



PLANNING A SECURE FUTURE

LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

VOL. 13 NO. 1

NEWS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

JANUARY 2003

Social Security News

Although current County employees don't participate in the Social Security program, those members who had previous jobs, or were previously covered by Social Security while employed by the County and have earned 40 quarters, will be eligible to receive Social Security benefits in the future. For those members who will be eligible, we have included this year's annual adjustments. Current beneficiaries of the Social Security program will get a 1.4% cost-of-living increase for benefits payable in 2003. This annual adjustment is based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). The Social Security taxable earnings base will be \$87,000. There is no change

cont'd on pg.7

Health Care Benefits for Your Retirement

When you retire, you can look forward to the valuable Health Care Benefits offered through LACERA.

LACERA's health care benefits program includes several medical plans and two dental/vision plans, and is available to all new retirees regardless of pre-existing medical conditions. However, *you only have 60 days* from your Board-approved retirement date to enroll yourself, your legal spouse, and eligible dependents in the plan of your choice with no lapse in coverage. Late enrollment rules will apply if you do not enroll within this time frame.

Your share of the cost depends on three factors:

- 1) Your years of retirement service credit (excluding reciprocal service credit),
- 2) The number of covered dependents, and
- 3) The insurance plan you choose.

LACERA has a variety of health

care plans for medical, dental, and vision. Select from several Blue Cross indemnity medical plans including Prudent Buyer and the Caremark Prescription Drug program. HMO plans available include Kaiser, PacifiCare, and the CIGNA Network Model Plan. In addition, for members over 65, we offer Medicare HMO and Medicare Supplement plans.

For members with 25 or more years of service, the County currently pays 100% of the premium for most plans. However, if your premium exceeds the Blue Cross I and II benchmark rates, you will be required to pay the difference every month even if you have 25 years of service. The percentage of the premium covered by the County increases 4% for each additional completed year of retirement service credit until you reach 25 years of service.

So plan on a healthy retirement as a LACERA retiree!

ISSUE • HIGHLIGHTS

2003 Board & Committee Members	4	Who Is Eligible for Retiree Health Care Benefits?	6	Legislative Updates	3
Farewell from Alice Natale	11	Semi-Annual Interest Rate	8	Retiring This Year?	3
From the Executive Desk	2	LACERAFinancial Report	12	Sweet Potato or Yam?	8
Full-Body Scans	9			"Thanks for Calling!"	12

**Los Angeles County
Employees Retirement
Association**

**Members of the
Board of Retirement**

- SIMON S. RUSSIN
Chair
Elected by General Members
- EDGAR H. TWINE
Vice Chair
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- LES ROBBINS
Secretary
Elected by Safety Members
- MARK J. SALADINO
County Treasurer & Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member
- SADONYA ANTEBI
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- BRIAN C. BROOKS
Elected by General Members
- WILLIAM DELA GARZA
Elected by Retired Members
- RICHARD R. WIRTH
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- WILLIAM PRYOR
Alternate Member
Elected by Safety Members
- VACANT
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**Members of the
Board of Investments**

- SANDRAJ. ANDERSON
Chair
Elected by Retired Members
- MARK J. SALADINO
Vice Chair
County Treasurer & Tax Collector
Member Ex-Officio
- BRIAN C. BROOKS
Secretary
Elected by General Members
- CODYFERGUSON
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- BRUCEPERELMAN
Elected by General Members
- LESROBBINS
Elected by Safety Members
- SOLON SOTERAS
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- LARKIN TEASLEY
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- ESTEVAN R. VALENZUELA
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

- Chief Executive Officer
MARSHA D. RICHTER
Assistant Executive Officer
GREGG RADEMACHER
Assistant Executive Officer
ROBERT HILL

From the **EXECUTIVE DESK**

Marsha D. Richter—CEO, LACERA



LACERA, Past and Present

Happy New Year, members! It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone. With every passing year, LACERA has tried to improve our member services, and we have seen many changes over the past decade—not the least of which, has been the welcoming of a new millennium! For my message in this first month of 2003, I would like to touch upon some of the changes that LACERA has implemented over the past decade. I find that looking over our recent accomplishments is a great way to gear up for the coming year, and also provides LACERA and our members with a sense of where we've been, and where we're headed.

