and comradery.

One serious note, Robert Prince has a medical condition that may prevent him from playing golf again. So, please keep him in your prayers and hearts for good recovery. We are with you, Robert, all the way!

Out next tournament is at the Lakewood Golf Course on Oct. 7. Entries must be received by Sept. 19. NOTE: Only one guest per member. Please send entry form and checks, @ \$32 per golfer and payable to RELAC, to 1000 S. Fremont Ave. #15, Alhambra, CA 91803-8802.



## RV Outing Notes

Jeanne Klauk,  
Assistant Coordinator of the  
RV Club



Our summer break is coming to an end and it is time to get back to camping. We are going to start our RV season at a new location -- the Newport Dunes Waterfront Resort and Marina. This will be pretty exciting - a new adventure for us! We will be there on Sept. 9 - 11. We have a lot of visiting to do to catch up on our friends' summer activities. Of course, we will work in some card games and lots of comradery around the dining tables.

Then Oct. 21 - 23, we will once again descend on Emerald Desert in Palm Desert. This is a lovely RV park and we are looking forward to visiting it again. On Jan. 26 - 29, we will camp at the Pechanga Casino and RV Park. It is a very nice park, and is close to Temecula wine country, as well as its own casino! Come join us for a great outing.

Mike Reyes is our RV coordinator and can be reached at (909) 357-0145. You can call me at (562) 896-8904.

## Golf Entry Form LAKEWOOD GOLF COURSE 3101 Carson St., Lakewood

**MONDAY, Oct. 14, 2019 8 A.M. START**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fees: \$32.00 PER GOLFER - CART EXTRA

If possible, place me in a foursome with below listed golfers.

Addresses of all golfers **MUST** be included.

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Early \_\_\_\_\_ Late \_\_\_\_\_ No Preference \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Only **ONE GUEST** per member. Enclosed check for \_\_\_\_\_ golfers @ \$32 per golfer. Make check payable to RELAC. Mail entry to RELAC, 1000 S. Fremont Ave., Unit 15, Alhambra, CA 91803-8802.

**ENTRY DEADLINE -Sept. 19, 2019**  
**All checks must be in RELAC Office**

## LACERA continued from p.2

This is a rare event, but it can happen. The last time this happened, the Postal Service reported a batch of checks destined for a specific area of southern Los Angeles was sitting, unprocessed, in a USPS processing center and had not been sent to the local post offices for delivery. We're not sure yet what caused this month's delay, but be assured we are figuring it out and will address it appropriately.

This brings me to the next thing on my mind. If you are one of the 4% who still receive their monthly benefit payments by check, I encourage you to sign up for direct deposit. Direct deposit is the safest and fastest way of getting your monthly benefit payment. Signing up is easy to do. You can visit lacera.com, login to the My LACERA member portal, and sign up online. You can download the form from our brochure section of lacera.com. Finally, you can call LACERA's Member Service Center and they can set you up right away. It's easy to do and helps ensure that there are no delays in getting that monthly benefit payment.

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

## RELAC NEWSLETTER

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Number 5

Retired Employees  
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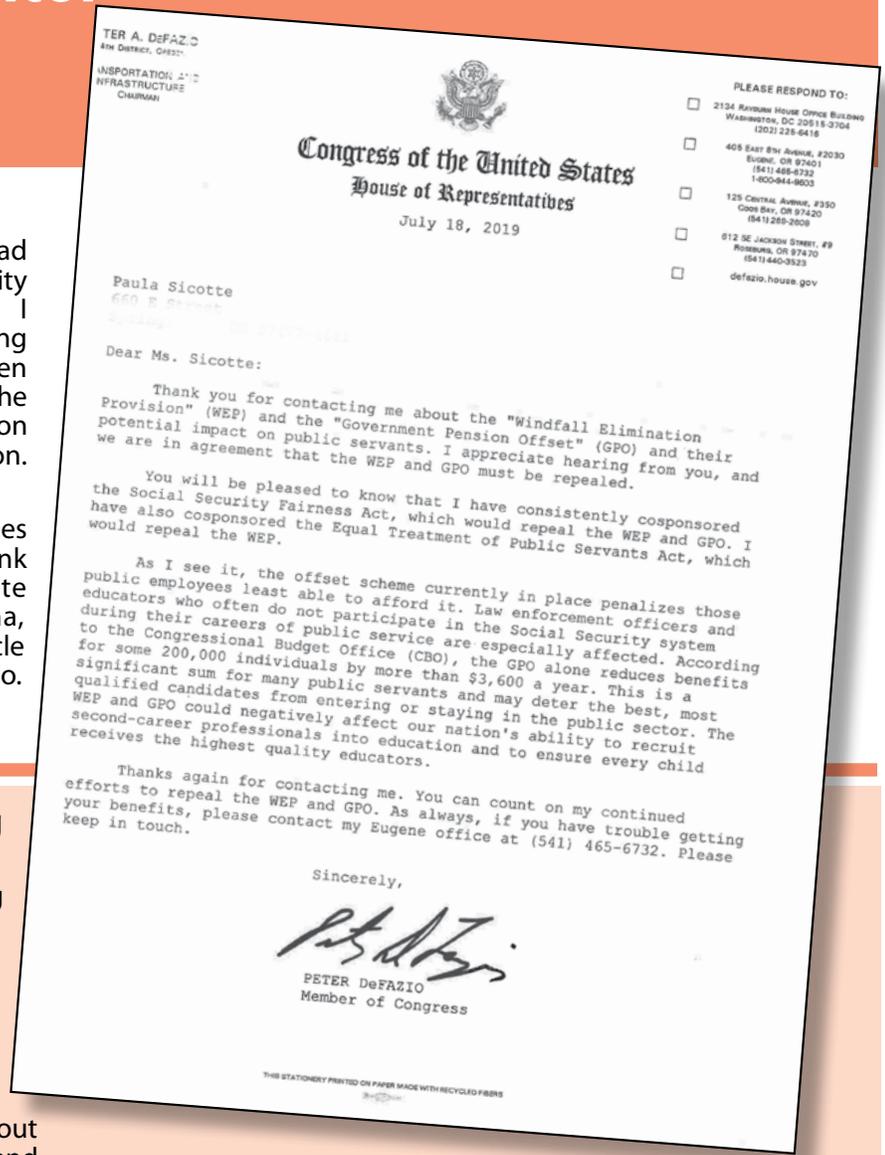
Public Holidays



# Letters To The Editor Write On!

Dear Dave (Muir): Just wanted you to know that I read your article regarding unfair reductions in Social Security benefits and wrote to my Oregon representatives. I heard back in writing from Peter DeFazio after writing him and talking to him in person. I also wrote to Wyden and Merkley, Oregon senators. DeFazio tells me that the Oregon contingent is all similarly aligned with his position and will support any Social Security Fairness legislation. I enclose a letter to this effect from DeFazio.

