



**PASADENA RPEA CHAPTER 007
NEWSLETTER**

Retired Public Employees Association of California
Published bi-monthly

May 2018



**“California’s Water – A Personal Perspective”
John T. Morris, Morris Water Resources Consultants**

Thursday, June 14 at 12:00 Noon

Villa Gardens Retirement Community

842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena
1st Floor Garden Room

Lunch - \$15

Where is our water coming from?

Water has always been a contentious issue in California. Water rights, environmental issues and the large infrastructures required to collect, store and distribute it are making it more expensive. It’s no longer a service we can take for granted.

Our speaker, John Morris, has been actively involved in water issues since the 1970’s. He serves on the Board of Directors at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, representing San Marino. Because of his expertise, he has worked for or been associated with more than a dozen water and civil engineering agencies and associations. His résumé is lengthy and impressive.

Born in Pasadena, his family history includes a grandfather after whom the local Morris Dam was named. Don’t miss this meeting!

Reservations Recommended

Please call one of the following by

Monday, June 11

Leta Ross (626) 791-1880

Larry Harsha (626) 351-0183

Or e-mail to LandCharsha@yahoo.com your reservation with “RPEA” in the subject line.

Menu: Buffet

Street Parking or
Valet Parking Only

Enter Villa driveway near main entrance
(not the east driveway as in the past)

Public Transportation:

MTA Bus Routes 180 & 485
Pasadena ARTS Routes 20 & 40
Metro Gold Line - Lake Station

2017-2018 Officers/Chairmen

President	Larry Harsha	(626) 351-0183
Vice-President	(position vacant)	
Secretary	Barbara Barrett	(626) 798-0530
Treasurer	Diane Johnson	(626) 862-1050
Newsletter	Walter White	(626) 359-5805
Membership	(position vacant)	
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Sunshine Coord.	Kathleen Ferraro	(626) 825-2585
Members at large	(8 positions vacant)	
Area V Director	Ellie Knapp	(661) 297-6348

Want to contact your officers by email?

Pres. Larry Harsha.....LandCharsha@Yahoo.com
 Sec. Barbara Barrett..... debb70111@Yahoo.com
 Treas. Diane Johnson.....dijohnson@coldwellbanker.com
 Leg. Leo Acenas..... LAcenas1@ATT.net
 Newsletter Ed. Walter White wsquared@GTE.net
 Area V Director. Ellie Knapp eknapp@roadrunner.com

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held at Walter White's condominium complex in Monrovia on September 13th at 2 p.m. Any or all chapter members may attend. Call (626) 359-5805 to confirm date and time or to get directions.

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

(assuming we are still meeting at Villa Gardens)

June 14, 2018Garden Room, Buffet
 October 11, 2018.....Garden Room, Buffet
 December 13, 2018 Villa Vista Room. 5th floor

If you are a new RPEA member or haven't been to one of our local chapter luncheons, then you are cordially invited to your first chapter luncheon as our guest.

(Don't forget to make a reservation).

Help still needed: We are still looking for alternate meeting locations that are within our budget.

April Meeting Notes

by Walter White

Our speaker was Paul Little, President and CEO of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce. Many of our chapter members remembered that he was a director on the Pasadena City Council for 12 years beginning in 1995.

Basically, the chamber is a member organization for businesses. Business and individuals pay dues to be a member. Pasadena currently has over 1400 members. Most are small business, but the larger businesses are often members as well. The federal designation for small business is 500 employees or fewer, but the Chamber considers 50 or fewer employees to be a small business. Most member businesses are local. The annual membership cost in the Chamber is generally based on the number of employees.

The organization was established in 1888 as the Board of Trade. The emphasis then was to attract business and investment into the area. Early involvement included participation in the construction of the Colorado Street Bridge. Originally designed to be straight, but by having it curved, the footings didn't have to be as deep and the project could be kept under budget. They kept the Rose Parade going in 1895 when it became too much for the Valley Hunt Club to manage. The Board's meetings regarding the parade resulted in the establishment of the Tournament of Roses Assn. They also loaned money for the construction of the civic auditorium's exhibition hall when the city was thinking of scrapping the plans due to lack of funding. The Board felt exhibitions held there would be important in attracting people and businesses to the area.

The name change in 1918 to Chamber of Commerce reflected the change in focus when the organization became more of a support and networking organization. Anderson Business Technology (formerly Anderson Typewriter) is celebrating 100 years of continuous membership with the chamber, having evolved over the years to meet the changing needs of their customers. Other organizations nearing that 100 year mark with the Chamber are AT&T, Vroman's Bookstore and the Huntington Hospital.

