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

**PLEASE  
SEE BOARD  
ELECTION  
MATERIALS IN  
THIS MAILING  
AND VOTE!**

## Vice Presidents' Message

It is an understatement to say that so much has changed in the 36 years since PARA was founded. One of the big things that hasn't changed is the continuity of an all-volunteer Board of Directors and Officers which provides thousands of member retirees of the Port Authority and PATH with a vigorous voice that can act together for their mutual benefit. This is a paraphrase from PARA's Mission Statement, and provides guidance as much today as it did in 1987.

By the time you receive this newsletter, many of you will have visited PARA's new website. This is a huge change in how the content and operation is managed "behind the curtain" besides the very obvious change in how it looks and works for the user. PARA's website – [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org) – is the daily constant out there for Port Authority and PATH retirees to go to for essential, vetted information tailored to their needs. While you are on PARA's website, go to the bottom of any page and you will see a tab to "Subscribe to eBulletins." Take less than a minute to sign up so you get the latest news from PARA between the publication of our semiannual newsletters.

We want to share a bit of important history about PARA's website. It was first published in 2006, having been built in HTML, an early computer language, by Joe SanSevero, a Port Authority retiree. It was his initiative alone that got the fledgling website started, and while known to the PARA Board, it was not directed by the Board. Joe kept adding more lines and more sections as he saw the need based on his judgment and various emails and calls from retirees. Joe was the sole hands-on person behind PARA's website, managing it on a voluntary basis, just as it started. It was in later years that the Board became more involved in adding content, through Joe, and also later years when the Board recognized his singular volunteer work by granting him an annual honorarium. Seventeen years at the helm was wearing, to say the least, and the Board knew that the whole front- and back-of-the-house system had to change as Joe began stepping back. Joe will remain an Advisor to the Board, rather than day-to-day webmaster, with the launch of PARA's first new website in 17 years.

While we are at it, we want to acknowledge Lou Venech, the PARA-phernalia newsletter editor, who performs the magic behind this particular curtain, with regular contributions from several other Board Members.

Please remember to pay your 2023 dues so you can vote for the Directors up for election; the ballot and dues payment card is enclosed, and it must be mailed in time to arrive no later than June 30, 2023.

On behalf of our President, Karen Eastman, and the Board, we wish you all a safe, healthy, and relaxing summer.

**Rae Ann Hoffmann**

**Maria Malone-Hodges**

## 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**

**Dave Gallagher**

**Al Graser**

**Cynthia Hadley-Bailey**

**Arnold Karvasarsky**

**Kirby King**

**Richard Lee**

**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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*The Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc. does not provide, and this newsletter does not constitute, legal, accounting, tax or other professional advice. We recommend you contact your own legal, accounting, tax or professional advisor as neither The Port Authority Retirees Association nor anyone associated with the newsletter assumes responsibility for your relying on the information provided even though we have attempted to ensure that it reflects our understanding of what is presented.*

## PARA Has a New Website!

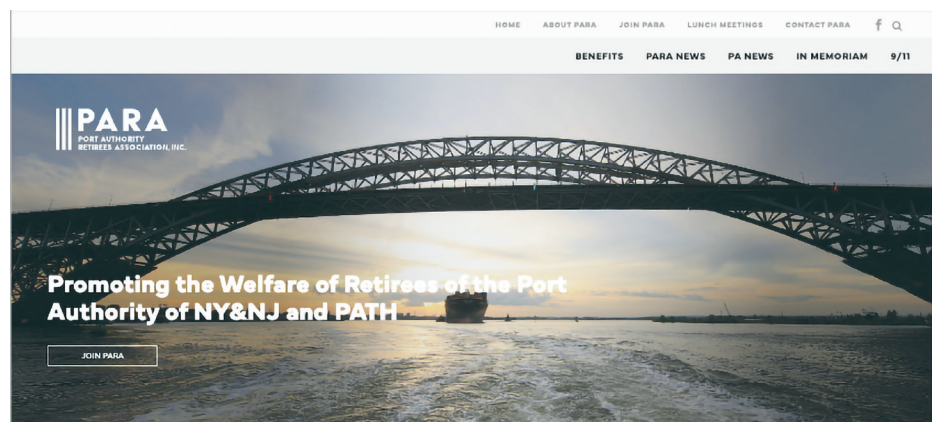
The Vice Presidents' Message in this issue features the launch of PARA's new website – its first in 17 years. PARA's Website Committee worked hard behind the scenes to assess what was needed, and since the Board of Directors never had a hands-on role operating the website prior to this time, this process was a steep learning curve. We would like to thank Joe SanSevero, who created PARA's first and only website up to this point and who was an active participant in this process.

