

In Memoriam

ABRAMOVICH, WALTER.....02/12/2013	LESKO, DENNIS.....03/08/2013
ADAMS GENEVA.....01/31/2013	LUBARSKI, EDWARD.....01/27/2013
ADRAGNA, ANGELO.....02/15/2013	MALEY, JAMES.....03/26/2013
AGOSTENELLI, ROSE.....12/20/2012	MARSHALL, JULIA.....01/19/2013
AUFMAN, ALBERT.....03/06/2013	MCGROGAN, EVELYN.....03/20/2013
BAUMAN, MICHAEL.....03/29/2013	MEEHAN, SHIRLEY.....03/14/2013
CAMPBELL, DONALD.....03/13/2013	MISKO, BETTY.....01/27/2013
CARLINO, AUGUST.....04/21/2013	PENEBAKER, ROBERT.....03/04/2013
COLUCCI, JOSEPHINE.....02/09/2013	PERNATOZZI, IRMA.....01/19/2013
DAY, CHARLES.....03/14/2013	PETURZZI, MARIAN.....02/05/2013
DEEP, DIANE.....01/21/2013	POHASKI, EMILY.....02/17/2013
DEVAY, MARY.....02/02/2013	POPKIN, ROBERTA.....02/17/2013
DEVICH, MILAN.....03/22/2013	PRIORE, ROBERT.....04/13/2013
DIXON, KENNETH.....01/21/2013	ROMANIAS, PATRICIA.....04/12/2013
GARFOLD, MARGARET.....02/14/2013	ROSINSKI, HELENA.....03/26/2013
GEBIS, KATHLEEN.....04/06/2013	ROSSI, FRANK.....01/19/2013
GIMA, GRACE.....02/10/2013	SCARBOROUGH, MILDRED..02/02/2013
GRABOSKI, HESTER.....02/18/2013	SCHRAMM, CAROL ANN....01/05/2013
GRANNISON, ALBERT.....01/13/2013	SLAGEL, DOROTHY.....01/17/2013
HEASLEY, JAMES.....01/15/2013	STREPPA, MARY.....04/25/2013
HEMMINGS, MERLE.....04/08/2013	SULLIVAN, MARY.....04/15/2013
HOGAN, JOHN.....04/01/2013	TARANTINE, RUTH.....08/16/2012
HUDAK, JOHN.....04/17/2013	VANSHUREN, ESTHER.....01/22/2013
JACKSON, EDITH.....01/21/2013	VIGGIANO, JOHN.....02/09/2013
KAUER, JOHN.....02/05/2013	WHELAN, JUANITA.....12/22/2012
JONES, LEONARD.....01/10/2013	WHELAN, THOMAS.....12/22/2012
KEELEY, HELEN.....01/13/2013	WILLIAMS, HARRY.....02/15/2013
KIEFFER, CHARLES.....01/28/2013	VAROGA, MARGARET.....07/14/2012
LEAF, VIRGINIA.....01/20/2013	

ARE YOU INTERESTED?

The offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer will be on the ballot this year and you could be a candidate for one of them. In particular, the office of the Treasurer will be OPEN, so if you have a financial background and/or experience handling BIG MONEY, and/or a penchant for figures, throw your hat in the ring! INTERESTED? See one of the officers if you have questions and to have your name placed on the ballot.

Additionally, ACRA members are welcome and encouraged to sit in at the Board meetings. The ACRA Board meets at the Hotel at 10:00 AM on the day of the General Luncheon Meeting.

By Angela Conte

Editor's note: Please refer to the President's Report for additional information.

Summary of Major Board Actions

At its March and April meetings the Board discussed the timing of sending the newsletter to all retirees. The past practice has been to send it before the December party. However, we do not get many new members to the party and the expense is rather high. There are also many newsletters returned as "undeliverable" because the County mailing list which we use for that mailing is less accurate than our own membership list. It was agreed to send it to all retirees in August instead, which is the beginning of our luncheon season, or at times when it is more advantageous to ACRA, for example, before Retirement Board elections.

More frequent invitations for all members to attend Board meetings will be given to encourage more involvement.

The Board also voted to develop a website for ACRA where luncheons and activities could be advertised and allow members to pay for them and their dues online. The Board chose to contract with Imagebox in Garfield for developing the website.