I just wanted you to know that we do read the articles and that we do respond to your call to arms. Thank you for keeping us so well informed. I also wrote to former employees that live in Arizona, Montana, Washington and Idaho to ask them to look at the article and write their representatives. Thanks for all you do.  
**Maureen Sicotte, Springfield, Oregon**



## Whittier General Membership Meeting

by *Ida Leon Ramos, RELAC Office Manager*

In case you missed our General Membership Meeting held June 19 at the Liberty Community Plaza in Whittier, guest speaker was Detective Michael Barlow of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Fraud and Cyber Crimes Bureau, a 24-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department who has spent the last six years assigned to cases involving fraud and abuse of elders. All too often cases of fraud go unreported -- scammers count on that! Detective Barlow pointed out that as we age, our cognitive abilities are affected, and we are more susceptible to manipulation by salesmen, but many times older individuals fall victim to family members as well. He cautioned members to be very careful in selecting a trustee of their estate or in selecting someone to whom they give power of attorney. He noted that 80% of cases investigated involve family members who take advantage of elderly relatives.

Many scammers appeal to our sense of greed. Detective Barlow reminded us of the old adage "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!" One red flag is when a telephone scammer tells you *not to tell anyone*. Recovery of loss is good if people stay on top of their financial records. The longer it goes before discovery, the harder it is to recover.

Detective Barlow shared some details of actual cases he investigated and answered questions from our members. Several had personal experiences which they shared with the group. Detective Barlow handed out his business card (and even left after his presentation to get more cards and returned!). He offered copies of an article from U.S. News entitled *10 Financial Scams to Avoid in Retirement*. (This article is now available on RELAC's Facebook page.)



Don Fandry,  
Norman Cortex



Diane Summerhayes



Edie Baker



Maciga  
Boonsomchuae



Khin Yi



Carmen Quinones



Carrie Billups



Eric Tran

# Keeping Up With Retirees

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



## A Campfire Survivor

### MAUREEN "MOE" SHERIDAN

I began my career with the Flood Control District in June of 1968, just one week after graduating high school. I began as a typist clerk, as needed, with Soils and Materials Engineering. Tys Wigman was my division engineer. I took maternity leave in 1970 to have my first son, John, and subsequently resigned to be a stay-at-home mom. My son, Doug, was born in 1973.

In May of 1975, I returned to work three days a week as a typist clerk, as needed, assigned to the Construction Division to fill the void left by Sarah Torres, who was on medical leave. Harry Stone (who would later be appointed director of public works) was then my division engineer. After six months I was hired on full time. I worked another 26 years for the Flood Control District, which later merged with the Road Department, County Engineer and parts of Facilities Management to become the Department of Public Works. I had the opportunity to serve directly with key engineering leaders of the department and the County, including Larry Ammon, Carl Blum, Jim Noyes (who also was later named director of public works) and Don Milne. I also valued working with the head of the Administrative Services Division, Bob Allen, who taught me that if you don't ask, the answer is no. When I retired in 2001, I was a management secretary IV, working for Deputy Director Tom Alexander.

Although I had lived in Southern California all my life, in 2004 I moved to Wheatland, California to be closer to my granddaughter. We have 10 acres in an unincorporated area and I began my life as a country girl. I later moved to Fort Bragg and am currently living in Orland with my dog, Midnite, and my cat, Ebony. Can you guess what color they are?

My husband, Jerome, and I have three grandchildren. In addition to granddaughter Makia Rain, now 17, we have grandsons Dustin Jonathan, 7, and Clayton Thomas, 4.

Following my heart and love for the written word, I became the founder, CEO, and president of Wheatland Community Library Association from 2007 to 2012. We were not successful in our attempt to establish a library, but we were successful in bringing the community together to work toward a common goal. (I have always been an avid reader and secretly used to read at my desk when things were slow!) And, nurturing my second love – animals -- I volunteered at the Paradise Animal Shelter.

By late 2018, my husband and I had separated and I was living with my son John and granddaughter Makia in Magalia. On Nov. 7, I had a mild heart attack and was transported to Feather River Hospital in Paradise, California. The following morning, I faced the most terrifying experience of my life: Escaping the Paradise Campfire. I was among the many patients evacuated from the ferocious flames – and I am only here to tell about it due to the exceptional driving skills and soundness of mind of the person who drove me and others out of harm's way. Flames roared, not 10 feet from our vehicle. We were in gridlock, barely moving. I had only a blanket to shelter me from the heat. We called family members to say our goodbyes. I can still hear the shrill cries from Makia and the sorrow in my sons' voices. There is a video of my trial by fire on YouTube that was shot by the driver, who



## A True American Hero TED LUMPKIN

by Jason H. Williams

Ted Lumpkin, who will turn 100 on Dec. 30, has seen many milestones come and go over his lifetime. During World War II, he served from 1942-46 in what was then called the U.S. Army Air Corps as an intelligence officer in Italy, as part of the Tuskegee Airmen. This 99<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Squadron of more than 14,000 – consisted of black and white instructors, black trainee fighter pilots, navigators, armorers, bombardiers and male and female support staff – was established in Tuskegee, Alabama, on orders from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The President was pressured to create the first unit of African American military aviators to address criticism that African Americans lacked the skills to become fighter pilots or support staff, such as co-pilots, navigators or airplane mechanics.

In 1947, at the conclusion of his military career, Lumpkin completed his BA degree in sociology at USC and began working for Los Angeles County. Over a 32-year career, he worked for Regional Planning, the Bureau of Public Assistance, the Bureau of Adoptions, Probation and retired from the Department of Community Development in 1979. Along the way, under the G.I. Bill, he received his master's degree in social work from USC. Also in 1979, he joined RELAC and has been a member ever since.

On Sept. 10, 1948, Lumpkin married Georgia Louise Kelly, whom he had met the year before in Los Angeles. To their union were born three sons and one daughter. The Lumpkins currently live in the Baldwin Hills area of West Los Angeles. Mrs. Lumpkin is 97 and will be 98 in January 2020!

Although they have achieved "super senior citizen status," both are still very active. They travel to family reunions and he still drives his car and regularly attends local and national Tuskegee Airmen's conferences. She has chaired her community's Landscape Committee and maintains her own beautiful garden. She is also a member of African American Quilters of Los Angeles, which makes and presents Quilts of Valor to U.S. veterans which read "Thank You For Your Service."

