

# PARA-phernalia

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

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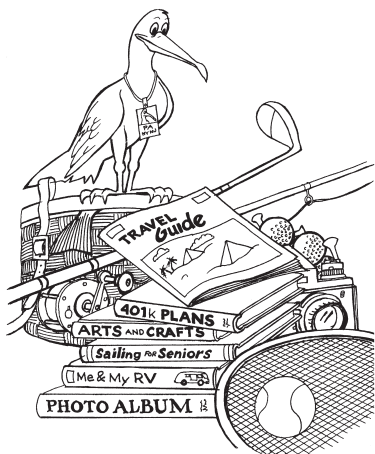
## A Message From Your President

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*Love increases as you give it.  
In giving Love you will  
accumulate a deposit of  
Love greater than you  
ever believed possible.*

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



At our March Board Meeting one of the matters discussed at some length was what could PARA do in the present economic climate to benefit its members.

One area that will require vigilance by both employers providing health benefits and those receiving such benefits is concern that the "Administration Is Open to Taxing Health Benefits" according to a New York Times article appearing under that headline on March 14, 2009. The Congressional Budget Office projects a tax on those receiving employer provided health benefits that could mean \$246 billion in revenue for a single year. There are powerful groups opposed to such a plan, but given the potential revenue and the shrinking sources of Federal revenue it would not be surprising to see this idea come up front and center.

The March Board discussion on benefits made it apparent that at the present time, given the major hit the Pension System has taken on its investments and the economy, it is unrealistic to expect the legislature to improve the existing inadequate COLA. Pursuing vigorously a full COLA remains the single most important goal of PARA, but timing is important in achieving that goal. As the head of a large retiree organization commented, if we seek an improvement at this time, the legislators will look at us as if we had two heads! PARA will pursue improving COLA when there is any credible chance of obtaining an improvement. I am particularly concerned with the plight of those who retired a good number of years ago and are seeing their purchasing power being eroded with the passing years. We are attempting to see if some relief can be fashioned for those who have suffered with the passage of years. There is precedent for a "catch up". However even a limited modest adjustment will be extremely difficult to achieve. The Comptroller has indicated the contribution of employers to the pension system will go up significantly to meet existing pension obligations. Understandably, we will hear howls from local governments and their taxpayers for any measure that would further increase employer contribution.

Now that I have given you the bright picture let me give you the needle. The Federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated, "A single dose of shingles vaccine is indicated for adults 60 years of age and older." A PARA member sent me an email indicating that after jumping through a number of hoops he was able to get reimbursed for the vaccine.

*Continued on page 2: From Your President*

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# PARA-phernalia

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## *From Your President - continued from page 1*

I had a similar experience with Express Script, but finally they picked up in my case 80% with my paying my usual 20% co-pay. The personnel at Express Script were polite and wanted to be helpful. The new cards may have caused part of the problem with the new ID numbers Express Script issued around the turn of the year. The point is that you may well have to be patient and persistent. **WHETHER THE VACCINE IS RIGHT FOR YOU IS SOMETHING TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR!** The CDC notes Shingles "...main symptom is pain, which can be quite severe." A CDC Pod-cast states that one million new cases of shingles occur each year and that half of those reaching age 85 have had or will develop shingles. The CDC further advises that complications occur in about one third of the cases. The most common complication is post-herpetic neuralgia, which can cause pain greater than associated with childbirth or cancer. The CDC noted, "All Medicare Part D plans cover shingles vaccine. The amount of cost-sharing (money you have to pay) for vaccination varies". The PA has provided a statement about coverage which appears in this Newsletter.

Over the past year or so, PARA has been working closely with the new Director of Human Resources, Mary Lee Hannell and her staff. Our working relationship with HR has greatly improved, as Mary Lee seems to understand more than her predecessors might have, that retirees can be a real asset to the PA and not solely a "heritage" expense. The volunteer program is one way to put our best foot forward and that is one of the reasons why we urge your participation. (See our website [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)).

**Richard Helman, President**

## **Information on Shingles Vaccine**

Medicare-eligible Port Authority retirees and their eligible dependent spouses covered for prescription drug benefits under the Port Authority's Retiree Prescription Drug Plan –Express Scripts (ESI): the shingles vaccine can be ordered by taking the signed prescription to a participating ESI pharmacy.