We reported on the progress of the committee's work, and relevant Board of Directors' approval in previous issues of PARA-phernalia, most recently in the Fall 2022 issue. Please read that for more background. The soft launch of the new website was May 1. The vendor, Potomac Digitek (PODI), who was chosen for this work provided server setup, website design, template and page development, content transfer and uploading, and testing; lots and lots of testing. The Website Committee worked closely, often daily, with PODI's developers, directing large and small changes throughout the site design.

You will notice that the website content has been reorganized and edited quite a lot from the original which Joe designed on his own. We had the advantage of user experience from the old website, and the benefit of much more facile content management options with this new website. Please familiarize yourselves with it. We hope you enjoy using it.

The next phase of this website development project will provide for online payment and a membership directory, both of which will be password-protected. PARA will provide the existing member data; PODI will create data tables and fields, and set up online payment. Once this phase is ready for launch, retirees will be able to exercise the option to join PARA by paying dues electronically, renew their annual dues, and edit their contact information so that it stays up to date, all via the website. We know from member feedback that many of you would prefer making an online dues payment over sending a check in the mail, although this latter option will still be available.

If you're subscribed to receive PARA's eBulletins, which is the way PARA members get timely news updates, you will hear about the latest on this next website development phase first. Just go to the bottom of any page on [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org) and click on "Subscribe to eBulletins." We really hope you enjoy our new website!



# 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:***

**Holly Blauser   Steve Borrelli   Dave Gallagher   Rae Ann Hoffmann   Kirby King  
Dennis Lombardi   Frank Lombardi   Peter Rinaldi   Lou Venech   Keith Walcott**

Members whose 2023 dues payments have been received on or before June 30, 2023 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 where 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, 2023. If you have not already paid

your 2023 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 12, 2023 at 11:00 AM. Please let us know if you plan to attend by June 30, 2023, by mailing us notice to PARA, P.O. Box 383, Oceanville, NJ, 08231, or by email to [para@paranynj.org](mailto:para@paranynj.org), no later than June 30, 2023.**



## **Kirby King**

***Early this year, PARA's Directors accepted the resignation of Board Member Rich Hellenbrecht, after many years of active and valued service, followed by the nomination and approval of retired PA/PATH executive Kirby King to fill that vacancy. He is among the Directors included on this year's ballot for a full three-year term.***

Kirby is the former Director of the Port Authority's Technology Services Department (TSD), where he led development and implementation of the agency's strategic technology vision through effective organization of the agency's existing technology infrastructure and resources, and additional capital investment for enhanced capabilities to support accomplishment of the agency's mission.

Kirby previously served as Deputy Director of PATH where he was responsible, under the Director, for PATH system planning, operations, security, safety, maintenance, and business processes. He also served as Assistant Program Director for the design and construction of the JFK AirTrain project, and as one of

four engineering project managers responsible for supporting the restoration and recovery efforts of major systems in the World Trade Center after the February 1993 terrorist bombing.

His previous professional experience included working as a fluid/thermal computer analyst with Martin Marietta Aerospace in Denver, Colorado, supporting various projects of the American space program. Kirby has a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of New York (now, NYU Tandon) and a master's degree in public administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University. He retired from the PA in 2013.

## **Board Member Profiles**

You can find a full list of PARA Board Members and brief background information about each one by going to <https://www.paranynj.org/about-para/> and scrolling down to roster and individual links.

# Board Highlights

The quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors were held on October 12, 2022, and January 18, 2023, respectively. The highlights of the October meeting are as follows: Director Bob Isaacs reported no unusual expenditures during the quarter, noting that interest rates on our investments are still not good, but the Association is stable. Interest rates are continually monitored for the most lucrative investment opportunities.

