



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

RELAC newsletter

Your Pension and Health Care Watchdog

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President's Message

by Brian Berger



As we progress through 2022, we are seeing more of a return to a normal way of life; however, with the changes forced by the COVID risks and accompanying safety requirements, some adjustments had to be made to many office and business programs. The 40-hour week, in the office, that was such a standard for so many of us in our years with the County has gone through a number of changes as many offices realized the amount of work that could be done from home. It appears that much of that modified office/home work schedule will remain. As many of us talk with those who are still working in the County we hear so many stories of workers who will continue to do much work from home. I'm sure that many of you hear similar stories.

RELAC continues to work at full speed. As I've shared before, office staff are in the office on a staggered basis supported by office-supplied computers at home. We are fortunate that a growing number of you are using www.relac.org to keep current on our activities in addition to our newsletter. When I am in the office, the phones are always busy. While talking about the office, I can share that we have renewed the lease at some very good terms, including the replacement of the very old carpeting, painting, better lighting, and additional built-in cabinets to help us store the mountains of material that gather in boxes under desks and elsewhere as it waits for the time(s) when it is prepared and distributed. In addition, we have the signs and banners, plus, that are and have been a part of those times when we were and soon again will be at an event.

We fully expect to have at least one seminar this year where many of us will have a chance to share and talk. As you all know, we still are very active in monitoring all activities that might impact our pensions and health care programs. You can read more on this area in the pages to follow. You can also keep up to date on the programs that continue. Some like the golf program simply continue and some of which are already in the deep planning stages. These programs include the golf program, the RV activities, scholarships, the March of Dimes March for Babies, support for the toy program of the Fire Department's Spark of Love, the continuing birthday cards program for all of our members over 90, and support for other organizations' events of interest to our members such as those for veterans, and the County Fair. Each of these charity/support programs grew in size last year and we fully expect that with the continued support from so many of you, they will see another jump in 2022.

Please feel free to offer other suggestions. We are always ready to explore new opportunities.

Fesler Appointed to RELAC Board

by Judy Hammond
Newsletter Editor

Roberta "Bobbie" Fesler, a 34-year employee of the County Counsel's Office, has been appointed to RELAC's Board of Directors.

Fesler was senior assistant county counsel – the third highest position in the County Counsel's Office – when she left County employment in 2008 to become general counsel in the Los Angeles Unified School District. There she managed a staff of over 150 employees, including approximately 50 attorneys. She served in that position for nearly two years, leaving when a death in her family prompted her to stop working to assist the surviving family members. In late 2009, she retired from both the school district and the County.

Fesler, appointed Feb. 8 by unanimous vote of the RELAC Board of Directors, fills a vacancy created by the 2021 resignation of Alice Prouty. Her term will expire Dec. 31, 2024.

"Adding Bobbie to the Board is an exciting new development," said Dave Muir, chair of the Bylaws/Nominations/Elections Committee. "Bobbie's distinguished career in the County Counsel's Office and as the general counsel in the Los Angeles Unified School District will greatly benefit RELAC."

Continued on p. 2



April 15 is Deadline to Apply for Board

RELAC members interested in serving on the Board of Directors in 2023 have until April 15 to file a letter of interest.

Applicants should briefly explain their interest and describe the experience and education that enhance their qualifications. The Directors Nominations Committee will interview all applicants before adding their names to the list of candidates.

The current Board of Directors will review the list of candidates at its May 10 meeting and select a slate of nominees to endorse for election. If there are more qualified candidates than open seats, an election will be held in September.

The new directors will serve three-year terms beginning in January 2023. Directors whose terms expire this year are Evelyn Gutierrez, Judy Hammond, Dave Muir, and Epifanio "Epi" Peinado.

Pursuant to RELAC's bylaws, a person who holds, or within the past 24 months held, a leadership position with an organization that represents County retirees that has a goal or policy that may be incompatible or in conflict with a goal or policy of RELAC is ineligible to serve as a director of RELAC.

Directors are expected to attend monthly Board business meetings, quarterly general membership meetings, committee meetings scheduled on an as-needed basis, and to participate in RELAC activities and events.

News From LACERA

by JJ Popowich

LACERA Assistant Executive Officer

Hi, everyone! I hope you enjoyed your holidays safely and your 2022 is off to a good start. At LACERA, we planned to start the year by bringing the majority of our remote staff members back in-house, but the Omicron variant has delayed those plans. We will be reevaluating our plans to return to the office after our March Madness season (in April). Our Member Service Center (MSC) is temporarily closed for in-person visits as we wait for the surge to die down, but rest assured we are still providing all the services you need via our remote Call Center, virtual MSC appointments, and online services. So, if you need to speak with a retirement benefits specialist "in person" and haven't used our virtual counseling option, it's the perfect time to give it a try. It's the same highly personalized in-person service, just done via technology. If you have any trepidation about the technology, don't worry: Our online meeting software is user-friendly, and we will get you familiar with it before your meeting.

When we do reopen the MSC for in-person visits, please be aware that the MSC sessions are permanently "by appointment only" — we no longer accept walk-ins. The appointment-only model allows us to provide you more efficient service while reducing wait times, a win-win!

To set up an appointment, visit lacera.com, then select "Make an appointment" from the "I Would Like to" shortcut menu on the right side of the page. On the reservations page, you can select the type of service from the drop-down menu. Currently only virtual counseling is available in the drop-down menu, but when we have reopened the MSC, in-person appointments will also be listed.

We have other convenient ways for you to conduct business with LACERA without coming into the MSC. If you need to provide us forms, certificates, or other account documents, you can:

Upload documents by logging into your secure My LACERA account at members.lacera.com. If you haven't signed up for My LACERA, I highly recommend it. On your account page you can view your ADRs, download 1099-Rs, generate a pension verification letter, send a secure message, and much more. Drop-off documents or mail for LACERA can be deposited in our secure drop box, 24/7. The drop box is located outside our 300 N. Lake building, to the right of the main lobby doors and MSC. Documents are picked up Monday through Friday, except on holidays. We mark a document as "received" if it is dropped off before 4 p.m. during the week. Any document placed in the mail drop after 4 p.m. is picked up the next business day.

We recently made improvements to My LACERA. First, we have made the login process more flexible. Previously, you had three attempts to log in; after three failed attempts, you would be locked out of your account and be directed to call LACERA for assistance. You now have five attempts to log in and have the option to reset your password yourself. We've also made the document and certificate uploads more convenient by automating the process for electronic signatures. Previously when uploading your certificates, you would be asked to provide a separate attestation document; now you will be prompted to digitally sign your documents.

We have also installed secure, onsite Wi-Fi. When our MSC reopens, members will be able to access the Wi-Fi network to more efficiently conduct their LACERA business, access documents, and conduct transactions in our offices.

One of our biggest priorities in the pipeline is developing a new case management system. Currently, LACERA does not have an overall system that all our divisions plug into, meaning the specialty software programs they use aren't designed to work together or share information. We are creating a new system that will integrate all the applications we use—for everything from retirement payments to insurance enrollment—and automate certain processes. This is a big initiative that will be completed in multiple phases over the next few years. Due to the complexity of the project and technical requirements, we have conducted an extensive vendor selection process. The final selection was set for February, after which the construction process begins!

Finally, we are about to start setting our organization goals through the strategic planning process. This year, we are taking a fresh approach by enlisting a professional consultant, who will conduct extensive information gathering and seek input from across LACERA, including employee suggestions for improvement, before facilitating a series of meetings with the boards, executive team, managers, and key staff members to establish our goals. The finalized strategic plan will be used to create our annual budgets and allocate resources and will serve as our roadmap for improving



LACERA continued from previous column

services for you now and in the years to come. We are currently interviewing consultant candidates, with the planning meetings set to begin shortly after. Stay tuned for updates.

Well, that's it for this month's edition. I hope everyone is enjoying their retirement (you've earned it!), and I'll see you next time.

RELAC Renews Office Lease, Includes New Benefits

by Dave Muir

Chair, Ad Hoc Office Lease Committee

RELAC has successfully renewed its lease for office space in The Alhambra campus on Fremont Avenue in Alhambra.

The lease has been renewed for five years, with an option to extend for an additional five years. With the assistance of Dan Alle of Redstone Commercial Real Estate, RELAC was able to negotiate several favorable provisions, including repainting of the entire premises, installation of new carpeting, the addition of cabinets and shelving, and most importantly, four months of free rent (for a savings of \$20,300).

Fesler Appointment continued from p. 1

Fesler said she was intrigued and flattered when approached to serve on the Board. "I am honored to be appointed. I look forward to working with each of the directors to fulfill RELAC's mission of protecting the pension and health care benefits of Los Angeles County employees."

Fesler's County career began in 1973 as a summer law clerk in the County Counsel's Office. The following year, after graduation from UCLA School of Law, she was hired as a deputy county counsel.

Upon retirement, Fesler and her husband, Don, moved to Lido Isle in Newport Beach, where she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Lido Isle Homeowners Association. When her term expired, the Newport Beach City Council appointed her to the city's Civil Service Board, and she served as both the vice chair and chair.

Three years ago, the couple moved to Long Beach to live closer to their daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughters. Several months after moving, she joined The Steel Magnolias, a charitable organization that raises money to support a local medical facility which provides services to children with developmental disabilities, and is now president-elect.

Fesler has remained in contact with former colleagues since her retirement, including meeting twice a year (pre-COVID) for dinner with a group of County Counsel retirees known as "The Geezers" and several times a year with a number of women she worked closely with that served in other County departments.

(Read Fesler's profile on page 8)



Gutierrez Honored by Board of Supervisors



RELAC Director Evelyn Gutierrez has been honored by the Board of Supervisors for 28 years of service on the County's Quality and Productivity Commission (QPC).

Gutierrez, who was first appointed in 2003 by Supervisor Gloria Molina and later by the Chief Administrative Office following Molina's retirement, resigned from the QPC last October.

The scroll, signed by all five supervisors, was presented virtually at the RELAC Board of Directors meeting in January by QPC Chair Nichelle Henderson and Chair Emeritus Shawn Landres. It cited Gutierrez's role as first vice chair, chair of the Awards Program from 2013-18, and work on the Productivity Investment Board, Leadership Conference, and Strategic Foresight Working Group.



Toys Delivered to County Fire Stations

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Community Support Committee

Hundreds of unwrapped toys and teen games were delivered to local fire stations by RELAC members in December 2021. A big thank you was expressed by local firefighters who distributed much-needed and appreciated toys to underserved communities.

RELAC members supporting the annual toy donation campaign included a family holiday dinner with guests donating "Spark of Love" toys instead of the traditional exchange of gifts for family members and friends. RELAC member Debbie Watts had over 100 toys delivered to a local fire station as a special donation.

