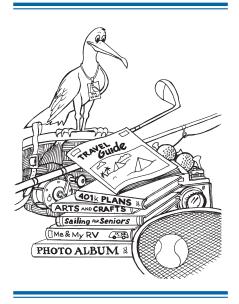
PORT AUTHORITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION, INC.

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



# **A Message From Your President**

## 2022 Goal: Expand Membership and Services

As I come up on my first year as President of PARA, I am looking back at our history, at how much has changed, where we are today, and where we might be going in the next few years. PARA is more than 30-years-old and continues to be run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, with no staff. It speaks to a dedication to help others in the Port Authority community of retirees, using our collective knowledge to advocate on behalf of this community.

So very much has changed over these more than three decades, such as how we communicate and do business in our daily lives. Back then, who would have ever thought that a pocket-sized device would serve as the keeper of our cherished family photos? Many other aspects of our lives have changed dramatically, accompanying the advances in communication technology. Banking, filing forms, updating contact information, getting news feeds, exchanging updates with family and friends, shopping for just about anything and many other activities of daily life have moved to online transactions.

Trends, accelerated by the COVID pandemic, also include online interviews for job applicants, virtual staff meetings, and online pre-retirement seminars at the Port Authority, as well as moving current employees to an automated system for updating their own contact and benefits information through a secure online portal. This isn't unusual, of course. Lots of organizations have been doing this for years. Many of us use online access for Social Security, Medicare, banking and other financial matters, changes of address etc. Keeping the personal touch, which was such a meaningful and significant part of our century-old Port Authority culture, is difficult. This is something that the PARA Board has tried its best to maintain in our relationship with its members.

This newsletter is an example of sticking with traditional media in the form of a printed newsletter, sent via post, twice a year. It is costly, but we think it is worth the extra cost and effort to reach you all in a more concrete way. Sixteen years ago our volunteer webmaster, Joe SanSevero, created PARA's website (<a href="https://www.paranynj.org">www.paranynj.org</a>) which retirees rely on for benefits forms, benefits explanations, contact information, news, PARA newsletters, bulletins, PA News archives, and the *In Memoriam* posts and archive. Nearly 12 years ago, we launched our eBulletins as a way to send time-sensitive news that couldn't wait for the print and mailing cycles of *PARA-phernalia*.

# 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, President Rae Ann Hoffmann, Vice President Maria Malone-Hodges, Vice President Bob Isaacs, Treasurer Jerrilyn Raczynski, Secretary Holly Blauser Steve Borrelli Elizabeth DeLaura Frank DiMola Rita DuBrow John Fitzpatrick Dave Gallagher Al Graser Cynthia Hadley-Bailey Rich Hellenbrecht Arnold Karvasarsky Richard Lee Dennis Lombardi Frank Lombardi Michael Morrow George Murtagh Ken Philmus Peter Rinaldi Herb Somerwitz Donna Tucker Louis P. Venech

## www.paranynj.org

**Keith Walcott** 



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## **President's Message** - continued from page 1

Thanks to Board Director Rita DuBrow and her recently formed committee, we now have a special *For Your Benefit* feature in each newsletter, which includes contributions from the Port Authority's Human Resources Department. This feature is fully vetted to ensure that accurate information is communicated to the retiree community.

In this issue you will find an insert with the annual ballot to re-elect Directors to the PARA Board. Please use this opportunity to make sure your dues are current so you can vote, and to update all of your contact information, including your email address, so you aren't missing out on PARA news. Thank you very much for being part of PARA's member community and for encouraging fellow retirees and current employees about to retire to become members.

Karen Eastman, President

## **Are Your Dues Still Due?**

PARA dues (a very reasonable \$10 per year, with additional contributions welcome) are payable throughout the year on a calendar year basis. This newsletter mailing includes a dues remittance card, which you can enclose with your check when you return your election ballot. Only members who have paid their 2022 dues are eligible to vote. Unsure if you've paid your dues for this year? Just go to the PARA website (https://paranynj.org/Dues/Index.htm) and click the link at the bottom of the page. This will generate an email to PARA's Treasurer requesting your dues status. Thanks for your continued support of PARA.

### **Call for Volunteers**

The Board of Directors manages PARA's work through several member committees and efforts by individual volunteers. It has no paid staff. Currently, we are looking for additional PARA members who can contribute their professional expertise on a volunteer basis in two key areas: financial management and communications technology.

