

PARA-phernalia

Your **P**ort **A**uthority **R**etirees **A**ssociation

Newsletter • Edition Number 33 • Fall 2004

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PARA-phrases

Inspirational Thoughts

“There is no such thing in anyone's life as an unimportant day.”



“Don't Forget Where You Put Your PARA-phernalia.”

There For You

Attendees at the Spring 2004 Board of Directors Meeting at the Port Authority of NY & NJ Teleport on Staten Island, New

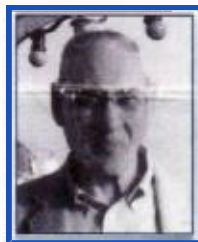


York gathered around the official PARA banner for a photo op. Pictured from left to right are Rita Dubrow, Henry Lee, Al Rubbert, Sal Foti, Bob Jago, Harmon Williams, Dick Rowe, Mike Krieger, Lee Goodman, Mario Salzano, Tom Donovan, Stan Raith, Dick Helman, Dick Williams (seated), Neil Lynch, Al Pettenati, Tom Kearney and Ray Mannion.

Our Newsletter Undergoes A Facelift

Under the eyes of former PARA President Al Rubbert and member Dick Williams, our association newsletter has a brand new look. The redesign effort encompasses a new name, a larger 6-page format with more photos, interesting columns, helpful tips, news about fellow members... and the introduction of our cartoon mascot, P.A. Gull. How do you think we look after our new facelift?

A Sad Farewell To Bob Dennebaum



Some readers may not be aware of the passing of PARA Treasurer Bob Dennebaum who died on January 29 of this year. His death was briefly mentioned along with a change of address notice in the shortened 2-page Spring 2004 edition of the newsletter. A broader recognition of late PARA member Bob Dennebaum is well deserved.

It was not until Bob left us that the true value of his many contributions became apparent — most of which were performed over and above his responsibilities as treasurer. His regular duties as treasurer encompassed the endorsing and depositing of over 4,000 checks from PARA members each year; making payments to the Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations, printers and others; working along with auditors on the bi-annual audit; and handling innumerable pieces of correspondence from retirees. Among other extra things, Bob also developed and maintained a new PARA retiree's directory complete with changes of addresses, the names of deceased members and an array of other valuable information.

Yes, for all he has done, Bob Dennebaum is greatly appreciated and sorely missed.

Officers & Board Of Directors

Al Rubbert, *Chairman Emeritus*

New York:

Richard Helman, *Pres.*

Alan Gonseth, *Vice Pres.*

Henry Lee, *Treasurer*

Patricia Beckhard

Thomas Donovan

Lee Goodman

Edward O'Malley

Richard Rowe

Mario Salzano

Rosemarie Smith Vincent

New Jersey:

Merle Robb, *2nd Vice Pres.*

Robert Jago, *Secretary*

Stanley Raith, *Editor*

Thomas Kearney

Michael Krieger

Cornelius Lynch

Alfred Pettenati

Harmon Williams

Richard Williams

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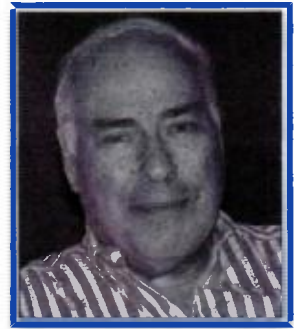
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A Message From Your President



Richard Helman, *Pres.*

A brief bio in our last newsletter introduced me as your new president. It stated that I am "concerned that during difficult economic times, the temptation by government at all levels is to cut back on the benefits we have earned. This will be an area that requires attention." I would like to elaborate on this concern and the role PARA and you as an individual can play to protect and further our interest.

We must continue to be aware of proposed actions by federal and state governments as well as the Port Authority of NY & NJ affecting retirees. We must speak out firmly on matters that affect our interest. However, there is a fine line to be walked, as there are times when we may not want to call undue attention to ourselves. As it has in the past, the board will consider this in view of our larger interests. If the PA sees PARA as nagging and hostile, we will be left with limited access. In Albany, Trenton and Washington, we will have no choice but to coordinate with other organizations that share our views (i.e. the Retired Public Employees Association, Alliance of Public Retirees Organizations, Inc.).