Retirees and eligible dependent spouses not Medicare eligible: their doctor should contact United Healthcare's specialty pharmacy, PharmaCare at 877-287-1234 to make arrangements to have the vaccine ordered and delivered to the doctor's office.

Questions, contact Express Scripts at the number on the back of the prescription ID card or call Port Authority Employee Benefits at (212) 435-2870.

## ***A WORD FROM THE EDITOR..***

You'll note that this issue devotes considerable coverage to the Tribute World Trade Visitors Center (Tribute Center). All of us who visited The Center on the two days set aside for PA Retirees experienced different reactions and emotions which we wanted to share with all of you. So too did the volunteers and permanent staff who manage The Center on a day to day basis. Many of the thoughts of PARA Board members, retirees and staff will affect you in different ways but hopefully, in the final analysis, will recall for you all the good things about being a part of the WTC and PA family.

Special thanks go out to Holly Blausler, Jerry Doherty and Rae Ann Hoffmann who worked so tirelessly to make PARA's and our retirees Tribute Center experience such a meaningful one. Their work began in the Fall of last year with the germ of an idea and culminated with the visit to the Center so many of us enjoyed. They are in large measure responsible for writing and/or editing much of the Tribute Center material they gathered from numerous sources and individuals for inclusion in this Newsletter issue.

## **PARA AND THE TRIBUTE WORLD TRADE CENTER**

On April 28<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup> retirees and family members visited the Tribute World Trade Center located at 120 Liberty Street, just across the street from the World Trade Center site. This significant event was co-sponsored by PARA, your retirees' organization, and the staff of the Tribute Center.

Retirees arriving for the visits received the PA's publication "A Guide to the Rebuilding of The WTC". They were greeted by President, Dick Helman and committee members for these events from the PARA Board; Holly Blausler, Jerry Doherty, and Rae Ann Hoffmann. Other PARA Board members on hand to greet retirees and assist in the day's events included Dave Gallagher, Dom Varricchio, Tom Kearney, Al Pettenati, Dick Lee, and Stan Raith.

Our own Board members were moved by the experience and shared their views in person or in writing. Stan Raith, our newsletter editor wrote a wonderful note and Dave Gallagher our Second V.P. a moving poem (see following article). Dom Varricchio, retired Police Lieutenant, told us 'I truly enjoyed the experience, albeit emotional at times, of greeting so many of the PA family that I had worked with throughout my years of service. We had a beautiful day and I got to meet some really nice people who worked with the Tribute staff'.

The day opened with an opportunity to relax with a cup of coffee and pastry thoughtfully provided by the Tribute Center staff. Lee Ielpi, President of the Tribute WTC Visitors Center and Jennifer Adams CEO, officially welcomed those assembled, and shared how Tribute came to be. (See companion article on 'Stained Glass'). It started with the 9/11 Families Association, and was joined by others including The Port Authority who provided construction funds for the Center. Lee explained the unique role of the docent, who must have a connection to the site either as a responder, neighbor, survivor, family member, or former worker. Several Port Authority retirees and active staff are docents and as arranged, they were the guides for the day. Special thanks to Rita Schwartz (retired Public Affairs), Maria Malone-Hodges (SIB), Mel Wasserman (retired Engineering) Michele Davidson (wife of Bob Davidson retired Chief Architect), Pete Miller (Engineering) and HRD Director Mary Lee Hannell for being on hand to make the experience so personal. We learned that being connected in some way to the World Trade Center is one of the requirements to be a docent, and how the Tribute Center would welcome PA retirees for this position. Contact information is in the article 'Volunteer Opportunities'.

Dick Helman, President of PARA told the assembled how much it meant to us in PARA to have this relationship with the Tribute staff. Retirees were reminded that PARA's main mission was to monitor our pension benefits. They were advised to go to our website ([paranynj.org](http://paranynj.org)) for updated PARA information. Additional volunteer opportunities were presented to retirees for the PA, as recruiters or as a source of institutional memory; or PARA if they have financial expertise to help check pension fund activities. Information on how to volunteer is also provided in 'Volunteer Opportunities' for PARA, PA as well as Tribute.