One of their main focuses is keeping small businesses happy and prosperous. The Chamber hosts four networking meetings a month. They have workshops, such as how to do small business accounting, or how to handle human resource issues. They had a whole series of workshops on the Affordable Care Act. The Chamber uses the expertise of their members as resources in these tutorials and workshops.

There are also fun events such as golf tournaments and gala events. They also schedule three or more restaurants events a year. Pasadena Restaurant Week each May involves about 40 or more restaurants who serve special fixed-price menus as inducement for customers. There's also Cheeseburger Week. Over 10% of the Chamber's members are restaurants. The Rite Spot in west Pasadena (later called the Nightwatch), was believed to be the first location where the term "Cheeseburger" appeared on a menu.

The Chamber hosts a number of mixers each year to provide an opportunity for networking and social interaction. These are free to members but \$10 for non-members. All the Chamber events are posted on their website.

When a local car dealership expressed to Paul his frustration with seeing license plate frames with other city's names on them, the Chamber started a "Shop Pasadena" promotion which lasts from mid November through mid January each year to encourage people to shop where they live. It not only benefits the businesses, but the sales tax helps the City of Pasadena in general. The Chamber partnered with the Art Center College of Design to come up with bus shelter ads.

Financial institutions, insurance companies, health care, engineering and education make up other large segments of membership. Caltech and JPL are members. Tetra Tech is now the largest engineering firm in Pasadena, not Parsons. Both are members. Interestingly, a recent survey found that one of the reasons that large firms locate in Pasadena is that their CEO lives near here.

Pasadena attracts lots of small engineering companies involved in improving business needs. As an example, Bluebeam, headquartered on South Lake Avenue, developed a method to easily send large architectural blueprint sets over the internet. They now have offices throughout the U.S. plus one office in Europe.

There are over 2700 hotel rooms in Pasadena with an occupancy rate typically between 85% and 90%. It rises slightly to 95% during big Rose Bowl events, but the price of the rooms soar. The introduction of the Gold Line light rail brought in \$3 million in investments near the stations. Old Pasadena doesn't fold up the sidewalks at night. The overall population hasn't grown much from the 1990's to today's 144,000 people. However, fewer people are living in single-family residences and more people are living near downtown where almost everything they need is within walking distance.

Although Pasadena has a great economy, and the Chamber encourages its growth, it was two Pasadena banks that started the 2008 economic crash in 2008.

Both Countrywide and Indy-Mac were located just south of our meeting location on Lake Ave. But because of the diversity of companies in town, the economic drop was not felt here as much as it might have been. Speaking of economy, because 1 of 8 jobs in this area revolve around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, Paul felt the upcoming trade war might have a material effect on the area's economy. It's yet to play out.

One of the areas the Chamber helps local business with is when they have questions about contracts or running business in general. Sometimes they have an issue or challenge and the Chamber can at least help find out what's going on and explain how the process works or why a particular decision came about. Many Pasadena businesses are foreign-based, and sometimes they need to be told that things just may not work out here the way they expected.

The Chamber is also the bridge between local businesses and the local schools' career academies. They find local speakers with expertise in the subjects that the students are interested in, and arrange field trips for them. They organize "job shadowing" where students simply follow someone around to get a feel for a typical work day and arrange over 300 internships each year for a more lengthy look into a career. In addition to businesses, many City departments host interns each year. It exposes kids to areas they might not otherwise have access to, and gives them something to put on their résumé.

The Chamber gets involved in legislative issues, keeping an eye on what's going on in Sacramento and the state ballot, in addition to what's happening locally. In November there will be a proposed 3/4% local sales tax increase on the ballot, part intended for city services; part for schools. There are four initiatives on the June ballot that have local implications. A couple affect the dates when local elections may be held, and two are regarding recreational marijuana. (The Chamber offices happen to be located adjacent to a marijuana operation.)

The Chamber, located on Mentor near Boston Court, has five permanent employees in 1300 square feet of office space.

In response to a question about the difference between the Chamber and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Paul said that the Junior Chamber is more of a volunteer organization like Lions or Rotary. Its members are generally under 40 years old.

The Chamber has its own website, of course. It can be found at www.pasadena-chamber.org. Incidentally, Pasadena was the first chamber in California to have a mobile app for smartphones!



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