Today, Lumpkin and survivors of the original Tuskegee Airmen are viewed as true heroes by the American public because of their skill, persistence and bravery as fighter pilots, and support staff, who protected U.S. planes on bombing raids and ground forces, in Europe and North Africa from 1943-46. In fact, the Tuskegee Airmen fighter pilots were so proficient at protecting U.S. bombers that white bomber pilots often specifically requested them on bombing raids. By the end of WW II, Tuskegee Airmen became one of the most highly decorated units in American military history.

In 2012, George Lucas' movie "Red Tails" chronicled the heroics of the Tuskegee Airmen, who flew P-51 fighter planes during World War II. The planes were called "Red Tails" because the planes' tails were painted red.

On March 29, 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor available in the United States, by President George W. Bush. The Tuskegee Airmen were also commended by President Barack Obama when he invited survivors from the 1940s to the White House in 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Lumpkin, for your service to our County and to our country!

## President's Message continued from p. 1

to audit our operations as described in our governing statutes. We are confident that the resulting audit will show that LACERA has internal controls and procedures that, when working as designed, identify and address issues as they are discovered. For example, the recent questions and concerns about travel expenditures were identified as the result of a normally planned audit that has been in progress since October 2018. Other recent issues were also discovered because of routine and planned audits. There is always room for improvement. Indeed, LACERA believes in continued improvement. We learn and improve from our internal controls as well as from input from all of our stakeholders."

LACERA's Board of Investments and Investment Office staff are responsible for investing the more than \$56 billion pension fund that provides over \$3 billion in benefits each year. Board members have a fiduciary duty to continually be abreast of investment opportunities and principles applicable to institutional investors. This requires significant ongoing education. In this regard, it is noted that LACERA's investment operations have achieved superior results for LACERA'S members. The funding level stands at an impressive 80%, far exceeding that of most state and local pension funds.

Les Robbins and I, in addition to serving on the RELAC Board of Directors, are your elected representatives on the LACERA boards. We fully supported the dismissal of the CEO. As always, we remain diligent in protecting the rights of all retirees.

In closing, I want to again thank our members for supporting RELAC. Maintaining a strong membership base allows us to be vigilant in protecting the rights of County retirees.

**YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT KEEPS RELAC STRONG AS YOUR PENSION AND HEALTH CARE WATCHDOG.**

## Moe Sheridan continued from p. 8

is a nurse. My terrified voice can be heard in the background, saying "The windows are going to melt!"

My son, granddaughter and I lost all our possessions. Everything we knew before that day is gone. It went up in flames. Like many survivors, I am experiencing the inability to concentrate, process ideas and function as I once did. John and Makia are living in upper Magalia about three miles north of our burned-out home. I'm supposed to live with them, but I just can't do it. I'm afraid of fire. Yes, it is PTSD.

I volunteered at the Paradise Animal shelter prior to the fire. I miss doing that so much. I had a super connection with a bully breed dog named Samson ... we would sit in the play yard and he would do silly things and make me laugh. He is up for adoption at the shelter. All of the shelters in Paradise and surrounding areas are filled with rescued Campfire cats. Maybe someone reading this is looking for a pet and is ready to adopt. Transport can be provided in certain instances. Our two cats are still missing. We haven't given up. The trappers are still trapping, and the matchers are still matching. Families continue to be reunited with their pets who have survived all this time. *Adopt, don't shop.*

I don't know what my future holds. I'm surviving the best way I can, and I have friends here at Hotel Campfire.

*Funny story:* Last week I visited Fieldhaven Feline Animal Shelter to love on some cats. One of the volunteers shouted, "We need someone to proofread this!" Up popped Moe! They were so thankful because it was a handout for the Peach Festival. The skills I gained with the County are still paying off!

## "DAY AT THE RACES" IS BACK ON!

by Mary K. Rodriguez, Chair, Recreation Committee

We are happy to announce that Santa Anita Race Track has confirmed the horses will be running during the fall season!

Come join us to celebrate RELAC's annual "Day at the Races," which will be held at Santa Anita Park on Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019. We will again be seated in the Sierra Vista Terrace, which offers a great view of the track.

**Your cost is \$46 per person** and includes admission, a racing program (available when you enter the park), a delicious buffet lunch, a seat at a table with a private TV monitor, and general parking. **Parking and admission gates open at 10:30 a.m., post time is at 1 p.m., and lunch will be served between noon and 2 p.m.**

**The reservation deadline is Sept. 18**, so please fill out the coupon and send in your check ASAP. Tickets will be mailed to you on Sept. 23.

In the past this event has been enthusiastically attended by our members. Everyone enjoys it and has a lot of fun. **Be sure to come early – although plentiful, seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. SEE YOU THERE!**



**SIGN ME UP FOR A DAY AT THE RACES WITH RELAC**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$46 = Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to RELAC and mail to:**  
RELAC  
1000 S. Fremont Ave., UNIT 15  
Alhambra, CA 91803-8802

**CHECKS MUST BE RECEIVED BY  
TUESDAY, SEPT. 18, 2019**

## FOR SALE

**Two Companion Mausoleum Crypts** – Located at the San Fernando Mission Cemetery. Each companion crypt holds two caskets or urns. Includes one crypt plate each, one insert each, one vase each. Located next to each other, at prime location height, approximately five feet from ground. Asking market price at \$20,000 each companion crypt. Contact Laura at (626) 222-3040.



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

June – July 2019

**Assessor** – Rafi Nazarian  
**Child Support** – Angela White  
**Children & Family Services** – Marie H. Bragg, Nenita Bulandus, Jocelyn Patterson, Pilar Purceli  
**Community & Senior Services** – Bernadette Chang  
**Fire** – Javier Acosta  
**Health Services** – Marva Burgess, Euphemia Cummings, Roy Griffin, Dora Hsu, Essie Milligan, Judy Ning, Virginia Paraiso  
**Human Resources** – Milena Rada  
**Internal Services** – George Mitchell  
**LACERA** – David Davidson  
**Mental Health** – Barbara Silver, Lisa Wicker  
**Olive View Medical Center** – John Melbihess  
**Probation** – Zenola Cochrane, Cheun-Chiao Lee  
**Public Library** – Pamela Hartley, Gudalupa Hoxworth, Karol Smith, Patricia Winiecki  
**Public Social Services** – Lauren Abrams-Hegazi, Renne Jennings, Aban Kapadia, Odette Kimble, Lois Lawrence, Arlance Sims  
**Public Health** – Billa Dahaby  
**Sheriff** – Paula Chafey-Merrill, Michael Chinery, Jeffrey Dusky, Douglas Duvall, Kelley Fraser, Helen Johnson Scott, Brian McBride, Steven Sciacca, James Taylor, Edward Young  
**Superior Court** – Joycelyn Askins, Michelle Gama, Jackie Kwon, Cynthia Zuzga  
**New Associate Members** – Dewpm Akita, Alicia Acosta, Mourad L. Eldahy, Olivia Davidson, Yvonne Duvall, Ralph Gama, William Hartley, Hyock Chang Robert Kwon, Cheng Lee, Juan C. Lopez, Nomik Nazarian, Harry R. Paraiso, Dale M. Patterson, Charles R. Purceli, Willie Scott, Merrienne Taylor, Bruce Yamada