As the world continues to become more reliant on technology, LACERA must evolve with the times. And no decade has had more impact on our record keeping than the last 10 years. From annual benefit statements to medical plan records to plan transfers, there isn't very much in our organization that hasn't been translated into computer data. And with all of the personal information we keep, your confidentiality is our top priority. For this reason, it sometimes takes us longer than we'd like to launch new programs. But when it comes to matters of security, we'd rather be safe than sorry.

Some of our recent technological accomplishments since 1993 include incorporating document imaging

technology (which turned our paper-based storage and retrieval system into an electronic one), improving our member database known as the County Employees Retirement Information System (CERIS), building a web site with interactive features, and much, much more.

As well as technological advancements, LACERA has seen significant financial growth. Our retirement fund has grown from \$12 billion in 1993 to \$26 billion in 2002. Yes, the 90s boom years were certainly good for LACERA! Even taking into account the market losses over the past two years, our fund has more than doubled. Prudent financial investments and smart money management by our Board of Investments have contributed to our healthy fund. Another fiscal-related improvement includes vesting the STAR COLA program for retirees, making the annual increase a permanent benefit at 80% for those who qualify.

LACERA's additions to our member service offerings are also ever evolving. In the past 10 years, our in-house training program has significantly improved our customer service as we reach toward our goal of One Call, One Response, 100% Accuracy. This year alone we created three new divisions to help streamline and improve our customer services. And finally, on the health care front, this year LACERA celebrated our 11th annual Health

cont'd on pg.12

2003 Legislative Updates

The legislature reconvened on January 6, 2003 following the winter recess. New retirement bills are slowly being introduced. LACERA is tracking all bills that may affect our members' retirement benefits or the way we do business. We will bring new bills, and updates to existing bills, to you in this column throughout the year.

AB 55 County Employees' Retirement: Additional Retirement Credit (Correa)

This bill, introduced by SACRS, allows the Board of Supervisors to authorize members to purchase up to five years of additional retirement credit by paying the full actuarial cost of the future retirement benefit and not place any additional financial burden on the retirement system. The additional service shall not be counted to meet the minimum qualifications for retirement, for cancellation of retirement contributions at 30 years of service, additional cost-of-living benefits or health care.

As written the bill requires that payment for the additional service must be made within five years. LACERA has suggested amending the bill to allow up to 10 years to complete payment. The five-year payment period will make the monthly payment amount for the additional service prohibitively expensive for all but the highly paid members.

LACERA position: Watch 

Retiring This Year?



If you're planning to retire in 2003, you have a lot of things to consider, including figuring out the best day to retire and where to live once you do. Many LACERA members have traditionally retired on March 31, to make the most of the annual Cost-of-Living increase (COLA) which is implemented on April 1. Of course members must also take other things into consideration, including their age, date of hire, and other factors affecting salary. The best way to determine your most opportune retirement date is to attend a Retirement Workshop and speak to a Retirement Benefits Specialist. Take advantage of this excellent service and make sure that you make the most of your retirement date.

Calculate the Differences

In addition to making use of the Retirement Workshops in planning your retirement, we encourage you

to sign on to www.lacera.com and use our new and improved retirement calculator. By simply entering your planned retirement date, age as of your retirement, years of service at retirement, plan, and final monthly compensation, the calculator uses current actuarial tables to determine what your retirement allowance could be. You can calculate numerous estimates by entering different retirement dates, salaries, and years of credit.

Although the calculator does not include all the retirement options available to LACERA members or include reciprocal service (your reciprocal service credit is only used by the calculator as a measure of qualifying you for retirement), this tool is still an excellent way to play around with your retirement date. Keep in mind, also, that the results from using the Retirement Calculator cannot be used as an official LACERA estimate. They are solely to be used to help you make an edu-

cated estimate for your ideal retirement date.

