

P.S.

POSTSCRIPT

NEWS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

MARCH 2018 • VOL. 29, NO. 1

STAYCATIONS:

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME AND MONEY

Vacation: It's more than just a break from work and your daily routine, it's a state of mind. Have you ever noticed that there's something about vacation that heightens your senses and boosts your creativity? That's because your brain is stimulated by change, with scientific research indicating that "new sounds, smells, language,

tastes, sensations, and sights spark different synapses in the brain and may have the potential to revitalize the mind" ("For a More Creative Brain, Travel," *The Atlantic*). Not surprisingly, research also shows that vacations help reduce stress, prevent heart disease, improve productivity, and promote better sleep ("Four Scientific Reasons Vacations Are Good for Your Health," *Inc.*).

On the downside, vacations can be expensive and, ironically, the journey itself can be a source of stress, particularly when air travel is involved. Whether you have limited time, limited funds or both, a staycation can offer the best of both worlds: the feeling of getting away and experiencing a new environment via daytrips minus the hassle of packing, scheduling a house or

cont'd on pg. 4



LACERA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LACERA Welcomes Newly Appointed Board Members

We warmly welcome the newest appointed members of LACERA's Board of Investments and Board of Retirement, who

began their three-year terms on January 1, 2018 and will serve through December 31, 2020.

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**Los Angeles County Employees
Retirement Association**

Board of Retirement:

VIVIAN H. GRAY

Chair
Elected by General Members

HERMAN B. SANTOS

Vice Chair
Elected by General Members

MARVIN ADAMS

Secretary
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

ALAN J. BERNSTEIN

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

JAMES P. HARRIS

Alternate Member
Elected by Retired Members

SHAWN R. KEHOE

Elected by Safety Members

JOSEPH KELLY

County Treasurer and Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member

KEITH KNOX

Chief Deputy County
Treasurer and Tax Collector
Alternate Ex-Officio Member

WILLIAM R. PRYOR

Alternate Member
Elected by Safety Members

LES ROBBINS

Elected by Retired Members

THOMAS WALSH

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

GINA ZAPANTA-MURPHY

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

Board of Investments:

DAVID GREEN

Chair
Elected by General Members

SHAWN R. KEHOE

Vice Chair
Elected by Safety Members

WAYNE MOORE

Secretary
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

JOSEPH KELLY

County Treasurer and Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member

KEITH KNOX

Chief Deputy County
Treasurer and Tax Collector
Alternate Ex-Officio Member

DAVID L. MUIR

Elected by Retired Members

RONALD A. OKUM

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

GINA V. SANCHEZ

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

HERMAN B. SANTOS

Elected by General Members

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

Interim Chief Executive Officer

ROBERT R. HILL

Interim Deputy Chief Executive Officer

JAMES BREKK

Assistant Executive Officer

JJ POWOWICH

Interim Assistant Executive Officer

BERNIE BUENAFLO

From the
Executive Desk

Robert R. Hill – Interim CEO, LACERA



We're 80 YEARS OLD!

It might surprise you to learn that LACERA is celebrating its 80-year anniversary. A lot can happen in eight decades, so let's take a look back at the ways the association has grown and evolved over time.

Structure Established

From 1938 to 1971, LACERA's structure, which still exists today, was established and refined. First, Los Angeles County's Board of Supervisors set up the Board of Retirement, and the following year LACERA was formed to administer the County's pension trust fund with guidance from the newly formed board.

Throughout the '40s, '50s, and '60s, LACERA defined and/or started processes for disability retirement, service credit purchasing, and reciprocity benefits. Also, LACERA membership was separated into two main types: safety and general.

In 1971, LACERA's Board of Retirement started LACERA's Retiree Healthcare Benefits Program. That same year, the County Board of Supervisors organized LACERA's Board of Investments, which has been overseeing LACERA's investment policy and objectives since its formation.

The Digital Age and Improved Member Service

With the introduction of the World Wide Web in 1989, a huge shift in business practices rippled throughout the world, including at LACERA. Before 1990, LACERA's general ledger was still manual — a three-foot-long accounting behemoth. Throughout the '90s,

“Improved member services went hand in hand with the enhanced digital capabilities.”

technological advances at LACERA moved forward rapidly, beginning with launching the active database and retiree payroll systems in 1990 and 1991, respectively. LACERA's first mainframe computer came along in 1995, allowing the support of numerous workstations, critical applications, bulk data processing, and transaction processing. By 1998, LACERA had scanned all member files and destroyed paper copies, and by 2000, lacera.com was up and running.