Tours were offered for all who attended. Afterwards, I asked retirees if they would share their reactions. Mildred Schneider (Public Affairs) who attended with husband Jerome, said, 'it was very emotional'. 'It's hard to believe those buildings are not there anymore... and all those people'. Veronica and Robert Elliott (TBT) joined those sentiments. Both Bonnie Williams (wife of Board member Harmon Williams).and Marianne Pellegrino (Aviation) repeated the comment made by so many - 'it was a moving experience'. Bonnie added that it "reinforces ones belief in the strength of people.

The first room contains a model of the World Trade Center. It is named "The Port Authority Room". I asked Jennifer Adams, CEO of the Tribute Center why that was so. Jennifer explained that the PA had been a major contributor; not only to the center but 'to the sense of community it established at the WTC; with the Summer Stage events on the plaza, decorations at holiday

seasons, a place to shop and have lunch or dinner'. She pointed out that Guy Tozzoli states in a short film in this first exhibit room that, he "wanted to make people love the place". The World Trade Center was for many retirees their daily "home". When constructing the Tribute Center, staff wanted visitors to take away the magnitude of the loss. Besides a model of the site, there are pictures on the rail that give one a sense of a 'family album' says Jennifer, plus a remembrance of those lost in both 1993 and 2001. Dominic Bonasio (GWB), with wife Judy stated "this was a great opportunity. I didn't want to disconnect".

Those pictures of World Trade staffers, and the film about the life of the World Trade community brought many right back to the years in which they worked at the World Trade Center. Marie Steiner (Tech Services) told us 'it was beautiful to revisit the scene'. The tour continued through the day of 9/11 followed by the rescue effort, where strong emotions took over for many. They then moved to the area that contains pictures of loved ones lost that day submitted by their family and friends. The list of PA staffers lost is part of this portion of the exhibit. Arnold Karvasarsky said, "I was deeply impressed by the professional presentation and apt arrangement of virtually all displays and artifacts", The presentation was most stirring for those of us who lived in the towers while they were upright. I would add that after viewing the presentations, I certainly was moved in remembering those who paid the ultimate price on the blackest of days in Port Authority history. Being in the company of dear friends and colleagues who shared the best of times with me at the Trade Center could be seen as a tribute to those who I still see, if only in my dreams".

When we reconvened in the meeting room, many retirees recounted their experience. Sue Mollo, nee Perez said, 'I was nervous coming here, but it was very moving'. Ethel B. Canady (WTC) agreed. Moe Cappitella (Rail) said 'the visit was well worth it'. Retirees received a handout called "PARA and YOU" which includes activities the PARA Board is engaged in on your behalf. It also included a comment card asking if you would like to be a volunteer advisor for PARA or PA's needs reproduced and include in this newsletter for your use.

So many other retirees shared their thoughts. Both Pete Tomolonis (Personnel), attending with his wife Kathy and Frank Tucillo (General Services) were very touched. Harmon Williams (TBT) said, "many thanks to you for an enabling us to participate in a truly touching and memorable "reunion".

Maxine Finkelstein (Finance) said, 'Entering the Tribute Center, and listening to the people who worked so hard to set it up, I was impressed with and in awe of the work that has been done to date. Going through the exhibit brought back all the raw emotion and heartache of those days in 1993 and 2001. But the sum total of the experience is a great appreciation that there is a place not only to honor those who died but to remember the good people, terrific experiences and fun times working at the World Trade Center. Thank you to PARA for arranging the tour'.

And thank you to all the retirees – we were so glad to see you!

Holly Blausler

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## ***THIS MOVING POEM COMES FROM OUR SECOND VICE PRESIDENT***

### A Tribute to the Center

When at first I stood atop the unclad steel  
Those many years ago  
And gawked across the sprawling urban sky  
And down upon the buzzing frantic mob,  
Who could have ever thought a day would come  
When one could only look up from the mangled depths below?  
  
When throughout those many early days I came  
To walk and work among those narrowed beams  
And lived and laughed and learned so much from so many  
That it filled a life to brim with joy and verve,  
Who could ever have thought a day would come  
When many more than one would die and others wail from all around?  
  
When I awoke that clear September morn  
The day began as every other one  
Until those wayward birds revised their pre-planned route  
To soar into those gleaming spires of steel  
That, to the world, were seen to be the core.

And in much too short a time were felled  
Into a smoking, splashing, steaming, crushing tomb  
For those who failed to run and paused awhile for panic to pass.  
Who could ever have thought a day would come  
When life would rise again from deep within that bounded frame  
And teem with hope, with strength, and reverent memory  
Of those whose ashes are forevermore the cornerstone  
Of this new and sacred place?