New volunteer retirees would join forces with the members of Communications and Website Technology committees or assist the Treasurer, who manages PARA's finances and membership records. Volunteers would work not only to help craft a doable agenda, but also assist in executing the initiatives. PARA plans to expand the volunteer corps soon to assist on other operating committees, such as Benefits, Membership, and Publications. If you would like to sign up to offer your services or have any questions, please write us at para@paranynj.org.

# **Election of PARA Board Members**

# It's that time of the year again, when you get to vote for your members of the PARA Board of Directors.

#### Re-elections

*Up for re-election for three-year terms are:* 

Bob Isaacs, Arnold Karvasarsky, Maria Malone-Hodges, Mike Morrow George Murtagh, Ken Philmus, Jerri Raczynski, Herb Somerwitz, Karen Eastman

Members who have paid their dues for 2022 on or before June 30, 2022 are entitled to cast their vote. The names of the candidates up for re-election, as well as their proposed term of office, are listed on the enclosed Official Proxy Ballot Card on which you can indicate your vote for all, some, or none of the candidates, or you can submit a write-in candidate of your choice if the individual is a member in good standing. Just return your completed ballot in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope, which must be RECEIVED by June 30, 2022. If you have not already paid your 2022 annual dues, you must include your check along with

your ballot for your vote to be counted. We always encourage members to exercise their right to vote and to play an active role in PARA.

The Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, July 13, 2022 at 9:30 AM. Please let us know if you plan to attend by June 20, 2022, by mailing us notice at PARA, P.O. Box 67, Old Bridge, NJ 08857, or by email to para@paranynj.org, no later than June 30, 2022.

# **Up-to-Date Address Listings: Your Critical Link**

Keeping your postal mail and email addresses current is a vital but too often neglected task for ensuring that you receive information important for your finances, health care, and other issues. Take a moment to be sure your mailing and email addresses are up to date with all the resources important to you, including the following if applicable:

- ♦ Social Security Administration/Railroad Retirement
- ♦ Retirement System Account
- ♦ Medicare
- ♦ UHC Retiree Health
- ♦ MetLife Dental

- **♦** Express Scripts
- ♦ Prudential Life Insurance
- ♦ PANYNJ Human Resources
- ◆ PARA

See our website, www.paranynj.org, for links to the benefits resources listed above. To update your address with Port Authority Human Resources, download the address-change form from the "Forms" page of the PARA website, fill it out and sign it (signature required). Scan or take a clear photo of the completed form and email it to Employee Benefits at hr\_employeebenefits@panynj.gov. Alternatively, mail the signed form to The Port Authority of NY & NJ, 150 Greenwich Street, 4 WTC, Human Resources Department, Floor 16, New York, NY 10007. Attn: Benefits Customer Care & Solutions Division. Phone number is 1-212-435-2870 and fax is 1-212-435-2871.

We especially urge that you keep your PARA information current. We see a steady trickle of returned newsletters from members who have relocated without sending a post card or email with their new address. Our having an email address for you is becoming more important, as we look forward to sending eBulletins on benefit issues and PANYNJ developments of concern to retirees. Send updated addresses to the P.O. number or the Treasurer's email under the "Dues" heading in the box on Page 2. If you are paying 2022 dues along with the PARA election enclosures, you can update your address on the dues-remittance card.

# **Board Highlights**

Both the October 14, 2021 and the January 10, 2022 Quarterly Meetings of the Board of Directors were held via Zoom technology. Highlights of the October meeting are as follows: Maria Malone-Hodges was appointed to fill the second Vice-President position of PARA and joins Vice-President Rae Ann Hoffmann in the disposition of those responsibilities. Treasurer Isaacs reported a first-quarter expense of \$5,000 which is the honorarium for our webmaster. Earnings on investments are low due to low interest rates. Otherwise, there was nothing out of the ordinary for this quarter.

The insurance policy on PARA Directors and Officers has been paid. Director Hoffmann suggested an operating directive regarding retainage of the insurance policy and Director Somerwitz suggested a compilation of annual memberships and dues so the Board can approve a resolution continuing those memberships and dues payments. This will be done at the next meeting.

President Eastman reported that the newsletter will contain information regarding the ordering of centennial coins, books, and other pertinent Centennial information noteworthy to retirees. Directors Hoffmann, Isaacs and DeLaura are putting together a list of members with emails and contact information and will try to update all membership information and status changes so that we can reach as many retirees as possible with information. Director Malone-Hodges continues to promote PARA membership to potential retirees. Director Hoffmann reported that the new website status is ongoing. There are several tasks needing completion in order to continue this process and this is being worked on.