The Board voted to spend up to \$100 for supplies and flags for the President's Project to spruce up the graves of veterans for Memorial Day at a couple of cemeteries.

Further discussion will be held on the responsibilities of the Treasurer's position and how to lessen them so the position is more attractive to potential candidates for that office.

An appropriate gift was sent to former Board Member Bill Gallagher who is seriously ill.

By Roger Westman

**Seen on a bumper sticker:
Ignore the Environment
--it will go away.**



ACRA • P.O. Box 371 • Gibsonia, PA 15044-0371 • 412-539-9307

ACRA is registered as a tax-exempt 501(c)(4) organization, established under the Internal Revenue Code for the sole and express purpose of promoting the common good and general welfare of its members.

OFFICERS:

Patricia Cray.....President
Joseph Scorpion.....Vice President
Ron Chleboski.....Treasurer
Roger Westman.....Secretary

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Ginny Bowman, Editor
Angela Conte
Eileen McFadden Drake
Diane Welsh

JUNE 2013

News

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

For those of you who haven't yet had an opportunity to join us for a walking tour, I hope you'll take a look at the activities scheduled over the summer months and try to participate in at least one. We've had such fun getting out and moving around new areas of Pittsburgh, learning something new about our fair city, all in the company of friends, spouses and former colleagues. The cost is certainly nominal—most walking tours are no more than \$5.00—and we try to identify a reasonably-priced restaurant in the area where we can all go afterward, sit down, grab a bite and reflect on the experience we just shared. Because we've scheduled many of these activities on days *other than* Wednesdays, we've also been successful in attracting folks who may have other commitments on our regular luncheon days. And for those of you who may not have someone to come with, don't let that stop you. There are always "singles" in the group—and it usually isn't long before they've found a friend for the day. There are many reasons to send in your reservation(s) and join us. Here are some activities that will be coming up in the next couple months:

June 6 Walking tour of Pittsburgh Botanic Garden

June 26 & 27 Kayaking lessons on the lake in North Park

July 22 Paddle and Eat Locally

August 2 Guided hike in Frick Park + Concert on the Lawn

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JOHN WEINSTEIN ADDRESSES RETIREES

The speaker for ACRA's March 20 luncheon meeting was John Weinstein, Allegheny County Treasurer and President of the Retirement Board of Allegheny County (RBAC). He named the members of the Retirement Board: Ted Puzak, Vice President, Chelsa Wagner, Secretary and County Controller, Rich Fitzgerald, County Executive, Bill Gallagher, Walt Szymanski and Jennifer Liptak. Ted Puzak and Bill Gallagher are elected members of the RBAC and ACRA members. He introduced Tim Johnson, new Executive Director of the RBAC. Mr. Weinstein announced that an annual report will be ready for release soon and the Retirement Board intends to initiate a quarterly newsletter.

Weinstein explained that the County Retirement System is based on a Defined Benefit Plan, not a 401(K); the Plan accepts the risk, not the employee/retiree. The sources of income for the Plan are employee and County contributions and investments. Goals are to diversify investments and contain costs. In fact, Allegheny County's plan has some of the lowest costs. The Plan experienced 11.66% growth over the past year and is now 75% funded, which is most favorable compared to some other municipalities. There are currently 7,410 employees and 4,399 retirees.

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PITTSBURGH Botanic Garden 'n talk

On Thursday, June 6, at 10:30 AM we will explore the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden. Join us for a walk in the woods! The Garden, located 20 minutes west of downtown Pittsburgh beside Settler's Cabin Park, is in early development, to become a world-class outdoor botanic garden. Detailed directions will be provided for those who register. After the walk we'll enjoy lunch at The Diner (an old-fashioned one!) in Oakdale. Five dollars will cover the cost of the walk and everyone will pay for their own lunch. Register by sending your check to ACRA, P. O. Box 5335, Pittsburgh, PA 15206-0335.

