



# PASADENA RPEA CHAPTER 007 NEWSLETTER

Retired Public Employees Association of California  
Published bi-monthly March 2020



## No April Meeting Due to Coronavirus Precautions

### *We Need Your Email Address*

We will be updating our chapter members via email if there are any changes in the status of upcoming meetings at Villa Gardens.

If you don't currently receive email reminders about our meetings, you are not on our list! So please send an email to our chapter president, Larry Harsha, with "RPEA" in the heading so we can add you to our distribution list. We don't sell or otherwise distribute this list. Larry's address is LandCharsha@Yahoo.com.

### **Senior Housing Precautions**

Villa Gardens, where we hold our meetings, is a senior living facility. Many senior facilities and nursing homes are now limiting visitors and group meetings in order to protect the most vulnerable of our population. It's not only beneficial to them, but it's beneficial to us!

### *Meeting Topics Needed*

What kinds of topics would you like to have presented at our meetings? Even better, if you know of a speaker that would be of interest to our group, give one of your chapter board members a call and suggest them. Or you may email Larry Harsha at the above email address.

### **2019-2020 Officers/Chairmen**

President	Larry Harsha	(626) 351-0183
Vice-President	(position vacant)	
Secretary	(position vacant)	
Treasurer	Vic Thomas	(626) 796-2824
Reservations	Kay Ferraro	(626) 825-2585
Newsletter	Walter White	(626) 359-5805
Membership	Michael Warner	(626) 798-3541
Legislation	(position vacant)	
Sunshine Coord.	Kay 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  
 Treas. Vic Thomas ..... halaulaschool57@Yahoo.com  
 Membership. Michael Warner.....mmw726@gmail.com  
 Newsletter Ed. Walter White.....wsquared@GTE.net  
 Area V Director. Ellie Knapp.....eknapp@roadrunner.com

### **Tentative Meeting Schedule**

June 11, 2020 ..... Garden Room, buffet  
 October 8, 2020..... Garden Room, buffet  
 December 10, 2020 ..... 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Villa Vista Room

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held at Walter White's condominium in Monrovia on May 14<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.

## ***Help Your Chapter Survive***

Thanks to Michael Warner for agreeing to be membership chairman. We desperately need a secretary. Ten more volunteers are also needed to fill the remaining vacant positions listed on the previous page! If you think that is too many board members, you can volunteer to help change our chapter bylaws to reduce the required number to a more reasonable value. We only need a couple of volunteers to do that.

## **AMBIA Notes**

by Walter White

Stephanie Rowley from AMBIA gave a short presentation at our February meeting about the benefits provided by RPEA's exclusively endorsed partner for insurance benefits. They can help with things that might keep you up at night, such as final expenses, getting hurt or injured when you're out of the country, etc. She said MASA, the Medical Air Services Association, is the most popular example of AMBIA benefits. MASA relieves you of the cost burden of transportation to a hospital, not just in the U.S. but anywhere in the world.

Stephanie will be coming to a future meeting with more detailed information on these and other benefits. Watch our newsletters for more specific information about the timing of her visit. She suggested that our regular attendees bring a friend, because the benefits can only be obtained by RPEA members. But anyone, including your friends, can become a member of RPEA – you don't have to be the recipient of a CalPERS retirement check in order to join. Join at [www.RPEA.com](http://www.RPEA.com).

## **February Meeting Notes**

by Walter White

Our main speaker was Martha Zavala from the voter services section of the League of Women Voters. Martha is from their Pasadena office, which covers 13 communities in and around the San Gabriel Valley. With the primary election coming up, it seemed an appropriate meeting topic. The League celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday the day following this RPEA luncheon. Their first goal following the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the 1919 law establishing women's right to vote, was to register 20 million women as voters. Their next goal was to support the Cable Act of 1922. Military men coming back from overseas with wives from foreign countries were able to have their wives naturalized as citizens. But if a woman came back

having married a foreign man, she lost her citizenship. This "Married Women's Independent Nationality Act" corrected that injustice.

The League takes positions on issues, but does not endorse specific candidates. To advocate for an issue, the League has to agree by consensus that the issue: is good for America, is good for the community, and is good for individuals.

Los Angeles County's population is bigger than all but 10 of the states. There are 50 different election codes in the country. L.A. decided to go with new voting machines last year. There was a mock election held back in September so that voters could get used to the new machines. Only one person in our group knew about it. With the county's large population, obviously it's difficult to communicate these events. Fewer than 6,000 people participated in this mock election even with all the media blasts that occurred, and most of the participants said they heard about it from a friend, not from the media. So the League is trying to help the county registrar by spreading the word about the new machines and voting procedures. [Your newsletter editor learned about the new machines while voting on one in a local municipal election last November 5<sup>th</sup> – and was the only voter in the room at the time.]