Then one springtime day, several thousand beyond that fateful one,  
I slowly inched into that small remembrance place  
To see again the remnants of memories, frozen in time.  
A choke, a tear, a mournful thud flared up, overwhelmingly,  
Unbounded by the bounded walls and sighs  
And gave life to those feelings long submerged.  
I stood there amid friends and those I never knew  
And, at last, I cried a long awaited – quiet -- cry.

Dave Gallagher - -May 6, 2009



## ***SOME SPECIAL THOUGHTS FROM PARA BOARD MEMBERS ABOUT THE RECENT VISITS TO THE TRIBUTE WORLD TRADE CENTER***

A note from our own newsletter editor, Stan Raith, to Tracy Grosner the Tribute contact with whom we had the pleasure to work

Hello Again Tracy,

Today deserves even a bigger WOW! than my earlier one. There are lyrics to a song “it’s lovelier (make that better) the second time around.” Well, today was even a more meaningful experience than my visit on Sunday. Your dedication and that of the rest of the staff and volunteers speaks volumes about how you all obviously enjoy and are committed to what you do. All of you made today a great day for our PARA Board members and for our fellow retirees. I heard nothing but positive comments from those who I had the opportunity to speak with. Everything was so well organized and timely and you’ll never get a PA person to refuse a free cup of coffee and snack. That was a nice touch and the brief introductions made all of us comfortable.

So many thoughts went through my mind today and I wanted to share them with you all. First, I have always been proud to be a member of the Port Authority and World Trade Center families. That pride blossomed even more today. After today I don’t see the World Trade Center as having perished but rather having been in a deep slumber. The spirit of the Trade Center and those who didn’t survive that terrible day has been reborn through all of you at the Tribute Center and is reborn each day in all of those that visit. Just think of the effect you have had on over a million people who traveled from around the globe. And The Tribute Center has done that in a relatively short period.

Downtown New York was also asleep for a time but you can feel it waking up with all the construction activity I saw and the throngs of people I encountered on the streets going about their “business as usual.”

And memories-something else you gave me today-I remember looking out over New York from Windows on the World, watching beautiful fall sunsets or the moon rising over the Brooklyn Bridge from my 61st floor office when I worked late, those sultry summer days of dancing on the Plaza at lunch, listening to the sounds of Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge and so many other groups, a morning cup of coffee outside Moran’s on the way in from the Hoboken Ferry. There are a few of you who might remember that other horrific day in 1993 when I and others distributed Bailey’s to those standing on long lines waiting for ferries back to New Jersey. Yes, I did that and I’m not sorry.

And finally thanks for the opportunity to meet old friends, some of whom I hadn’t seen for as long as thirty years.

Thanks for the memories.

Best Regards,  
Stan Raith

# REFLECTIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

## Thoughts and comments from our contacts at the Tribute World Trade Visitors Center.

**Tracy Grosner, Volunteer Coordinator:** Working with PARA board members to create an inviting event for all PANYNJ retirees was extremely rewarding. RSVPs allowed me to connect with a majority of attendees. On 4/28 and 5/5, it was a joy to connect faces with names, and interact like old friends.

One of the most rewarding feelings I had was witnessing the coming together and rejoining of old friends and colleagues, who may not have seen each other in 30 years: employees embracing bosses; and the overwhelming feeling of warmth and community that emanated throughout the museum. I also heard stories about the WTC. One gentleman spoke about clubs and organizations of the Port Authority. Another gentleman brought a 35 + year old pamphlet, detailing construction components of the WTC. In both cases, there was a feeling of pride and fond memories of being a part of the PANYNJ family.

I was also overwhelmed by the commitment and dedication of our (Tribute Center) volunteers. As soon as the event was published, our volunteers who are also PA retirees or working professionals were onboard to help in any way they could.

**Jennifer Adams CEO:** How wonderful it was to meet and hear the stories of building the trade towers and also how nice it was for retirees to come back to the place they loved for so many years.

I met an executive secretary who mentioned how the PA held familiarization tours of the WTC towers as they were being built. As every 5 new floors were added, they were taken down from the Ninth Avenue offices to tour the floors. The construction directors would come by and say “ladies grab your hard hats, time to go and visit our new home”. She still has the hard hat with the logo and WTC Development on it.