From the Executive Desk cont'd

Improved member services went hand in hand with the enhanced digital capabilities. The Call Center that exists today got its start in 1991, with incrementally better service for our members as the years went by and technology allowed for metrics and logging. The creation of an online retirement calculator in 2001 allowed members to estimate when it was best for them to retire. By 2008, the online calculator had become a sophisticated Retirement Benefit Estimate tool using members' actual unique data (plan type, years of service, salary, etc.) to assist in their retirement calculations.

In-Person Communication

Outside the technological realm, LACERA has refined and strengthened the quality of its in-person communication throughout the years. In 2004, LACERA began hosting the biannual Employer HR

Conference, which provides employers with the information they need to educate their employees (our active members) about retirement.



LACERA has hosted pre-retirement workshops for active members since 1991, and in 2006, we introduced Saturday workshops for our members who are unable to attend during the week. These workshops include one-on-one

counseling opportunities. Of course, we want to communicate with our retired members, too, which is why in 2007 we started the Staying Healthy Together program, which provides valuable wellness information and workshops to help retirees stay connected with us and each other.

Forward Thinking

From our inception in 1938 to now, we have been a forward-thinking association, constantly integrating new technologies into our business procedures and enhancing the scope and quality of services we offer our members. While the methods we've used to accomplish our work have varied widely throughout time, our mission to produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits remains a constant and enduring pursuit.

LACERA Welcomes Newly Appointed Board Members cont'd from pg 1

- **Gina V. Sanchez** was appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the Ninth Member of the Board of Investments
- **Thomas Walsh** was appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the Fourth Member of the Board of Retirement
- **Gina Zapanta-Murphy** was appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the Ninth Member of the Board of Retirement



Gina V. Sanchez
Ninth Member of the BOI



Thomas Walsh
Fourth Member of the BOR



Gina Zapanta-Murphy
Ninth Member of the BOR



LACERA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LACERA Board Member Shawn Kehoe Recognized as NACD Board Leadership Fellow

In January, LACERA announced that Board of Retirement Member and Board of Investments Vice Chair Shawn Kehoe had been recognized by the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) as an NACD Board Leadership Fellow, Gold Standard Director Credential.

As the highest standard of credentialing for directors and governance professionals, the NACD Fellowship is a comprehensive and continuous program of study that empowers fellows with the latest insights, intelligence, and leading boardroom practices. NACD Fellows serve on the

boards of some of the world's largest and most diverse corporations, including heavy hitters like Citigroup, DuPont, IBM, Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Nordstrom, and UnitedHealth Group.



NACD Board Leadership Fellow
The Gold Standard Director Credential®

"I am honored to join the distinguished and diverse group of individuals who make up the NACD Fellow community and who are committed to advancing the highest standards of boardroom excellence," said Kehoe. "The resources, insights, and connections I've made through the NACD Fellowship will be key assets to LACERA, as well as to my professional growth as a director."

Staycations: Making the Most of Your Time and Money cont'd from pg 1

pet sitter, and arranging costly flights and accommodations. Choosing this route is not only economical and practical, it will also help you maximize your time off with your family, develop a greater appreciation for life's simple pleasures, and discover the hidden gems in your own community. Following are a few simple guidelines to help you create your own at-home vacation that will feel like a real getaway.

Plan Ahead

Your key to a successful staycation is planning ahead and committing to it. Approach it as you would a regular vacation by picking the start and end days; establishing a food, recreation and transportation budget; and, with your family or travel partner, deciding on an itinerary. Look into guided tours suited to your particular interests (art, food and wine, or film and television), or build your own tour around your preferred mode of transportation (more on that in Get Out, below). Discoverlosangeles.com, the L.A. Tourism & Convention Board's website, has

free, comprehensive neighborhood guides and three-day suggested itineraries in a variety of categories to help you create your own perfect staycation agenda.

Before your set start date, prepare your home: Clean the house (or hire someone to do it for you), do laundry, stock the refrigerator, and take care of any maintenance tasks that might distract you from relaxing when you return from your daily adventures. Unless you love to cook and won't mind doing dishes, make dining out a part of your vacation budget.

