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***"Don't forget Where You Put  
Your PARA-phernalia."***

**See Latest  
PARA News &  
Join or Renew  
Membership  
Online at  
[www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)**

## Co-Presidents' Message

The headline of this article is a perfect lead-in for our news. At its July 12 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to approve a Bylaw amendment for an Officer's position to be shared. Accordingly and with the Board's approval, we succeeded Karen Eastman, our outgoing President, as Co-Presidents. We thank Karen very much for serving as President, and continuing on the Board of Directors.

The Website Committee has been working hard on the new features that you can take advantage of — and we hope that you do! — on our website, [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org). If you have not yet visited it, we encourage you to do so, since there is so much information there about benefits, news, and what draws us together as a community post-Port Authority and PATH.

This leads to another announcement, a big one, that is brand new for PARA members. The website now offers an online dues payment option! Yes, at long last. We heard from many of you who are no longer writing many checks, and who wanted to be able to pay your dues online. Please see the article about online payments on page two for more information. Many details and testing went into its development, and we are optimistic that it will help make being a dues-paying member of PARA much easier.

Another announcement is that Michael Shannon and Kevin Lejda joined the Board of Directors. We are very honored to have their respective experience and perspective. Mike took on the position as Treasurer from Bob Isaacs, who managed everything from collecting checks to vetting votes to monitoring the bank account and billings, for more than twelve years. Bob, continuing in his spirit of generosity, agreed to serve as Assistant Treasurer. Kevin's vast experience in all things PATH will provide much needed support for such things as benefits information, and has joined the Benefits Committee, chaired by Rita DuBrow. Please take a few minutes to read Michael's and Kevin's bios in this issue. You can access all the Directors' bios at the bottom of each PARA website page under "Board of Directors."

Now we get to something very sad, and it is about Joe SanSevero, PARA's intrepid and singular webmaster, who died on May 29. Please see a tribute to him on page eight. We keep discovering how much he did behind the scenes, self-propelled and all voluntary, for his fellow retirees. We miss him every day.

We thank each of you for being a part of PARA, and we wish you and your family a healthy, safe and happy holiday season and new year. The PARA Board and we wish you all a safe and joyous holiday season and a healthy new year.

**Rae Ann Hoffmann   Maria Malone-Hodges**  
**Co-Presidents**

## Officers & Board of Directors

### Past Presidents

Harold A Milley (1987-1993)

Al Rubbert (1994-2003)

Richard Helman (2004-2011)

Dave Gallagher (2012-2021)

Karen Eastman (2021-2023)

Rae Ann Hoffmann, Co-President  
Maria Malone-Hodges, Co-President

Michael Shannon, Treasurer

Jerrilyn Raczynski, Secretary

Holly Blausner

Steve Borrelli

Elizabeth DeLaura

Frank DiMola

Rita DuBrow

Dave Gallagher

Al Graser

Cynthia Hadley-Bailey

Bob Isaacs

Arnold Karvasarsky

Kirby King

Richard Lee

Kevin Lejda

Dennis Lombardi

Frank Lombardi

Michael Morrow

George Murtagh

Ken Philmus

Peter Rinaldi

Herb Somerwitz

Donna Tucker

Louis P. Venech

Keith Walcott

[www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)

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## Time to Pay Your 2024 PARA Dues

### Pay by Credit Card (Preferred) ~ Pay by Check

Your annual PARA dues, \$20 per year with additional contributions welcome, are due by January 1, 2024. As part of our website development initiative, you now can pay your annual dues online using a credit card. PARA accepts Mastercard, Visa, and Discover cards. Paying by credit card is quick, simple, and secure. We hope you will find it much easier than writing a check, adding a stamp, and putting it in the mail.

