

CSU, Fresno Emeriti and Retirees Association

CONNECTIONS

NEWSLETTER #3

Spring 2013

Luncheon Speaker May 10th

The spring luncheon will be held at Marie Calendar's restaurant, located at Cedar & Shaw avenues from 11:00a.m to 2:00p.m. Lunch is free for ERFA members and prospective members. Peter McDonald, the Dean of Library Services at CSU, Fresno, will be the speaker. Following his presentation, a brief Question and Answer session will follow. The formal business meeting will commence by 1:00 p.m. Possible agenda topics are: the introduction of newly elected ERA Officers and the functioning of the Executive Committee, recent CalPERS developments regarding Long Term Care Insurance, the legal challenge to pension integrity at stake for CalPERS in the recent court ruling on Stockton's bankruptcy application; and member concerns and ideas for the ERA chapter going forward.

Mr. McDonald's talk will be on "Libraries in the Digital Age." The focus will be: How the internet is changing the landscape of humanity's historical record. After more than two millennia of written communication on clay, papyrus, parchment, and paper that have provided permanent source material about civilizations, the modern era of computer generated records ("saved" and lost) describing the nature of contemporary societal activity is becoming ephemeral. Therein lies a major challenge facing librarians and scholars in the 21st Century, when computers crash, web sites disappear, email correspondence is erased, and electronic media is displacing print publications. The Dean may also incorporate implications for CSU libraries and how CSU Fresno's library operations and priorities might be affected.

Peter has also indicated his willingness to answer questions about the Henry Madden Library services, including digital access to holdings and external sources as well as staff assistance available to retirees understanding and utilizing the computerized retrieval systems.

Mr. McDonald came to Fresno six years ago from New York state, where he previously served as Associate University Librarian for Collection Services at Syracuse University (1999-2006) and as director of the Frank A. Lee Library at the Geneva Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University (1994-1999). Peter earned his Master of Library Science degree at the University of Washington (1986) and his B.A. Degree at McGill University (1976) in Quebec, Canada. He is the author or co-author of numerous publications; and he has been recognized for outstanding achievements in library science while at Syracuse and Cornell universities.

ERA NEWSLETTER STAFF

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If any member wishes to send any question, concern, or idea about ERA to the executive committee, they should contact Dave Quadro by email: davidq@mail.fresnostate.edu

Exec. Committee Election Results

The election of officers to the Executive Committee of the Emeriti and Retirees Association (ERA) of CSU, Fresno was conducted in late March 2013 in accordance with the newly adopted "Mission and By-laws" of the local chapter of the statewide Emeriti & Retired Faculty Association (ERFA). The Nominations Committee, consisting of John Shields (Chair), Judith Kuipers, and Judith Neal, reviewed the membership list and nominated one person for each elective position.

David Quadro (Communications) was elected President (70 votes). Ron Johnson (Theater Arts) was elected Vice-President (69 votes). Joanne Schroll (Kinesiology) was elected Secretary/Treasurer (69 votes). No write-in votes were cast for any of the positions. 72 ballots were returned from the 132 ERA members to whom ballots were sent -- a 54% voting rate. The new officers assume their duties on July 1, at which time the Executive Committee is empowered to fill the appointed position of Historian-Editor as a member of the Executive Committee. Additional appointments to positions without portfolio on the Executive Committee may be made.

The current Chapter Revitalization Team of volunteers -- consisting of Al Evans (Political Science), Frank Powell (Psychology), Dave Quadro (Communications), John Shields (Agricultural Economics), and William Stock (Student Affairs Research and Evaluation) -- ceases operation on June 30.

PROFILE: Professor Emeritus Richard Haas, Biologist

[Dr. Haas is a biologist, whose career at CSU, Fresno began in 1969. He obtained all his degrees at UCLA, where his Ph.D. dissertation was on Sexual Selection in an East African 'Annual Killifish'. Subsequently, he did related field work for the World Health Organization of the United Nations in Oman, Somalia, Ethiopia, India, Sri Lanka, and Bolivia -- focused on establishing pond fisheries to help control malaria that is carried by mosquitoes. The son of Hungarian immigrants (pre WWI), Richard was raised in New York state. He served in a U.S. Army intelligence unit in West Germany in the early 1950s and returned to Los Angeles, California to teach junior and senior high school biology for ten years. During this period he was recruited to participate in the development of a new national curriculum for teaching biology (sponsored by the National Science Foundation) and then to rewrite the standard curriculum of high school biology for the L.A. School District. His lifetime has also been filled with many and varied activities -- principally photography, sculpture, vegetable gardening, international tour leader, and guest lecturer abroad and at home.]