The L.A. County Fire Department's 2021 sponsorship of the annual Spark of Love Toy Drive provided toys and holiday greetings for thousands of families in need during these difficult days of unemployment, public health issues and social distancing.

RELAC thanks its members for the continued community support that truly enriches so many lives.



RELAC members Debbie Watts (a Department of Health Services retiree), Loretta Lopez (Regional Planning) and Phil Ow (Chief Administrative Office) donate toys instead of exchanging gifts.



RELAC Director Don Fandry at Arcadia Fire Station.

RELAC Seniors Over 90 Receive Birthday and Holiday Wishes

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Chair
Community Support & Outreach Committee



Liz Baca and Loretta Lopez are part of RELAC's card-writing team.

In special recognition of RELAC members 90 years or older, approximately 80 birthday cards are mailed monthly by the Community Support & Outreach Committee. The committee's mission is to promote connectivity and celebrate RELAC's senior members.

A majority of the birthday cards are mailed to members living in California. However, a few retirees reside in Arizona, Oregon, Las Vegas, Texas and a few other states. And two live abroad. Rose Agcaoili, 93, resides in the Amparo Village, Caloocan City, Philippines. Joyce Weil, 94, is a resident of Oxford, England.

The card-writing team -- Liz Baca, Loretta Lopez, Don Fandry and Evelyn Gutierrez -- is especially pleased to write a special note of congratulations to RELAC members who are over 100 years old, who totaled 68 members in 2021. Among these centenarians, Anderson Johnson, 107, is our most senior member!

The committee also sends annual holiday cards to members over 90 years old. The 2021 holiday card-mailing marathon resulted in sending best wishes to 875 RELAC members, ranging from age 90 to 107.

If you are a "senior" RELAC member (90 and older), you are invited to e-mail your photo to Evelyn Gutierrez at egferro@cs.com or mail your photo to the RELAC Alhambra office, attention Evelyn Gutierrez, for inclusion in future newsletter committee articles.



Team RELAC Three-Peat Champs?

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Community Support Committee

March of Dimes Regional Director Velma Brooks-Benson recently welcomed Team RELAC to the 2022 March for Babies campaign. Reviewing previous campaigns, Brooks-Benson congratulated RELAC for being the top Los Angeles County team in 2020 and RELAC member Joe Kelly as the top walker. In 2021, Team RELAC again placed as the top Los Angeles County team. The talk on the Walk is can RELAC become a three-peat champion in 2022? The challenge has been accepted!



RELAC President Brian Berger, Walk Co-Captain Linda Hopkins

March of Dimes has announced that the 2022 Walk for Babies event is scheduled for Saturday, April 23 at 9 a.m. as a live event at Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles. Public health protocols will be followed, including the wearing of face masks and social distancing.

Team RELAC Co-Captains Linda Hopkins and Evelyn Gutierrez are also encouraging members to form their own neighborhood walks, including their neighbors and friends. Supporting medical research and services essential to the healthy birth of premature babies, especially grandchildren, is the goal.

RELAC thanks its members, families and friends for the continued support and generosity that will provide needed funding during the medical challenges presented by COVID-19 and new variants.

Brooks-Benson also announced that the continued MOD Loyalty and Recognition Program will enable fundraising results to be reported by June 30 for official recognition of team achievements. RELAC's 2022 goal is to receive the March for Babies Three-Peat Champion award!

RELAC members can send a check payable to March of Dimes, noting 2022 March for Babies in the left lower area. Mail the check to the RELAC office in Alhambra, attention MOD 2022 Team. To make online donations, go to the March for Babies posting and donor link on RELAC's website at relac.org. To reach the team co-captains, e-mail Hopkins at lhopkins1054@gmail.com or Gutierrez at egfierro@cs.com.



Medical ID Bracelets Provide Important Information When Emergencies Occur

by Joseph Kelly, RELAC member

Several years ago, I found myself inside an ambulance on the way to a local emergency room. The paramedics were very interested in knowing what, if any, prescription medications I was taking. At the time, I was taking only one, but I found myself in such a daze that I could not remember the name of it, nor the reason I was taking it. The paramedics explained that it was very important I try to recall this information, but I couldn't. Fast forward to this past holiday season, when I booked a 32-day excursion by sea through the Amazon in Brazil and the West Indies, ending in the Bahamas. Prior to booking it, I spoke with my doctor about this trip and asked if he had any concerns. He said, "None, but make sure to buy and wear a medical ID bracelet." A medical identification bracelet is a piece of metal, engraved with your name and important medical information, that you wear at all times around your wrist or neck. The purpose is to inform others, like the paramedics I mentioned, of important information if there is a medical emergency.

Over the next several weeks I did research and found these key factors to consider when purchasing a bracelet:

Bracelet or necklace (including military dog tag). I went with the bracelet because I don't like wearing anything around my neck.

What do you engrave on it? My doctor recommended my name, the month and year of my birth, medical diagnosis, and the prescription medicines I am taking. Because the bracelets are generally a standard size, it is very challenging to include all this information. On the web, I discovered that most medical conditions have a formal abbreviation that can be used, and this allowed me to fit more information on the bracelet. Seniors between the ages of 65 and 79 in this country fill an average of 20 prescriptions annually. I take very few prescription medications, so I was able to fit all of them. If you are unable to include them all, you should consult with your medical provider.

Wristband types. You have a lot of options. I purchased two different types – one in a black weave and a second in dayglow primary colors. The former has a more formal look and the latter a more casual look. Both are waterproof, which was important to me since I spend a fair amount of time at beaches.

Costs. Again, you will have a range of options. Mine came in at about \$50 each. I told my six siblings I was purchasing two bracelets and I asked them to gift them to me for my birthday. I am the first among us to purchase a medical ID bracelet.

Do you really need to wear it 24/7? Yes. Again, the purpose of the bracelet is to provide important medical information to first responders. Since I don't know when a medical emergency will occur, I wear mine 24/7.

Privacy. Some bracelets include the medical information on the outside of the bracelet so that anyone in close proximity can read the information. I didn't want that, so I had my medical information engraved on the inside of the bracelet.

Although I hope to never reap the benefit of the bracelet, it's good to know that a medical ID bracelet provides first responders with important medical information during an emergency.

Black Resource Center is Special Library Service

The Black Resource Center was established as a special service of LA County Library in 1978 to serve the informational and educational needs of African Americans and the larger population by supporting research and study on social, historical and cultural aspects unique to the African American experience.

The center, located in A C Bilbrew Library in Los Angeles, serves as an information and referral agency to other libraries, government agencies and the general public. It is an important link in the survival and preservation of the heritage of African Americans. The center provides many services and activities that include:

In-depth reference service to specialized researchers and to the general public. Cultural awareness programs such as Juneteenth, Kwanzaa and Black History Month celebrations.

Promotional materials and displays for programs and activities in support of African American heritage and multiculturalism.

Community outreach and networking with other organizations and institutions. Black History Month is celebrated every year during the month of February.

What's Happening?

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Chair, Special Events Committee



L.A. County requires continued use of face masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. For public health updates, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.

The following events or activities may provide you with safe and enjoyable outings. Call to confirm event dates and public health requirements.

Antelope Valley Poppy Reserve

Mid-March through mid-April, you can view a beautiful display of poppies in bloom. The high desert reserve, located in the western Mojave Desert, is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Shaded picnic tables and wheelchair paths provided. Interpretive Center features exhibits and art displays. (661) 724-1180.

Swallows Day Parade – San Juan Capistrano

Saturday, March 12 the San Juan Capistrano Fiesta Association hosts a parade and mercado celebrating the Old West and the return of the swallows from their winter home in Argentina. The parade route runs throughout downtown, starting at 11 a.m. (949) 615-1920.

St. Patrick's Day Parade – Hermosa Beach

Saturday, March 12 at 11 a.m. the annual St. Patrick's Day parade begins at the intersection of Valley and Pier Avenue. (310) 376-0951.

Cesar Chavez Celebration – La Plaza de Cultura y Artes

Sunday, March 20 at noon – FREE to the public, this cultural and historical event highlights the life and legacy of Cesar Chavez. Attendees will learn about Chavez's impact on the California labor movement and civil rights. La Plaza is at 501 N. Main St., Los Angeles. (213) 542-6279.

Los Angeles County's Department of Human Resources encourages that L.A. Regional Food Bank donations in March be made in memory of Cesar Chavez and his struggle to provide food and healthy working conditions for labor workers.

Blessing of the Animals – Olvera Street, Los Angeles

Saturday, April 16 at 2 p.m. at Olvera Street near N. Alameda Street in downtown Los Angeles, the annual blessing of the animals will feature blessings by Archbishop Jose Gomez from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Bring your pets and join this special event hosted by the Olvera St. Merchants Association. (213) 716-1373.

2022 L.A. County Fair, Pomona – May 5 to May 30

The 100th celebration of the County Fair will open to the public on Thursday, May 5 with a Cinco de Mayo celebration. The fair will also feature a special Mother's Day and Memorial Day event.

The Pomona Fair administrative team is requesting historical photos of past County Fairs for possible inclusion in a special community display. If you wish to share personal photos taken at previous Pomona Fair events, please e-mail them by March 1 to RELAC Director Evelyn Gutierrez at egfiero@cs.com.



Celebrating 2022 Lunar New Year

by Evelyn Gutierrez, Special Events Committee



Phil Ow and Jing Hu

RELAC joins the Chinese Employees Association of L.A. County (CEALAC) in celebrating the 2022 Lunar New Year and the Year of the Tiger.

Jing Hu, CEALAC president and employee of the Department of Public Social Services, sends best wishes to RELAC members, especially those born in 1926, 1938, 1950 and 1962 – previous Years of the Tiger, which occur every 12 years. (The lunar calendar has 12 years and a different animal is celebrated each year.)

The CEALAC's mission includes promoting awareness of the Asian culture, tradition and history. For Chinese communities around the world, the Lunar New Year is the most important and festive holiday of the year. Historically, this holiday begins with the first new moon on the lunar calendar and ends 15 days later. Traditionally, this was a time when farmers would rest from work in the fields. It represents a time of rest and hope for the new year. The Year of the Tiger is associated with strength, bravery and confidence.

Traditional celebrations include receiving red envelopes (lai see) containing small amounts of money and include the Lantern Festival held on the last day of the celebration. On this night, colorful lanterns light up the houses and traditional food such as yuanxiao (sticky rice that symbolizes family unity) and fagao (prosperity cake) is served.

Hu stated, "The Lunar New Year, celebrated on Feb. 1, 2022, is steeped in legends and cultural traditions spanning over thousands of years. The CEALAC Board of Directors extends a special RELAC invitation to attend future Asian community celebrations and explore the Chinese culture and heritage. We wish you good health, prosperity and a Happy Lunar New Year." Visit website CEALAC@CEALAC.org.