***You must set up a secure member account to enable credit card payment, as well as to review and update your member profile.***

#### To Pay by Credit Card:

- Visit the PARA website at [www.paranynj.org/members](http://www.paranynj.org/members)
- Please log in – your email address is your Username
- See the FAQ instructions for your temporary password and reset after logging in
- Click - \$ Pay Dues
- Enter requested information (Enter credit card number without hyphens or spaces)

#### To Pay by Check:

As in prior years, members can continue to pay by check via US mail, using the envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

For your 2024 dues payment, send your check using the enclosed envelope, and **please add your email address** on the form inside the envelope flap so PARA can add that information to the database. Providing your email address will facilitate future dues payments online at your option, receive PARA eBulletins when there is time-sensitive information about benefit issues and other Port Authority retiree concerns, and in the future, allow access to some information on our website that will be available only to dues-paying members. For any questions about your information in PARA's database, please see the privacy statement at [www.paranynj.org/privacy](http://www.paranynj.org/privacy).



**The Port Authority family marked the 22nd anniversary of the 9/11 attacks with the annual service at St. Peter's Church near the World Trade Center. On September 7th, Chairman Kevin O'Toole and Executive Director Rick Cotton joined employees and retirees on the Memorial Plaza for the Rose Service, a new yearly tradition introduced as part of the 20th anniversary commemoration in 2021.**

# Board Highlights

***Before beginning this report, I would like to say that I will be resigning the position of PARA Secretary after the April 2024 meeting. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as Secretary for the past 12 years. As a result, PARA will be in need of a replacement. During my tenure I have transformed the PARA by-laws from a typewritten document to a digital version for ease of access and amendment. The Secretary's responsibilities in addition to writing these newsletter articles include taking the meeting minutes and maintaining the official PARA files. If anyone is interested in this Board position, or would like to discuss this further, please contact me at jerriraz@gmail.com. I would be happy to fill you in. I plan to remain on the Board.***

The quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors were held on April 19 and July 12, 2023, respectively. Highlights of the April meeting are as follows: Treasurer Isaacs reported no unusual expenditures for the quarter. PARA income is steady. Some investment moves were made to ascertain a better return on investment. These moves and all new investments are safe and insured.

Director Venech reported that a follow-up book to *Empire on the Hudson*, entitled *Mobilizing the Metropolis: How the Port Authority Built New York*, which was to be co-authored by Jim Doig prior to his passing, is being concluded by authors Jen Nelles and Phillip Plotch. This book focuses on the last several decades of Port Authority history. Director Walcott reported that FOX is in the process of filming a drama series about the Port Authority Police, which should be coming out soon.

Director DuBrow reported a slow quarter for benefit inquiries. All Medicare Part B payments have been made and there were very few complaints. PA Benefits is still working on ways to handle calls more effectively. It appears the roll-out of the Retiree Portal has stalled but she will continue to follow-up with HR as always. It is important when contacting HR to use email rather than phone communication so there is always a record of the request. The HR contact information will be contained in every newsletter.

Director Borrelli reported that the retirement system has changed many of its forms and will make sure the website is up to date with this information. Director Hadley-Bailey continues to attend all PA and Police pre-retirement seminars and has gotten results. The Port Authority has lowered the age for seminar attendance from 50 to 45. Director Blauser reported that Rich Hellenbrecht has resigned from the Board and John Fitzpatrick will be leaving shortly. Kirby King has joined the Board to fill Rich Hellenbrecht's position.

Director F. Lombardi introduced Paul Finkel and Polly Wolf of Potomac Digitek, who gave the Board a virtual tour of the new website and answered questions. Marie Juliette Liebetrau, one of the new owners of the company, thanked

Director Hoffmann for her leadership of this monumental effort. Director Lombardi reported that Phase I came in well within budget and the contractor is ready to begin work on Phase II. The Board then approved a resolution approving Potomac Digitek to begin Phase II at a cost of \$25,000 (which includes contingencies). Phase II will include an on-line dues payment component and an online membership directory component. Future operations and maintenance costs will be approved by the Board when requested.