On behalf of the Website Committee, Director Frank Lombardi reported that two vendor proposals for the new website were received and evaluated. A meeting had been held with one of the companies to ascertain additional information. The Phase I portion of the project, which was estimated to take about three months, will cost approximately \$25,000. This includes website setup and development; additional web design, upgrades, and support; and a contingency cost.

Once set up, there will be a test period of approximately four months during which the Board may make adjustments prior to general PARA accessibility. After the test period, the Board will consider Phase II features and the Committee will request to award Phase II at a future Board meeting. The Board then authorized a contract award for Phase I to Potomac Digitek at a cost of \$25,000.

Director Rita DuBrow reported some benefit requests this quarter. She continues to work with Port Authority Human Resources to further improve the way we get information from HR to retirees and to make it easier for retirees to get more timely answers to their questions. The Board is testing the HR system and thus far, it is not performing the way we would like it to, but we will keep working with HR until we get results. Hopefully, everyone who is eligible to file for Medicare Part B reimbursement has done so successfully.

Director Cynthia Hadley-Bailey continues to work on PARA member recruitment. She goes to both Port Authority and PA Police pre-retirement seminars with information on PARA for potential retirees. She recently instituted dues payment for police organization memberships via Pay Pal which was well received. The Board is considering doing the same for PARA dues payments as well. If anyone knows retirees who are not members, please encourage them to join.

The Board authorized a \$5,000 honorarium for Joe SanSevero, PARA's current webmaster. Once the

contractor begins operation of the new website, the Board would like Joe to continue as an advisor to the Board. We will continue to need and rely on his expertise. The honorarium will then be adjusted accordingly.

Highlights of the January meeting are as follows: Board President, Karen Eastman requested, and the Board approved, a leave of absence during which Vice-Presidents Rae Ann Hoffmann and Maria Malone-Hodges will assume the responsibilities of the Presidency.

Director Isaacs reported that dues collection was very good during the quarter with no unusual expenditures other than the first payment to Potomac Digitek, which was authorized at the previous meeting. He and Director Steve Borrelli will meet with a bank representative to try to obtain a better interest rate on a CD that matures in April and will continue to monitor rates for the best possible return on PARA's investments.

Director Lou Venech reported that the Spring newsletter will be mailed prior to Memorial Day. He is compiling information on the many retiree gatherings that take place on a regular basis and will note as many as possible in the newsletter. He is also working with the Port Authority staff on rebuilding the PA archives as was once planned and will include any updated information that becomes available. He shared updates on busing of migrants to the Port Authority Bus Terminal and the opening of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and Shrine at the World Trade Center, replacing the parish church destroyed on 9/11.

Potomac Digitek is now working on Phase I of the website contract. The required information is being transferred from the current website to the new one. Director Liz DeLaura will assume the responsibility of updating the In-Memoriam section. She may be contacted with information via email at lizd1071@gmail.com. Director DuBrow reported that the HR retiree portal is still not in operation.

Director Holly Blauser reported that Rich Hellenbrecht has resigned from the Board due to other pressing responsibilities and we thank him for his outstanding service over the years. Kirby King has been approved to fill his position and will be among the candidates in the upcoming general election of Board Members.

**Jerrilyn Raczynski**

## ***PARA Board Seeks New Treasurer, Secretary***

This is a year of transition for PARA, highlighted by the phased rollout of a new website. In 2023, PARA's long-time Treasurer and Secretary both plan to end their many years of service in those posts. The Board aims to recruit replacements by this Fall.

Bob Isaacs has been PARA's Treasurer for 12 years, smoothly processing dues collection, maintaining the member database, managing the annual Board elections, and other related duties. He also works with the Finance Committee to manage investment of PARA funds. The new website will facilitate database management and eventually enable on-line dues payment.

Jerri Raczynski has served as PARA Board Secretary for 11 years. She prepares the quarterly and annual Board minutes and updates and maintains the official PARA records and By-Laws.