Director DuBrow has had several Zoom meetings with PA Human Resource staff regarding the new retiree Benefits Portal which HR is trying to establish. This will permit retirees to access important information and get reminders of deadlines for processing certain benefit programs. As part of this process, the Service Delivery area will be eliminated and will be replaced by "HR Connect," which will handle non-benefit related issues and "Benefits," which will handle Medicare, Wellness (claims, health and dental issues, life insurance) and retirement issues. The Benefits Division will be managed by Stella Cicchetti and a 3-member team. They may be reached at (212) 435-2870 and via email at hr\_employeebenefits@panynj.gov. PARA will add this information to its website and issue an eBulletin with all the pertinent information.

In preparation for the Retiree Portal, Benefits will need updated email addresses and phone numbers for all retirees. The best way to accomplish that is for retirees to download a copy of the Port Authority Retiree Address Change Form, which is on the PARA website, print it out, complete it, making sure it is signed by the retiree or surviving spouse, and send it via email to the new address listed above. Rita is also working with Benefits on a new on-going column for each

newsletter called "For Your Benefit" in which we can cover upcoming important topics, reminders, and updates.

Director Malone-Hodges reported no upcoming pre-retirement seminars at this time. Hopefully, HR will complete a schedule for 2022 shortly. Director Hadley-Bailey will take over the Chairmanship of the Membership Committee and will work closely with Director Malone-Hodges on this effort. As before, PARA participated in the 9/11 events commemorating the Twentieth Anniversary of the attacks. Both Frank Lombardi and Peter Rinaldi spoke at these events along with other retirees. Peter spoke of the amazing resilience of the Port Authority staff during both the 1993 bombing and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He stressed that the impacts of the changes and advancements made after the '93 bombing saved countless lives on 9/11. The Leadership Fellows of the Port Authority did an outstanding job in putting these successful events together considering they were young children when it actually took place.

At the January Meeting Director Isaacs reported no unusual expenditures in the 2021 financials. Interest rates remain low and revenue from dues was down by 25 percent. PARA membership seems to be decreasing overall. Much of the current membership doesn't pay dues and this needs to be addressed. Several ways to accomplish this were discussed. The Finance Committee looked into alternative dues payment methods and decided it would not be prudent to offer at this time because the current record keeping system would be difficult to modify. Alfred Doblin of the Media Relations Department is creating a Port Authority Archive and may be looking for information and/or artifacts.

Director DuBrow reported that the PARA website has been updated with new information supplied by HR Benefits. She has gotten positive feedback from those using the new benefits email. Those requesting reimbursement for Medicare Part B have until March 31, 2022 to apply. No further notifications of this deadline will be sent by HR. PARA will send an eBulletin reminding members.

PARA authorized recurring annual expenditures for 2022 in the following amounts, subject to payments of a contingency to cover actual increases in such fees/payments which will be reported to the Board and acted on separately – New York Council of Non-Profits (NYCON) - \$60; Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations of New York (APRONY) - \$250; Constant Contact - \$546; Zoom - \$150; and Great American Insurance - \$669. Director Somerwitz reported that Hear in America has been integrated with TruHearing and the primary contact is Katy Bova-Picuri. She can be reached at katy.b@truhearing.com or (619) 977-5854.

PARA continues to try to reach all potential retirees in order to increase membership by attending all PA and Police pre-retirement seminars.

Jerrilyn Raczynski

# **PANYNJ Centennial Book Still Available**

It's not too late to order a copy of the lavishly illustrated history of the Port Authority commissioned by the agency as part of its 2021 Centennial celebration. Written by noted New York City historian Anthony W. Robins, By Air, Land, Rail, & Sea: The Port Authority of NY and NJ, 1921-2021 offers 200 pages of images interspersed with accounts of the Port Authority's accomplishments across the bistate metropolitan region. This hardcover book is available only to PANYNJ employees and retirees, at a cost of \$75.00 plus shipping. Order by going to panynj.myshopify. com and entering the password "PANYNJ" to access the page.



# STAYING CONNECTED WITH LOCAL RETIREE LUNCHEON GROUPS

Are you looking for opportunities to get together near your home or winter residence with other retired or active Port Authority colleagues? Or are you already part of one of the groups of PANYNJ/PATH retirees who meet periodically in the bistate metro area and beyond? PARA's website provides information about a number of groups meeting in the Port District and Florida at https://www.paranynj.org/Lunch/index.htm.

With in-person meetings returning as pandemic risks moderate, we want to update that information and to ensure interested PARA members know how to connect to these popular gatherings. Several of the eleven groups listed on the link above have not posted in recent years. Others continue to be active. Notably, the South/Central Jersey group meets every three months in Forked River, NJ. April's luncheon attracted 80 attendees. They convene again on Thursday July 21. See the website for details and contact Liz DeLaura (Lizd1071@gmail.com) or Rita DuBrow (Ritasue25@comcast.net) to RSVP.