By Ginny Bowman

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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The kayaking lessons are provided by Venture Outdoors. They will be held on sequential days, because one lesson left me feeling a little less secure than I would like for the Paddle and Eat event. So you don't have to attend both days, but they're available if you need them. Just know you won't be able to join the "paddle and eat locally" activity unless you've had some kayaking experience. VO will provide the kayaks and mandatory life vests for the lessons and for the "paddle." The cost for members' lessons will be \$15.00, non-members = \$25.00 (regular non-member fee - \$29.00). The eat 'n' paddle cost for our members will be \$25.00, kayaks and lunch included (non-members = \$35.00). (Please note: Venture Outdoors' advertised fee for this activity for non-members is \$40.00.) All kayaking events will take place from 10 a.m. to noon/early afternoon.

On August 2, we'll take a sunset guided hike through Frick Park (5:30-7:00 p.m.), then join fellow Pittsburghers on the Clayton lawn for First Friday at the Frick. The indie folk group, Matrimony, from Charlotte, North Carolina, will be on hand to entertain. Price of the hike - \$5.00.

Be on the lookout for postcard announcements for each of these activities.

The President's Project. In the last newsletter I mentioned a Memorial Day project I was hoping to gather support for: Visiting several cemeteries in different sections of Allegheny County, cleaning up the overgrowth

on the headstones of veterans from WWI, WW2, Korea and Vietnam and placing a flag on those graves. The number of volunteers will determine how many graves we'll be able to cover. If you have a couple of hours free one day the week of May 20th, give us a call on the ACRA line (412) 539-9307, and tell us which day you'd prefer to volunteer—Monday, May 20th, for instance, or Tuesday, or Friday. We'll accommodate *your* schedule to the extent possible. And thank you in advance for your time and service on behalf of our generation's fallen.

The Treasurer's position. Elsewhere in these pages you'll see a call for a volunteer candidate to run for the Treasurer's position. If you're someone with an accounting background, or have experience with bookkeeping, give this office some thought, won't you? In order to reduce the responsibilities of the office, we recently created another post to receive the luncheon and walking tour reservations. (That's why you see two different post office boxes listed for membership dues and for luncheons.) But that move then frees the Treasurer to create monthly financial reports (for the Board's review) and to collect dues in the organization's annual membership drive. It's a position without which the organization cannot function. (We can't accept money from you without accounting for it!) So don't make us close up shop while we find someone—or have to hire somebody to do it for us. I know the right person is out there, so, Right Person, step forward, please!

The calendar for the remainder of 2013. Remember, there's no luncheon this year in June. In September, our speaker will be Pete McQuillin from The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania. You may not be ready to think about your demise, but it's sure to happen to most of us; Pete will show us how to save money while sparing our loved ones having to make those decisions at a difficult time. Then in October, we will welcome Joanne Grossi from the Department of Health and Human Services, who will address the Affordable Care Act and its effect on our Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans in 2014. We were very fortunate to be able to get Ms. Grossi to come to Pittsburgh for our luncheon on October 16, and we hope to have a good turn-out for her. November, of course, is our Annual Meeting (11/20/13) with individual health care counseling sessions; and, the one we all look forward to, our Annual Christmas Party on December 11, 2013.

By fall, we should have our new Web page set up. You'll be able to check dates, make your reservations, even pay your dues online. If you wish, that is. For those who like things the way they are, we'll keep on printing everything the same as you're used to, nothing will change.

In the meantime, enjoy your summer! I'll look forward to seeing everyone again in September.



PLEASE TAKE NOTE!

- Questions about your pension should be directed to the Retirement Board, NOT to ACRA. Please call the Retirement Board of Allegheny County at (412) 350-4674.
 - ACRA Luncheon Costs:

Paid in advance:	Member.	\$17.00
	Member's spouse and/or guest. . .	\$20.00
At luncheon:	Member.	\$20.00
	Member's spouse and/or guest. . .	\$23.00
- Member's costs are applicable to current dues-paid members. Spouses and guests are not entitled to member's costs unless they are paid ACRA members.

LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS?

ACRA members have asked us about why retirees have varying amounts of life insurance benefits as part of their retirement package. We know of amounts from \$1,500 to as high as \$10,000 in coverage. In order to determine why there are differences the ACRA Board wrote a letter to the Retirement Office in August, 2012 asking for an explanation or the criteria used for determining the amount each retiree is entitled to. We also asked which companies provide the coverage and if optional amounts are available for purchase by retirees.