New Life, New Location

Many retirees find that once their career obligations are no longer a consideration, there's no better time to pick up and start a new life chapter in a new location. Whether you're finally going to Florida, moving closer to the children, or packing up an RV for an adventure on the road, don't forget to consider taxes on your retirement income. If you remain in California, your retirement income will be taxed by the state of California. But if you reside in another state, California will not collect state income tax on your retirement allowance that was earned in California. This retirement income, however, may be taxable in your new state of residence. State tax requirements on retirement income differ from state to state. You should consult with your own tax advisor and contact the appropriate state tax authority for its rulings. 

Do you have questions regarding your retirement benefits?

Telephone LACERA at

626-564-6132

800-786-6464

FAX: 626-564-6155

Your Social Security number is the key to finding your records.

We thank you for your patience and understanding when you call.

welcome@lacera.com

Now you can e-mail LACERA to ask about general retirement information. Just use the LACERA e-mail address shown above. If you have specific questions about your benefits or need to resolve any issues affecting your personal retirement account, please contact LACERA at **800-786-6464** and ask to speak to a Retirement Benefits Specialist.



2003 Board and Committee Members!

Beginning January 1, 2003, the Board of Investments, the Board of Retirement, and their committees will officially welcome their reelected and newly elected members. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce them to you now, and also to say farewell to some Board members at the end of their terms.

Board of Investments



Bruce Perelman

Elected by general members, **Bruce Perelman** began his inaugural three-year term on the Board of

Investments effective January 1, 2003. He just completed a three-year term on the Board of Retirement.

Mr. Perelman graduated Summa Cum Laude with an undergraduate degree in civil engineering from Tufts University, and currently works as an engineer for the County's Department of Public Works. In 1994, he passed all three written examinations and the take-home civil engineering examination for state registration as a civil engineer and subsequently he was promoted to a supervising civil engineering position within his department. In 1997, he was hired as a subject matter expert by the State of California to co-author the 1998 State registration examination for entrance into the profession of civil engineering.

In June 2002, Mr. Perelman was

awarded a Master's of Business Administration from the Anderson School of Management at UCLA. In addition to coursework, he gained experience in the for-profit world through an MBA internship at a leading venture capital firm, and later on a four-person team that performed market assessment and strategy formation for the Space and Communications Group of The Boeing Company. He looks forward to using this education and experience during his term on the Board of Investments.

Mr. Perelman can be contacted by email at: BrucePerelman@yahoo.com.



Sandra J. Anderson

Elected by retired members, **Sandra J. Anderson** began her second three-year term as Chair on the Board of Investments effective January 1, 2003.

Ms. Anderson has made significant contributions to LACERA and its members. During her tenure with

the County, she successfully managed staff and expenditures exceeding \$40 million monthly and developed new programs, budgets, and departments. Her County career included serving in the Chief Administrative Office as a Chief Analyst, and various positions in the Department of Public Social Services including Deputy District Director. In 1989 she was elected to serve on the Board of Investments as a representative of active members. In 2000, the retirees elected her as their representative. Ms. Anderson improved LACERA services to its members by recommending the creation of and funding for the STAR COLA program.

Ms. Anderson has a BA in political science from the University of California at Berkeley, an MA in political science from Atlanta University, an MSW in social welfare from the University of California at Los Angeles, and a JD from Whittier Law School. She is the owner of a law firm that specializes in probate and trust law, estate planning and elder law, and dependency law. She was the Deputy Director for Juvenile and Emergency Services and Director of Community Relations for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, and serves as a consultant and speaker for other organizations nationwide.

Ms. Anderson is a member of the California, Los Angeles, and Beverly Hills Bar Associations, as well as a member of the Black Women Lawyers and the Women Lawyers Associations of Los Angeles. She is happily married to Leon, a County Sheriff's Department retiree. They have three adult children.

Board of Retirement



Brian C. Brooks

Elected by general members, **Brian C. Brooks** began his three-year term on the Board of Retirement effective

January 1, 2003. He continues to serve on the Board of Investments.