Most importantly, slow down and take the opportunity to unplug from technology, connect with your loved ones, and enjoy the feeling of being fully engaged in every activity — whether it's visiting a museum, having a family game night, or just taking a walk in the park.

Get Out

Fortunately, L.A. County residents have endless recreational opportunities and daytrip options.

Below are a just a few ideas that will hopefully inspire you to take some of your earned time off and get out and explore.

County pride: Did you know the County owns and/or oversees some of the region's biggest attractions, over a dozen wildlife sanctuaries, 182 community and regional parks, and the world's largest municipal golf system? Get a sense of our influence and scale by hiking or biking the extensive trail system, or make an outing to the L.A. County Museum of Art, Natural History Museum and Exposition Park, La Brea Tar Pits and Page Museum, William S. Hart Museum, Music Center, John Anson Ford Theatres, Hollywood Bowl, Descanso Gardens, or Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden.

Architectural tours: The Los Angeles Conservancy is a great resource for learning about the city's many architectural treasures. The organization offers low-cost guided walking tours of historic downtown, Angeleno Heights, the Broadway Historic Theatre and Commercial District, Union Station, and much more. Or you can download a variety of self-guided tour booklets and maps from the Conservancy's website, ranging from the Charlie Chaplin *City Lights* Film Location Tour to Venice Eclectic: Modern Architecture from the '70s and '80s. There are also guides especially geared toward youth and family activities.

Traveling abroad in the city: With L.A.'s immense diversity and distinct ethnic neighborhoods, you don't need a passport to experience another culture, including sampling authentic international cuisines. Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Little Ethiopia, Thai Town, Historic Filipinotown, Little Armenia, Pico-Robertson, Olvera Street, Little Saigon in Westminster, and Little India in Artesia are just a few places you can visit to feel like you've stepped into another part of the world.

There's no business like show business: If you really want to play the part of tourist, be a part of a studio audience. *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, *The Late Late Show*, *Conan*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *The Voice*, *Jeopardy!*, and *The Price is Right* are all shot in L.A., and tickets are free. Get a sneak peek at

upcoming guests and request tickets by visiting each show's respective website.

Adventures on the Metro: The website Laist.com has several articles dedicated to touring L.A. via Metro, including detailed suggestions for the various stops on the Gold, Red, and Purple lines (just type "Laist Metro Adventures" in Google). Not only that, your L.A. County employee ID is good for event and museum discounts, as well as special offers at participating businesses through the Metro Destination Discounts program (visit www.metro.net/service/discounts for more details and to access the trip planner). If you want to be more spontaneous, you can get off on various Metro stops and use an app like Google's FieldTrip, which runs in the background of your smartphone and pops up with notes when you pass by a place of interest.

A day at the beach: Escape the weekend crowds by heading to Santa Monica or Venice while everyone else is at work. If you like the train, make the journey part of the adventure. Metrolink runs daily to the seaside towns of Oxnard and Ventura to the north or San Clemente and Oceanside to the south. (For the bargain-minded, Metrolink tickets are only \$10 on weekends, and the train also stops at San Clemente Pier.) Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner goes all the way from San Luis Obispo to San Diego with stops along the way in Pismo Beach, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, San Juan Capistrano, Carlsbad, and other scenic locales. Take your bike along for pedal-powered exploring; Metrolink has bike/surfboard cars, and Amtrak will let you reserve a spot for your bike on the Pacific Surfliner.

Island hopping: You can actually enjoy an island getaway without getting on a plane if you live in Southern California. Catalina Express runs multiple daily trips to Catalina Island from San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point, while Island Packers offers trips out of Ventura Harbor to Anacapa and Santa Cruz (the other most accessible Channel Islands), three to seven days per week. Trips are about one hour each way.

Whatever destinations you choose and however you decide to get there, enjoy every moment. Happy trails, and here's to your health!



YOUR SECURITY, OUR CONCERN

Safely Storing Hazardous Materials in Your Home, Part 1

Many common household items are potentially hazardous if stored improperly or if they fall into the wrong hands. Of the nearly 2.2 million poison exposures reported in 2015, 93 percent occurred in a residence, so it's important to identify and properly store potentially harmful materials to ensure safety for yourself and others in your home. Hopefully, you already know and utilize safe storage practices, but in this and subsequent issues of *PostScript*, we will list potential sources of harm and ways to mitigate their danger, starting with medications and personal care products.