Please help PARA offer an up-to-date and complete listing of recurring retiree gatherings. Is your group's listing out of date, missing, or are you trying to start a new group? Please write with details on how often and where you meet, and who interested retirees should contact to join future get-togethers. Send the information to para@paranynj.org for inclusion on the PARA website listing. The Fall issue of *PARA-phernalia* will include information received by October 15.



PARA would like to thank the Benefits Customer Care & Solutions Division of the Human Resources Department for the following updates. Please note that their contact information is listed at the bottom of the article and staff is available to respond to your calls or emails.

# **Updates from Human Resources – Employee Benefits**

Although the latest COVID-19 wave is ebbing, there is still a lot going on in the world that's causing us worry, fear, stress, and sadness that can negatively impact mental and physical health. As an agency, we wish to remind you of various resources available to you.

#### Mental Health:

We know that there is no health without mental health. Mental health is one of your greatest assets. It helps you focus, overcome obstacles, realize your potential, and get along with the people around you. All of which are even more essential during times of crisis.

**If you are facing stress, anxiety, or depression, you are not alone.** Your wellness, including your mental health and wellbeing, is the agency's top priority, and there are many ways to reach out and get support.

For members enrolled in one of the UnitedHealthcare (UHC) Plans, the UHC/Optum Employee Assistance Program offers guidance on navigating mental health, financial or legal concerns, and offers 24/7 support. Call the UHC member number at **877-259-1391** and ask to speak to an EAP consultant, or contact the UHC/Optum EAP directly at **888-887-4114**.

Additional behavioral health resources are available at myuhc. com and liveandworkwell.com. Editor's Note: You can access a summary of available UHC services at https://www.paranynj.ora/Benefits/PDF/Mental health.pdf.



**The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey** has a partnership with MSK Direct to provide dedicated access to exceptional cancer care, support, and expert resources from the world's leading specialists at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK). If you or a family member are impacted by cancer and would like to discuss treatment options at MSK, call the dedicated MSK Direct phone line for PANYNJ: 844-303-2124 or visit **mskcc.org/panynj**.

#### How to contact us:

Questions regarding benefits can be sent to Benefits Customer Care & Solutions via email at hr\_employeebenefits@panynj. gov or by calling 212-435-2870. Email is the preferred means of communication. The postal mailing address for the HR is:

Port Authority of NY & NJ 4 World Trade Center Human Resources Department – 16th Floor 150 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10007

## Prudential Group Life Insurance Group Contract Number 10493

Life insurance is a valuable and important part of the PANYNJ comprehensive benefits package. The Prudential Insurance Company of America is the insurance company that the Port Authority has selected for this purpose. Prudential also provides administrative services in connection with insurance claims, as well as beneficiary changes.

In addition to keeping your current address on file with the Prudential Life Insurance Company, it is also important to keep your beneficiaries up to date and inform family members about your Life Insurance Benefit. You may view or change your beneficiary online at the Prudential website.

To view or change your Beneficiary online over the Internet:

- 1. Access the Beneficiary Designation website at www.prudential.com/mybenefits
- 2. Select "Register Here"
- 3. In the Control Number field, please enter 10493. Click next.

4. Complete the required information on the following screen and create a personal User ID and personal password.

NOTE: Be sure to submit your beneficiary designations when you are making any changes. For more information or any questions, or to request a printed copy of a Booklet-Certificate for the plan details, please contact the Customer Service Office at (800) 778-3827 Monday through Friday 8:00 am until 8:00 pm Eastern Time. If using a telecommunication device for hearing impaired (TDD), please call (800) 496-1214 during the same time period. The address for Prudential is: The Prudential Insurance Company of America, Record Keeping Services, P.O. Box 13676, Philadelphia, PA 19176.

To reduce or cancel your Life Insurance, you must contact the Benefits Customer Care & Solutions Unit in HR at the Port Authority and submit a letter in writing indicating any changes you wish to make, and they would be irrevocable once implemented.

It is also important to note that each year the Port Authority Payroll Department will send a W-2 form, Wage and Tax Statement to retirees indicating their tax liability for insurance amounts that are taxable over \$50,000 and are also reported to the IRS. This income is known as "imputed income." Therefore, it is important to provide a correct address to the Port Authority to make sure that you receive this document, if applicable.

In the event of a retiree death, both the Port Authority and the Prudential Insurance Company must be notified.