Mr. Brooks attended Antelope Valley College, LA City College, Long Beach City College and Cal Poly Pomona. After serving in the U.S. Army, including a Vietnam tour from 1966-1969, Mr. Brooks went on to work for the LA County Flood Control District in the Department of Public Works. Mr. Brooks was also a Captain and Mission Search Pilot for the Civil Air Patrol, and a Senior Civil Engineering Technician. In 1983, Mr. Brooks became a State Certified General Real Estate Property Appraiser. He holds a commercial pilot license for hot air balloons and single and multi-engine aircraft, is a Valuation Engineer II, appraising commercial, industrial, and residential real estate property, and is an expert witness in eminent domain.

Mr. Brooks is Past President and current member of Chapter One of the International Right of Way Association. In addition, he served on the Board of Directors and is currently a member of the California Association of Professional Employees (CAPE), AFL-CIO, and he served on the Board of Directors and is currently a member of the County Employees for Fair Retirement Plans (CEFRP). Other memberships include SEIU Local 660, C.O.P.E. committee, the

Chicano Employees Association, the Los Angeles County Filipino Americans Association, and the Retired Employees of Los Angeles County (RELAC).

Mr. Brooks is happily married with two young children at home and three adult children.



Bill de la Garza

Elected by retired members, **William "Bill" de la Garza** began his inaugural three-year term on the Board of Retirement

effective January 1, 2003.

Bill started his career as a part-time recreation leader and pool lifeguard for the Los Angeles City Schools and the City and County of Los Angeles while attending El Camino Jr. College and the University of Southern California. In 1960 he accepted a full-time position with the County of Los Angeles as an Assistant Park Director. He enjoyed working with the public and during his 35-year tenure with the Department of Parks and Recreation he paid his dues as Park Director, Sports Specialist, Director of Sports and Aquatics, Superintendent of Regional Recreation, and Regional Operations Manager. In 1991 he retired from his County career as Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation.

While employed with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Bill served on the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games, the committee that is credited for bringing the 1984 Olympic games to Los Angeles. In

cont'd on pg. 10

Who Is Eligible for Retiree Health Care Benefits?

Once you retire, you will be eligible to enroll in the LACERA-sponsored Health Care Benefits Program if you are a member of LACERA and retire from:

- The County of Los Angeles (even if you did not have medical coverage under an employee health care program while you were an active County employee)
- Participating agencies of the County of Los Angeles, including the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Little Lake Cemetery District, the Local Agency Formation Commission and the County Superintendent of Schools.

Retiree's Eligible Dependents

Include:

- Lawful spouse unless legally separated
- Unmarried natural or legally adopted children or stepchildren until age 19 or until age 23 (and enrolled as full-time students at an accredited or licensed educational institution*) and dependent on you for financial support
- Unmarried dependent children age 19 or over who are incapable of self-support due to a physical or mental handicap and meet all the following requirements:
 - The dependent child's disability began before age 19 or 23 (while enrolled as a full-time student at an educa-

tional institution), and

- The child is fully dependent on you for financial support, and
- The child has been continuously covered by a County-sponsored plan, and/or you can provide proof that the disabled child meets the above conditions and has been continuously covered by any other group or individual medical insurance plan, and
- You can provide medical evidence of total disability subject to the conditions of both LACERA and the plan in which the member is enrolled.

- Other dependent(s) defined by specific law and plan contracts.

Retiree's Eligible Surviving Dependents** Include:

- *Surviving Spouse*
A surviving spouse who is eligible to continue to receive retirement benefits, and to whom the retiree was married for at least one year prior to his or her retirement date, and is named as the primary beneficiary. If the retiree was granted a service-connected disability, the one-year rule does not apply, however the date of the retiree's marriage must precede the date of his or her retirement.

