



## PASADENA RPEA CHAPTER 007 NEWSLETTER

Retired Public Employees Association of California  
Published bi-monthly

November 2018



We're moving back to Villa Gardens  
for our December meeting  
842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor - Villa Vista Assembly Room

**“Our Annual Christmas Party”**  
**Charismatics – Dickenson Costumed Choral Group**  
Thursday, December 13 at 12:00 Noon  
\$10 for everyone

### *You're in for a Treat!*

If you attended last year's party, you know that this choral group from Crescenta Valley High is one of most talented of the groups that have entertained us in the past. Did I mention they were costumed?

We're moving back to Villa Gardens for our Christmas meeting - 5<sup>th</sup> floor. The kitchen has been upgraded and we look forward to a turkey meal. Because the meal is banquet style, we need to have a good head count the Friday before the meeting. (If you are a procrastinator and didn't meet the reservation deadline, we still might fit you in, so try calling us anyway.)

Invite your friends and family to this one. There's valet parking service on the east side of the complex. The church parking lot is off limits.

### **Early Reservations Required**

Please call by  
**Friday, December 6**

Larry Harsha (626) 351-0183

or email to [LandCharsha@yahoo.com](mailto:LandCharsha@yahoo.com) your reservation with “RPEA” in the subject line.

Menu: Banquet style turkey dinner

Street Parking or  
Valet Parking Only  
(Enter Villa driveway east of entrance)

Public Transportation:  
MTA Bus Routes 180 & 485  
Pasadena Transit Routes 20 & 40  
Metro Gold Line - Lake Station

## 2017-2018 Officers/Chairmen

President	Larry Harsha	(626) 351-0183
Vice-President	(position vacant)	
Secretary	(position vacant)	
Treasurer	Diane Johnson	(626) 862-1050
Newsletter	Walter White	(626) 359-5805
Membership	(position vacant)	
Legislation	Leo Acenas	(626) 285-1879
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  
Secretary ..... TBD  
Treas. Diane Johnson.....dijohnson@coldwellbanker.com  
Legislation. 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 January 10<sup>th</sup> 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

December 13, 2018 ..... Villa Vista Room. 5<sup>th</sup> floor

Meeting locations for 2019 haven't yet been determined. However, we will probably keep to our present meeting dates: the second Thursday of most even-numbered months.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Help needed: We are looking for someone to accept telephone reservations for our lunch meetings and to coordinate with the meeting location staff.

Help needed: We are looking for two people to serve on a committee to review and update our chapter bylaws.

Help still needed: We are looking for 8 people to join the chapter board as Members at Large. (Unless the bylaws committee (see above) reduces the number of Members at Large to a more reasonable number.)

Help still needed: We are still looking for alternate meeting locations that are within our budget and have convenient parking. Let us know if you liked meeting at Coco's last month.

## Thanks to Barbara Barrett

Due to family medical issues, Barbara has had to resign as our chapter secretary. Barbara served for more than seven years as our secretary, and we thank her for the time and effort that she gave to the chapter.

Obviously we need someone to step up and take over the position, even if it's just for a short time. Our chapter president is already doing triple duty while acting as head honcho, meeting coordinator and membership chairman. If being secretary isn't your thing, we have other open positions where you can contribute (see previous column.) Some chapters have a dozen or more members on their board of directors. It helps spread the workload.

## Chapter Elections

RPEA's fiscal year ended on October 31. Elections will be held at the December meeting for chapter officers, board members, and other important volunteer positions for the upcoming year. We're already a month late. This year, participation is even more critical since we need to fill the position of secretary in addition to all the other vacancies.

## October Meeting Notes

by Walter White

Our speaker was Douglas Edwards, who is associated with HumanGood and Westminster Gardens. The subject was three-fold: how to prepare for a hospital stay, what and who you will need in the hospital, and how to take charge of your care.

He started by saying the Affordable Care Act was put in place because of the older generation, It wasn't the younger generation that prompted the legislation. Statistics show that over your lifetime, 90% of your health care dollars will be spent in the last six months of your life. 1/3 of us will require some kind of surgery in those last six months. As the population ages, the total national cost of health care increases. The Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare) was enacted to address that. It had three primary goals: to decrease the cost of healthcare by putting pressure on insurance companies to manage costs better, to address the quality of care that is being delivered, and to make healthcare accessible to all.