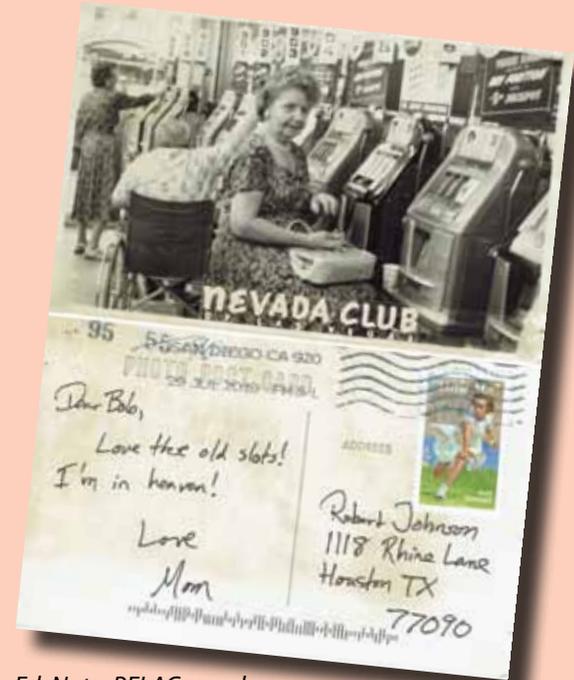
## Thanks for New Member Referrals

We would like to thank the 10 members who recruited colleagues to join RELAC during June and July 2019. Due to our aging membership, we must remain vigilant in signing up new members in order to remain a strong organization to protect your hard-earned pension and health benefits. We are the only organization that exclusively serves the interests of Los Angeles County retirees, so help us help you. For membership applications and brochures, call the RELAC office at (800) 537-3522, e-mail [admin@relac.org](mailto:admin@relac.org) or go online at [www.relac.org](http://www.relac.org). Be sure to tell the new member to put your name on the application as making the referral.

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

**Joseph Charney**, *Dora Hsu*, Health Services.  
**Mohan Dadlani**, *Aban Kapadia*, Public Social Services.  
**Shirley Davis**, *Essie Milligan*, Health Services.  
**Shirley Donoho** and **Diana Summerhayes**, *Cynthia Zuzga*, Superior Court.  
**Fred Hungerford**, *Pamela Hartley*, Public Library.  
**Fred Hungerford**, *Patricia Winiecki*, Public Library.  
**Joan Lewis**, *Lauren Abrams-Hegazi*, Public Social Services.  
**Angelica Natividad**, *Juan C. Lopez*, associate.  
**Brenda Stephens**, *Arlance Sims*, Public Social Services.  
**Barbara Warmesley**, *Odette Kimble*, Public Social Services.

## A Kind of Dead Letter:



*Ed Note: RELAC member Robert Arvid Johnson was hired by the County Engineer in August 1947. He held the position of senior supervising civil engineer when he retired in 1978, and served 28 of his 31-year County career in the Waterworks and Utilities Division.*

## Postcard from Heaven

*by Robert Johnson*

I am always pleased to receive a postcard from a traveling friend, but I was astounded to receive one Saturday morning apparently from my mother, who died 35 years ago.

My son, Jef, my family archivist who accumulated several old albums and suitcases full of photographs and other memorabilia, found a photo postcard that was blank on the address side and showed my mother sitting at a "one-armed bandit." This was given to my mother by a roving photographer employed by a Nevada casino that my mother had visited while she and my father had stopped at on their tour back to Michigan about 1953.

Written on the back of the postcard:

*Dear Bob,  
Love these old slots! I'm in heaven!  
Love, Mom  
And it was addressed to me in Texas....!*



*Bob and mother, Judy, circa 1970*

*Bob turns 99 on Sept. 6*

# Inside LA County

by Judy Hammond  
Newsletter Editor



The FBI has opened an investigation to identify sheriff deputies who get matching tattoos and determine whether their groups encourage or commit criminal behavior. The probe follows allegations of beatings and harassment by members of the Banditos, a group of deputies assigned to the East Los Angeles Sheriff's Station. Supervisor Janice Hahn said the County in June was forced into approving a \$7 million legal settlement to the family of a man shot and killed by deputies because one of the deputies was part of a "secret society" of deputies with matching tattoos at the Compton station. The lawsuit claimed the shooting was part of a pattern of excessive force by inked deputy gangs.

County supervisors are considering granting subpoena power to the Office of Inspector to get internal records of the Sheriff's Department, access its facilities and talk to employees. Inspector General Max Huntsman said since Sheriff Alex Villanueva took office, the department has blocked his staff from accessing documents they need to monitor the department. Huntsman said Villanueva displays a "bunker mentality" that promotes secrecy.

The former chief of the Sheriff's Department's professional standards and training division said she resigned after being told by the incoming chief of staff that Alex Villanueva wanted fired Deputy Caren Carl Mandoyan reinstated before Villanueva took office as sheriff so it would appear the action was being taken by outgoing Sheriff Jim McDonnell's administration. Alicia Ault's comments were contained in a deposition she gave in the County's lawsuit over Mandoyan's reinstatement. Supervisors filed the lawsuit in late July after Villanueva refused their request to rescind the rehiring.

Relatives of a 10-year-old boy who was tortured and killed in 2018 allegedly by his mother and her boyfriend have filed a \$50 million lawsuit against the County and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), claiming social workers disregarded their concerns about abuse and failed to protect him. DCFS is also under criticism for failing to remove a 4-year-old boy from his Palmdale home after receiving permission from the court to do so. He died weeks later. His parents said he drowned in a swimming pool, but the Sheriff's Department said his injuries were not consistent with drowning.

A Superior Court judge rebuffed the County's effort to force L.A. Times reporters to disclose the identity of sources and other unpublished information, which the County sought after The Times filed a lawsuit to require the County to release certain government records.

Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald says she will be unable to ban pepper spray in juvenile detention facilities by the end of the year – as County supervisors had requested – but should be able to do so by September 2020. She said she needs \$39 million for more staff and staff training to fully implement the ban.

The Probation Department completed its facility consolidation plan in August with the closure of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall in Downey and Camp Ellison Onizuka at the Challenger Memorial Youth Center in Lancaster. The department has closed nine facilities since 2017. The juvenile hall average daily population has fallen from 933 in fiscal year 2012-13 to 571 in fiscal year 2018-19, while the camp population decreased from 983 to 287 in that same time period. The decrease is a result of a concerted effort to incarcerate only those youth seen as a risk to public safety. One of the closed camps, Camp David Gonzales in Calabasas, is being converted into a residential training facility to support formerly justice-involved men aged 18-25 by providing life skills and job training. The Challenger Memorial Youth Center in Lancaster is being converted into a similar program to serve both men and women.

The Ft. Moore Hill's Pioneer Memorial in downtown L.A. has reopened after a 2 ½ year, \$6 million restoration. The memorial fountain was turned off in 1977 during a drought, and by the time the drought was over, the mosaic tiles had fallen off and the pumps vandalized.

In the first "Seen=Saved" adoption event, 200 photographers from around the country on July 1 created profiles of more than 1,200 pets at the County's seven shelters and posted them online.

Covina, Duarte and West Covina no longer contract with County Animal Care and Control .

A contractor with the Department of Health Services was the victim of a "phishing attack" that exposed the personal information of 14,591 patients.

The County Fire Department has stopped issuing burn permits in an effort to prevent wildfires.

Sheriff's Lt. James Royal sued his department, saying he was retaliated against for trying to convince his superiors to warn the public about shootings in and around Malibu Creek State Park, before a man sleeping in a tent with his young daughters was shot and killed. The family of the slain man has filed more than \$90 million in claims against the Sheriff's Department and several state agencies.

A report by the American Civil Liberties Union noted that all 22 people who have been sentenced to death in the County since District Attorney Jackie Lacey took office have been persons of color. Lacey responded that race is not a consideration when cases are reviewed.

San Francisco DA George Gascon says he is considering challenging Lacey next year. Deputy District Attorneys Joseph Iniguez and Richard Ceballos have announced their candidacy.

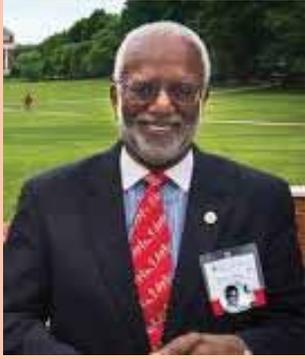
The County is looking at installing free Wi-Fi at all 182 parks. Thirty parks have it now.

The County is requiring commercial and industrial development projects in unincorporated areas to pay 1 percent of the building value for publicly accessible civic art onsite or to a countywide fund to support arts funding.

The L.A. Homeless Services Authorities purchased the Sylmar Armory for \$2.9 million to convert it to a year-round bridge housing program for women.

The District Attorney's Office, as part of its animal cruelty prosecution program, is investigating racehorse deaths at Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia. The program was the first of its kind in the nation when it was established in 2007.

## Supervisors Honor Retirees



### Williams is Guest Speaker at University of Maryland

RELAC member and former director Jason H. Williams was guest speaker at the University of Maryland, addressing more than 200 students and faculty about the importance of a college education in his life, as the first African American student athlete to integrate the University of Maryland in the fall of 1962.

A copy of the hour-long presentation, which includes opening comments by U of M's assistant athletics director and an introduction by university President Dr. Wallace Loh, is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/EPNKX7rSbLM>

Not only was Williams the first African American at U of M but also the first to integrate the Athletic Coast Conference, a group of public universities in the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

His attendance at the university on a swimming team scholarship for springboard diving was made possible by the 1954 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which struck down *Plessey v. Ferguson*, a doctrine of separate but equal in public schools.

Williams' sister Barbara and her daughter Jackie drove from Baltimore to attend Williams' presentation.



Superior Court Judge Margaret Henry



Treasurer-Tax Collector Joe Kelly



Josephine Marquez,  
Workforce Development,  
Aging & Community Service



Brian Lear, Internal Services



Grace Robinson Hyde, Sanitation Districts

### Rest in Peace, Nathaniel Boone

by Supervisor Janice Hahn

My father gave Nathaniel Boone a job as parking attendant of 'Lot 22' at the Hall of Administration in the early 1970s ... and Nathaniel held that position for 46 years!

And for 46 years he brightened the corner where he was. He became famous for how kind and courteous he was to every single person who came through his lot. He came up with celebrity nicknames for people and made sure everyone drove out of his lot in a better mood than the one they drove in with.

A few years ago, the Board of Supervisors renamed the lot "'Nate's Lot'" and, when we threw him a retirement party in 2017, hundreds of people came to thank him for his decades of service to the County.

Nathaniel Boone passed away over the weekend (in late July) at the age of 89. Very few people dedicate themselves to their job the way Nate did. He will always be a special part of our County family.

Rest in peace, Nathaniel.

Boone with Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Janice Hahn.

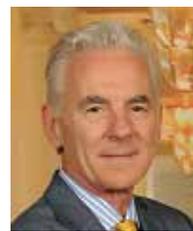


# PASSAGES

Compiled by Judy Hammond, Newsletter Editor



Philibosian



Bellomo



Valenzuela

## RETIREMENTS:

Assistant County Counsel **Manuel Valenzuela**, who joined the County Counsel's Office in 1988 and served on Board of Directors of the Hispanic Managers Association. **Grace Robinson Hyde**, who joined the County Sanitation Districts in 1983 and named chief engineer/general manager in 2013. **Josephine Marquez**, assistant director of community services, Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, with more than 37 years of service. **Angelo Bellomo**, deputy director for health protection in Department of Public Health, with 21 years of service. Superior Court Judge **Margaret Henry**, after 18 years on the bench, 10 years as supervising judge of the Juvenile Dependency Court and the past three years presiding over the 18 & Up Court. **Brian Lear**, section manager, maintenance and operation, Internal Services Department, 40 years of County service.