- *Surviving Children (if there is also a surviving spouse)*

Surviving unmarried natural children, legally adopted children, or stepchildren, up to age 19 or until age 23, if they remain unmarried and enrolled as full-time students at an accredited or licensed educational institution.*

- *Surviving Children (without a surviving spouse)*

Surviving unmarried natural children, legally adopted children, or stepchildren, up to age 18 or until age 22 who are enrolled as full-time students at an accredited or licensed educational institution* and receiving retirement benefits. These eligibility requirements apply if there are only surviving dependent children, with no surviving spouse.

- *Surviving Disabled Dependents*

Disabled dependent children who satisfy each requirement described above.

Retiree's Eligible New Dependents Include:

- A new spouse
- Newborn child
- Newly acquired legally adopted children and stepchildren

Retirees must contact LACERA to enroll these dependents **within 30 days of the date they become eligible family members.** If the retiree

cont'd on pg.7

Who Is Eligible, cont'd from pg. 6

enrollment form is received by the 15th of the month, coverage begins the first day of the month following the date of the qualifying event.

If retiree is married, both he and his dependents must enroll in the same plan. Split enrollment among family members—enrolling in different LACERA-sponsored health plans—is not permitted (unless both spouses are LACERA retirees).

If retiree is married to someone who is also a LACERA retiree, they may

each choose coverage as the primary insured under a different plan. However, a retiree may not enroll his or her spouse as a dependent under his or her coverage if he or she also enrolls as an eligible retiree. Cross-coverage is not allowed.

Important Note: A retiree must marry at least one year preceding his or her date of retirement. If this requirement is not met, the new spouse and the new spouse's depen-

dents will not be eligible to continue coverage in a LACERA-sponsored insurance plan following the retiree's death, except for a limited period of time through COBRA. 

* If a retiree's eligible dependent ceases to be enrolled on a full-time basis at an accredited educational institution and then loses eligibility, then subsequently re-enrolls as a full-time student, he/she establishes immediate eligibility upon re-enrollment. It is the retiree's responsibility to notify LACERA within 30 days of the date of re-enrollment to add him/her to the retiree's plan(s).

**Those dependents who are eligible to continue coverage following the LACERA member's death.

Social Security, cont'd from pg. 1

in the 6.5 payroll tax rate for employees. For a complete listing of all the changes, visit the Social Security Administration online, at www.ssa.gov.

Social Security	2002	2003
Earnings required to earn one credit	\$ 870	\$ 890
Earnings required to earn the maximum of four credits	\$ 3,480	\$ 3,560
FICA tax rate remains at 7.65% for both employees and employers		
Retirement Earnings Test exempt amounts for beneficiaries:		
• Under Full Retirement Age (FRA, age 65) throughout 2003		\$11,520
• FRA in 2003 (period before the month FRA is attained)		\$30,720
• Month in which FRA is attained and later		no limit
Earnings threshold for a trial-work-period month for disability beneficiaries	\$ 570	
Monthly Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) amount for:		
• Non-blind disability beneficiaries		\$ 800
• Blind disability beneficiaries		\$ 1,330
Maximum monthly retirement benefit at FRA	\$ 1,660	\$ 1,741
Estimated average monthly benefits in January		
• Retired workers		\$ 895
• Retired couples		\$ 1,483
• Disabled workers		\$ 833
• Young widow and two eligible children		\$ 1,838

The County of Los Angeles withdrew its employees from the federal Social Security program in December 1982. If you were covered by Social Security while employed by the County prior to January 1983, you will have a reduction in your retirement allowance depending on the number of covered years of service. 

Sweet Potato or Yam? What's the Difference?

Excerpted from *The Wellness Letter*

What we commonly call yams are actually sweet potatoes, which are not really potatoes at all, but strange roots, like carrots. (Real potatoes are storage stems, or tubers.) True yams belong to another plant family entirely. You will seldom see a true yam in this country, except in specialty markets. If you did find one, it would be pale and starchy, with a rough and scaly skin. Called njami, true yams are grown in Africa as well as the Caribbean; sweet potatoes are grown all over the world. Sweet potatoes have darker reddish-brown skin and dark orange flesh. There are, however, at least four

varieties, some with lighters skins, some with red-purple skins, and also variations in flesh color. (Canned sweet potatoes are often also labeled “yams,” since that’s what most people call them.)