RELAC member Phil Ow stated, "RELAC members are wished a very happy 2022 Year of the Tiger. Perhaps you are a tiger -- were you born in a Year of the Tiger? Or maybe we should all identify with the characteristics of the tiger and be brave and strong. I wish our members continued good health, happiness and joy in this Lunar New Year."

Letters To The Editor

Write On!

Dear RELAC staff, thank you for your beautiful Christmas card. I wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy holiday season and an even better 2022.

Edith Berk Baker, Downey, California

Dear RELAC Board of Directors and Evelyn Gutierrez, thank you for my Christmas card.

Ida J. Wong, Grove, Oklahoma

Dear Evelyn (Gutierrez), I am writing regarding my mother Ida Sherman and the birthday card that RELAC recently sent to her. You and I worked in the L.A. County CAO at the same time back in the early 1990s, where I worked for Debbie Lizzari and Mike Henry. You were the County's van pool coordinator and I drove a van from Palmdale at the time. I wanted to inform you that my mother passed and can be removed from the list of retiree members. Thanks to RELAC for acknowledging her birthday over the years. It was one of the only cards that she would receive, as all of her friends and relatives have also passed away. I left L.A. County 29 years ago and actually went to work for a company located in the same office complex in Alhambra that the RELAC offices are located. Hope all is well with you and thanks for your assistance with this. Happy holidays to you.

Robert Sherman, Thousand Oaks, California

To RELAC, thank you for the birthday and Christmas card you sent my dad! It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform you of the death of our beloved father, Hector Montenegro, on Dec. 4, 2021. He fell and broke his femur in September and had been in Bayside Care Center Rehab in Morro Bay until his passing. He would've been a young 95 years on Dec. 18! He lived a full life enriched by many friends and family. (We wish we could have met every one of you!) We want to thank you for being a part of Dad's life! He would've wanted to leave you with a smile from one of his silly jokes. There is no service planned at this time. Warmest regards [his children],
Susan Henshall, Trabuco Canyon, California
Nancy Haines, New Zealand
Gary Montenegro, Lompoc, California

Thank you, RELAC, for these [raffle] drawings. I look forward to them every year.

Beverly Williams, Covina, California

Enclosed is my information for the Valentine Drawing. Thank you for all the wonderful information we get from our RELAC newsletter. I have been enjoying it for over 20 years. Keep up the good work.

Michele T. Lowe, Canyon Country, California

Thank you to the Board of Directors for the great RELAC newsletter. Always enjoy reading it. Happy New Year! All the best to all of you. Thank you.

Linda Campos, Downey, California

To all the RELAC volunteers, thank you for all you do.

Patricia McGrath, Oro Valley, Arizona

To RELAC management and staff, thank you for the excellent management and follow-through throughout the years, protecting the integrity of RELAC. The RELAC team is second-to-none! Thank you.

Cherry C. Uyeda, Encino, California

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Golf News

by Gil Sandoval
RELAC Golf Director

Los Amigos Golf Tournament Jan. 24

The "A" Flight was a closer race than the other flights as first time new member Mike Pearson was two strokes up on Eddie Otero to win first place with a net 69. Eddie's net 71 was good for second place. He was one up on Chuck Adams, who had a net 72 and finished in third place.

Andy Mendoza, playing very well, won first place in the "B" Flight with net 68. Robert Prince repeated his second place finish with a net 71 as he beat Harlan DeBie in a card off. Harlan took third place with a net 71 as well.

The "C" Flight was an easy win for Richard Duran as he played his best golf with RELAC. His net 68 was a five-stroke lead over Frank Martinez, who brought in net 73 for second place. Art Moronez finished third with a net 75 after a long hiatus to work at his son's home north of Boston.

In the Ladies Flight, Jacqueline Johnson putted lights out as she only needed 27 putts for her round of golf, shooting a net 61 to duplicate her win from last month. Her round was the lowest net score for all flights. Way to go Jacqueline! Shirley Johnston brought in a net 79 to take second place. Marjorie Stevens-Kelly, at net 83, finished in third place. Marjorie was scheduled for cataract surgery in February in both eyes (following the deadline for this article) so we hope everything went smoothly. We had five women players and we welcome their participation, but we look forward to having more in the future. Thank you all for playing!

We want to thank Tony Bacon for bringing in Mike Pearson and Herman DeBose to our golfing family. If you can help recruit new RELAC members who are golfers, it would be terrific. Please help us grow.

In the men's closest-to-the pin competition on par 3 holes, Eddie Otero won the third hole, Herman DeBose the seventh, Jeff Phillips the 12th, and Harlan DeBie the 17th. In the women's competition, Kay Barents took the third hole, Shirley Johnston the seventh, Charlene DeBie the 12th and Jacqueline Johnson the 17th.

The next tournament is scheduled at La Mirada Golf Course on March 28. First tee at 8 a.m. Please be reminded that fees have increased. Green fees were raised in January to \$42 per tournament to conform to the minimum tournament pricing for all County golf courses. The entry form can be found on the RELAC website at relac.org under the calendar section. We would appreciate it if those of you who have friends that play with us and do not have access to the website would pass on the information about our next tournament so they can sign up to play. If you have a course that you would like to play, please let me know and I can add it to our schedule form next year.



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Saturday, Sunday &

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

December 2021- January 2022

Animal Care & Control – Gary Pecorelli
Child Support Services – Delia Lazo Ruiz, Audrey Young
Children & Family Services – Richard Dyke, Alma Jimenez, Mark Miller, Cheryl Rogers, Sharon Sanchez, Catherine Walsh
Community & Senior Services – Pete Fajardo, Stephanie Klopfleisch
District Attorney – Laverne Boykin, Dennis Duarte, Ephraim Turner
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Flood Control – Ronald Brook
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Museum of Natural History – Katharine Donahue
Olive View Medical Center – Ronald Bradford
Parks & Recreation – Bertha Brown
Probation – Vittorio Gulley, Berty N. Jacobo, Paul Lajoie, Frank Pallares
Public Health – Angela Haley, Jo Anna Levinson, Catherine Mak, Angelica Millan, Deborah Reff
Public Social Services – Angel Atilano, Max Berkovics, Marva Curry, Debora Kennison, Leticia Martinez, Latonya Newman, Jose Olmedo, Clarice Rachal, Ernestine Robles, Evelyn Walker, Ione Williams
Public Works – Diego Cadena, Helen Lee, Alfonso Munoz, Nelson Nelson
Sheriff – Jeffrey Adams, Elizabeth Aurelio-Ortiz, Louis Creten, Jerry Despues, Carolyn Gallobruno, Eduardo Garcia, Michael Garfin, Reggie Gautt, Kevin Gavaghan, Carlos Girard, Jesse Hernandez, Ernest Hockaday, Anthony Hollins, Pamela Johnson, Stephen Johnson, Ron Kegel, Jeffery Knox, Allen Kunihiro, George Magallanes, Richard Mc Keon, Toni M. Merlo, David Mertens, Anne Mitchell, Pauline Morga, Elizabeth Mackey Peterson, Dan Pohl, Victor Rampulla, Albert Rodriguez, Mark Saldecke, Greg Sisneros, Sandra Solis, Wayne Stickle, Jeff Stosic, Mark Sutherland, Tony Taylor, Ronene Thomas, Seiko Tokuda, Maurilio Velazquez, Susan Velazquez, Toni Veltri
Superior Court – Helen Ariizumi, Paul Solis, Kenneth Strickland
Department Not Designated – Seda Adjajian, Anthony Austin, Sylvia Castillo, Shin Chao, Ozie L. Hollingsworth, Amanda Johnson, Isabelle Saber, Hema Trivedi, Vicente Velazquez, Joseph Vu
Associate – Rocio Adams, Suzanne Alkonis, Richard Atilano, James Becerra, Terrell L. Boykin, Shawn Bradford, Rhonda Creten, Charlene Despues, Cynthia G. Duarte, Apula Radcliffe Dyke, Xiomara D. Fernandez, Consolacion Garcia, Carolyn Garfin, Paula Gautt, Yvonne Girard, Michelle Hockaday, Cynthia Hollins, Glenn Kennison, Marianne A. Lajoie, Alma J. Lopez, Norma Magallanes, Maria L. Marquez, Gailya M. Mayfield, Beverly Mc Keon, Melissa Mertens, Robert J. Mitchell, Anabony Monahan, Ana Munoz, Vivian G. Nelson, Edward No, Lorelei J. Pallares, Edward Peterson, Adam Rudolph, Reem Saldecke, Linda Solis, Leda Sutherland, Efelda Tokuda, Bharat Trivedi, Marta Velazquez, Christine H. Vu

Thanks for New Member Referrals

We would like to thank the 17 members who recruited 34 colleagues to join RELAC during December 2021 and January 2022. Due to our aging membership, we must remain vigilant in signing up new members to remain a strong organization to protect our 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 or go online at 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):

Terry Black, *Reggie Gautt*, Sheriff
James Brown III, *Seiko Tokuda*, Sheriff
Leon Brown, *Anthony Hollins*, Sheriff
Julian P Donahue, *Katharine Donahue*, Museum of Natural History

Letters continued from p. 6

Thank you and RELAC for the 2022-2023 pocket calendar. It is very useful and I love the artwork you selected for its cover and back.

Gwen Andrizzi, Torrance, California

Thank you, Mr. (Brian) Berger, for a beautifully written letter dated Jan. 1, 2022, especially denoting our diverse communities. [Reference – cover letter for the RELAC pocket calendar.]

Irving and Cecilia Cohen, Palm Desert, California

Dear RELAC team, thank you for your recent letter and especially the enclosed pocket calendar! May I ask you to send me two additional calendars? They are so handy to use for seniors like me. Thank you.

Priscilla Mak, Los Angeles, California

[Re: article on death of Mary Jung] In July 1994 Rene Topalian was my supervisor at the Department of Health Services. Mary Jung had just joined the department as chief deputy after departing the Chief Administrative Office when Richard Dixon did. Rene and I requested a meeting with Mary. She was very reasonable and supported the position we hoped the department would take. We never heard any more about the foolish request we had received from the CAO at the time.

Barry Hunt, Inglewood, California

The "draft for review" [of the article on Jack Taube's death] looks great. You did a wonderful job of presenting a complicated man and his many activities. A fellow that did all the things Jack did must have loved his life. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Jack, and for your offer for me to join RELAC. I will join in the next few days.