Editors' Note: PARA would like to extend a note of congratulations to Ms. Elvira Navas, who retired last month from the Benefits Customer Care & Solutions Unit of the Human Resources Department. Elvira has been a great resource for PARA, along with all the assistance she provided to our retirees. Thank you, Elvira, and enjoy your retirement!!



Current and former Port Authority Port Department leaders joined executives of Centerline Logistics on April 15th for a ceremony renaming one of the company's harbor tugboats for William F. Fallon, Jr., a respected strategic analyst and industry-relations manager who was the only member of the department to perish during the attacks on the World Trade Center twenty years ago. Fallon had guided colleagues out of the WTC after the 1993 bombing and again assisted others in escaping the building on 9/11.

Gathering at Berth 8 at Port Newark, speakers at the event included former Port Department Director Rick Larabee. Father John Corbett, the port Chaplin, blessed the vessel. Port Authority bagpipers joined the ceremony. Bill's widow Brenda Fallon christened the newly named tug, which will work the waters of the bistate harbor. NYFD and New Jersey fireboats saluted with their water cannons offshore.

# **Spread the Word: Join PARA!**

Know anyone who's about to retire or has just retired? Why not reach out to them to let them know the benefits of being a member of PARA? You can let them know that PARA allows members to stay current with news about the agency, its employees and retirees, and with State and federal issues of importance to retirees such as benefits, pensions, and Social Security updates.

The annual dues of \$10 per year is a bargain! You get the semi-annual issues of PARA's newsletter, *PARA-phernalia*. Your dues also support the PARA website, which provides valuable information to retirees including medical and dental forms, connections to the pension program and Social Security/ Medicare, retirement parties (when we have them again), sadly the In Memoriam section, and much, much more.

PARA membership is a very worthwhile investment for you and your family. Joining is easy. Prospective members can go to the PARA website (www.paranynj.org) to learn more about the resources available and scroll down to the "Not a Member- Join Today!" tab to download the enrollment form.

# **Those We Have Lost (In Memoriam)**

Names of deceased include those who were reported to PARA as of 4/30/2022

	/ /	re district to	01/11/02
Jerome Press	11/03/2021	Kenneth H. Hojnowski	01/14/2022
James J. Harley	11/05/2021	Harry Schmerl	01/22/2022
Robert J. Schuren	11/07/2021	Morris Haywood	01/29/2022
James Anthony Pignotti	11/17/2021	Timothy James Carey	01/30/2022
Mark L. O'Neill	11/14/2021	Alfred (Fred) Grimaldi	01/31/2022
Philip Tralongo	11/20/2021	John (Jack) Collins	02/02/2022
Stephen H. Butterbrodt	12/01/2021	Bartholomew Iannucci	02/05/2022
Joann M. Breslin	12/08/2021	William T. Brennan	02/08/2022
Steven Pambello	12/14/2021	Aniello G. DeSiano	02/09/2022
Estelle Slonim	12/16/2021	Yolanda Harris-Little	02/15/2022
John F. Dempsey	12/23/2021	Vincent E. De Conzo	02/18/2022
Patrice K. Taylor	01/01/2022	Anthony Raiola	02/19/2022
Barbara Ann McCann	01/02/2022	Ramkishin K. Samat	02/25/2022
John E. Hogan	01/05/2022	Romulo Antonio Rodriguez	02/27/2022
John J. Mollica	01/07/2022	Clement T. Merola	03/04/2022
Stanley E. Atlak	01/07/2022	Diann Maria Bulfone	03/07/2022
Michael Simon Zarin	01/09/2022	David J. Volk	03/07/2022
Richard Xavier Nava	01/09/2022	Carmen A. Marino	03/12/2022
Bernard Silinsky	01/10/2022	Frederick Alonzo Myers	03/21/2022
Craig R. Wine	01/11/2022	James L. Giorgi	04/04/2022
Joseph E. Bannon	01/11/2022	Pablo Artache	04/13/2022

PARA has been posting In Memoriam notices of deceased PA and PATH employees, received from retirees' families and other close associates, since 2006 when its website was launched by webmaster Joe SanSevero. Notices for the current year and those in our sixteen years of archives can be found by using these links, and then clicking on a specific name to get more information:

https://paranynj.org/Memoriam/2020/In\_Memoriam\_2020.htm https://paranynj.org/Memoriam/In\_Memoriam\_Archive.htm

In addition to this listing, please remember in your thoughts and prayers those members of our retiree community and their families who have been afflicted with COVID-19 and, most especially, those whose lives have been taken as a result of this deadly disease.