County Treasurer John Weinstein, who is President of the Retirement Board, was copied on the letter. In September, 2012, ACRA received a phone call from John's Assistant, Janice Vinci saying they were compiling the information but could not provide a date when it would be available or why it was taking so long, other than to say it was complicated.

In response to another request for information to include in this newsletter, the following statement was received from Timothy H. Johnson, Ex-

ecutive Director, Retirement Board of Allegheny County:

"I would like to thank the Retirees Association and its membership for raising questions about the life insurance coverage. These questions have prompted a review process that has been somewhat involved and lengthy. Many questions are answered; however, every question has not been answered and the coverage for a certain number of retirees remains under review. I will provide the answers we have at the upcoming ACRA Luncheon and continue to keep ACRA informed. Please know that the Retirement Office is working with the County in order to resolve any remaining issues. On behalf of the Retirement Board, I would like to again thank the Retirees Association and its members for both its inquiries and patience throughout the review process."

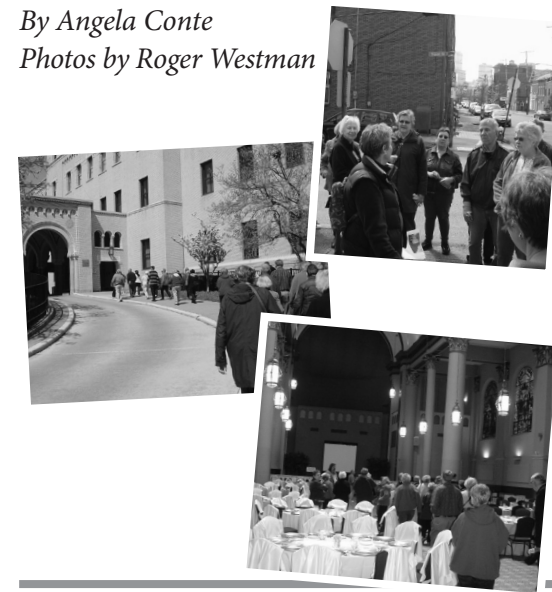
We look forward to Mr. Johnson's presentation at our luncheon meeting and we will share answers to the life insurance benefit questions in future newsletters.

By Roger Westman

NORTHSIDE WALKING TOUR

On April 26th twenty-three ACRA members and their guests toured Deutschtown Historical District with our guide from Venture Outdoors, and what a tour it was! Beginning with the James Street Gastropub & Speakeasy, the owner enthralled us with the history of the pub and its very "colorful" and interesting past. On to Allegheny General Hospital portico and foyer: beautiful architectural works of art. Next, the Priory and Great Hall. Gathering in the courtyard, we were met by the owner and stepped through the Priory doors to view several guest rooms, a teeny tiny bar which contained a huge bank safe, and a breakfast dining room for guests. Finally, we were escorted to the Great Hall, a former church with magnificent stained glass windows, now a fabulous banquet facility. As we walked along East Ohio Street, our docent pointed out many buildings of interest and noted their architectural interest. We arrived back at the James Street Pub where we enjoyed an excellent lunch, rested our tired feet, and reveled in the sights we had just seen. There is much, much more to Deutschtown – a few of the highlights seen are mentioned here.

By Angela Conte
Photos by Roger Westman



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House Bill 546 was passed unanimously in mid-March and is now before the Senate. According to the PA General Assembly, as we go to press, there has been no subsequent action. This Bill is important because it will stop the inclusion of overtime into pension calculations for new hires. It will not affect any current employees or retirees. In fact it will take eight years for any impact since it takes that length of time for new hires to vest in the pension plan. The Bill would save \$338 million over 25 years. About 1,100 persons now have overtime figured into their pensions, while the remainder are not eligible for overtime and must take compensatory time off instead. ACRA members should call or write their State Senator now to encourage passage of this bill.

By Roger Westman and Ginny Bowman

save
the
dates

WALK 'N TALK

Thursday, June 6 Pittsburgh Botanic Garden • June 26 & 27 Kayaking lessons on the lake in North Park
July 22 Paddle and Eat Locally • August 2 Guided Hike in Frick Park • Concert on the Lawn

LUNCHEONS

September 18 Pete McQuillin - The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Pennsylvania
October 16 Joanne Grossi - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Affordable Care Act