**Wendy Aibel-Weiss, Director of Exhibits and Education:** On a gallery tour, it just so happened that the victim names projected on the screen on gallery four were Port Authority names. This was riveting as the PARA members on our tour had a memory and story for almost each name as it flashed up. “Oh that was my secretary for a few years!” “That guy always made us laugh.” “I haven’t thought about him in a while,” “oh she was a charmer!” This particular moment for me was deeply moving

I was also struck by the extraordinary devotion to the PANYNJ that many of the retirees that I spoke to expressed. As a staff we continued to talk about this in the afternoon as we were moved by the strong sense of identity and professionalism each of these people shared about their work place. We wondered if this kind of connection will be experienced by employees of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Dave Barrette, Volunteer Program Manager:** It was such a wonderful experience to have the PARA family at the Tribute Center, and to hear all of the stories of the good ‘ole days, and see such reunions. Dick, Holly, Gerry and Rae Ann were all so wonderful to meet and work with! The retirees were all so moved by not only the other PA retirees, but to watch them go through Gallery 1 and see the pictures and regale all of their own personal experiences, showed just how much this event meant to them. For some, it was a difficult time but it was a time where everyone was able to celebrate the life of the towers, and pay tribute to all

that was lost that day. I personally would like to say thank you to everyone who came, and shared their experiences with us.

**Thandiwe Lewis, Volunteer Associate** William Brazill, a retiree, shared a pamphlet of the models, plans, and pictures of the construction of the towers, complete with an explanation of a new feature in construction at the time: kangaroo cranes. It was like looking at a Port Authority family heirloom.

Tribute just celebrated its millionth visitor. It was a great toast to new beginnings at the World Trade Center site and to the future of the site. The PARA event, which followed, was a nod, a smile, and a thank you to the past of the World Trade Center site. It was an honor to host the men and women who made the World Trade Center the unique place it was.

The docents who guided retirees on the Tribute tours were none other than former or current PA employees. Here’s how they experienced those visits.

**Mary Lee Hannell, Director HRD:** As a charter docent of Tribute I can tell you first hand how much Tribute touches those of us who know intimately what is missing from those 16 acres as well as those who come for their first visit. I’m so proud to volunteer for this organization.

**Rita Schwartz, formerly of Public Affairs:** A while ago I escorted Holly Blausen on a tour of Tribute and told her what satisfaction I received from working as a docent. We talked about her writing an article in the PARA newsletter. From that, this extraordinary two day experience took place. I not only got to talk to the group about my own reasons for serving as a docent, but had the pleasure of seeing so many old friends and colleagues. It was a joyous and a painful morning. As we watched the names of PA employees scroll down in Gallery 4, the group became silent, remembering and mourning, our lost friends, our lost home, and our lost connections.

**Maria Malone-Hodges, current PA employee:** I find my work as a docent to be extremely rewarding. The Tribute Center family is much like our Port Authority family; people are caring, thoughtful and want to make a difference. Our visitors come to Tribute to learn first hand about 9/11 and that is important to me because the more people know the less likely it is to happen again.

**Peter Miller, current PA employee:** It was great to see so many familiar faces at the PARA events. I was struck by how much knowledge of the WTC and its history came across from everyone. Everyone had memories and facts that I hadn’t heard or had forgotten in my 23 years here at the PA. But most of all genuine feelings for lost friends and colleagues came through. Ninety-five percent of the visitors on my tours are from other states and countries that had never been to the Trade Center. Sharing memories is incredibly important to keep reminding us of the rich human legacy of the WTC.

**Michele Davidson, wife of Bob Davidson, retired Chief Architect:** This is the first time during any tour, I found myself listening to the group, more than I was actually talking. I was a teacher and a student at the same time. They had their own 9/11 stories, and incredible insight into life at the World Trade Center. Many were simply touched and enlightened by what the center exhibited. I would have to say, the day with groups from PARA will be remembered by all who were there

# STAINED GLASS, A LINK BETWEEN PARA AND THE TRIBUTE WTC CENTER

The PARA Board wanted to express its gratitude to the Tribute Center staff for hosting our members at the Tribute WTC Visitor Center. We decided to frame a piece of stained glass that had been discovered in the rubble of the old Liberty Deli (on Liberty Street) -- now used as the site for the Tribute Center. Retirees who visited on April 28 or May 5 had the chance to see this beautiful artifact, which measures 19” wide by 25” high.