Joe Taibe, Santa Monica, California

More New Member Referrals

Evelyn Gutierrez, *Catherine Mak*, Public Health
Robert Hinojosa, *Alfonso Munoz*, Public Works
Linda Hopkins, *Clarice Rachal*, Public Social Services
John C. Jacobo, *Berty N. Jacobo*, Probation
Randy Klopfleisch, *Stephanie Klopfleisch*, Community & Senior Services
Martha Lopez, *Tony Hayden*, Health Services
Ann Marinovich, *Elizabeth Mackey Peterson*, Sheriff
Isabel Milan, *Irene Recendez*, Health Services
William Prior, *Donald Scott*, Fire
Les Robbins, *Jeffrey Adams*, Sheriff
Louis Creten, Sheriff
Jerry Despues, Sheriff
Dennis Duarte, District Attorney
Angela Haley, Public Health
Ernest Hockaday, Sheriff
Pamela Johnson, Sheriff
Stephen Johnson, Sheriff
Ron Kegel, Sheriff
Allen Kunihiro, Sheriff
David Mertens, Sheriff
Angelica Millan, Public Health
Dan Pohl, Sheriff
Greg Sisneros, Sheriff
Wayne Stickle, Sheriff
Ronene Thomas, Sheriff
Maurilio Velazquez, Sheriff
Susan Velazquez, Sheriff
Walter Tubbs, *Frank Pallares*, Probation
Joseph Villanueva, *Albert Rodriguez*, Sheriff
Jason H. Williams, *Armetha Bravo*, Health Services

Keeping Up With Retirees

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

With husband, Bob



BOBBIE FESLER New RELAC Director

My long career with Los Angeles County began purely by chance. In 1973, while waiting outside my husband's class one day toward the end of my second year at UCLA School of Law, I noticed a bulletin board had postings for summer law clerk positions in the three County legal departments -- the Offices of the District Attorney, the Public Defender, and the County Counsel. While I was familiar with what the DA and PD did, I had never heard of the County Counsel and had no idea what that office's work involved. But, the application deadlines for the DA and PD had already passed, so the only option was the County Counsel. I braved the freeways and drove to the Hall of Administration the next day, the last day to apply for a position in the Office of the County Counsel. I had an interview the following week and started as a County employee a few days later.

After graduating law school the following year, I was hired as an entry level attorney and wound up spending 34 years in the Office of the County Counsel. For the first 10 years, I provided legal advice and representation to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and its officers and staff. After Proposition 13 resulted in major changes to state funding of local agencies, the County Counsel stopped providing legal services to school districts. So, I spent the next 24 years providing legal advice and representation to the Board of Supervisors and other elected County officers and their staffs. In addition, whether as the lead counsel or as the supervisor of other attorneys who acted as lead counsel, I was involved in the legal affairs and litigation of nearly every County department, commission, and affiliated agency.

When I left County service in 2008, I had served for the previous 10 years in the County Counsel Office's senior management. In that capacity, among many other things, I developed and oversaw the implementation of the first officewide restructuring in 20 years, as well as a comprehensive system of litigation oversight and management.

I left County service for what a friend described as a trip "Back to the Future" -- I returned to my roots to become the general counsel at the LAUSD, where I managed a staff of more than 150. There, I assisted the Board of Education and the superintendent in navigating the challenges created by the financial impacts on the district of the Great Recession. It was both a very demanding and very rewarding capstone to my long career as a government attorney.

Shortly after retirement, I became a grandmother, my best "job" ever! Three years ago, my husband, Don, our three Doodles, and I moved from Newport Beach to Long Beach, where we live just four blocks from our two beautiful granddaughters. The opportunity to watch them participate in their activities at school, in sports, and in various clubs and groups is a blessing for which we are grateful every day.

We have travelled extensively, alone as well as with the entire family, including trips to England and to Italy with the girls. We can't wait for COVID to be behind us, so trips that have been on hold for the last two years can finally be enjoyed. Don and I just celebrated 50 years of marriage, which may be the biggest accomplishment of our lives! When I'm not traveling or enjoying my family, I stay busy sewing and embroidering with my grown up "toys."



STEPHANIE KLOPFLEISCH

I graduated from Pomona College in 1962 with a bachelor of arts degree in English literature and a minor in music. So, I was very tenuously prepared to enter the world of work. Unfortunately, professors of literature needed a Ph. D and major orchestras in the early 1960s did not accept women into their ranks. So, after a job search to find a match with my interests and education, I ended up in the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) of Los Angeles County in 1963. But amazingly, it was a perfect place for me. The work seemed important, our clients desperately needed assistance and I was inspired by the chance to make a positive difference in my community. After a year of being a social worker, the County gave me a stipend and I went to graduate school at UCLA, two years later receiving my master's degree in social welfare.

I worked in various assignments in the welfare department (licensing, child protective services, dependent children of the court, field services). All of these jobs led me to appreciate how diligently County workers tried to help their clients overcome the financial and social difficulties in their lives. It was such difficult work! In 1973 I became an assistant director under Keith Comrie. Welfare reform with new employment and training services were a big part of the push in the '70s to enable clients to become economically independent. Also, homelessness had begun to be an issue in Los Angeles County and interagency coordination of resources was a developing effort. I spent so much time trying to develop more available and efficient social services with other agencies.

In 1979 I became the chief deputy of Community and Senior Services and eventually the department director. It was a nimble agency that planned and executed community services through a network of contract service providers. The staff of the department were mostly community advocates and were constantly trying to do more services in unusual and creative ways. Domestic violence shelters, senior centers and community centers were among the leading activities in our department. It was such a pleasure to work in this department with the positive determined staff.

In 2001 I retired and took my music off the backburner and began playing viola and piano in earnest. I played in many orchestras -- Brentwood, Valley Symphony, Claremont, New Valley (the inhouse band for Forest Lawn), Glendale Symphony, and Los Angeles Doctors Symphony. I played in the pit for a small opera company for five years (one of my favorite jobs), I am the accompanist for the Apollo Men's Chorus going on 20 years, and I played gigs in a string quartet and a piano quintet. I have been so happy to be totally involved in music. It made up for having missed the opportunity when I was young. (As a result of blind auditions, about 13 years after I graduated from college, orchestras around the world that paid an annual salary finally began slowly accepting women.)

My husband, Randy, and I have done a lot of traveling since I retired -- hiked the Inca Trail in Peru, explored Iran with three other couples, crisscrossed Southeast Asia, bicycled through Russia and have had so much fun visiting diverse countries. We have a cabin on Big Bear Lake where we have spent many summers with our children and their families. Daughters Liz, a health care executive, and Jennifer, an art director, are a great pleasure and our five grandchildren never cease to amaze us with their antics and accomplishments. Since the pandemic, our life has slowed down dramatically -- although I still continue my volunteer work with the LA Phil on boards and committees ---and I love the musical opportunities that involves. Overall, things have been good for me and I feel fortunate that I "found" L.A. County and was able to contribute to the many good projects the County undertakes.

KAREN M. HARRIS

I started my County career in January 1979 in the Department of Public Social Services as a typist clerk at the old White Front building on West Imperial Highway. My job was to give callers day care referral services within their zip code. After taking a shorthand class at Trade Tech College, I passed the County's shorthand exam and promoted to secretary. Several years later, I promoted to senior secretary for the regional director in the Department of Children and Family Services, then to management secretary to the chief of real estate for the Internal Services Department's Leasing and Space Management Division, which later was placed under the Chief Administrative Office. As the real estate secretary, I supported the chief and real estate staff and transcribed minutes for the Real Estate Management Commission for all county-related leases. My next career move was to senior management secretary for the chief of the Bureau of Investigation in the District Attorney's Office, where I scheduled appointments, distributed special appropriations funds and other duties as assigned. I supported the assistant chief, five captains and over 130 sworn personnel. I was also part of the bureau's Baker to Vegas relay running team for many years as a "catcher" and worked the night shift no one wanted, midnight until 6 a.m. Years later and to my surprise, District Attorney Jackie Lacey asked me to become her executive assistant after the retirement of her previous executive assistant. I was in utter shock when she personally called to offer me the position. I felt inadequate at first, but knew that the past 36 years had prepared me for such a time as this. I scheduled all of Mrs. Lacey's meetings, events and appointments, a task that could have been intimidating, but turned out to be one of the most humbling, but truly rewarding experiences.

Since my retirement in March 2016, I spend my time walking my dog, Hazel, a 6-year-old terrier mix. I also spend time with my three adult daughters (two who work for the Department of Mental Health), two sons-in-law (one who also works for the Department of Mental Health), and five grandchildren (two grandsons and three granddaughters). I also spend treasured time with my siblings, joyously traveling with several to New York, New Orleans, Alaska, Canada, St. Louis, Texas, Las Vegas, Arizona, Sacramento and other close-by cities. I also have attended many jazz festivals and concerts with family and friends.

I serve as block club captain, organizing neighborhood cleanups and other community-related events. This position places me in continual contact with city officials and the captain of the Compton Sheriff's Station. I organized Disney movie at the park, co-sponsored with the Sheriff's Department; and hosted breakfasts at my home for Compton sheriff, fire, public works, and code enforcement employees. Each breakfast was well attended by public officials and residents.

I spend many hours monthly with Sunny Cove Sistahs, a group of 11 women in my neighborhood. It started with a daily cup of coffee with a neighbor in my garage at the onset of COVID. That eventually grew into front yard get-togethers with other neighbors, then into a sisterhood of middle-aged women who now regularly host neighborhood events. Our most recent event was a July 4th block party, something we had never had, but look forward to hosting annually.

I work an occasional part-time job with Action Figures, a staffing agency with venues at Long Beach, San Diego, Anaheim, Pasadena and Los Angeles convention centers. My position includes, but is not limited to, ticket scanner, ticket printer and room monitor. This is a tiring, but fun job. I meet great people and often work celebrity-attended events. There's never a dull moment.

I am thankful for my County career and all the wonderful co-workers, some now friends for life, that I have met along the way. I have truly learned the meaning of "It's a Wonderful Life."



BARRY CHASS

I was a freshman at San Diego State when my older sister, Susan, who was working at the County's Road Department, mailed me a job bulletin for a summer job as a road laborer. I applied and worked for the next four summers, winters, and spring breaks replacing traffic lights, painting curbs, stripes, and crosswalks, and driving a forklift at the stockyards. One time, I dropped a pallet of 1,500 gallons of white traffic paint. I'm told that paint can still be seen.

I was an accounting major, and in the spring of my senior year, I went to the campus "Career Day." Nestled between elaborate booths set up by Price Waterhouse and Ernst & Ernst was a simple card table with recruiters from the Los Angeles County Auditor - Controller. The CPA firms told me to apply after my military service, but the recruiters from the Auditor-Controller said they would consider hiring me after graduation and hold my job while I was in the military. And that's how it started.

My first interview in Los Angeles was with Tyler McCauley. He told me that most new recruits start with the Audit Division; however, because I had minored in computers and could program in Cobol and Fortran, and was a whiz on a keypunch machine, he wanted me to start with the Accounting Division; and when I returned from the military, I would be working on a project to automate the Auditor's accounting systems - which in the late '60s was entirely manual except for the county payroll system. In fact, when I started with the County Auditor, the desktop calculator hadn't been invented. We had these awful electro-mechanical machines called Comptometers with about 150 keys.