On more than one recent occasion, local governments with the backing of Governor Pataki, have tried to cut back or substantially delay the contribution that government employers are required to make to the state pension fund. This was the subject of a warning contained in a letter in April of this year from New York State Comptroller Alan Hevesi to all retirees. On your behalf as part of a vigorous lobbying campaign, both Al Rubbert and I have written to Mr. Hevesi.

Hevesi, trustee for the pension funds, appears to take his fiduciary obligation to retirees seriously. After contacting Hevesi's office, we are in the process of making arrangements to have a representative meet with your board in an effort to improve communications with our trustee.

Another example of how issues of concern may arise is a recent change in Medicare that provides some prescription drug coverage. This change may tempt governmental employers to cut back or eliminate employee drug coverage (I am not aware of any plan by the PA to do this). This is one reason why improved communications with the Human Resources Department of the Port Authority is vital. There was a time when many of us referred to the PA as "Mother PONYA" because in some ways it was a family. Over the past years, major personnel and structural changes have occurred at the PA. It is no longer prudent to assume that those making economic decisions will protect the interest of retirees. Your board will strive to be alert. I ask that you please let us know of matters not widely known that will impact retirees. If you have a close relationship with a decision maker (i.e. a commissioner, assemblyman or senator), please let us know. Finally, when we request that you write to a particular official and you agree with the position we are taking, please take the time to write... *there is strength in unity.*

Yours truly,

Richard Helman, President



The PARA Gallery

Past & Present Photos

A Request For Photos

Please send us snapshots of recent or past PA and PARA get-togethers and special events along with a brief description and if possible, the names of those pictured in the photo. Prints, color slides and digital images are acceptable. When sending digital photos, only high-resolution photos at a minimum resolution of 900 x 1200 dpi will reproduce at the desired quality.



Pictured left to right: Jeff Green and PARA President Dick Helman. Jeff addressed the board and was recognized for 37 years of service and congratulated on retirement in October.



Pictured: The September 22, 2004 PARA Board of Directors meeting underway at the Port Authority Offices.

Looking Back...

The PA Golf Tournament was initiated in the late 1930s and except for a brief hiatus during World War II continues to this day. In recent years, the event has taken place at Skyview Golf Club in Sparta, New Jersey.

For the first time in memory, a non-PA police softball team won the league championship in 1972 (although several of those who played on The Downtowners team were former PA police officers).



Enjoying dinner after a day of putting around at the 1983 Port Authority Golf Outing at Tammy Brook Country Club were (top row, pictured from left to right) Bob Jago, Frank Caggiano, George Mancone and Merle Robb. (bottom row, pictured from left to right) Tony Barber, Mike Collins, Manny Savro, John McHugh, Stan Arszulewicz, Paul McGovern.



Posing for a team photo in 1972 were The Downtowners, league champions that year of the Port Authority Softball League. Pictured (in front from left to right) were Harmon Williams, Terry Tomlinson, Bob Jago, Joe Cowles, George D'Alessandro, Andy Szakos (in back from left to right) Bob Dudajek, Gary Gorman, Frank Caggiano, Carl Selinger, Ken Philmus, Lou Forte and Pete Giovannini, the team's manager.



There is a great deal of rhetoric spewing out of Albany regarding our pension fund. "Those in the know" have provided answers to the most frequently asked questions from the members.

Q CAN THE GOVERNOR TOUCH THE COMMON RETIREMENT FUND WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE COMPTROLLER?

A *No, and not even with the approval of the comptroller which, by the way, Comptroller Hevesi has no intention of giving. The State Court of Appeals has ruled that both the comptroller and the state have equal fiduciary responsibilities to the fund and the assets of the fund cannot be used to solve the fiscal problems of the state.*

Q WHY DO SOME LEGISLATORS PERSIST IN SAYING THAT GOVERNOR PATAKI'S PROPOSAL IS NOT A "RAID" ON THE COMMON RETIREMENT FUND?