Nutritionally, you’re way ahead with sweet potatoes, which are one of the most nutritious vegetables. Their bright orange color comes from beta carotene, and a medium baked sweet potato contains about 10 milligrams, a hefty amount, plus about 30 milligrams of vitamin C, some B vitamins (including folic acid), vitamin E, magnesium, and calcium. The true yam has no beta

carotene and half the vitamin C, but is richer in potassium.

In spite of their sweet taste, sweet potatoes are not high in calories. They have the same number of calories as white potatoes, about 100 per 3.5-ounce serving. They are usually inexpensive, too, and can be quickly cooked in their skins in a microwave. Just pierce them in several places before cooking. Raw sweet potatoes, when cut in strips, make good dipping vegetables. A cold baked sweet potato, once a lunch box staple, is a great snack, too! 

Semi-Annual Interest Crediting Rate of 2.6%

Nai-Len Ishikawa

LACERA pays retirement benefits using the money from our investment portfolio. We build the investment portfolio through member’s contributory plan contributions, contributions from your employer, cash received from interest, dividends, and trading, and from holding on to investments while their price increases (unrealized gains). Unfortunately, the past year has been hard on the investments markets and we have seen a reduction in our investment portfolio from losses on trading and investments losing value as we hold

them (unrealized losses). Fortunately, we have had a positive cash return from interest, dividends and trading during the first half of this fiscal year. This positive cash return allowed LACERA to credit contributory plan member accounts with 2.6% semi-annual interest as of December 31, 2002.

LACERA’s goal is to credit 4% interest twice a year, for an annual rate of 8%. Crediting member accounts with interest is our first funding priority. However, we are constrained by the actual investment returns we earn during the year.

It is important to remember that LACERA is a defined benefit plan and the benefit payable to you is not effected by the amount of interest credited to your account. Interest crediting is important to those contributory plan members who leave County service and withdraw their contributions and for those purchasing service credit on the installment plan. For those members purchasing service credit on the installment plan, the overall contract cost will be slightly reduced due to the lower interest rate for this period. 

Full-Body Scans — Peace of Mind?

Excerpted from *The Wellness Letter*

You take good care of yourself, have a good diet, and get check-ups. But you know someone who was diagnosed with lung cancer and lived only a year, and someone else who died of a sudden heart attack. Could that happen to you?

There's a test claiming to offer peace of mind in such matters: the full-body CT (compound tomography) scan. These scans obtain cross-sectional images of the heart, lungs, liver, and other organs, as well as soft tissues, bones, and blood vessels. They can look in nearly every crevice and cranny. The technology is, of course, already in wide use for diagnosing specific ailments. But full-body scans for the "worried well" have become an industry these days. Radio and TV ads abound, sometimes sponsored by your local hospital, and feature people testifying that their lives were saved by full-body scans. You may also have heard that the medical profession is opposed to these scans because you don't need a doctor's referral to get one.

The test typically costs \$1,000 or more, and insurance won't pay for it. But if you can afford it, isn't it a

good investment? Should you be "proactive"—a favorite word of those promoting the scans? The reasonable answer to both of these questions is no.

How to Be Proactive

The Radiological Society of North America and the American College of Radiology, organizations of professionals most likely to benefit financially from full-body scans, do not recommend them. Nor does the American Cancer Society or the Food and Drug Administration. Here's why:

While CT scans are very useful in the diagnosis of specific illnesses when there are symptoms or reasons for testing, the pictures in a full-body scan are usually not as high in quality or resolution as those ordered for a specific reason.

Moreover, full-body scans cannot screen for breast or prostate cancer—the most common cancers—and they may miss other tumors as well. There is no evidence that finding lung cancer early will lengthen your life, or that a full-body scan ever lengthened anybody's life. Such scans certainly cannot detect high

blood pressure or diabetes, which are the most important risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

Peace of mind is not a likely outcome of a full-body scan. Scans most often uncover harmless abnormalities. The only way to find out if the abnormality is cancer is via a possibly painful and expensive biopsy. Or maybe you'll be told to wait and come back for more scanning in a few months. On the other hand, a scan that finds nothing suspicious can give you a false sense of security.