Bonds

## APPOINTMENTS:

**Kristin Sakoda**, executive director of the County Arts Commission since February 2018, selected director of the new Department of Arts and Culture, at salary of \$222,853. RELAC member and former District Attorney **Robert H. Philibosian** named Supervisor Kathryn Barger's appointee to the County Citizens' Economy and Efficiency Commission. Judge **Dick Terezian** named to Civil Service Commission to replace **Z. Greg Kahwajian**, who had served as Fifth District appointee for more than 21 years, 11 as president. Sheriff **Alex Villanueva's** 33-year-old son, **Johannes Jared Villanueva**, is a deputy sheriff trainee, set to graduate from the academy in November. LACERA Chief Counsel **Steven P. Rice** has assumed the duties of chief executive officer during the recruitment process to replace **Lou Lazatin**, 63, who was terminated after less than eight months. The County Museum of Art has expanded its board of trustees to 64, adding **Melody Hobson**, co-founder of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art; **Colleen Bell**, director of the California Film Commission; and **Robbie Robinson**, partner in merchant bank BDT & Co.



Adams

## HEALTH:

Former Sheriff's Sgt. **Les Robbins**, a RELAC director and member of the LACERA Board of Retirement, on the mend and headed to Alaska for fishing and photography trip after successful cervical spine surgery and removal of what turned out to be a benign Warthins tumor on right parotid gland in neck. **Bill Yaney**, RELAC member and retiree of the Department of Senior and Community Services, recovering from a heart attack, which required placement of a stent to open his arteries and pacemaker in shoulder to regulate heart rhythm.

## DEATHS:

**Don Rohrer**, 82, who retired as chief lifeguard of the Department of Beaches in 1996, with 44 years of service, and was instrumental in transitioning ocean lifeguards into the Fire Department in 1994. **Philip Hickok**, 72, who was appointed a judge in the Los Angeles Superior Court in 1979 by then-Gov. George Deukmejian and was a deputy county counsel when he retired in 2013. Deputy **Joseph Solano**, 50, a 13-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, who was shot off-duty in what was believed to be a random attack. Sgt. **James Beamon**, 35-year Sheriff's Department veteran, who was longest-serving active sergeant in the Sheriff's Department. Dr. **William H. Swanson**, 85, medical director at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for 33 years, Dr. **Bruce Zawacki**, 83, researcher and chief of the burn unit at LAC+USC Medical Center 1973-1998, whose work on the ethics of burn care influenced doctors to give greater consideration to patients' wishes for their own care. Battalion Chief **Mark Tolbert**, 60, who was a professional football player before joining the County Fire Department as a firefighter in 1989. Former Sheriff's Sgts. **Billie Culberson**, who retired in 1989 after more than 23 years; **Eddie Leung**, who retired in 2010 after almost 26 years; and **Edmund Rodriguez**, who retired in 1989 after 21 years. **Audrey Hill McQuay**, 91, who with her husband had a box at Hollywood Bowl for more than 50 years, and whose recipes for meals she prepared for those evenings are on display at the Hollywood Bowl Museum. **Nathaniel Boone**, 89, parking lot attendant at the Hall of Administration for 46 years and after whom the Board of Supervisors renamed the site "Nate's Lot."



Solano



Tolbert

## COURTS:

L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy **Antonio Ramirez**, 45, charged with three felonies after allegedly attacking his 73-year-old mother, forcibly resisting arrest and carrying a dagger.

## HONORS:

Dr. **Curley Bonds**, chief medical officer for the Department of Mental Health, honored with the J. Polard Turman Alumni Service Award by Emory University, in recognition of extraordinary service, volunteerism and leadership. County Probation Director **Frank Adams** awarded the John B. Clark Award by the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association for outstanding contributions to the field of corrections.



Zawacki



## Dr. William H. Swanson Dies at Age 85

Dr. William H. Swanson, 85, medical director at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for 33 years, died July 13 at UCLA Medical Center in Santa Monica from complications of pneumonia.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Janice; his daughter, Susan Swanson Oswald, and her husband, Jim; his son Douglas Swanson; his son Eric Swanson and his wife, Libbi; his four granddaughters, Madeline and Camille Oswald, Kylie and Kenna Swanson.

Born and raised in Seattle, Washington, Swanson moved to Los Angeles in 1959 after graduating from the University of Washington Medical School. He completed his residency in internal medicine at UCLA Medical Center and later became medical director at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. He was also an associate dean of the UCLA School of Medicine. He had been a member of RELAC since his retirement in 1997.

Several RELAC members who served with Swanson praised his work and character.

RELAC member Kenneth Dillard worked with Swanson at Harbor-UCLA for more than six years, beginning as the associate administrator in 1972 and then administrator in 1974. "Bill was a fantastic medical director and associate dean," he said.

RELAC member Ed Foley, who worked closely with Swanson through the '80s and early '90s while he was hospital administrator at Harbor-UCLA, said Swanson was an excellent medical director. "Among many other fine attributes, Dr. Swanson was the glue that cemented the bond between the UCLA Medical School and Los Angeles County at Harbor. This long-standing County-UCLA arrangement brought to the hospital outstanding young doctors ---interns and residents -- as well as nationally recognized medical faculty. These men and women were and are the heart and soul of the talented and hard-working medical staff delivering up-to-date medical care to county patients."

RELAC member Barry Hunt said Swanson was an "inspirational leader and role model" at Harbor-UCLA. "He was a gentleman who always found ways to get conflicting factions to work together to deliver the best in patient care, education and research." Hunt said he will always be grateful to Swanson for writing letters of recommendation for him to teach health care management at Cal State University Dominguez Hills. He taught at Dominguez Hills from 1980 to 2005 and at Cal State University Los Angeles since then. "I've never stopped."

RELAC member Maria Gero was pediatric head nurse at Harbor-UCLA from 1985-1988. "I always remember Dr. Swanson as a caring person interested in staff and the work they did."

In an online tribute to Swanson, Peter Hunter said he was honored to work with Swanson as director of development at Harbor from 1979 to 1980 and enjoyed his cheer and enthusiasm. "He was a complete gem of a guy who did a marvelous job at Harbor."

Swanson's family said spending time with his granddaughters brought him his greatest joy in life. They said he was a lifelong learner and voracious reader who loved to travel and was dedicated to introducing his children to various cultures and people around the world. Keeping physically fit was a passion, and he was one of the original Gold's Gym members in Venice Beach. He continued working out at the gym until just before he passed away.

His family said he was a humanitarian and philanthropist who championed equal rights and freedom of speech by supporting his favorite charities -- Doctors Without Borders, the ACLU, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and National Public Radio. He was also an advocate for environmental causes and supported such philanthropies as Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, and the World Wildlife Fund.

## Chief Lifeguard Don Rohrer Dead at 82

Don Rohrer, who retired as the County's chief lifeguard in 1996 after 44 years of service, has died at age 82 following a short-term illness.