The Treasurer and Secretary serve on PARA's all-volunteer board and are members of its Executive Committee. Both posts are critical to sustain and grow the organization's capacity to serve our members. Want to join our effort to expand PARA's value to Port Authority retirees? Members who would like to learn more about the roles of these two positions and possibly apply should address an email to [para@paranynj.org](mailto:para@paranynj.org).



### ***PA Marks Thirtieth Anniversary of 1993 WTC Bombing***

Even though it has been years since the February 26, 1993 attack on the WTC, the Port Authority family continues to pay tribute to the memory of those who died on that day. To commemorate this milestone, there was a moment of silence at 12:18 PM at the National September 11 Memorial Plaza to mark the time of the attack, followed by a live reading of the victims' names: Port Authority employees Robert Kirkpatrick, Stephen Knapp, William Macko, and Monica Rodriguez Smith and her unborn child; Windows on the World purchasing agent Wilfredo Mercado; and visitor John DiGiovanni. After the on-site ceremony, a Mass of Remembrance was held at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church on nearby Barclay Street to honor the faith shared by those cherished people lost on that horrific day.

# FOR YOUR BENEFIT

In this issue, we are providing important contact information for retirees. You may wish to copy this info and keep it in a convenient location. This information will also be available on the PARA Website under the **Benefits Section**.

## Important Benefit Contact Numbers/Email addresses/Websites

PARA-paranynj.org

**Port Authority Benefits Customer Care & Solutions Division** -  
Phone -1-212-435-2870. Fax- 1-212-435-2871. Preferred method of  
communication is email - hr\_employeebenefits@panynj.gov

**Port Authority Payroll Division** - 1-201-395-3439 or 1-201-395-  
3608 for W2 Wage & Tax Statements for Life Insurance Imputed  
Income. PATH Payroll Division- 1-201-395-3454

**UnitedHealthCare** - Phone-1-877-259-1391.  
Website- www.myuhc.com PA Group #197512;  
PATH Group #197944

**Medicare** - Phone 1-800-633-4227 (1-800-Medicare).  
TTY users -1-877-486-2048 Website- www.Medicare.gov

**Prudential Life Insurance** - Contract # 10493  
Phone -1-800-778-3827. Website - www.prudential.com/mybenefits

**ExpressScripts** - Phone- 1-888-799-6968.  
TTY users - 1-800-716-3231. Website- express-scripts.com.

**MetLife Dental** - 1-888-727-2317 Group# 302043.  
Website- metlife.com/mybenefits

**Dentcare Dental Plan** - Phone-1-800-468-0600.  
Website- www.healthplex.com

**Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center/Partnership with Port  
Authority** - Phone-1-844-303-2124. Website-MSKcc.org/panynj.

**National Vision Administrators (NVA)** Phone 1-800-672-7723.  
Website- www.e-nva.com PA Group #1007; PATH Group #1008

**Hear in America** - 1-800-286-6149 - Hearing aid provider

**HealthEquity Wageworks for Medicare Part B  
Reimbursement Program** - Phone-1-877-924-3967.  
Website - www.HealthEquity.com/wageworks.

**New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS)** -  
Phone - 1-866-805-0990 or 1-518-474-7736.  
Website- osc.state.ny.us

**Railroad Retirement Board (RRB)** - Phone- 1-877-722-5772

**PATH Supplemental Pension** - 1-212-984-9304 or 1-212-896-9923

**Social Security** - Phone - 1-800-772-1213.  
Website- ssa.gov/benefits/Medicare

**New York State Deferred Compensation Plan** -  
Phone- 1-800-422-8463. Website- www.nysdcp.com

**XCEL Federal Credit Union** - Phone- 1-800-284-8663

**The St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine has opened at the southern end of the WTC complex, replacing the tiny parish structure on Cedar St. destroyed on 9/11. Indoors, the traditional iconography memorializes the trauma of that day, incorporating images of first responders and Lower Manhattan. Currently, it is open to the public from 10AM-3PM every day but Tuesday, while also maintaining an extensive schedule of religious services. Check <https://stnicholaswtc.org/> for details.**



# ***PABT Team Rises to Migrant Busing Challenge***

The job description for employees at the Midtown Bus Terminal doesn't include handling a nationwide humanitarian crisis, but the team at the PABT rose to the occasion when buses carrying migrants began arriving without forewarning at the facility on Friday August 5.