I started working in the Auditor's Accounting Division in June 1968 and literally within a few weeks got called for my Army draft physical. We were told to get our affairs in order and we would be reporting for active duty in the next few weeks; however, a few days later, I got a call from a local Army Reserve unit that needed a recruit with an accounting education. I applied, got inducted into the Army Reserve, and only needed to serve six months.

When I returned to the Auditor, I was assigned to work with Joe Banuelos, a senior systems analyst who was working on the automation project. We worked together for over two years automating the revenue and expenditure ledgers, and especially the monthly budget reports that would go to the Chief Administrative Office (CAO). In those days, the County payroll came out on the 10th of the following month. The payroll expenses by department were the final transactions needed to close the books and produce the monthly budget reports. Almost every month, we didn't get the payroll information until late afternoon, after the Auditor's keypunch staff went home. So I did the keypunching. Over a two-year period, almost every month on the 10th, I would be in the Hall of Administration past midnight keypunching. In the entire building, there were only the computer operator, a few custodial staff, a security guard and me. But we never missed a deadline. I delivered the budget reports on the 11th of every month to the CAO, specifically Mr. Lloyd Halstead's desk, before he arrived at his office. And, I never met him!

In 1971, Banuelos promoted to the LAC+USC Medical Center and he took me with him. Joe wanted to automate the Medical Center's accounting ledgers, which we did over the next three years, and the programs we developed were adopted by a few of the other large County hospitals. Joe was a real mentor.

In 1974, the County hospitals were using a very simple all-inclusive rate system for billing. There were no systems in place to track services such as lab, x-ray, pharmacy, etc., to individual patients. Everything was manual. Then officials from Medicare notified the County that it needed to track detailed patient data, similar to the systems used for "itemized billing" in private hospitals. After a couple of failed attempts, the department created the "MASTER Project," which resulted in purchasing a computer time-sharing package already used in many

With wife, Cookie





Christmas Luncheon for Retired Department Heads

Fifteen former County department heads – all vaccinated -- attended quarterly luncheon on Dec. 6 at Tony P's Dockside Grill in Marina del Rey. From left front: Philip Browning, Children & Family Services; David Janssen, Chief Administrative Office; Conny McCormack, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk; Jackie Lacey, District Attorney; Brian Berger, Animal Care and Control; Sheryl Spiller, Public Social Services; Steven Golightly, Child Support Services; Pat Wright, wife of Russ Guiney, Parks and Recreation. From right front, Stephanie Klopfleisch, Community and Senior Services; Lynn Bayer, Public Social Services; Harry Stone, Public Works; Jason Williams, Building Services; Pastor Herrera, Consumer Affairs; Joseph Kelly, Treasurer-Tax Collector; Russ Guiney, Parks and Recreation; John Naimo, Auditor-Controller. All but two are RELAC members.



Red-y or Not, the End is Near for This Fab Five:

This is the last official photo of the current Board of Supervisors, with the retirement this year of Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, who says she is "red-y" for a change. When the Board had five male members, they were referred to as "the five little kings," but the all-female Board prefers to be known as "The Fab Five." From left to right are Janice Hahn, Hilda Solis, Holly Mitchell, Kuehl, and Kathryn Barger. A number of candidates have announced for Kuehl's seat, including Bob Hertzberg, former majority leader in the state Senate and speaker of the state Assembly; state Sen. Henry Stern, Assemblyman Richard Bloom, and West Hollywood Councilwoman Lindsey Horvath. The recent redrawing of supervisorial district lines – the first time to be done by an independent citizens commission instead of the Board of Supervisors -- caused the Third District to become more conservative, picking up northern San Fernando Valley, which angered Kuehl, who said the change was politically motivated to make it easier for a more centralist candidate to win.

Barry Chass continued from p.9

hospitals around the country. I was in my final summer camp at Fort Ord when my name came over the PA system (for those of you who served in the military, the last thing you want to hear is your name being paged). Turned out, I had a phone call from Richard Marciniak, who had been appointed project director, and Richard was offering me a position on the project heading a team to install the accounting components in all eight County hospitals. I accepted and spent the next five years moving from hospital to hospital. The project was very successful, largely due to Richard's management style. He was like a tank (which I happened to be washing when he called). Nothing stopped Richard, a truly gifted manager.

Around 1980, Irv Cohen was promoted to deputy director of finance and Irv promoted me to one of his four division chiefs, with me essentially trying to improve expenditure tracking and forecasting. Irv was also a great mentor.

In 1985, the County created the Department of Children's Services. It was a combination of the Adoptions Department and the Children's Protective Services component from the Department of Public Social Services. It had a shaky start, and the CAO put in a team to help move it forward. I transferred from the Department of Health Services (DHS) to head the accounting group, which didn't exist. What a great opportunity! How many times does a County employee get the chance to create an organization from scratch? When I started, there was only me and a few bookkeepers from the Adoptions Department. When I left almost 11 years later, we had a staff of 65. Prior to leaving, a good friend, Pat McMahon, who started at the Auditor about the same time I did, and then a division chief at the Auditor, said our department had one of the best accounting sections in the County. But that credit really goes to Ed Jewik, who came with me from DHS. Ed worked with me the entire time, recruiting staff, organizing, and training. He was a gold mine.

Then in 1996, I retired on my 50th birthday, thank you, Plan A. Actually, I had a job too good to pass up in the private sector waiting for me. I did return briefly five years later on the 120-day plan that extended with contracts for another two-three years. My last month with the County, I was on the subway on my way to the office when 9/11 hit.

My wife, Cookie, and I have been married for over 50 years, and our two children continue the family commitment to public service. They are both Medicare auditors. In fact, my daughter has audited the same County hospitals where I worked.

In addition to travel, we've had sailboats in Marina del Rey for close to 40 years. I took up racing in the 1980s, inspired by a prior director of health services. We've spent many summers sailing with our kids to Catalina, Newport, San Diego, and I even participated in a race from the Marina to Puerto Vallarta. As the crow flies, it's about 1,200 miles; but sailing, we logged almost 2,000 miles. Cookie and I are also big Dodger fans. We have been partners in season tickets since the '70s.

About four years ago, we sold our Encino home of almost 40 years and moved. I wanted to buy a condo near Marina del Rey and spend more time on the boat. Cookie wanted to move to Ventura County, where both our children live, and spend more time with the children and grandchildren. So after a really long and heated discussion (which lasted almost five minutes – a new record for me, according to my children), we bought a home not far from the beach in Ventura County....and now my life is babysitting, and life is good.



Inside LA County

by Judy Hammond
Newsletter Editor

In December 2005 Chief Administrative Officer David Janssen recommended to the Board of Supervisors that a replacement building be identified for staff and operations of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration due to seismic concerns. That didn't happen. Now, more than 16 years later, the Board is moving forward on an estimated \$300-350 million project to retrofit the building, preserving its historical character and design features, with no change to the existing use or capacity. Supervisors in February approved hiring a consultant for \$31,245,000 for architectural/engineering services. The proposal calls for using base-isolation technology – requiring a moat around the exterior of the building, with a 36-inch clear space for the ground to move independently of the building during a major earthquake – and traditional seismic strengthening. Excavation will be required inside the building, which will remain operational and mostly occupied during the retrofit. The building was constructed in the late 1950s and completed in 1960.

Following a massive sewage spill in Carson – caused by a pipe nearly 60 years old – supervisors ordered an assessment of the aging County-run sewer infrastructure.

County libraries are offering COVID testing to make tests more accessible to residents. More than 500 residents turned out at the Huntington Park Library, the initial library to offer testing, the first day.

The Board of Supervisors proclaimed Jan. 13 as Korean American Day in the County, noting that it was the 119th anniversary of the first arrival of Korean immigrants to America and that the County is home to a unique Koreatown community with more than 800,000 residents.

The County is getting pushback from some of the communities designated to house youths being transferred from the state to local probation halls and camps. The state is closing its juvenile justice facilities and transferring the individuals housed there to the 58 counties.

Staff of the economic development unit of the Los Angeles County Development Authority are now County employees, with the transfer of personnel and programs from that section into the new Economic and Workforce Development Department. Employees were blanketed into the County civil service without exam or probationary period, with transfer of benefits. The new department is one of two being created by dividing the Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services Department. They become operational in July.

Supervisors approved \$265,000 to the L.A. Times for attorney costs to settle litigation filed by the newspaper in March 2018 to obtain public records that included electronic information on all homicide cases handled by the Sheriff's Department over a 16-year period, work histories of eight sheriff's employees, e-mail addresses of all Sheriff's Department employees, investigations and personnel records related to complaints of sexual misconduct and/or sexual assault occurring within the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, and two Public Records Act manuals maintained by the County. The County had incurred \$269,447 in its own legal costs at the time of the settlement approval.

Camp David Gonzales, a closed juvenile detention camp, is being considered as a facility for residential reentry job training for youth aged 18-25 with criminal records who want a career in fire service. Supervisor Sheila Kuehl said the state has long relied on prison labor to fight wildfires, but many of these inmates once released are barred from working in fire service because of their criminal record.

The Board of Supervisors has asked that a strategic plan be developed and implemented to institutionalize equitable language access standards (that is, provide those with limited English proficiency reasonable access to the same services as English-speaking individuals), citing statistics that show the County is home to the largest immigrant population in any region in the nation, with nearly 3.5 million of its residents – about 36 percent – born outside the United States. More than half of the County's population speak a language other than English at home – more than 220 languages. Immigrants make up 44 percent of the county's workforce and run small businesses that generate 40 percent of the self-employed income. Nearly 60 percent of children born in the County have at least one immigrant parent, and 44 percent of households are headed by an immigrant.

Heavy winds caused minor damage at Camps Paige and Afflerbaugh in La Verne, prompting the Probation Department to evacuate 28 youths to Barry J. Nidorf for a week while repairs were being made.

Due to the pandemic, the County Fire Museum had to curtail its celebration of the 50th anniversary of the TV show "Emergency!" but said it looks forward to one day celebrating with the original "far grander" plans.

Supervisor Kathryn Barger broke with colleagues, urging that blanket COVID-19 masking policies for indoor and school masking mandates be eliminated and individuals be allowed to make their own decisions. Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said masking rules could be loosened once the number of hospitalizations in the region from COVID fell below 2,500 for seven straight days. At the time (Feb. 3), there were 3,398 COVID patients in the hospital.

Since the County launched LA Found and Project Lifesaver three years ago, 900 trackable bracelets have been distributed to individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia and autism, with rescues of 26 people who have wandered from home.

Probation officials confirmed that a person pretending to be a health worker walked past armed security at Barry J. Nidorf on Jan. 29 and swabbed the mouths of seven youths. The department called the incident "disheartening, disrespectful and criminal."

A \$14 million settlement has been approved by a federal judge in a class action lawsuit against the Sheriff's Department for detaining inmates beyond their release dates at the request of immigration officials. The victims will receive \$3.7 million – the rest goes to attorneys.