The retirement activities of Dr. Haas are an extension of his life long passions, which has made his transition from academia seamless and satisfying. He believes this is the key to easing into retiree status, which has allowed him more time than ever to do what he loves. In the artistic realm Dick's personal avocations of photography and sculpture have brought local community recognition. He has had one-man shows at the Spectrum Gallery; and his pictures of people, flowers, and scenery (especially Yosemite) have been on display at Fresno City Hall, the Federal Court House, and the University of California regional office building. Regarding his sculptures, a life-size bronze "Sea Lion & Pup" has just been cast at the foundry in Glendale (after two years in the making) and will soon be set near the entrance to the new Sea Lion Cove exhibit in the Fresno Chaffee Zoo, where Dr. Haas has been teaching basic animal behavior and ecology to docents for 30 years, and still does. His other notable public sculpture is the center piece of the atrium entrance to the new Science Building on the CSU, Fresno campus. Called "The Column" of life (see photo), it illustrates the energy flow through a marine eco-system as a food chain of marine life; and there is also a depiction of multiple forms of animal flight, as well as representations of other major concepts in biological science.



Overseas travel during retirement as a tour leader and guest lecturer has also carried over from his professional life. He has led multiple wildlife trips to the Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica, and Peru as well as safaris to Kenya and Botswana. And he has had guest lectureships in Russia and China.

Finally, ever the teacher, Professor Haas (at the lively age of 83) was instructor of his third short course on biology ("Something Fishy is Going On" about evolution) this spring for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at CSU, Fresno. [See page 4 for information about Osher's program for seniors (age 50 and above).]

TRANSITIONS: Long Term Care Insurance

Many of you received notification from CalPERS (dated March 22) of impending increases to your current Long Term Care (LTC) insurance premiums. A chart of "Average Costs of (different types) of Care in California 2012" was included. Seven options for LTC insurance coverage were presented in a matrix of benefits (types and levels). Policyholders face difficult decisions for maintaining or reducing benefits to make premiums affordable or even letting their insurance policy lapse. The intent herein is to identify factors and pose questions found in published retirement literature that might be relevant to your individual analysis of the options and your evaluation of the tradeoffs involved in your choices.

[NOTE: A federal law enacted in 2006 enables states to establish programs that ease a major financial concern of those purchasing LTC insurance. Buyers of LTC policies lacking lifetime coverage worry that benefits could run out and force them to draw down assets to a very low level before qualifying for LTC under the safety net of Medicaid. The program is called "Partnership for Long Term Care" (Wall Street Journal, April 24, 2007). It is a public-private LTC arrangement that was implemented in California in 2007. "CalPERS also offers a partnership policy to public employees, retirees, and their families" (San Francisco Chronicle, May 29, 2011). {Contact the California Department of Health Care Services, which administers Medi-Cal; in other states call the Insurance Commission office or alternatively contact the American Association for Long Term Care Insurance at www.ahca.org/brief/lcapp. to determine whether your state has such a program.} If you buy a "Partnership qualified policy", you will know up front how much more of your personal savings you would be allowed to preserve. Essentially, for every dollar your LTC policy pays out in nursing home benefits during the minimum years of coverage required, you can EXCLUDE a dollar from the Medi-Cal eligibility formula – thus keeping more of your savings intact for other living expenses. CAUTION: Due to the on-going budget crisis, many states are slashing Medicaid; so check whether this partnership program is still operating.]