And then there's the radiation dose from X-ray scans. Perhaps the radiation from one full-body scan won't harm you, but when the benefits are so doubtful, why risk it? And if you have the scans periodically, the radiation exposure could be significant.

Being proactive—that is, taking a vigorous informed interest in staying healthy—is the best way to ward off illness and feel good. But proactivity, when it comes to this test, means saying no. Regular exercise, regular check-ups (and proven screening tests), and good eating habits are a better, cheaper way to ensure peace of mind than a scan. 

"Chance is always powerful. Let your hook be always cast; in the pool where you least expect it, there will be a fish." — Ovid

Board and Committee Members, cont'd from pg. 5

1975-76, he was Chairman of the Los Angeles County Interagency SCUBA Diving Committee, and played a key role in the development and passage of the Los Angeles County Scuba Diving Safety Ordinance. He continued his love for sports by officiating and instructing high school and college officials for the Southern California Baseball, Basketball and Football Associations. Bill authored three recognized sports officiating publications and served as President and Director of the Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation. He worked closely with national sports celebrities Jesse Owens and Pele in developing and establishing national youth sports programs and is a guest lecturer in Recreation and Sports Administration at local community colleges and universities.

Other professional affiliations include being the Board member and Chairman of the Southland Credit Union for over 20 years, honorary member of the Latino Peace Officers Association, Board member of the United Hispanic Scholarship Foundation, and former member of the LA County Interagency Gang Task Force. He is currently Vice President of the California Retired County Employees Association (CRCEA). Bill credits RELAC for sparking his interest and commitment in serving and assisting retired county employees. He served RELAC as Chairman of its Golf and Investment Committees, President, and is currently Past President of RELAC.

Bill is happily married to his wife of 41 years, Rachel, and has one son named John. His hobbies include traveling, golf and U.S.C. Football. 

New Board Officers

Board of Retirement

Simon S. Russin, Chair
Edgar H. Twine, Vice Chair
Les Robbins, Secretary

Board of Investments

Sandra Anderson, Chair
Mark J. Saladino, Vice Chair
Brian Brooks, Secretary

Committee Assignments

Following is a list of the Board of Retirement Committee assignments for 2003:

Operations Oversight Committee

- Brian Brooks, Chair
 - Sadonya Antebi, Vice Chair
 - Edgar H. Twine
 - William de la Garza
- Staff:* Robert Hill, Gregg Rademacher

Insurance Benefits and Legislative Committee

- Simon S. Russin, Chair
 - William de la Garza, Vice Chair
 - Brian Brooks
 - Les Robbins
 - Alternate: William Pryor
- Staff:* Marsha D. Richter, Kathy Migita

Disability Procedures and Services Committee

- William Pryor, Chair
 - Edgar H. Twine, Vice Chair
 - Mark Saladino
 - Les Robbins
 - Alternate: Sadonya Antebi
- Staff:* Sylvia Miller

Travel Policy Committee

- Simon S. Russin
 - Brian Brooks
- Staff:* David L. Muir

Thank You and Farewell!

For those members whose terms ended on December 31, 2002, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks for your hard work and dedication to making LACERA a better institution for all members. Once the Board of Supervisors announces their appointments, we may very well be welcoming back some of you, as well! In any case, we wish to express our sincere gratitude for your time and energy. Thank you!

Board of Retirement

Sadonya Antebi (re-appointed by
Gloria Molina)
John F. Fleming
Richard R. Wirth
Bruce Perelman

Board of Investments

Daniel Cohen
Simon S. Russin
Larkin Teasley (re-appointed by
Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite
Burke)

Farewell from Alice Natale

As I review the history of our organization as well as the County of Los Angeles, it strikes me that many of us do not realize the magnitude of our jobs.