Some history on the creation of the Tribute World Trade Center will put the stained glass piece in perspective. I interviewed both Lee Ielpi, President of the Tribute Center and Jennifer Adams, CEO to learn more about Tribute. Lee said that the Center came about as a result of the ‘9/11 Families Association’. Twelve widows of firefighters wanted to learn more and also to share information in those early days after the attacks. They built a network for communication, and for the first two years prepared a newsletter for affected families. It was their primary mission to assure that the memorial will be placed over the original footprint of the two towers. Once the final design was approved in 2004 they decided that the education of visitors was their next goal.

Lee noted that visitors coming to the site were “looking at nothing but a hole in the ground”. “There was nothing to explain the events of the day,” he said. Jennifer Adams, was overlooking the former site of the Trade Center from their office over the Century 21 Department store, and thought it would be appropriate to use one of the former business spaces in the vicinity of the site as a learning center for visitors. It is within that space, that a wall of stained glass was discovered, but more on that later.

Lee explained that a major mission became the education of students. Lee himself gave the first presentation to a group of high school students from Philipsburg, Kansas. He told us that they were as disinterested as students can sometimes be, until he began to personalize his presentation based on his own experience. He realized the importance of this personal exchange, which is now the heart of the Center’s program. Lee, a retired firefighter himself, lost his son on 9/11. Jennifer had worked at the World Trade Center, and after a return to New York was a volunteer at the site in the first three months after 9/11/01.

Walking tours began in August 2005 and the Tribute Center itself was opened in September 2006. “We wanted them to understand the living history of the community that was the WTC”, says Lee. It is important for visitors to relate to those who lived the experience. So, one of the unique characteristics of the Center is that to be a docent, one must have been either a rescue worker, volunteer, survivor, lost a loved one, or lived

or worked in the area. “The visitors center should connect with those who experienced the World Trade Center,” said Jennifer. The Tribute Center plans programs that they hope will unite the community. Tribute Center welcomes PARA members to become Tribute volunteers.

The Tribute World Trade Center recently celebrated its one millionth visitor with a band and choir group from Lima Ohio. Since opening, the Center has collected over 100,000 comment cards from visitors. The Center also offers individual audio tours in five languages. Lee believes that visitors leave with an acknowledgement of the sadness of the day, but are enlightened about the events, and offer wishes for a peaceful future – the comment made most often on the cards left at the Center after their tours.

So, where’s the stained glass you ask? Well when Jennifer, Lee and Kimberly went into the rubble of what is now the Tribute Center space, they saw several stained glass panels along a wall of what is now Gallery 1, ‘The Port Authority Gallery’ which shows the liveliness of the WTC community. The wreckers were due to come the next morning so the three of them climbed over the rubble to get at the glass. Lee climbed to the top, and he would pry out a section and hand it down. Many of the pieces are damaged unfortunately, and others are missing pieces. However, the piece used for the PARA gift is missing only one small piece and is truly beautiful. PARA’s gift of framing now permits the piece to be displayed and appreciated, as it was when our members were recent guests.

Tribute Center staff would love to know more about the panel; what year it might have been made, the significance of the design, etc. If any of our readers are stained glass mavens, they would like to hear from you. A silver and gold wood frame encases the scrolling flower design, with its bright red and green and a touch of blue, shining through the pearly white panels. What a lovely way to remember the relationship established between PARA and the Tribute Center.

To learn more about the Tribute Center visit their website [www.Tributewtc.org](http://www.Tributewtc.org). To become a volunteer, call Tracy Grosner at 212-422-3520 ext.112.



# ***The PARA Board and the Port Authority Need You***

The Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc. (PARA) is a not-for-profit corporation that promotes the welfare of PA retirees by fostering and encouraging a united effort to maintain and improve legislation, primarily as it affects the pensions of the New York State Retirement System's members. PARA is also a member of the Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations, comprised of 44 member organizations representing more than 350,000 New York State public retirees.

The PARA Board is an all-volunteer body that contributes its knowledge and time to represent PA retirees. From time to time, circumstances arise where the Board can utilize a pool of talent to supplement its own resources. For example, in the current economic climate, the PARA Board could use particular help in monitoring the Pension Fund. We are already very fortunate to have a former CFO of the PA leading that effort for us. Any of you who are sophisticated in financial matters would be most welcome to join us in this timely and important mission.