At the July 12 meeting, Director Isaacs reported that 23 percent of the membership voted. The election results were approved. They include the following: Directors for terms of three years: Gallagher, F. Lombardi, Hoffmann, Blauser, Rinaldi, Borrelli, D. Lombardi, Walcott, Venech and King. The following Board officers were approved for a term of one year or until superseded: co-Presidents Hoffmann and Malone-Hodges, Secretary Raczyński, Treasurer Isaacs and Assistant Treasurer Cutler.

Director Malone-Hodges reported that Karen Eastman will resign from the presidency but will remain on the Board. As a result, the by-laws were amended to provide for co-Presidents to be appointed. The Board then approved the appointment of Rae Ann Hoffmann and Maria Malone-Hodges as co-Presidents. The Vice-President position will remain vacant at this time.

Director Venech reported that progress is being made coordinating the contents of the newsletter with the new website. He also reported that he met the son of Austin Tobin, who agreed to meet with him again and share recollections for a newsletter article. Director Hoffmann reported that the new website went "live" on May 1. Director King reported that while Phase I covered primarily format, Phase II will cover functionality and will allow PARA to track membership, payment status, and to accept electronic dues payments. Mail payments will continue to be accepted as well.

Director Somerwitz reminded the Board that under the

***Continued page 4***

# New Board Members

This summer, PARA's Board approved welcomed two new Directors as part of its commitment to sustain essential organizational functions and to improve the expertise available to serve all its members. Michael Shannon has agreed to serve as PARA Treasurer, succeeding Bob Isaacs. Kevin Lejda brings the knowledge of his long career at PATH, strengthening PARA's ability to support PATH retirees and to address their distinct benefits issues.



**Kevin Lejda** began his Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) career in 1981 as a facility clerk in the Way and Structures Division. Shortly after he was promoted into the Transportation Division. During his 39 years of service, he held numerous represented and management positions in rail operations. His titles included Conductor, Engineer, Train Dispatcher/ Terminal Supervisor, Trainmaster, Operations Analyst, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent of Transportation Construction and Operations Planning. For the last 21 years of his career in Superintendent positions, Kevin led more than 400 employees of the Transportation Division in day-to-day rail operations and through challenges brought about by September 11, rebuilding of the temporary and permanent World Trade Center PATH stations, Superstorm Sandy flooding, labor negotiations, and the construction and commissioning of PATH's state-of-the-art Communication-Based-Train-Control System.

In recognition by his peers, Kevin received the 2016 Pillar of the Port Authority Award for career service, commitment to public service, honor and integrity, strength, and resilience. Asked what he was most proud of, his response: "career perfect attendance." He retired in 2021 and participates in the program of part-time employees as an advisor to the PATH management team.



**Michael Shannon** began his Port Authority career in 1985. He enjoyed 37 years holding many financial management positions within the Comptrollers, Treasury, and Management & Budget departments. He also held financial manager positions for PATH and Aviation line departments. In 2017 through his retirement in 2023, Michael served in the Aviation Department as the Manager, Aviation Financial Service for New Jersey Airports supporting both Newark Liberty and Teterboro airports. As a recent Port Authority retiree, Michael looks forward to many opportunities ahead. This includes staying in contact with the many Port Authority colleagues and friends he has worked with over the years; joining other organizations; and staying active through golf, pickleball, and cycling.

## Board Highlights - continued from page 3

by-laws, that the only dues-paying membership benefit is to vote. All other information is available to all paid and unpaid members. It is now proposed that most of the website information be restricted to dues-paying members only. Prior to adoption, members will be notified and apprised of their dues status and given time to become current. This information will also be available upon individual sign-in to the website. The Board then adopted Operating Rules for the new website.

Director DuBrow reported that she continues to speed the responsiveness of HR to inquiries, but the lack of attention is frustrating. She will continue to address this issue with HR. Director Hadley-Bailey reported that she has been successful in her recruitment effort which is ongoing. She and Director Malone-Hodges continue to attend the pre-retirement seminars. Director Malone-Hodges asked for volunteers for this year's Remembrance Through Renewal program. She has also joined the New York State RPEA (Retired Public Employees Association) to keep abreast of issues that may affect PARA's constituency.