Midtown Bus Terminal General Manager Cate Britell recounted that episode and the months that followed to retiree and PARA VP Maria Malone-Hodges, a former PABT Operations Manager, and PARA-Phernalia editor Lou Venech in a recent interview. They also stopped by the temporary New-York-City-managed aid center in the North Wing, where many of these migrants return seeking advice and assistance at the first place they were welcomed to the region.

"Here at the Bus Terminal, we really need to be ready for anything," GM Britell noted. "Fortunately, we have great operations staff on-site and our own police department, so we were able to pivot almost instantly to receive the first few buses that weekend. Then we coordinated with City officials and non-profit groups as the flow of buses continued steadily until January."

NYC agencies and non-profit groups took the lead in receiving the new arrivals and arranging initial aid and transport. PABT management and PAPD worked to ensure the buses' efficient and safe movement from the Lincoln Tunnel to the assigned berths at the facility and the awaiting greeters. PANYNJ Media Relations and Government Affairs staff also mobilized on site to deal with intense coverage by national and local news media and attention from concerned local officials.



GM Britell stressed that the Port Authority has no role in managing assistance for migrants, but that the agency continues to set aside cordoned-off space in the North Wing called "Area X" for the operation.. Members of the New York National Guard, staff from NYC agencies, and workers and volunteers from non-profit organizations provide a range of services to migrants weekly without affecting PABT customers.

PABT operations veteran Maria Malone-Hodges noted most travelers are unaware of how much goes on behind the scenes to maintain routine operations at the aging terminal, which have continued through intensive peak-period commuter demand, sometimes-challenging neighborhood social conditions, and the COVID pandemic. The quiet but busy activity in Area X is the latest reminder of the PABT's abiding role in serving the region and the countless individuals and families who pass through it every year.

*As this issue went to press in early May, additional charter buses bearing migrants began arriving again at the PABT.*

## **Upcoming Fox TV Drama Features PAPD**

Word is out about a new drama series in development for Fox Television featuring the Port Authority Police Department, and its wide-ranging role protecting the region's bi-state bridges and tunnels, transit facilities, ports, airports, and the World Trade Center.

Entertainment-industry media covered Fox's pick-up of the proposed one-hour episodes, with former PAPD Chief of Counter-Terrorism Michael Valenti on board as an executive producer working with veteran television-series executives.

Deadline news service reported, "It will follow the PAPD's first female chief as she leads its elite major crimes unit and also must contend with mafia, governors from two states, the NYPD, the FBI and her own powerful police union – all while managing the tangled, messy lives of her team."

May 2023

Dear Port Authority Retirees,

For nearly six years, we have had the honor of serving at the Port Authority. We often speak about the 100-plus year history of this extraordinary agency, and of its legacy of serving the region regardless of the challenges that have faced generations since the Port Authority's inception in 1921. When we speak of that extraordinary legacy, we are talking about you.

Port Authority retirees built this great agency. You are the people who saw the twin towers rise; expanded our airport, terminal, and port facilities; operated and maintained six Agency crossings; and improved PATH. You are the people who came to work on February 26, 1993, and on September 11, 2001.

You grieved. You bonded as a family. And then you did what only you could do – you moved the agency through sorrow and loss, and then rebuilt while planning for future generations. Equally important, you made sure that none of us forgot the sacrifices of those lost in 1993 and 2001, or of Port Authority responders who either became ill or died because of their labors on the 9/11 recovery. Your input in the annual '93 World Trade Center bombing and 9/11 remembrance services remains invaluable. And on a personal note, being able to thank some of you face-to-face at these events is truly an honor.

The global pandemic of these past three years has presented new challenges to the agency. Yet, Port Authority retirees continued to step up – whether through the Port Authority Retirees Association (PARA) or individually – to help the agency advance its goals, including assisting in several of the agency's Centennial initiatives that were executed during the darkest moments of the pandemic.