Since its inception, PARA has maintained liaison with the Port Authority's Human Resources Department and currently enjoys access to that department in a truly cooperative atmosphere. That relationship is especially welcome in these times when any communications on our benefit programs merit accurate knowledge and shared dialogue.

The Port Authority is committed to a multi-year Capital Program, allocating a record \$3.3 billion for 2009, which invests in critical projects that will create jobs, stimulate the region's economy, and build some of the transportation infrastructure essential for our region's future.

To administer a capital program of this magnitude, and to run the Port Authority's complex and demanding transportation infrastructure, the agency must tap its resources fully – human, financial, physical. For this enormous task, the Port Authority also values the potential contribution of its retirees as volunteer advisors.

After all, PARA members like you were among the original teams of planners, accountants, engineers and others who developed what the agency is today, and represent an invaluable resource: institutional memory. The Port Authority recognizes the value of career service professionals who might serve as a potential source of assistance to meet the challenges ahead, such as assisting in recruitment efforts or perhaps to be available to share information about a project or program close to your experience.

The PARA Board has created a Member Information Card that we'd like all of our members to complete for the following reasons:

- First, to keep PARA current on where you are and how to reach you;
- Second, to gauge your interest in potentially being on call to help PARA or the Port Authority;
- Third, to identify the skills and knowledge of PARA members that might help the PARA Board fulfill its mission,
- Fourth, to further PARA's relationship with the Port Authority by using our members' experience to contribute to the agency's plans for the future, and last, to determine if you can identify other Port Authority retirees and current PA employees who might want to become members of PARA.

We have enclosed a card for you to complete which is printed on the back of the Proxy Ballot card. Please complete that as well as the ballot card and return them in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope along with your annual dues by June 24, 2009.

## ***In Memoriam Phil Cheney***

On March 2 Phil Cheney, PARA's Treasurer, passed away at the age of 66. Phil was a well respected and well liked individual and professional who will be missed by not only the PARA Board but also all those current and retired PA employees who knew Phil as a friend and co-worker. Phil was a kind man who was always ready to help someone find their way through the sometimes complex financial and retirement issues facing them. Phil served the Port Authority for 34 years and remained dedicated to the PA's mission after he retired in 2000. Phil was not only the Treasurer and a Board Member of PARA but was also Treasurer and a Board Director of the Xcel Federal Credit Union.

Phil's love for his community was exemplified by his devotion to his church as a deacon and elder and as a Boy Scout leader.

Phil was a devoted family man and the Board and entire membership of PARA extends condolences and deepest sympathy to Phil's wife Carol, his two sons, Kevin and Philip Jr., his daughter Kristin and his two grandchildren, Claire Marie and Katherine Elizabeth.

God Bless you Phil. Rest in Peace.

Dick Lee





# PARA - 2009 Election & Annual Meeting

## Elections and Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting date is fast approaching and we will again be re-electing Directors whose terms are about to expire. We will also be voting for two new Board Members, Liz De Laura and Dick Lee whose biographies are included below. Dick Lee has been appointed by the Board to fill the vacant Treasurer's position created by Phil Cheney's passing.

The meeting will be held at 11:15 A.M., on Monday, June 29, 2009 at the Times Square Hall, Port Authority Bus Terminal in the Borough of Manhattan in the City of New York. Members who previously paid their dues, if postmarked by May 15, 2009 for the 2008/2009 membership year will be entitled to vote. The names of the new candidates and those 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 submit a write in candidate of your choice if a member in good standing. You need not attend the meeting to vote. Just return your completed Ballot in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope along with your 2008/2009 dues by June 24, 2009. We always encourage members to exercise their right to vote and play an active role in "their" organization. Since seating at Times Square Hall is limited to approximately 70, it would help with our planning if you advise us of your plans to attend. Please let us know of your intentions by June 24, 2009 by mailing us notice at PARA, PO Box 486, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-9998 or by e-mail to Richard@helman.net.

## Guest Participant at Annual Meeting

I was fortunate enough to be able to arrange for Kevin Murray, Deputy Comptroller for the Division of Retirement Services to participate in our Annual meeting via a telephone conference call. His credentials, which follow, speak highly of his experience and knowledge of the Retirement System. If you are able to get to the meeting I'm sure you'll find his participation informative.