Harbor-UCLA Medical Center's trauma center was closed to new patients for more than two hours in January due to a blood shortage, the first time in more than 30 years that the Department of Health Services has had to take such action at a trauma center.

The new boundaries of supervisors' districts, drawn for the first time by a citizens redistricting commission, created a second district with a majority of Hispanic residents (the Fourth, now represented by Janice Hahn) and grouped more Asians together in Hilda Solis' First District, which still has a Hispanic majority but is 27 percent Asian. The new boundaries were effective immediately.

The County has hired a Washington-D.C.-based law firm to audit the County's contracting policies and procedures, four months after the Board of Supervisors asked for a review following the indictment of former Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas on bribery and conspiracy charges for allegedly directing lucrative contracts to USC in exchange for favors for his son.

Several cities are considering hiring their own prosecutor to handle misdemeanor crimes because they are unhappy that the District Attorney's Office has decided not to prosecute many misdemeanors.

PASSAGES

Compiled by Judy Hammond,
Newsletter Editor



Trejo



Oghenekohwo



Miller



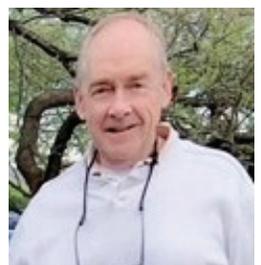
Marrone



Meneses



LoBianco



Pohndorff



Mac

RETIREMENTS:

Robert Meneses, Alternate Public Defender head deputy, with 39 years of service, including with the Chief Executive Office, Treasurer-Tax Collector, and Community and Senior Services, who served the past eight years as president of the County Hispanic Managers Association. **Alexandra Bauer**, deputy director and head attorney for the Child Support Services Department, 31 years of service. **Cathy Chidester**, director of the Emergency Medical Services Agency for Department of Health Services, with almost 32 years of service. **Peter Hughes**, assistant auditor-controller since January 2015. **Trinh Mac**, deputy general manager, IT applications, and one of highest ranking females in the Internal Services Department, more than 31 years of service. **Michael Lampert**, senior human resources manager in the Department of Human Resources since July 2017, with more than 29 years of service. **Patricia Navarro**, human resources manager in the Auditor-Controller's Office, 47 years of service. **Richard Beltran**, principal analyst for the Chief Executive Office, almost 37 years of service. Department of Human Resources executive secretary **Pauline Oghenekohwo**, who served as president of the African American Employees Association, with almost 31 years of service. **Robert de la Cruz**, Board of Supervisors, most recently building manager of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, with almost 34 years of service. **Samantha Li**, information technology specialist in Internal Services Department instrumental in development of the County website, with more than 34 years of service. **Virginia Bonila**, special services assistant in Chief Executive Office, with more than 38 years of service. **Mary Mendibles**, LAC+USC Medical Center, with more than 52 years of service. **Jereatha Thomas**, Department of Public Social Services, with almost 51 years of service.

APPOINTMENTS:

Anthony C. Marrone named interim fire chief, filling in while Chief **Daryl Osby** is on medical leave. **Michael Miller** is a new trustee on the LACERA Board of Investments, serving a three-year term as appointee of Supervisor Holly Mitchell. **Kelly LoBianco** and **Laura Trejo** will head the two new departments being created from the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services. LoBianco, most recently chief program officer for a workforce development organization in New York City, will head the Department of Economic and Workforce Development. Trejo, who has served as general manager for the City of Los Angeles' Department of Aging and led the Older Adult Programs for the County Department of Mental Health, will head the Department of Aging and Community Services. Supervisor **Hilda Solis** appointed by President Biden to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, his first appointment to the Kennedy Center. **Michael Bustamante**, who served as press deputy to former Supervisor Gloria Molina, is Supervisor Kathryn Barger's newest appointee to the Beach Commission.

HEALTH:

The pandemic became personal for Supervisor **Kathryn Barger** in January when she tested positive for COVID-19. Fully vaccinated with a booster shot, she experienced mild symptoms; it felt like a cold. "Time to walk the talk - I'm isolating, getting rest and keeping my loved ones at a distance," she tweeted. With lots of time on her hands at home, she watched a lot of old movies.

DEATHS:

Firefighter **Jonathan Flagler**, who served 19 years with the Vernon Fire Department before transitioning to the County Fire Department in October 2020, the first firefighter to die in the line of duty while actively fighting a fire since 2009. **Michael Pohndorff**, 65, who served as health deputy to former Supervisor Deane Dana, from COVID. Registered nurse **Sandra Shells**, 70, who served 38 years at LAC+USC Medical Center, died three days after being attacked at a bus stop on her way to work. Deputy Probation Officer **Mariesha Collins**, a 27-year employee, killed in a traffic accident in Fontana while on her way home from shopping. **Doris Topsy-Elvord**, 90, a deputy probation officer for 19 years, the first black woman elected to the Long Beach City Council and to serve on the Long Beach Harbor Commission. Former Municipal and Superior Court Judge **John David Harris**, 87, who retired in 2004 and became an arbitrator and hearing officer of the County Civil Service Commission. **Jack Harris Taube**, 94, probation officer for 30 years, retiring around 1985. Former Sheriff's Lt. **Clyde French**, who had almost 31 years of service when he retired from the Lennox Station in June 1997. **Louis Emmet Mahoney**, 82, who served in the County Health Services Department before becoming health officer of Long Beach and director of public health of San Bernardino County.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Doris Dana, widow of former Supervisor Deane Dana, is now living in Hawaii with daughter Diane. Los Angeles Mayor **Eric Garcetti**, son of former District Attorney **Gil Garcetti**, a RELAC member, won approval of his nomination to be U.S. ambassador to India from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and now awaits a full vote by the Senate.

COURTS:

Rodolfo Quiroz, a former employee of the County's Community Development Authority, received a \$1,350,000 settlement after suing, alleging harassment, retaliation, failure to prevent retaliation and harassment, libel and slander, and improper termination. The widow and three children of County Fire Department engineer **Tory Carlon**, killed last June by colleague Jonathan Patrick Tatone at the Agua Dulce station, has sued the County for wrongful death, claiming the Fire Department knew Tatone was mentally unstable and dangerous but did nothing about it. County Fire Capt. **Arnie Sandoval**, who was also shot by Tatone and suffered serious injury, including paralysis, is also suing. A \$1 million payout was approved by the Board of Supervisors for **Anthony Brown**, an FBI informant whose reports of abuse in the jails while he was in custody ultimately led to the convictions of nearly two dozen sheriff's officials, including Sheriff Lee Baca and Undersheriff Paul Tanaka. **Barry Montgomery**, a mentally disabled man beaten by sheriff's deputies in 2004, has received \$2.75 million.

Firefighter Flagler Dies In Line of Duty

County Firefighter Jonathan Flagler, 47, was killed while fighting a residential fire in Rancho Palos Verdes on Jan. 6, the first firefighter to die in the line of duty while actively fighting a fire since 2009.

Flagler served 19 years with the Vernon Fire Department before transitioning to the County Fire Department in October 2020.

"I join with the Flagler and LACoFD families in mourning the sudden passing of Firefighter Flagler," said Interim Fire Chief Anthony C. Marrone. "It is always a tragedy to lose one of our own in the line of duty. Firefighter Flagler made the ultimate sacrifice; his bravery and courage will never be forgotten."

Fellow firefighters pulled Flagler from the house after he was overcome with fire and smoke, but he later died at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. Colleagues joined in a solemn procession to escort his body to the Coroner's Office in Boyle Heights, with firefighters on fire trucks saluting from freeway overpasses. They passed under a U.S. flag suspended by two ladder trucks at the entrance to the medical examiner's office. Firefighters from departments across the region, as well as law enforcement officers, came to a Jan. 21 memorial service hosted by the County Fire Department at Cottonwood Church in Los Alamitos. A long line of firefighting colleagues saluted as the procession for Flagler passed under the U.S. flag suspended between two fire trucks on its way to the church.

"We'll always remember the day we lost our brother," County Fire Department Chaplain Vince Roldan said during the ceremony. "Jon was a true hero. And he lost his life in the line of duty upholding his oath to protect the lives and property of the community he served. There is a scripture in the gospel of John that says 'Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.' That's the heart of a firefighter and it is also why we are all hurting so much right now. Jon Flagler had that heart. He lived a selfless life, always putting the people in his life that he loved first. Jon never did anything halfway. He gave his all in everything -- as a husband, father, friend and as a firefighter. And that is why he will be missed, but will never be forgotten."

"He protected lives and property as if they were his own, not just this one time, but on every incident," said interim Chief Marrone at the service. "That's what noble and dedicated firefighters do."

"These past two weeks have been heartbreaking for all of us," Marrone said. "When I first got the call -- a call that no fire chief ever wants to get -- that a firefighter has possibly lost his life in the line of duty, I remember heading straight to the hospital, early that morning. I was hoping and praying that everything would be OK; and it was not. I also remember feeling the weight of his loss, and the shadow it cast on his brothers and sisters who worked closely with him at Fire Station 83 and Battalion 14 and at his old Vernon Fire Department. As a chief, I am grateful that we lead an organization of men and women who go out every shift to do a dangerous job. They do it without hesitation or regard for their own personal safety; and they do it with commitment and courage... His watch ended, but his bravery never wavered. He is greatly missed by all of us, and he will never be forgotten."

"We can celebrate Jon's rich and powerfully influential life, Jon's service to so many citizens," said County Firefighter Dave Gillotte. "So many lives (were) saved because of his commitment to others."

Friends and colleagues described Flagler as a constant jokester who had an infectious smile that would light up a room.

The day before the memorial service, Flagler's family was presented a flag at a solemn ceremony in Vernon at County Fire Station 13 -- which will be renamed the Jonathan Flagler Memorial Training Center -- where he began his career in 2002. The station was previously known as Vernon Fire Department Station 1 before the County took over that city's agency in 2020.

Flagler was born and raised in San Pedro and graduated from San Pedro High School in 1992. He attended El Camino Community College to take fire science classes and graduated from Rio Hondo's Fire Academy, eventually moving on to get his bachelor's degree from Cal State Los Angeles in 2001. He is survived by his wife, Jenny, and two sons, Brody, 14, and Jack, 12, of San Clemente.

Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered all flags at the California capitol to be flown at half-staff in honor of Flagler. "This devastating loss is a reminder of the dangers our heroic firefighters face every day to protect Californians. Firefighter Flagler's sacrifice and over two decades of selfless service will not be forgotten," he said.



Jack Taube Dies: 'He Was a Real Mensch'

RELAC member Jack Taube, 94, a County probation officer for 30 years, retiring around 1985, has died.