PARA has developed a valuable two-way dialogue between the agency's Human Resources department and retirees. PARA assists retirees with individual issues while also amplifying essential retiree messages to the Port Authority for action. We thank PARA for all it does.

Port Authority retirees are the foundation on which the Port Authority builds upon. You have set the bar high, and all of us who have come after you remain committed to matching your level of dedication and service, and to carry on your legacy with both pride and humility. We are forever indebted to you.

We close our weekly broadcast to current employees with, "thank you, thank you, and thank you." Yet it seems not enough as we address the agency's retirees, so we close, thank you, thank you, and thank you, very much.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. O'Toole  
Chairman



Rick Cotton  
Executive Director

# Stay Connected at PA Retiree Gatherings

***PARA is always reaching out to learn about recurring gatherings of PA/PATH/PAPD retirees, and the new website allows for more timely and detailed event information and contacts. Here are some of the most active groups. Go to <https://www.paranynj.org/lunch-meetings/> for more details.***

**South-Central Jersey Luncheons:** Turnouts are always strong for this group, which meets quarterly on the third Thursday of the month at the Captain's Inn, in Forked River, NJ. The next luncheon is July 20. Get on the list by contacting PARA Board Members Liz DeLaura (lizd1071@gmail.com) or Rita DuBrow (ritasue25@comcast.net).

**Bergen County Luncheons:** A last Wednesday of the Month (LWOM) group has been meeting for decades, now convening at Cafe Tivoli in Ridgefield. A new Second Monday of the Month (SMOM) group is meeting at In Napoli in Fort Lee. All retirees are welcome. The interim contact for both groups is PARA Board member Liz DeLaura (lizd1071@gmail.com)

**Port Authority Retired Police Association:** PARPA (<https://parpagroup.com/>) has an active calendar of activities for its members. One event open to PARA members is the group's Annual Summer Picnic on Thursday, July 27 from noon-6 PM at Oaktree Lodge, 1412 Schoolhouse Road in Wall, NJ. No advance registration needed. The cost is \$35 per adult and \$12 for children under twelve.

## **Port Authority Retired Detectives Association:**

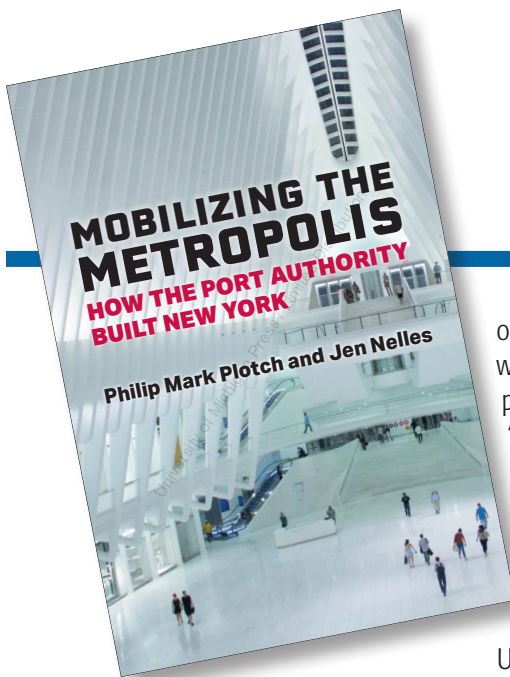
This fraternal group invites membership by all police ranks, Police Officers from other departments, and PA civilian personnel who have worked with the Detective Division or the department. PARDA holds an annual dinner dance in the Fall, date TBD. When details are available, PARA will post them on our website.

**Signal8-2 Club of Florida:** This PAPD retirees association invites all active and retired members of the department to its annual reunion weekend in Florida this September 30-October First. Details available at <https://signal8-2clubofflorida.com/>

**Winter LWOM Club:** Another last Wednesday of the month club meets in Lake Worth FL during the winter months. Contact PARA Board Member Bob Isaacs (bob@bobisaacs.net) to get on the group's email list.