A celebration of life was held June 23 at Dockweiler Beach in Playa del Rey for Rohrer -- said to be the prototype for David Hasselhoff's Lt. Mitch Bucannon character in "Baywatch" -- and a flag ceremony was held at the Lifeguard Division Headquarters on June 17.

As chief lifeguard, Rohrer oversaw 72 miles of County coastline and Catalina Island and was responsible for 135 fulltime ocean lifeguards and 650 seasonal lifeguards.

Adjourning in Rohrer's memory, the County Board of Supervisors credited him with being instrumental in transitioning the ocean lifeguards from the Department of Beaches and Harbors into the Fire Department in 1994.

Rohrer, who died April 30, was a founding member of the United States Lifesaving Association in 1964 and served as its president from 1998-2003.

He and his wife, Beverly, retired superintendent of the South Bay School District, had two sons, Jeff and Matt.

The following article announcing Rohrer's retirement appeared in the Los Angeles Times on May 31, 1996.

Baywatch' Prototype Lifeguard Retiring  
Brace yourself, Baywatchers. The lifeguard in Los Angeles is retiring.

No, it's not the actor David Hasselhoff, nor the earnest lifesaver he plays on that internationally famous sun-and-surf TV adventure. It's Don Rohrer, the county's chief lifeguard and undoubtedly the prototype for Hasselhoff's Lt. Mitch Bucannon.

After a lifelong career combing county beaches, Rohrer is dry-docking his paddle boat and stowing his rescue can. He is 60 and can still swim around the Venice Pier in about 12 minutes, or take 10 to do 500 meters in a pool. After 44 years, he has saved an estimated 2,000 drowning swimmers.

Rohrer was unavailable Thursday, while he drove up and down the coast accepting the congratulations of colleagues. That evening about 350 well-wishers and beachniks gathered in Santa Monica for a retirement bash at the Museum of Flying.

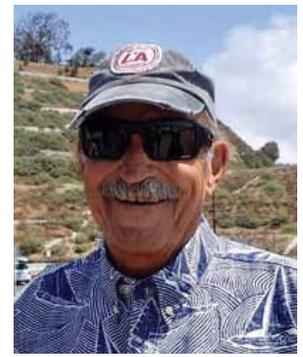
"You couldn't ask for a better person to work for," said Assistant Chief Lifeguard Randy DeGregori, who joined the department in 1964 and through the years has been supervised by Rohrer in one capacity or another. "He expects you to do the right thing and it's easy to work for a man like that."

Long before CPR, before even mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, the teenager Rohrer hoisted himself into the observation tower at Playa del Rey Beach and went to work for the City of Los Angeles when the back-pressure-armlift was the standard inhalation therapy. That was in 1952.

Today, lifeguarding has gone high-tech, with radios, radar, homing devices, resuscitators, defibrillators, four-wheel drives, helicopters and, of course, the famous Baywatch rescue boats. For many years Rohrer was the captain in charge of rescue boat operations.

In the days before the county consolidated services first with Santa Monica in 1973 and then with Los Angeles in 1975, beach lifeguarding relied more on manpower and less on equipment. The approach was different, too.

"The lifeguards would wait for obvious signs of distress or for someone to yell 'Help,'" DeGregori said.



## IN MEMORIAM

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

**Agricultural Comm./Wts. & Measures** – Melvyn A. Makos, James S. Thompson

**Alcohol/Drug Pgms. Admin** – Louise M. Hayes, Wesley L. Hayes Melvyn A. Makos, James S. Thompson

**Antelope Valley Rehab** – John F. Wengert

**Assessor** – Leona M. Evans, Dortha F. Fisher, Geneva Harmon, Joy A. Heltzel, Andrew Leggitt, Sean O Reilly

**Auditor** – Alice F. Lew, Beverly J. Robertson

**Beaches & Harbor** – Calvin A. Porter, Donald B. Rosenthal  
**California Children's Services** – Shawn Flowers-Clark, Carolyn Hass

**Chief Executive Office** – Barbara Banks

**Chief Information Office** – Sarah Brumfield

**Child Support Services** – Ruby Baker, Magdalena Martinez, Debra D. Pearson, Sara A. Thomas

**Children & Family Services** – Mary Acevedo, Willie J. Bircher, Robert M. Clark, Irene M. Cotton, Lee F. Gallemore, Audrone Giedraitis, Grace R. Halverson, Jackie McBride, Candy G. Millan

**Correctional Health** – Chu-Hsiang Chi, Richard Y. Yao

**County Counsel** – Philip H. Hickok, Iver E. Skjeie

**District Attorney** – Herbert M. Jacobowitz, Charles R. Powers, Jack B. White, Lawrence W. Worch

**Fire** – Carlos Estrella, Cecil E. Faircloth, Thomas F. Grogan, William D. Gussman, Robert E. Herman, Irvin A. Langton, Donald R. Lee, James A. Lounsbury, George J. Sotro, Robert F. Wieser, Albert C. Williams

**Harbor/UCLA Medical Center** – Rhodly L. Alden, Mary L. Chumley, Loraine M. Johnson, Terrall S. Kennedy, Rosa P. Martinez, Kim L. Le, Myrna E. Ricarte, Sally Tindall

**Health Services Administration** – Sally U. Aoki, Kenneth L. Arlington, Thomas R. Burk, Eduardo Diaz, Maurice A. Issa, Mary T. Lee, Rosa L. Lowe, Sherman Maddox, Mary M. McKee, Celia Montalvo, Ernesto R. Perdido, Jesus I. Quintero, Horace R. Sampson, Jacqueline Thorton, Robert B. Truman, Stanley A. Yagi

**Human Resources** – Mercedita M. Gillo

**Internal Services** – Macario V. Almanza, Percy Brewer, Richard T. Burns, John H. Catterall, James Crosby, Al W. Day, Levoskar E. Kerner, Virgilio Laurencio, Robert Manny, Ollie Mc Lemore, Roland J. Moore, Stephen G. Morey, Marion K. Munekiyo, Howard E. Perdue, Donald G. Pierce, Gilbert S. Romero, Jose A. Serrano, John W. Stockwell, Hayward Taylor, Robert J. Verrico

**King/Drew Medical Center** – Patricia E. Bath, Shirley M. Brown, Angie Cabrera, Archerine Greene, Janice A. Moody, Yuphaphga C. Relatores, Hazel Sheldon, Yih M. Tsai, Georgia M. Whitley, Daniel J. Wooten