Martha gave an in-depth presentation to us in the hopes that each of us would pass it on to 4 or 5 other people. Even the order of items on the ballots has been changed. Instead of presidential and federal congressional candidates being at the top of the ballot, municipal issues and local races are now at the top, with the others further down the ballot. This is to encourage people not to skip over important local and state issues.

There are other firsts in this election. This is the first county-wide use of the new machines, it's the first time you are allowed to vote at any polling place in the county, and early voting is now widespread in the county. Some 250 voting locations planned to open 10 days before election Tuesday; 950 others will be open 3 days before. [Your newsletter editor voted on the weekend before Election Day – and again was the only voter in the room at the time.] The 2016 "Voter's Choice Act" made all these changes possible.

The new touch-screen machines operate totally differently from the old inked-card system. Martha received quite a few nods from members when asked if they were afraid of new technology. But once you've done it, it's like riding a bike – it's easier next time. Many of our members use mail-in ballots, and those full-page forms haven't changed since the last election. If you use the mail-in ballot but aren't able to take it to a polling place

or mail it in yourself (such as being in a nursing home or hospital) make sure you seal it and give it to someone you trust, so it won't be modified before it reaches its destination.

Many of the previous polling places did not meet the requirements of the new system. Rooms must have good electrical availability to power the voting and log-in machines. The new machines take up more physical space than the old booths did and the hosting facility must now be under a more stringent contract. Worker training and certification is more complicated too. Vote centers will generally have 10, 30 or 50 voting machines.

This is a brand new system developed exclusively for L.A. County. It took 10 years to develop. There were no commercially available systems that met all the necessary requirements. It's not a proprietary system, so any other county in the U.S. that chooses to, can adopt the system.

You can now vote at any vote center in the county. A center near your work might be more convenient than one near your home. When asked how that remote voting center knows what ballot you should be receiving based on your home precinct, Martha explained that it's part of the sign-in process. When you sign in, it's now done electronically on an iPad touch screen that is linked to the Registrar's office. They first ask for your name, and if there's more than one person in the county with that name they'll ask for your birthdate. If there are still multiple matches they'll ask for your home address last. You'll then sign on a signature line on the screen. The workers no longer have to look up your name in a big book. They no longer have to verify which party ballot you need – the system already knows. And they are relieved of having to manually cross off addresses on those sheets of street addresses that were posted outside each polling place.

Once the registrar system has determined your home precinct during sign-in, it prints a QR code on the corner of the blank ballot that they hand you. Any ballot machine in the room will understand that code. The machine will display only those items that apply to your local contest as shown on your sample ballot. The ballot machines themselves are stand-alone machines. All the candidate and proposition information is already pre-programmed into every machine in the county, so the voting machine doesn't need to connect to the internet or WiFi and is totally independent. It can't be hacked. And there's an physical paper ballot printed after you've made all your choices so that recounts can be made if required.

Being a computer, it can do simple checking. It won't let you vote for three candidates if "Vote for no more than two" applies to the office. And at the start, you can choose from multiple languages if you're not proficient in English. You can even change the font size if you forgot your reading glasses.

After you hit the "START" button, the screen will prompt you to insert the blank ballot into the ballot holder. It then slurps the ballot into the machine so it can read the QR code on the paper, and print out your choices when you are finished voting. When you're done voting, it temporarily ejects your ballot so you can verify that your choices were printed correctly; then slurps it back into the machine, placing it into a secure storage box for later counting at the ballot center. The ballot has no personal information on it. It can't be traced back to you. The machine doesn't store any of the vote count. All it collects internally is how many ballots it collected. The voting choices are only on the paper ballot.

Martha said to read the screens carefully. They tell you what to do at each step. Some contests have more candidates than can fit on the screen at one time. So there's a "MORE" button that brings up the additional choices.

She then showed a video that highlighted all the new machines and procedures.

For the real techie, they have a method that will shorten your time at the polling place. Anytime before Election Day, you can go on-line at home and transfer your sample ballot choices to an interactive application. That application will generate a special QR code (called a Pole Pass) that you print out on your home computer. When you get to your polling place, the system can read that code and instantly pre-set all your choices on the voting screens. You still have the ability to change your mind on any item before you hit the final button.

Here's some interesting statistics. 85% of eligible adults in Los Angeles County are registered to vote. But less than 30% usually show up to vote even in heavily contested contests. Some recall elections attract only 10%. Our ballots are getting bigger now that some city and local district elections are required to be held on the same date as major state-wide and federal elections. These longer ballots are another good reason to pre-select your choices utilizing the on-line Pole Pass system.

---

The League of Women Voters is located at 65 S. Grand Ave. in Pasadena <https://my.lwv.org/california/pasadena> (626) 798-0965.



Pasadena R.P.E.A. Chapter 7  
c/o Larry Harsha  
1070 Pine Bluff Dr.  
Pasadena,, CA 91107-1750

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Pasadena, CA  
Permit # 740

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



From  
Glendale/  
Burbank

From  
Arcadia/  
Monrovia