Taube had many interests, including practicing magic and being a member of the Magic Castle. He drove a sports car and was part owner of a boat and small airplane. A member of MENSA, he was very involved with the astrological community, attending astrological conventions internationally, and teaching at the Carroll Righter Foundation in Hollywood until the pandemic. He was also involved with Wings over Wendy's, a group of veterans, veterans' supporters, and aviation and military aficionados based in the San Fernando Valley.

"He was a real mensch," said fellow RELAC and MENSA member Barry Hunt. "He often invited attendees at MENSA parties to go to the Magic Castle with him. There, as his guests, we got free admission and were able to see the many marvelous magic acts for free. He was an illustrious member of GLAAM (the local chapter of MENSA)."

Joseph Taibe was a co-worker in the early 1970s at the West San Fernando Valley area probation office. He was in juvenile investigations and Taube was in juvenile supervision. "We ALWAYS got each other's mail because our name were similar. He was a very interesting guy. He actually did a mind reading act that was impressive. He got me several passes to the Magic Castle back then, and I really enjoyed going. He was funny. He used his magic to convince minors that he could read their minds, and it reminded them they could not lie to Mr. Taube. I am 90% certain that it was an act, but there were times I was not altogether sure. Magic tricks at work... could it have been the best area office to work at? Maybe. I enjoyed it and Jack was part of the magic. A nice fellow, too. Sorry he's gone."

Taube, who died Dec. 27, taught briefly at Cal State Northridge before joining the Probation Department.



For the Record:

A photo of Walter Johnson in the January-February edition of the newsletter was erroneously identified as RELAC member John Hammargren. Both men were speakers at the celebration of life for former County Supervisor Pete Schabarum. Johnson was a representative of Rancheros Visitadores, of which Schabarum was a member. We apologize for the error.



Pohndorff Dies

Michael Pohndorff, 65, who served as health deputy to former Supervisor Deane Dana, from COVID on Jan. 10 after being in critical care for 23 days; leaving wife, Ping, and daughter, Emma, 6, of Tucson, Arizona.



IN MEMORIAM

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

Agricultural Comm./Wts. & Meas. – William H. Myers, Anne Pichler, Barbara J. Thogersen

Alhambra Municipal Court – Angela Torres

Ambulatory Care Network – Arthur L. Wesley

Animal Control – Art Lugo Palomarez

Antelope Valley Rehab. Center – Jack V. Daugherty

Assessor – James H. Bell, Lulu M. Cresencia, Nancy E. Delange, Becky K. Fujimoto, Josie Mae Gaines, Landy C. Lee, Jessie L. Perkins, James C. Reed, William G. Rowe

Auditor-Controller – Iskander W. Iskander, Alma I. Torres, Richard M. Yamashiro

Beaches & Harbors – Peter J. Stange

Board of Supervisors – Bryan Urias, Shirley A. Wilson

California Children's Services – Vera Derkacz, Marion L. Henry

Chief Executive Office – Leslie H. Detweiler, Robert A. Powell, Gladys Turner

Chief Information Office – Santos P. Lopez

Child Support Services – Rouzik Harouttounian, Eleda Hila, Carol Mentell, Annette Stephens

Children & Family Services – Brian A. Aaron, Ziba Amini, Charlene Caldwell, Helen Marie Davis, Joan M. De Mello, Victoria R. Figueroa, Robert J. Goldberg, Mary A. Graves, Florence A. Hall, James T. Knapp, Evangeline Linnet, Linda J. Lovato, Mary E. Lowe, Frances L. Lucas, Maria J. Mendez, Thai X. Nguyen, Aroutun Palian, Yoko Parsons, Maria Estrella Santos, Sharon Rosenberg Schellenbach, Sheryl Zigmond

Communications – Elsie F. Thurston

Correctional Health – Mindy L. Black, Mike A. Okongwu

County Counsel – Hermalee Schmidt, Benjamin J. Sterling

District Attorney – Alberta M. Beitman, Nancy H. Brannum, Elizabeth J. Delgado, William H. Duncan, William H. Fleeson, Raymond A. Locke, David A. Walters

Engineer Facilities – Glenn R. Lougee

Fire – Harry O. Batrum, James A. Buchanan, Laurel L. Carlson, Melvin C. Clemens, Stephen D. Coppi, Jonathan E. Flagler, Steven H. Gamboa, Willis E. Haddox, Gerald D. Henery, Milton R. Johnson, Eddie W. Long, Donald L. Moore, James R. Paradiso, Angelina M. Pina, Ralph H. Reimer, Larry Ralph Rich, Joseph B. Rodgers, Ruth Ann Ross, Howard H. Roth, Kenneth P. Snyder, Timothy M. Stromer, Raymond C. Utterback, Clarence V. Wilkinson

Flood Control District – Mary Sexton

Harbor/UCLA Medical Center – Josefina Coronel, Michelle L. Coulter, Mary L. Daniel, Almo E. Galvez-Arang, Esperanza P. Guevarra, Khalil W. Islam, Patricia Kelly, Henrietta M. MacDowell, Yolanda E. Martinez, Julia N. Murakawa, Joseph E. Pecot, Bathilda A. Ross, Patricia Tidwell

Health Services Administration – Alma R. Atkinson, William T. Bain, Alma R. Brown, J'Ette B. Buck, Curtis W. Johnson, Cheryl Lynn Jones, Hilana Mansour, Albina F. Mardiros Zakarian, Hector C. Montenegro, Donley Ross Phillips, Suellen Ramos, Carlos R. Rivas, Barbara J. Trent

Health Services – Donald W. Avant Jr.

Human Resources – Bruce F. Mc Donald

Internal Services – Ray G. Ballarini, Augustine Cervantes, Thomas J. Connors, Rosemary Cook, Thelma A. Cumby, Judith Ann De George, James L. Harris, Fernarine Hunter, Elvira T. Jenkins, David Kanno, Patricia G. Petran, Oscar C. Price, William R. Rice, Marion Roddy, Palvinder S. Sandhu, Jesse Scott Jr., Howard N. Takata, Joseph S. Thompson, Norma Joanne Tomlinson, Alice F. Webster, Charles H. Windsor

Juvenile Court Health Services – Richard A. Dizon, Maxine Nickerson

King-Drew Medical Center – Robert K. Bier, Cesar A. Espejo, Rosa L. Hudson, Ethel Sanders, Hilda L. Smith, Oscar L. Williams

L.A. Municipal Court Reporters – Carolyn S. Zacks

LAC+USC Medical Center – Consuelo Avellaneda, Susana Becerra, Ted Bezak, Pauline F. Campbell, Ruth M. Cooks, Gladys Derrick, Vivian K. Fellenz, Bernice E. Fuller, Grace Goldberg, Alan Greenberg, Juana Guzman, Denise Hernandez, Eric V. Hickman, Raymond L. Jackson, Anne E. Johnson, Margaret Lambey, Julia E. Larreta, Lisa Ann Lewis, Abedon Lujan, Margaret Mc Clain, Travee Mondy, Doris V. Myles, Aurora Pascual Oducado, George Ortega, Lionel Ortiz, Grace Price, Soon D. Rhee, Vincent J. Rinando, Aurora Rodriguez, Martha M. Sanchez, Robert B. Sitzman, Clara Sorrell, Earle E. Stahler, Mary H. Suddeth, Betty Sugihara, Leuiga Tupuivao, Margie Watts, Jo L. Wilkerson, Terry Williams, Patricia Wilson

LACERA – Freddie J. Verzosa, De Lois Warren, Gloria G. Wiley

Mechanical – James Ortiz

Medical Examiner-Coroner – Maria G. Diaz

Mental Health – Loyce Lang Hill, Irma Miranda-Saenz, R. S. Telford, Karen A. Winteringham

Museum of Natural History – Alexander W. Ferguson

Olive View/UCLA Medical Center – Ronuld L. Bradford, Joy P. Briggs, William Centeno, Carol L. Gahret, Betty L. Gayle, Richard T. Hawkins, Lois A. Landis, Anthony R. Le Garreta, Carla Nino, Alejandra Sabedra, Hazel Sein Ba

Parks and Recreation – George Munoz, Lazaro M. Olivas, David Edward Wilmore

Probation – Eusebio G. Ahuero, Mageline A. Andres, Abraham L. Butler, Mariesha A. Collins, Earl Correll, Darius L. Dobson, James Weldon Douglas, Alejandro R. Fierro, Patricia L. Gibbens, Stephen F. Harris, Lue B. Harvey, Gordon A. Hillberg, Albine Hopcus, Robert N. Kennedy, C. W. Landis, Richard C. Mac Mahon, Armando D. Medina, C. Jayne Melia, Floyddean Murphy, Michael Pines, Daryll F. Pipkin, Annie L. Sanchez, Lynn Scharnhorst, Winston McReed Simms, Satik M. Siraki, Joaquin M. Solis, Doris L. Topsy-Elvord, Columbus Wallace, Sandra E. Williams, Nadine W. Wilson

Public Defender – Albert Roger Halfon, Richard B. Sanford

Public Health – Conrado C. Abrasaldo, Bonnie J. Anderson, Charles W. Coffee, Diane M. Davis, Barbara M. Gibson, Barbara T. Jones, Samuel Kaddis, Grace S. Kitaoka, Bonnie L. Long, Betty L. Mc Kneely, Clifford Eugene Mosby, Charles Roberson, Gilda Tavasoli, Geraldine Williams, Naomi S. Engle

Public Library – Julie A. Broyles, Margarita Rodarte, Louis A. Shackles

Public Social Services – Jimmie Beal, Henry J. Bley, Michael H. Bozik, Venus F. Canlas, Consuelo Castellanos, Rhonda G. Cherry, Bruce Chinn, Willie J. Dangerfield, Onelia M. De Quesada, Barbara J. Duplessis, Obery D. Feazell, Patricia K. Fleming, Jane V. Garrett, Jeanne B. Grant, Sharon D. Hardin, Steven Hemme, Gloria S. Hieger, Diana G. Hill, Gloria B. Hughes, Buenaventura S. Ignacio, Joanne S. Jackson, Talin Khachatourian, Rose Y. Lechuga, Gail D. Lee, Jim Y. Lee, Sharon L. Lingford, Jessie L. Mallett, Adele R. Mathias, Ellen C. McDonough, Tawanda Miles Collins, Mildred Enola Morin, Frances L. Mulligan, Jorge I. Ortiz, Yvonne D. O'Veal, Christina Paopao, Robert R. Perez, Virginia A. Romans, Yolanda Ross, Mazie D. Smith, Gerald E. Sternthal, Beverly A. Thompson, Gordon W. Twyford, Audrey Valdez, Clotilde Villa, Jesus T. Vinoya, Charles L. Whims