A *These legislators, the governor and the budget director, are playing with words. Their proposals don't actually take money out of the Common Retirement Fund this year — they just don't put in enough money to actuarially fully fund it. None of their proposals indicate how they expect to achieve full funding. They may hope the stock market will rebound far beyond their own or anybody else's projections. Failing this, the burden will be put on future generations to pay for current retirement benefits.*

Q IS THE GOVERNOR TRYING TO MAKE THE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER AN APPOINTED OFFICE?

A *He would probably like to at this point, but he would need to change the state constitution to do it.*

Q CAN OUR COLA BE TAKEN AWAY?

A *No, this is permanent legislation and is now constitutionally protected.*

Q IS THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL TO TAMPER WITH THE RETIREMENT FUND CONSTITUTIONAL AS HE CLAIMS SINCE HE IS NOT MANDATING THE USE OR REDUCTION OF THE COMMON RETIREMENT FUND?

A *Only technically. He is asking the comptroller to illegally do what he and his predecessors have been barred from doing by the courts. Happily, Comptroller Hevesi has not and will not comply.*

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite government program.”

President Richard Helman. Upon his graduation in 1961 from Columbia Law School, Richard Helman joined the PA Law Dept. By the time of his retirement in 1995, Dick had served as Chief of Litigation and later as Chief of Commercial Litigation. For over 30 years, he has been on the faculty of New York University and is presently an adjunct Associate Professor of Real Estate teaching a law course at the graduate level. Dick is up to the task of President and will lead PARA to bigger and better things.

Treasurer Henry Lee. The PA employment of Henry Lee spanned from 1968 to 1999 - the year that he retired from a position as Manager/Administration, Comptroller's Dept. For his first 20 years, Henry held a variety of positions in what was then the Personnel Dept. The most notable was client representative. Henry hired many of the technical personnel involved in design and construction of major PA facilities. He holds a BS degree from Syracuse University and an MBA from Long Island University. Henry's energy and expertise will have a positive impact on your association.

Al Rubbert, chairman emeritus and former PARA president, is filling in as an assistant to PARA's new treasurer, Henry Lee, until the end of the year.

Secretary Robert Jago. Since early this year, Robert Jago has been serving as PARA Secretary. In the December newsletter, it was mentioned that Bob joined the board. It is appropriate to highlight some other aspects of his career. Starting as a police officer serving at various PA facilities, Bob transferred to administration in 1962. Following a stint as management trainee, he moved through a series of promotions in the former Personnel and Rail Transportation Depts. In 1979, he was promoted to executive assistant, Law Dept. — a position he held until retiring from the PA in 1989. Since then, Bob has volunteered at over 40 golf tournaments that benefited various health related programs and charities.

Attention New Members And Those About To Retire

Those of you who have been PARA members for a number of years are aware of the organization's activities as well as the goals and objectives. Normally our Goals and Objectives are only distributed to board members. Due to the boost in current and upcoming membership, the 2004/2005 Goals and Objectives are outlined here for the perusal of all. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome. *Send them to: Port Authority Retirees Associations, P.O. Box 486, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-0486.*



“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”

Let's Hear From You

Send us published articles, letters or just “newsy notes” of interest to former co-workers. Also keep us informed about what you're doing in retirement. For those using e-mail, the address is richard@hellman.net.

NY State Retirement Pension System

Call Toll Free: 1-866-805-0990 (follow the prompts).

Goals and Objectives 2004-2005

1. Continue to work with the New York State Comptroller and the Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations to seek passage of legislation that would increase the current permanent COLA from 50% of the CPI to 100%.
2. Continue to develop a retiree network in conjunction with the alliance to meet with every member of the New York Legislature on matters affecting retirees.
3. Continue dialogue with NY-NJ-FL Congressional members to ensure that senior's economic status is not diminished by any legislation.
4. Meet periodically with the PA Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief of Staff and Human Resources Dept. to continue rapport and support for PARA and PA.
5. Maintain liaison with the PA PBA retiree organization, Last Wednesday of the Month Club and other PA retiree groups to expand PARA prominence.
6. Publish at least 2 newsletters annually and special newsletters as deemed necessary.
7. Adhere to a quarterly Board of Director's meeting schedule with two meetings in NJ and two in NY facilities.
8. Monitor the by-laws to ensure that they reflect the changing nature of PARA as necessary.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

Renewal of annual membership dues for June 2004 - May 2005 are overdue. If you have already renewed your membership, ignore this reminder. If you haven't, please use the remittance form below and the convenient return envelope enclosed. Don't forget to add postage. And remember to let your elected representatives know that you are watching how they vote on retiree issues!