# 'Mobilizing the Metropolis'



***The Port Authority's accomplishments and struggles offer important lessons for organizational leadership and regional competitiveness, described in an insightful new "reflective history" of the agency published this month.***

Co-authors Jen Nelles and Philip Mark Plotch spoke recently with PARA-Phernalia's editor for their first joint interview to discuss how they approached ***Mobilizing the Metropolis: How the Port Authority Built New York***. Here are highlights from that conversation. A longer version will be available soon on the new PARA website.

## A Fresh Collaboration

Jen Nelles noted, "It's important to remember that we were working at first with Jim Doig," author of ***Empire on the Hudson*** (2001), considered to be a definitive history of the agency. "We all agreed that this book shouldn't be 'Empire on the Hudson Two,' picking up where the first book ended."

"We came from slightly different backgrounds," Jen continued. "Jim always had a fairly entrepreneurial lens on the

organization. I'm more of a political scientist who studies how regions work and how political institutions function." Phil added, "I'm not an expert on engineering details of infrastructure projects. I'm much more fascinated to learn, 'who is the decisionmaker; who decided where they were going to build it, and how to connect it.'"

Unfortunately, Professor Doig passed away in the early stages of structuring the book. "We really missed him," Phil noted. Nelles and Plotch persevered. "Neither of us could have written this book on our own, for sure," Phil said. "This is a really deep collaboration." Plotch also noted that he really enjoyed talking with Port Authority retirees, a great resource for first-hand stories about the agency's history.

Jen spoke about developing the thesis of the book. "We recognized that Port Authority is seen for better or worse as a unique and powerful organization that couldn't be created like this today, that it was a product of its time and had great leaders and all these assets." That is a familiar story.

"But how was that institutionally unique, and also how did that shift and change over time?" she continued. "And we wanted to challenge the perspective that it was always an all-powerful entity. It has many advantages certainly, but it always had to play a political game and to collaborate with different coalitions."

## Forging Regional Consensus

The book attributes the agency's most noteworthy successes to four factors: its skill in applying its internal resources of staff expertise and funding capacity; its

relative autonomy to propose projects and expand regional roles; an agency culture supporting innovation and excellence; and visionary leadership. They recounted how the effective deployment of these assets generated the breadth of regional support necessary to overcome opposition and deliver a system of interstate transportation facilities, maritime terminals, the regional airport system, and the original World Trade Center project.

"It's a bistate org in a very politically fragmented region, where regionalism never has really sat well," Nelles noted. "We decided it was going to be a bit of a hybrid approach. Because the PA does so many different things in so many different portfolios, there was a logic to focus on the development of the port, the airports, and bridges and tunnels. But we did realize that there were sometimes 'moments' that we needed to cover. So there's a whole chapter describing turning points."

Both authors stressed that their distinct perspectives were critical in extracting lessons from the PA's history that apply more broadly to organizational performance and coordination of regional development. Nelles has written several books on metropolitan governance issues in the U.S. and abroad. She is a Senior Research Fellow at the Innovation Caucus, Oxford Brookes Business School, a Visiting Professor with the Networks and Governance Lab at the University of Illinois Chicago, and a co-director of the Regional Studies Association Network on Infrastructural Regionalisms (NOIR).

Plotch has authored well-received books about the Second Avenue Subway saga and the drawn-out process of replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge. He drew on his experience working for several New York

# Tells PA History and More

agencies, including the MTA. Phil credited David Plavin, who held senior posts at both agencies, with helping him understand the differences between these two major agencies. "David said the biggest difference for him was how wealthy the Port Authority was relative to the MTA... which is always going hat in hand to elected officials for needed funding. The PA doesn't rely very much on funding from the outside.

"There's a whole chapter – and this was a complete surprise when we did an outline – about Lou Gambaccini. But the more I learned about him the more I realized he was really special and changed a lot of things. Not just at the PA and just the metro area, but across the entire country when it comes to transportation."

The chapter recounts Gambaccini's role in the creation of Transcom and TransitCenter, and the restoration of the Hoboken-Lower Manhattan passenger ferry service. "The more we learned his story, the more we understood how his leadership skills and his entrepreneurial skills fit in with our thesis about the agency. Unfortunately, we didn't get to meet him, but we think there's a great legacy there."