- (1) Reassess your personal circumstances and prospects now, compared to your estimated needs for protection when you signed up for LTC insurance. This is analogous to periodically reviewing your investment portfolio and rebalancing the mix of stock, bonds, treasuries, etc. as you age.
- (2) Don't make your decision based on how much you have already paid (i.e., "wasted") in premiums. Those payments provided the protection you needed until now. Rather, focus on evaluating the benefits versus costs of continuing or adjusting your LTC coverage, as if you were buying a new policy.
- (3) Some major private insurance companies offer hybrid life insurance policies with a linked LTC benefit rider for 6 years of coverage that can also include compensation for a family member who performs parental care at home. LTC insurance through a life insurance policy is supposedly cheaper than a standalone LTC insurance policy and it is easier to obtain.
- (4) Consider the possibility of reducing benefit coverage and self-insuring out of personal savings for the remaining protection desired. Alternatively, you could purchase an annuity, which starts payments in the future that would cover expenses of LTC after the time limit expires for insurance policy benefits. A reverse home mortgage for both spouses jointly is another possibility.
- (5) Consult with a fee-based financial advisor to assess your financial situation in terms of developing an overall financial security plan that would include provision of appropriate and affordable LTC insurance.
- (6) Determine whether you really need LTC insurance. According to many analysts, if your net worth (not including your house) is over a certain amount (1.5 to 2.0 million dollars) you probably don't need a LTC policy. {Note: The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College estimated in 2010 that \$197,000 is

what a typical married couple at age 65 should expect to spend on uninsured health care costs over the remainder of their lifetimes. This does not include institutionalized nursing home care expenses. The figure rises to \$260,000 if nursing home cost is included.}

(7) Reassess the risk you are willing to take with lower LTC benefits, especially giving up lifetime coverage. Various actuarial studies indicate that only 8 of 100 LTC insurance claimants with a 3-year benefit period exhausted their coverage, and that the average time spent in a nursing home is about 3 years. Americans who live to age 65 have a 40 percent chance of entering a nursing home; but 25 percent of those over 85 do. One study found that only 3.6 percent of the claims filed for nursing homes, assisted living and home services were for care that lasted 4 – 5 years; and 4.3 percent were for care lasting more than five years. In 76.7 percent of claims, the care lasted less than 2 years. These findings might be affected by how stringent the LTC insurance policy eligibility rules are for specific types and levels of care.

(8) "Dementia and stroke have been the leading cause of CalPERS claims, accounting for 44 percent of all payouts (Los Angeles Times, February 22, 2013). Physical disabilities from injury and debilitation from aging are other risks. The PBS News Hour broadcast a segment on senility (Thursday April 4, 2013) and referred listeners to an on-line test called "Assessing Your Risk for Alzheimer's." Go to <www.PBS.org>.

(9) Do you have LTC insurance for the right reason? Preserving assets for an inheritance or payment of grandchildren's college tuition may not be warranted. However, protecting your kids against having to assume the financial burden of your elder care is a more rational justification.

(10) Initiate conversations with nuclear and extended family members about their realistic ability and likely willingness to provide the financial resources and/or personal time to meet a range of your future elder care assistance needs.

(11) Commit to taking action now to avoid having to be unnecessarily institutionalized by preparing your home to live safely and independently (and cheaper) in the future. Invest in minor remodels such as installing grab bars in showers and bathrooms to help avoid falls (a major cause of disability in the elderly) and widen doorways to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. Look into other home modifications and monitoring technologies to assist the elderly. Identify local government and non-profit agencies that provide elderly assistance services now, instead of leaving it until the time of crisis later on.

(12) Build a social network of friends that in times of emergency and can render assistance to you until your family members can arrive from distant locations and arrange proper care for you. Remember, your LTC policy probably has a 90-day deductible period before benefits start. Such a network can minimize your out-of-pocket expenses in the short term. Single friends in particular are even creating non-binding social pacts of mutual understandings and obligations to help each other in times of need.

OSHA Lifelong Learning Institute

The CSU, Fresno chapter of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute offers seniors (age 50 and above) daytime opportunities for intellectual stimulation and practical endeavors that range in presentation from General Session lectures (7 talks) to Short Courses (15) as well as field trips (6) each semester of the academic calendar year. In Spring 2013 the General membership cost is \$65 (single) or \$110 (couple). Nominal fees are charged for Short Courses (\$35 per person for 3 or 4 meetings of 90 minutes) and Field Trips (prices vary by destination and distance). The Osher program is administered by the CSU, Fresno Division of Continuing and Global Education. CONTACT INFORMATION: Internet www.csufresno.edu/olli; Email osher@csufresno.edu; Phone (559) 278-0008.