Doug mentioned that many of us at the meeting probably aren't concerned, because they have Medicare, parts A &

B, probably a supplemental policy and a good pension. But the ACA does affect hospital decisions. When we have to go into the hospital, we should know what their agenda is. One of the hospital's priorities is to get you out of the hospital and on your feet as quickly as possible. Hospitals are not always the best place for your recovery. Doug recounted a personal experience where he entered a hospital for heart surgery on a Monday and was out by Friday. (3 hours in surgery, 24 hours in ICU, 4 days in recovery, and on his feet on the second day.) The hospital is not a place to rest. They keep bugging you all hours of the day with tests and medication. There is no time to rest.

Doug attributed a quote to Groucho Marx, "I wouldn't dare go to the hospital. People die there all the time." Most people want to die at home, but 90% of deaths actually occur in a hospital because people haven't done their planning. With judicious planning, you can stay at home. Doug went into great detail regarding the "Five Wishes" document. It is a comprehensive advance healthcare directive and end-of-life document. And you don't need a lawyer to fill it out. Having Five Wishes on file with your family, friends and local hospital will insure that decisions in the emergency room are your decisions, and not someone else's. Emergency rooms are not the best environment to make quick, serious decisions. [See our May 2011 newsletter for an excellent summary of Doug's presentation on Five Wishes. Contact your newsletter editor for a copy.] Doug recently found out that Kaiser Permanente has their own version of the form, so if you have Kaiser, be sure to incorporate their form with the Five Wishes form.

In response to a question of being away from your local hospital during an emergency, Doug said that many medical records are now available digitally. He also suggested that if you are traveling, especially if out-of-state or overseas, take a copy of your Five Wishes with you. There's a wallet card you can carry with you that states you have a Five Wishes on file. Depending upon your privacy concerns, one member suggested you might put Five Wishes and other information on a flash drive and attach it to your keychain.

Doug then addressed the next major point of his presentation which is that no one should ever go to the hospital alone. It's important to have people with you who can speak for you and help absorb all the medical information the doctors provide. If the doctor happens to give you bad news, your mind tends to fixate on the bad news and doesn't necessarily pay attention to all the other advice and information that the doctor is trying to give you.

Doug distributed a number of handouts to help explain the role of your advocate, your role as a patient, things you can do to prevent a readmission, and a typical hospital discharge checklist. [Copies of the meeting handouts are available from your newsletter editor.]

Most often your advocate is the same person mentioned in your healthcare directive because it's probably the person you trust the most regarding your medical state. The advocate handout lists 12 areas where your advocate can be of help. In addition to those 12, Doug said your advocate should know what inspires you or keeps you going (e.g. wanting to go home to be with a pet). Grief, sadness and depression are common in hospital patients.

The handout for your role as a patient lists seven items you need to keep in mind, along with 7 items of practical advice. Also, the handout on preventing a readmission strongly suggests having a discharge (or care) plan outlining specific things you need to do when you get back home. The discharge preparation checklist can be used if the hospital doesn't have its own.

Doug asked a nurse (his wife) if there were other things to consider. She mentioned that while at the hospital you will probably be seeing lots of different nurses and staff. Maybe even a number of different doctors. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself regarding your care. Not everything gets written down on your chart. You're not in a hotel. You don't need to bring half the stuff you think you'll need – especially women. Limit personal items to one bag. Get out of bed as often as you can. Take advantage of visitors and pet therapy – they promote healing. Make sure you have arranged for someone to pick you up when discharged.

The last handout concerns what you need to do before you leave the hospital and steps to prevent readmission for the same medical problem. Hospitals only receive payments for the first diagnosis. If you have to return for the same illness, they don't get paid. Make sure you follow their discharge plan exactly. Create a support team at home to help, know what to do if things get worse, and follow up with your regular doctor and any recommended specialists.

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Copies of Five Wishes can be obtained by calling (888) 594-7437 or from [www.AgingWithDignity.org](http://www.AgingWithDignity.org). The cost is \$5 each, or less in quantity. It's a copyrighted document but well worth it. Your personal doctor might have copies in his/her office.

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If you misplace your current newsletter, it's usually available at [www.RPEA.com](http://www.RPEA.com) website. On the left-hand column of their home page, click on "Chapter Newsletters." It might even show up there before you receive it in the mail. (Or it might not show up at all if your newsletter editor forgets to send it to headquarters.)



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