Director Hoffmann spoke about our dear friend and colleague Joe SanSevero, who recently passed away, and acknowledged all his help and innovative creations. He developed the first PARA website, not because he was asked to do so but because he thought it was needed. He did this out of the goodness of his heart. He used his own money on most of it and, although PARA provided an annual honorarium, it never covered all his costs. For Joe, it was a labor of love, and PARA loved and appreciated him for it and for the wonderful friend and colleague he was. Director Karvasarsky proposed giving this year's honorarium to DonorsChoose, the charity of Joe's choice. The Board then approved a donation of \$2000 in his name to DonorsChoose. Director DeLaura was thanked for her time and help in maintaining the In-Memoriam portion of the website during the transition.

# Sharing WTC History for Future Generations



**Peter Rinaldi recounts slurry-wall history for WTC Museum docents**

For nearly all *PARA-Phernal* readers, the 1993 bombing at the World Trade Center and the 9/11 attacks are dramatic living memories. But as older generations move on and new ones take their place, these increasingly are historical events without the vivid recollection and emotional impact of these tragedies or the inspiring story of recovery and renewal at the complex.

Many Port Authority retirees and employees volunteer to keep these memories fresh for our neighbors and visitors to our region. Among them, retired PANYNJ Assistant Director of Engineering, Peter Rinaldi, continues to share his unique firsthand experiences from years of work at the original WTC and involvement in both the urgent structural repairs following 1993 bombing and then the recovery and reconstruction of the World Trade Center after 9/11.

"I realize that the firsthand knowledge acquired through these experiences is important to share so that it is passed on for future generations," Rinaldi explained. "The crowd is thinning out. Each passing year, fewer of us are available to tell these stories as participants, so I'll keep doing this while I still can."


This year alone, Peter was among guest speakers at a dinner benefiting the WTC Memorial and Museum, which marked the 30th anniversary of the 1993 bombing. He shared his story of escaping with colleagues from a stalled elevator. This fall he described the history and preservation of the WTC slurry wall to a new cadre of docents at the museum. He returned recently to provide a history of the World Trade Center from its inception to the present.

Rinaldi also addresses the incoming class at New York University's Tandon

School of Engineering every year with an account of the original construction and then the reconstruction of the World Trade Center complex. "This is a very compelling, real-world story that I use to describe the skills and thinking that goes into engineering work, and the coordination of diverse disciplines – structural, mechanical, geotech, electrical, and so forth. It encourages them to keep deepening their studies."

"My World Trade Center history started in 1973 as an engineering trainee, I worked on some of the remaining construction tasks at the complex as the Port Authority relocated to its new headquarters. "Now it's come full circle," Rinaldi reflected on his educational mission, "The events become history, and we become history."

# FOR YOUR BENEFIT



*As in prior years, we are providing information this fall to remind retirees who are eligible for the Medicare Part B Reimbursement Program (eligibility criteria are explained in the letter below) to apply for their benefits by March 31, 2024. The HR Benefits Customer Care & Solutions Division has provided the letter below as a reminder.*

*Although there have been fewer issues with the reimbursement process recently, some of the Wageworks accounts have been underfunded as Medicare B amounts continually change, preventing correct reimbursements. HR suggests that retirees review their Wageworks Accounts. If the funding is not correct please submit a copy of the Social Security or RRB Benefit Verification letter to [HR\\_EmployeeBenefits@panynj.gov](mailto:HR_EmployeeBenefits@panynj.gov) so your account can be updated with the correct amount. You can direct other questions or issues to the same email address.*

*PARA appreciates the support of HR staff in assisting PA/PATH retirees during this process. The HR benefits team is available to our retirees and their eligible dependents through the dedicated email address above or at (212) 435-2870 Monday through Friday 9 AM-5 PM.*

## Medicare Part B Reimbursement - Account Review

If you or your dependent spouse are enrolled in Medicare Part B, this is a reminder that the annual deadline for your 2023 Medicare Part B Premium reimbursement expires on March 31, 2024. Claims received on or after April 1, 2024, will not be processed.