**LAC+USC Medical Center** – Leo F. Alonzo, Giobaldo N. Diaz, Arthur J. Donovan, John Eadie, Margree Epps, Philomina Fredricks, Karin D. Goebel, Fabiana M. Guillen, Hazel J. Henry, Susie L. Jackson, Minnie B. Jones, J.R. Kent, Henrietta J. Loya, Calleanor Patterson, Antonia O. Perez, Melvin Rowlett, William R. Ward, Delia M. Wyler, Bruce Zawacki

**Mechanical Department** – Edgar J. Boucree, Joe F. Castillo, Vernon T. Chung, William C. Corning, Karl H. Luck

**Medical Examiner-Coroner** – Bernadine L. Blucher, Craig R. Knapp

**Mental Health** – Jere Alhadeff, Ofelia C. Bernier, Rodolfo Garcia, Candida Perez, Cheryl Schram, Rex K. Shimizu, Murray

F. Zane

**Olive View/UCLA Hospital** – Cynthia D. Benjamin, Rene Hernandez, Paula J. Nehen, Jane R. Parr

**Parks & Recreation** – Lillian Finn, John C. Kaiban Jr., Hudson L. Smith III

**Probation** – Joseph W. Ashe, Marcos Badillo, Mark A. Baker, Hakim Braud, Geneva Brown, Joan B. Chapman, John Copley, Jay R. Frey, Teruo Hosaka, Melvin L. Jones, Everlene Lawrence, Ruth R. Leebhoff, Emauel R. Lester, David L. Levine, Walter E. Murden, Sharon Pickett, Juan Rodriguez, Ozieal F. Smith, F.R. Spinka, Herbert Taylor, William K. Wilson, Ruth M. Yasaki

**Public Defender** – Malcom S. MacMillian, Damon R. Swank

**Public Health Program** – Merlinda R. De Leon, Cleitus Hilliker, Margaret Rathbun, Sheila M. Reilley, Sandra Silvers

**Public Library** – Louise H. Parsons, Louise H. Trujillo, Irene Y. Wang

**Public Safety** – Federico Blanco

**Public Social Services** – Rutilla Atanasoff, Frances M. Byars, M.M. Caldwell, Penelope H. Calloway, Conception Evans, Mary P. Farran, Edgar J. Flemming, Sandra D. Gibbs, Ramona Glaude, Antonio B. Gonzalez, Irene G. Gutierrez, Co T. Ha, Annette Hartman, Andrea R. Hernani, Helen K. Hicks, Genevieve Hipsman, H.F. Kindell, Frances Macias, Max A. Moya, Andrietta Nelson, Enrique L. Parcon, Gloria J. Penrice, Deborah Price, William H. Sammon, Linda Schluter, Josephine Stewart, Ilene M. Tyler, Velma N. Warren, Vivian D. Westbrook, Ruby L. Williams, Mary T. Williams

**Public Works** – John E. Arenas, Raymond Gomez, Amy H. Kim, Archie Taylor, Jimmie D. Trujillo, Joe G. Valenzuela, Gerald L. Waterbury, Supot Ying

**Rancho Los Amigos Hospital** – Leroy Bowen, Audrey Floud, Gerald L. Horn, James W. Jackson, Johnie Leonard, Brenda R. Lunsford, Thelma B. Mast

**Regional Planning** – Leonard Erlanger

**Reg-Recorder/County Clerk** – John H. Longbehne, Yuk F. Yee

**Sheriff** – Marilyn E. Baker, Carmen C. Baljag, David A. Bethany, James L. Birmingham, John M. Brady, Betty J. Childs, Robert V. Cooney, Ramon Covarrubias, Billie Culberson, Heinz J. Cuvelier, Richard A. Dana, Deborah A. Dereszynski, William E. Dresen, Timothy W. Edwards, Ruth F. Evans, Cordell R. Ford, Arthur Garcia, Robert J. Green, Kenneth L. Handcox, John Heard, Gary B. Hellman, Kenneth L. Indeck, Jimmy D. Jackson, Paul A. Johnson, Kenneth H. Johnston, James E. Joscak, Manual J. Metcalf, Charles R. Metz, Michael R. Miltimore, Keith Mitchell, Theresa L. Nielsen, Wanida Nipataruedi, Edmund S. Rodriguez, Deena Rosen, Robert R. Rossi, Donald B. Stotts, Anna B. Stump, Gail E. Tam, Jeffrey S. Trevillyan, Stephen D. Ward, Larry E. Watts, Jerry L. Weiss, Azalene A. Whelchel, Ross J. Whipple, Herbert H. Wilmsen, Robert E. Wilson

**Superior Court/County Clerk** – Barbara Chetta, Eric Cohen, Marilyn Fishman, Janet Jensen, Ronald R. Mastro, Mona L. McClure, Janis M. Raiford, Lawrence Richardson, Bradley A. Stout

**Treasurer and Tax Collector** – Ronald C. Ganze

**Workforce Dev., Aging & Comm.** – Patricia Palmer

**Department Not Designated** – Myrtle L. Broussard, Josephine M. Clark, Walter E. Davis, Helen I. Eaton, Michelle E. Frazier, Robert M. Fukutaki Sr., Rachel S. Giser, Betty J. Howard, W.T. Jones, Salud A. Paguio, Genevieve G. Ramirez, Louis J. Regenstreif, James L. Revis, Estela Vega



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# Upcoming RELAC Events



**Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019**

## General Membership Meeting

Los Angeles County Arboretum, Ayres Hall • 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

### Featured Speaker:

Jeanne O'Donnell, "Earthquake Preparedness"

Office of Emergency Management

DOOR PRIZES

9 a.m. Complimentary Refreshments - 10 a.m. Meeting Begins

Arboretum tour available following the meeting.

**Saturday, Sept. 28, 2019**

## Annual RELAC Picnic

Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area #5, 15501 E. Arrow Hwy., Irwindale

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Country Western Music by: "The Bobby Z Band"

Catered Barbecue, Line Dancing, Bingo & Wildlife Exhibit

**FREE PARKING**

Lunch served 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Bring a folding chair and country western attire (optional)

**RELAC** Members and Adult Guests

**Reservation Deadline: Sept. 12**

Reservation form inside this newsletter.

Call RELAC for info: (800) 537-3522 or visit website: [www.relac.org](http://www.relac.org)



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*Are you moving?  
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name, address or  
e-mail address?*

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newsletter, correct it  
and mail to:

RELAC

1000 S. Fremont Ave.,  
Unit 15 Alhambra, CA  
91803-8802 or

Phone:

(800) 537-3522

(626) 308-0532

Fax: (626) 308-2901

Email:

[admin@relac.org](mailto:admin@relac.org)

website:

[www.relac.org](http://www.relac.org)

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from LACERA.