Kevin F. Murray was appointed Deputy Comptroller for the Division of Retirement Services in August 2007. He is responsible for the operations of the New York State and Local Retirement Systems which administers more than \$6.9 billion in annual benefits to 358,109 retirees and beneficiaries and provides services to 677,321 active and vested members. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Murray was the Executive Director of the Retired Employees Association (RPEA) since 2002. He was employed in the State Division of the Budget from 1970 to 1984 where he advanced to the position of Assistant Chief Budget Examiner in the General Government Operations Unit. Thereafter, he was Divisional Vice President of Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield from 1984 to 1987. He returned to State service in 1987 as Deputy Commissioner for Tax Policy Analysis in the Department of Taxation and Finance. For eleven years, from 1988 through 1999, he served as the Tax Department's Executive Deputy Commissioner.

## Candidate Biographies:

**Elizabeth DeLaura**- Began her Port Authority Career in 1959. She held positions in the Tunnels & Bridges Department, Management Services Department, Purchasing, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and in 1990 became a Financial Analyst in the Treasury Department, a position she held until her retirement in August of 1995. Liz has held the position of Treasurer for Women's Equity and Holy Trinity Church in Hillsdale, NJ. Following her retirement she worked as a Deputy Tax Collector for the Borough of Montvale, NJ.

**Richard (Dick) Lee**- Dick was appointed to the Board as Treasurer on March 20, 2009. He started his Port Authority service in July 1966 in the Accounting Division and spent most of his PA career in supervisory and management positions in the various divisions within the Comptroller's Department. He also worked for a number of years in the Aviation Department and on special assignment with the World Trade Department in 1992. Upon retiring in 1996 Dick went on to become Controller of The New Jersey Credit Union League and then moved on to work with a number of other PA retirees on transportation issues with The National Transit Institute at Rutgers University.

## **WEB SITE FEATURE ON RETIREE BENEFITS PLANNED**

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We're always looking for ways to make PARA's Web site ([www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)) more useful to PA retirees. And we know, of course, that there is one topic that's especially important to all of us at this stage of our lives -- benefits.

So we recently launched a project in cooperation with PA Benefits to make information about retiree benefits conveniently available on our Web site. We have contacted the Benefits folks at the PA, and they are entirely supportive of the plan.

To make the information easy to digest, we're going to present it in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) format. Getting the answers is the easy part. They will be provided by PA Benefits staff. Being retirees ourselves, of course, we can come up with a number of typical questions. But to produce the best possible product, we would like to receive as many benefit questions as we can from our growing family of PA retirees.

So if you have a question you would like to propose for our list, please send it to me by e-mail ([tkwtca@aol.com](mailto:tkwtca@aol.com)), phone (201-791-3782) or snail mail (302 Howard Avenue, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410) – and I will put it in the hopper. When you send your question in, please indicate your position title at retirement and the year you retired. The best questions will be ones that concern large categories of employees, and all questions we use will be published anonymously.

Also, don't forget to visit the PARA Web site ([www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)) often to take advantage of the many resources assembled there so skillfully by Webmaster Joe SanSevero. Some examples:

- Links to other important sites, including the New York State Retirement System, Social Security and Medicare.
- Schedules for retiree lunches and other get-togethers.
- E-mail directory of retirees (join the list if you're not already there!)
- On-Line Forum discussions among retirees on any subject of interest.

**By Tom Kearney**

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

“Volunteer”, says our president Dick Helman. “It keeps the grey matter active”. There are a number of ways to help PARA, the PA, or the Tribute Center.

PARA: Interested in using your former PA skills to assist PARA? Fill out the card in the newsletter. We are especially interested in tracking the trend in pension plan changes. Please let us know if you have an expertise in finance. To learn more about PARA visit our website [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)

PA: Willing to recruit for the PA? They are especially interested in former employees to help as recruiters at job fairs or colleges. Please let us know the department in which you worked. Or contact Holly Blauseer at [atraeveda@aol.com](mailto:atraeveda@aol.com) to volunteer.

TRIBUTE: Would you like to consider being a docent at Tribute? Docents are asked to 1. Commit to only two tours a month. 2. Volunteer to do inside only (gallery tours). Or 3. Other ways of supporting Tribute and the memories of those lost. To become a volunteer call Tracy Grosner at 212-422-3520 Ext. 112. To learn more visit their website at [www.tributewtc.org](http://www.tributewtc.org)