## Some 'Dark Places' Too

But the book is not simply about the agency's successes. It recounts the failed push for a fourth jetport in the Meadowlands that followed its successful campaign to assume control of the region's major airports. The authors describe the steady decline in the PA's relative autonomy through the Eighties, Nineties and beyond, when the heady postwar growth in vehicular volumes at the crossings slowed and new capital and operating obligations forced the agency to seek gubernatorial approval for toll increases.

"We go to some pretty dark places," Nelles stressed. These include bi-state stalemates over New Jersey port leases, cancellation of the Access to the Region's Core project, the tortuous process of redeveloping the World Trade Center complex in the years following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the "Bridgagate" scandal.

## Looking Ahead

Despite these challenging episodes, both authors pronounced themselves optimists about the future of the Port Authority and how it might support the bi-state region in its second century. Jen Nelles: "It's a fascinating structure, and it's a vital organization to do stuff in a

bistate regional way, but I think it's also quite controversial. It doesn't sit easily in the region. Something people don't appreciate so much is that the Port Authority has done a lot of is just convening. Even if they don't own a project from start to finish, they're often really good at bringing together thought leaders, political leaders, people who need to have conversations."

Phil Plotch agreed: "The Port Authority understands regional transportation as a system – the relationship between the ports and the airports and the freight rail network and how that relates to the passenger network and to the trucks using its crossings and the local streets.

"The Port Authority has the potential to do so much more," he concluded. "and to tackle some of the major issues we have in the region, whether it's energy, climate change -- obviously transportation -- and land-use. There's just so many issues where the PA could help the region, if the region wanted to think as a region. If the region just wanted to think of themselves as all these different counties and all of these different cities and doesn't see themselves as competing against other regions in the world, we're missing a huge opportunity."

*Mobilizing the Metropolis, published by the University of Michigan Press, is now available in hardcover and paperback editions from the publisher and from your favorite booksellers. PARA's website will post book-talk events by the authors as information becomes available this year.*



**Philip Mark Potch**



**Jen Nelles**

## Those We Have Lost (In Memoriam)

*Names of deceased include those who were reported to PARA as of 5/7/2023*

*The Fall 2022 PARA-Phernalia issue included deaths reported through 10/21/2022.*

*The first three names below were not included in that listing.*

Tony Carroll	05/04/2022	Tom Carver	01/10/2023
John G. Nolan	07/15/2022	Michael Kirby	01/12/2023
John Joseph Caifano	10/05/2022	George Krone	01/15/2023
Michael J. Clarke	10/27/2022	Leon Messina	01/17/2023
Billy Lloyd Anderson	11/01/2022	George Rossi	01/18/2023
Isabel Eadicicco	11/01/2022	William R. Hessemer	01/29/2023
Thaddeus S. Niedzwiecki	11/06/2022	Keith Conway	02/08/2023
Donald Anthony Serpico	11/07/2022	Max Negrin	02/12/2023
Allegra Lockett	11/23/2022	Leonard Colasuonno	02/15/2023
Alan Mark Whitlock	11/25/2022	Irwin Bressler	02/18/2023
Robert Cotugno	11/27/2022	Patricia B. Suliga	02/18/2023
Matthew T. Besheer	11/29/2022	Susan Roeder	03/04/2023
Carolyn A. Thompson	11/30/2022	Thomas Anthony Cierzo	03/07/2023
Herbert Ouida	12/08/2022	Richard "Rick" Palacio	03/08/2023
Robert Crerand	12/18/2022	Patrick E. Callahan	03/09/2023
Patricia Ann Klein	12/23/2022	Frank J. Gryboski	03/09/2023
Martin Esbin	01/05/2023	John O'Connor	04/11/2023
Robert Hall	01/07/2023		

***PARA has posted In Memoriam notices of deceased PA and PATH employees, received from retirees' families and other close associates, since webmaster Joe SanSevero launched our initial website in 2006. Go to [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org) and use the "In Memoriam" tab at the top of the page to access notices for the current year and preceding two years, and click on a specific name to get more information. An Archive of older postings also is available in this section.***

***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.***