Please review your account to ensure your funding amount is correct. If your account was funded incorrectly, please submit a copy of the Social Security or RRB Benefit Verification letter for you and your spouse. The letter must include the amount you and your spouse were charged for Medicare Part B premiums for 2023. If your account is correct, no action is required.

**Note: There is no reimbursement for Medicare Part D.**

To be eligible, you must meet all the following:

1. Retired after July 1, 2000; and
2. Retired as a Port Authority/PATH permanent non-represented employee, including Field Police (FP), or a member of the FM or FS Unions; and
3. Are age 65 or older (a dependent spouse is not eligible until the retiree turns 65)

To review your account, or to create an account with Health Equity, please log onto [www.healthequity.com](http://www.healthequity.com) and refer to the attached Health Equity guide for further instructions.

As a reminder, you must submit one of the following acceptable documents showing proof of your Medicare Part B premium:

- 2023 Benefit Verification Letter or
- 2023 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Letter

**\*Please note:** RRB retirees must submit a copy of their Benefit Verification Letter or COLA letter to receive reimbursements. To obtain a current Benefit Verification or COLA letter please contact the Railroad Retirement Board at 877-772-5772. For all other members, please contact the Social Security Administration at [www.ssa.gov/manage-benefits/get-benefit-letter.com](http://www.ssa.gov/manage-benefits/get-benefit-letter.com).

Your Health Equity account is funded based on your Medicare Part B premiums. You must provide us with any updates regarding your Medicare Part B to receive the correct funding. Please email us at [HR\\_EmployeeBenefits@panynj.gov](mailto:HR_EmployeeBenefits@panynj.gov) with your updated information or questions regarding your Medicare Part B funding.

HR Benefits | Benefits Customer Care & Solutions | Human Resources

# Did You Know PATH Employees Work Under the Railroad Retirement System?

*By Kevin Lejda*

*In the 1930s, federal legislation was enacted to establish a retirement system for railroad employees separate from the Social Security Act of 1935, recognizing the particular circumstances of the rail industry. While the Railroad Retirement system has remained separate from Social Security, the two systems are closely coordinated regarding earnings credits, benefit payments, and taxes.*

## Some Key Differences

Full age retirement annuities are payable at age 60 to railroad workers with 30 years of service. For those with less than 30 years of service, reduced annuities are payable at age 62 and unreduced annuities are payable at full retirement age, which is gradually rising from 65 to 67. Annuities are also payable to spouses and divorced spouses of retired workers, widowers, surviving divorced spouses, and remarried widowers. Qualified railroad retirement beneficiaries receive Railroad Medicare coverage at age 65 just like Social Security beneficiaries. However, covered railroad retirees should ensure healthcare providers understand you have Railroad Medicare to avoid billing problems.

Railroad Retirement annuity benefits are structured into two tiers to coordinate them with Social Security benefits. Tier I is based on credits, using Social Security benefit formulas. However, Tier II is based on railroad service only, and generally provides a higher level of benefits than Social Security.

## Current Connection Important for Railroad Retirement Benefits

Maintaining a current connection with the railroad industry is one of the important eligibility requirements for annuities payable by Railroad Retirement. How is a current connection determined? A current connection determination is made when an employee files for a Railroad Retirement annuity. To meet the current connection requirement, an employee must generally have been credited with railroad service in at least 12 months of the 30 months immediately preceding the month his or her railroad retirement annuity begins. Full or part-time work for a (nonrailroad) employer in the interval between the end of the last 30-month period and the month an employee's annuity begins can break a current connection, even with minimal earnings. A current connection determines whether the Railroad Board or the Social Security Administration will pay monthly benefits, which are generally larger when paid by the Railroad Board.