Up, Up, and Away: Medications and Personal Care Products

Statistics from the National Capital Poison Center in 2015 showed that 47 percent of poison exposures involved children under the age of six, with cosmetics, personal care and cleaning products, and medications making up the majority of exposures. Pain medications are the single-most frequent cause of pediatric fatalities. If you have children living in or visiting your home, here are some guidelines for keeping such items out of their hands.

- Keep personal care products, vitamins, and medicines inaccessible and out of sight, and locked up if possible, whenever children are present in your home. Store such items up and away in a location that children can't reach or climb onto. Make sure child safety caps are completely closed every time.
- Cleaning products, including detergent pods, should be kept out of reach, for example in a linen closet on a high shelf. If such products pose a spill danger, consider keeping them in a securely locked cabinet at floor level.
- If using child safety locks for cabinets, be sure they are installed correctly and always engaged.

- As soon as you are done taking or giving medicines or using household products, put them away. Do not put your next dose of medication on a counter or table.
- Organize and inventory your medications at least once a year, and preferably every six months. Check for expiration dates and signs of deterioration, and dispose of old medications. Check with your municipality for drug drop-off programs, or visit the U.S. Food & Drug Administration at www.fda.org and click on the Drugs tab for information on proper medication disposal.
- Be aware of any medications that guests may bring into your home, and ask visitors to keep track of their belongings and keep drugs where children cannot access them.
- Be vigilant of your medications if older children and teenagers are present to prevent intentional misuse. A study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that in 2015, 16.8 percent of teenagers surveyed in grades nine through 12 had taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription.

Sources: National Capital Poison Center, American Association of Poison Control Centers, National Council on Patient Information and Education, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Safe Kids Worldwide



3 THINGS: Tulips

One of the most cheerful harbingers of spring is the tulip. Long prized for its vibrant colors and striking appearance, the flower is native to Central Asia but was cultivated by the Ottoman Empire and introduced to Europe in the 16th century. Bulb trading and speculation were so pervasive and frenzied in Holland in the 17th century that they led to the first economic bubble, Tulip Mania.

1. At Tulip Mania's height, bulbs were said to change hands over 10 times in one day, and a single coveted bulb was enough to buy a house on the fashionable Amsterdam canal.
2. At the Netherland's Keukenhof Gardens, the biggest flower park in the world, more than 7 million flower bulbs are planted annually, and despite the country's small size, Holland is one of the world's largest exporters of tulips.
3. Today there are currently over 3,000 varieties of tulips, divided into 15 groups. The maritime-climate-loving geophytes have been cultivated in almost every color.

Sources: Focus Economics, Gardenia.net, Holland.com

"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."

— Marcel Proust



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Pre-Retirement Workshop Schedule

March 2018

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|----|----|---|----|----|----|------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | S | 7 | 8 | 9 | G/S* |
| 11 | 12 | G | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | G | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | H | G | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

April 2018

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| 15 | 16 | G | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
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| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

May 2018

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| 20 | 21 | G | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | H | G | 30 | 31 | | |

G = General Members
S = Safety Members
H = Holiday

Unless otherwise indicated, workshops are held at LACERA from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Empower Retirement will offer a 45-minute overview of Horizons (457) and Savings (401k) plans; LACERA will give a 2.5-hour presentation. **Reservations are required; access the Appointment System on lacera.com or call 800-786-6464 to reserve a seat.**

*Held at LACERA from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Public Service Announcement

Become a Volunteer Child Advocate!

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (or CASA) volunteer makes a difference for children in foster care. CASA volunteers are paired to work one-on-one with a child and ensure they have the services and support needed in the areas important to all children: stable homes, education, and healthcare. There are 30,000 kids in the foster care system in L.A., and many need the support of a CASA volunteer.

Learn more about how you can make a difference in a young person's life at one of CASA of L.A.'s information sessions. They hold sessions in different locations throughout L.A. County. A calendar of upcoming sessions can be found on our website. To learn more or RSVP for an upcoming session, please visit www.casala.org or call (323) 859-2888.



Upcoming Holidays

LACERA will be closed:

- **Monday, March 26**, in observance of Cesar Chavez Day
- **Monday, May 28**, in observance of Memorial Day

Editor's Note:

PostScript is published by the staff of LACERA. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters; LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

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