Public Works – Ruben Barajas, Charles M. Browne, Joe Carbajal, Raul J. Cruz, Willie F. Davis, Albert Brent Duplessis, Donald W. Dykier, Albert J. Falcone, Arthur Oscar Gaetz, Betty A. Gordon, Raymond L. Hiland, Leopoldo R. Lopez, Joseph A. Martinelli, Isom Roosevelt Parks, Guillermo Pereda, Arthur Raygosa, Arthur J. Rebrovich, Carl D. Somers, John M. Stivers, Gerry L. Tolen, Norman L. Turner, Stanley M. Uemura, Frank E. Wright Jr., Kenneth E. Yarber

Rancho Los Amigos Hospital – Ann Garner, David J. Gutierrez, Lillie U. Hawkins, Joan Herrmann, Clarence Johnson, Bonnie Jones, Joylee G. Jones, Artise K. Martin, Bruce L. Robertson, Eduardo J. Velayos, Ruth Wilson

Reg.-Recorder/County Clerk – Dolores Catano, Luther Ola Rhodes, Opal J. Salone, Roderick Tetangco, Shin-Ing Wang

Sheriff – Managumpay S. Aguirre, Alfonso F. Ancheta, Luba Barackman, Eleanor Billups, Paul B. Borden, Edwin E. Buchanan, Thomas F. Bush, Harvey A. Cantor, Marian E. Carter, Pekean Chong, John Concialdi, Kingsbury N. Conner, Paulo Cruz, David Demerjian, Louis J. Derickson, Eric A. Doepking, William H. Grant, Don H. Greene Jr., Lawrence P. Griffin, Warren G. Harding, Duane J. Harris, Gary H. Herbeck, Loini V. Iuta, George Jack, Walter E. Johnston, Gary E. Jones, Robert M. Kelba, Linda M. Knutson, Michael C. Lewis, Frederick A. Macchio, Grady M. Machnick, Patricia A. Madigan, Richard J. Mardiros, Normand A. Martin, Bradley L. Martinelli, Eusebio Saldivar Martinez, Alfred J. Meisel, Armen Hayward Mirakian, Ronald J. Mowry, Albert Nahum, John Paillet, Mary R. Patton, Coy I. Payne, Robert C. Powell, James O. Rahman, Edward F. Reiley Jr., Timothy C. Richards, Lenora Riley, Cecil M. Sabatine, Diane Santiago, Teddy L. Seabourn, James P. Skiman, Robert C. Smoldt, Carol Janet Stratton, Algirdas Vincentas Stropus, William C. Sudduth, Edward Sudec, William E. Thill, Lyla R. Thompson, Miriam E. Travis, Everette D. Wade, Joseph C. White, Barry A. Wish

So. Cal. Air Pollution Control – Robert J. Hilovsky, Sandra L. Ryan

South Coast Air Quality Mgmt. – Dominick J. Mercadante, Emie Obata
Superior Court/County Clerk – Virginia L. Beynon, Mildred Bornstein, Larry D. Frasher, Wendy R. Hirano, Pelenaise Ngaue, Vicki L. Nikola, Donald R. Roberts, Christine S. Roman, Guillermina Ruiz, Charlene May Saunders, Ollie M. Scaife, Kenneth Dennis Wieland, Josephine Williams

Treasurer/Tax Collector – Aurora P. Guha, Peter W. Liu, Billie J. Mc Intyre, Glenda Robinson
Workforce Dev., Aging & Comm. Svc. – Mary L. Longoria
Unidentified County Agency – William R. Violette

Vigil Held for Probation Officer Collins, Killed in Traffic Crash



With son, Marlon

The Probation Department hosted a memorial candlelight vigil Dec. 20 honoring Deputy Probation Officer Mariessa Collins, 54, a 27-year employee killed in a traffic accident in Fontana while on her way home from shopping.

Over 100 Probation staff, community supporters, family and friends gathered at the intersection of the two-car collision, which police said was caused when the driver of the other vehicle ran the red light at a high rate of speed and crashed into her vehicle. He was arrested and charged with vehicular manslaughter. Collins was returning from the store where she had purchased gift cards for a church charity event she was organizing, "Angel Tree," which provides donated gifts for children whose parents are in prison. "She was an angel," said her son, Marlon. "No person could ever have a negative thing to say about her."

Chief Deputy Probation Officer Adolfo Gonzales shared a story of Collins' compassion and connection with the young people she worked with, saying she would read bedtime stories to detained youth because many had never experienced such a privilege. "The men and women of the Los Angeles County Probation Department will always have the Collins family in our hearts. It's not just tonight, but forever, she will never be forgotten."

Marlon Collins said his mother, who was married for 32 years, was the "glue that held our family together." "She was a testament to putting her family first in everything she did," and in turn, her family was inspired to do good deeds for other people, he said.

County Offers Grief Support

The County Department of Mental Health has compiled a collection of grief-related mental health resources which can be accessed online at <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/resources/grief-loss/>. It also has a 24/7 help line at (800) 854-7771 to provide mental health support, resources and referrals. The department offers these suggestions to help you get through your grieving process:

- Maintain a normal routine as much as possible.
 - Spend time with others; avoid isolation.
 - Keep a journal, write down all thoughts and feelings associated with the loss.
 - Put together a scrapbook of loved one to keep memories alive.
 - Confide in a trusted individual and share your story of the loss.
 - Do things that feel good to you that are emotionally and physically healthy.
 - Express feelings openly and allow yourself to cry.
 - Eat well-balanced meals even if you are not hungry.
 - Reach out to people and groups that can offer support and help.
- If the healing process becomes too overwhelming, seek professional help.

Memorial Fund Honors ER Nurse Killed at Bus Stop



The LAC+USC Medical Center Foundation has established a memorial fund in honor of nurse Sandra Shells, 70, who died in January after being attacked as she waited for a bus to go to work.

Shells worked at LAC+USC for more than 38 years and was planning to retire soon.

"LAC+USC Medical Center family is overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support received in the wake of nurse Sandra Shells' passing," the foundation said in announcing the memorial fund, which will be used to help Shells' family and assist other families who have been affected by, or have fallen victim to, violence.

Shells was at a Metro stop in downtown Los Angeles at 5 a.m. on Jan. 13 when she was struck in the face in an unprovoked attack. She fell to the ground and fractured her skull, dying of her injuries three days later. Kerry Bell, a 48-year-old transient, was arrested while he was sleeping near Union Station and charged with murder. "Sandra Shells unselfishly dedicated her life to caring for others in their time of need," District Attorney George Gascón said. "To lose such a valuable member of our community is tragic and my office will hold accountable the person responsible for her death." Friends, colleagues, and police officers held a candlelight vigil at the bus stop where she was attacked, releasing a bundle of white balloons in her honor.

"Everyone is going to remember her by her smile. She just was a really nice person, mentor. Everyone loved her," said friend and registered nurse Terri Thompson. "She was a kind, loving human being who came to work every day and took care of the most vulnerable people in the city of Los Angeles, and she was our friend," said co-worker Candice Palmisano. "It seems unfair, cruel, and she didn't deserve this. No one deserves this."

Shells, known as "Sandy," began her career as a registered nurse on Nov 7, 1977 on the diagnosis and evaluation unit at the medical center's historic General Hospital. In 1990 she joined the Department of Emergency Medicine as a relief nurse, primarily working the day shift.

In its announcement of the memorial fund, LAC+USC released this statement: "Sandra could run circles around some of the 20-year-olds. Sandra always went out of her way to help her co-workers, and on her downtime, made it a point to know everyone's name, and even details about each person's family. Sandra loved Star Wars and found a common bond with many team members who referred to her as the Jedi Master. She often wore her hair like Princess Leia. Although she had a car and could drive, Sandra preferred to ride the bus to work. She enjoyed arriving to work very early, usually an hour and a half before her shift began and would sit in the locker room to read her Bible before beginning her shift. Sandra greeted staff daily as they made their way into work and she came to be unofficially known as the locker room greeter. Sandra loved being a nurse and truly fulfilled her life's purpose. She led with love, kindness, and compassion, oftentimes carrying extra clothes in her bag to give to homeless patients. Over the years, Sandra trained many nurses and role modeled how to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Sandra recognized the need within the community and always came to work with humility, compassion, and most importantly a smile. She was truly committed to serving the LAC+USC community. She will forever be remembered for one of her favorite phrases: 'Come on now, stop playing. We have work to do.'"

"She greeted us every morning while she read her Bible. You knew it was going to be a good day if you worked with her," said co-worker nurse Bruce Banares. "She taught me benevolence and unbiased care. What she stood for was the homeless, was the underserved. She liked this community and was very dedicated."

Shells often mentored her peers, who often joked they would retire before her.

"What she taught me is 'you're a nurse.' Not the skills you learn in school, but what it means to be a nurse. No matter what you're going through, no matter who cussed me out, I'm still your nurse. 'How can I help you?'" said Banares. "Sandy will be missed. Her spirit is missed. It's hard to work in the area without her in the ER. She never stopped working. At her age, at 70, she didn't take too many breaks. She helped everybody and said 'What can I do next?' I was her charge nurse sometimes. It just sucks that this happened, but Sandy represented unbiased care for anyone no matter where you were in life."



Return Service Requested

Happy Birthday, RELAC Centenarians

Happy birthday to our members who will be 100 or older in March and April.

March

Mary Jane Shiromoto, 100, Harbor/UCLA Medical Center
March 9, 1922

Estella J. Tompkins, 100, Sheriff
March 14, 1922

Henriette Shrader, 100, District Attorney
March 15, 1922

Joyce Waters, 100, Public Social Services
March 20, 1922

April

Ruth A. Keys, 101, LAC+USC Medical Center
April 1, 1921

Hilda Dornfest, 100, Health Services
April 2, 1922

Delores G. Taylor, 100, Public Social Services
April 9, 1922

Harriett W. Canister, 103, Health Services
April 13, 1919

Mc Kinney Ward, 100, Mechanical
April 26, 1922

Winners of 2021 Recruitment Drawing Announced

Thank you for Helping us Grow

Congratulations to the 20 winners of RELAC's first cash drawing to thank members who recruited colleagues to join RELAC during 2021. There were 89 referrals by members (exclusive of the 54 by RELAC directors and staff, who are not eligible for the drawing). Each winner receives \$25.

We thank all those members who helped us grow. The drawing winners are:



Lynn Barnett
William Gerth
Mary Glass
Daphne Grisby
Robert Hinojosa
Kathy House
Carmen Irigoyen
Robin Kay
Ann Marinovich
James Matthews
Chona Navarro
Tamara O'Sullivan
Milena Rada
Les Sexton
Clare E. Sleeter
Connie Sullivan
Joann Sanfilippo
Walter Tubbs
Yvette Vasquez
Joseph Villanueva



IMPORTANT!
*Are you moving?
Did you change your
name, address or
e-mail address?*

Cut out the address portion of this 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
E-mail:
admin@relac.org
website:
www.relac.org

Note: It is important that you mail this to RELAC or contact RELAC by phone as we DO NOT receive your address change from LACERA.