*The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board website at <https://rrb.gov> provides important information regarding employment under the Railroad Retirement System. PATH employees nearing retirement and PATH retirees with questions about benefits can contact Port Authority Human Resources at [hr\\_employeebenefits@panynj.gov](mailto:hr_employeebenefits@panynj.gov) for assistance.*

## Check Out Working Advantage Discounts

Port Authority employees and retirees can take advantage of hundreds of discounts at stores, theaters, theme parks, and more through Working Advantage, the PA's Employee Discount Program partner. Visit [www.workingadvantage.com](http://www.workingadvantage.com) and use the PA Member ID number, 405042634.

## Explore PARA Website's Expanded Features

- **Comprehensive** Benefits Contact Information and Benefits FAQ
- Details on Regular **Retiree Gatherings** in PA Region & Florida
- Links for Additional Background on Most **In Memoriam** Entries
- **PA News** – Bi-Weekly Highlights of Staff and Agency Achievements

# Remembering Our Friend, Joe SanSevero

Who didn't know Joe? Perhaps there are some in the Port Authority community who didn't, but his reach went very far. Joe's legacy was the website he hand-built in html, published in 2006, for the Port Authority Retirees Association. As more and more people continued to contact him with all sorts of questions, he responded by researching the answers and then adding new information to his website. And it really was *his* website. He cared for it almost every day, and did so spurred on by his own passion to help his fellow retirees and their families, entirely on a voluntary basis. He also could not



help but dive into technical and personal problems that got to him via phone, email or the website. When the PARA Board broached the subject with him of how to run a website without him, needing him to work side-by-side with us was a intensive transition period. In the end, he was a key member of PARA's Website Committee and managed to see the new PARA website, built in a way that could be sustained by the Board, go live on May 1. He died on May 29. He was indeed one of a kind. (Joe's obituary is on the 2023 page of In Memoriam on PARA's website, [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org).)

## Those We Have Lost (In Memoriam)

*Names of deceased include those reported to PARA as of November 1, 2023*

William Augustine Nurthen II	10/31/2023	Winifred (Dalton) Kelly	7/14/23
Charles A. Dorrell	10/22/23	Dwight Woodson	7/6/23
Ralph S. Mantello	10/15/23	James R. Sullivan	7/4/23
Saul Wenegrat	10/10/23	Charles (Charlie) Linden	7/3/23
Joanne Carol Drum	10/5/23	James (Jim) Grismer	7/3/23
John Lynch	9/28/23	Sandra Dean	June 2023
Jayson Ortiz	9/27/23	Alvin Ray	6/28/23
Michael Fleming	9/26/23	Anthony J. Carlesi	6/24/23
Angelo Bonura	9/25/23	John (Jay) McGowan	6/24/23
Bernard Gunsiorowski	9/12/23	Anthony Jones	6/21/23
Charles Fausti	8/24/23	Andre (Andy) Volkoff	6/19/23
Louis P. Cenci	8/10/23	John J. Regan, Jr.	6/13/23
John T. Huber	8/9/23	John Lema	6/9/23
Laura DiLullo-DeLuca	8/8/23	Joe SanSevero	5/29/23
Marjorie Jean Giovaniello	8/4/23	James W. Munday	5/17/23
Marie M. Flores	8/3/23	Zenaida R. Deguilla	5/16/23
Tom Lee	7/25/23	Donald L. Fagely	5/14/23
Marc R. Bailey	7/21/23	Richard Cravello	5/9/2023
Alex Velez	7/20/23	Christina Mariano	May 2023
Lewis Maciocia	7/16/23		

**Go to the "Contact PARA" page on [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org) and send us information of any recent retiree deaths. You can get more information for most entries by going to <https://www.paranynj.org/in-memoriam/2023/> and clicking on a specific name. Follow additional links in the In Memoriam section for older listings.**