PARA DUES REMITTANCE FORM

Please print or type:

___ P.A. Employee
 ___ P.A. Retiree
 ___ Year

()

Last Name

First Name

Home Phone

Address

Town

State

Zip Code

Please check:

Has your name, address or telephone number changed? ___Yes ___No

___ Enclosed is \$5.00 annual membership dues for period of June 2004 through May 2005

___ Enclosed is \$ _____. I would like to contribute as a sponsor. Receipts in excess of annual dues are credited as sponsor contributions.

Please only make checks payable to: **Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc.** Retain cancelled check as your receipt.

Mail with Remittance Form (envelope provided) to: Port Authority, Retirees Association, PO Box 0344, Thiells, NY 10984-0344



How To Save Money On Hotel Rooms

Here are some suggestions from travel experts and experienced travelers on finding a hotel room for less than the listed price:

1. Ask a Travel Agent. Inquire about unpublished sales going on in the area you're planning to visit. **2. Travel Off-Season.**

Hotel prices drop significantly during off-season and weekend rates are usually much lower than weekday business rates. And try not to stay in a city during a major convention. **3. Request a Status Discount.** For people over age 60, most hotels offer 10% discounts. For members of AARP, National Alliance of Senior Citizens or Silver Keys, the discount is more. Many hotels will also offer a discount to students, veterans, young adults and members of AAA, business organizations or other groups.

4. Call Direct. You will almost always save money by contacting the hotel directly instead of booking through the chain's toll-free number. Book your room well in advance so the hotel agent knows you have time to shop around. Don't accept the first rate offered to you as many hotels have a fall back rate (they will quote it if, and only if, a customer is reluctant to accept the standard rate). **5. Try Booking Through The Airline.** Many international air carriers have established relationships with foreign hotel chains that can save you money when traveling overseas. **6. Call a Hotel Consolidator.** Consolidators such as Quickbook (800-789-9887, www.quickbook.com) book blocks of rooms months in advance at steep discounts.

? Who's Doing What Now



Leon Goodman Receives Award

Leon Goodman, who retired from the Port Authority in 1992, received the Burton W. Marsh Distinguished Service Award from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) in August 2004. He is the third person from the Port Authority to be selected for this award. Previous PA recipients were Edward Wetzell (1971) and Alan Gonseth (1986). The award, one of ITE's highest honors, was presented at the ITE Annual Meeting in Orlando. ITE is the leading international,

multimodal transportation professional society, with over 16,000 members in 90 countries. Leon's ITE activities included service on the ITE Board, as ITE international president and as chair of the ITE Transit Council. He was manager of transportation planning in the PA's Planning and Rail Development Department.

Lee continues his work as a consultant in traffic engineering and transportation planning.



As part of the Human Resources Department's ongoing commitment to ensure the privacy of health care information, protect current and retired employees against identify theft and to comply with recent federal HIPAA legislation, all active and retired employees enrolled in United Healthcare will soon receive or have already received new health ID cards. They no longer have social security numbers listed.

An alternate identifier provided by United Healthcare has replaced the social security number. This unique number can be used when contacting United Healthcare and, in fact, has been used on correspondence received from United Healthcare over the past several months (such as an Explanation of Benefits statement). In addition, the new plastic ID card is more durable. It is also more convenient because all covered family members are listed on the card. A magnetic strip on the back of the card will enable eligibility and co-payment information to be verified electronically by the doctor or hospital, simplifying the check-in process. The level of benefits remains the same and United Healthcare has assured us that it will continue to provide the superior level of service to which current employees and retirees are accustomed.

If you have any questions regarding your health benefits or the new card, please contact:

United Healthcare
(877) 259-1391

Employee Benefits
(212) 435-2870