As a new hire, I was happy just to have a job. Period. That was my goal, and as a new hire, I had achieved that goal. Little did I know I would spend most of my adult life working for Los Angeles County!

Once on board, I realized the largeness of the County, the sheer number of citizens we serve, and the responsibilities we all have. Not only did I go to work, I actually got to be involved in many activities I'd previously never considered. The job became my primary focus as time went on, with increasing responsibilities, and, on occasion, the opportunity or challenge of dealing with a taxpayer who did not share in my love of county government.

My first job required me to answer incoming calls for LACERA regarding various questions about retirement. My next job was in the Treasurer's office, where taxpayers had slightly different ideas, most of which included disputing the cost of property taxes. This job gave me the ability to deal with the occasional difficult person. This was my preparation for working with people throughout my career at LACERA.

Now I look back at LACERA and see how our department and ser-

vices have grown. Our goal is to serve you, which includes respecting you, treating you fairly, and most importantly, helping you develop your retirement dreams. We see 10,000 to 14,000 of you for individual counseling each year. We provide hundreds of seminars about retirement planning. Many of your departments invite LACERA benefit specialists to your picnics, conferences, and other large gatherings to provide information to you directly. You can visit our web site to learn more about LACERA and your retirement plans, plus we are available to you, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., in our Call Center, and from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at our Public Counter.

As I move to the other side (the retiree side) this spring, I feel that my career has helped me to make others' dreams become visions, and their visions become fulfilled. The hardest part about leaving this "job" is that I no longer will be able to meet many of you, become friends with many of you, or share your life dreams. My world will have a big hole without the County employees to fill it.

I hope that as you plan, dream, and prepare for retirement, you also enjoy your careers as you build towards your post-retirement goals. Farewell.

Alice Natale is Assistant Division Manager of Member Services at LACERA, and has written the "Benefit Notes" column in this newsletter for the past 12 years. Alice is often referred to as the voice of LACERA, and she has been a key figure behind many successes here, including the development and management of LACERA's Outreach team, Call Center, and Public Counter. She has been the person from whom countless County employees have received retirement counseling, both at the beginning and end of their careers. In her more than 31 years at LACERA, Alice has amassed a wealth of information and become a veritable encyclopedia of LACERA history. Her presence will be sorely missed by County employees and LACERA Board members and staff. ♪



LACERA Financial Report

LACERA is continually planning for your future. The Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR), enclosed with this issue of *Postscript*, gives you a summary of LACERA's financial strength as of June 30, 2002. Read all about the progressive accomplishments of your \$26 billion fund. The PAFR reviews revenues and expenses, investment performance, asset allocations, funding status, and mem-

bership growth. Despite recent fluctuations in the stock market, LACERA continues to manage a very healthy fund.

LACERA is always searching for ways to improve customer service and build a better retirement fund for your future retirement. We are pleased to present the 2002 Popular Annual Financial Report for your review. 



“Thanks for Calling!”

To ensure that every LACERA member gets the best possible service from our Member Service specialists, we have instituted a policy of recording all phone conversations with members. These phone calls are

randomly selected and reviewed by our Quality Assurance section. Members who do not wish to be recorded may request a call back from a Member Service specialist on an unmonitored phone line. 

LACERA, Past and Present, cont'd from pg. 2

Fair for retirees, and implemented Caremark's "CarePatterns" disease management program.

As we begin 2003, I look forward to our continued improvement in every aspect of our business, including member benefits, fiscal

growth and technological advancements. Our business is serving you, our members, and to that end our work is never done. LACERA is your retirement system, and it is our privilege to be of service to you! 

Contributing Writers:

Alison Herschberg
Alice Natale

Design:

Allen Helbig

Letters to the Editor may be sent to:

Delia Price
Editor-in-Chief

POSTSCRIPT
LACERA
PO BOX 7060
PASADENA, CA 91109-7060



Editor's Note—

PostScript is published by the staff of LACERA. Signed articles represent the opinion of the writers and not necessarily the opinion of the LACERA management, Board of Retirement or Board of Investments.

Alternative formats are available upon request.