



Allegheny County

Retirees Association

September 2014

Newsletter

P.O. Box 5335 • Pittsburgh, PA 15206-0335 • 412-539-9307

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Retirement Board of Allegheny County election:

Roger Westman, volunteer Louise Schafer and I witnessed the ballot count for the open seat on the Retirement Board. The other two candidates were present, as were representatives from the Retirement Office and Treasurer Weinstein's office. When the count was completed, Frank DiChristofaro was pronounced the winner with 985 votes. Frank was supported by an active employees' coalition, and they did a good job of getting out their vote.

I have written in the past about the importance for retirees to retain that seat on the Retirement Board (this was the vacancy created when ACRA member Bill Gallagher

passed away). I've explained the tension that exists between active employees (who oppose having their pension contribution rate increased) and retirees (whose COLA depends on that contribution rate being maintained or, when recommended, increased).

Mr. DiChristofaro indicated that he supports a cost-of-living increase [for retirees] so long as it doesn't compromise the health of the fund. Unfortunately, "compromise" is a matter of interpretation. Only time will tell how all this plays out.

Status of our COLA campaign (Cost Of Living Adjustment):

Last November I addressed the RBAC
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FRANK DICRISTOFARO ELECTED TO RETIREMENT BOARD

"I want to insure the integrity and growth of our pension funds" responded Frank DiChristofaro, newly-elected member of the Retirement Board of Allegheny County, when asked about his goal in running for office. He brings to the Board 25 years of experience in the Allegheny County Court Association of Professional Employees, a BA in Criminal Justice from Duquesne University, as well as an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Community College.

After three years as a counselor at Shuman Center, Mr. DiChristofaro began a career as a probation officer, under the jurisdiction of the Court of Common Pleas, which has lasted for 25 years. COLA raises are a concern of his efforts to make sure the pension fund is stable and grows in the years to come. Involved in his 11 year-old son's activities - soccer, basketball, fishing - he sounds like "A Man for all Seasons". ACRA members hope he is "A Man for All Reasons"!

By Mary Nolan, SC

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Frank DiCristofaro Elected to Retirement Board

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Congratulations, Joe Scorpion!

SAVE THE DATES!

- ~ **Walk 'n Talk, Sept. 12**
Walking Tour, Mexican War Streets
- ~ **Luncheon, Sept 17**
Speaker: Dr. Karl E. Williams
Medical Examiner of Allegheny County
"CSI Pittsburgh"
- ~ **Luncheon, October 15**
Speaker: Bill McKendree
Apprise; What's new with Medicare and more
- ~ **Luncheon, November 19**
Personal Medicare conferences
Annual Meeting
- ~ **Christmas Party, December 10**

urging a \$25.00/month increase in pension payouts starting in January 2014. In December the Board denied our petition. So at April and June's meetings, I profiled four members who collect pensions of \$600.00 a month, or less. (Actually, "Dorothy," "Ruth," and "Catherine" collect less than \$500.00 a month. Only "Dave" made it above \$500.00, and then only minimally at \$510.00. Note: Their names were changed to protect their privacy.) In July, Roger [Westman] delivered a statement based on data collected from the questionnaires we asked you to return. So we continue our work, making the case for a COLA increase. Soon the RBAC will take their vote for 2015—determining the contribution rate to the pension fund for active employees and whether or not to approve a COLA for retirees. We'll keep you posted.

Welcome our new Treasurer:

The ACRA Board is delighted to announce its appointment of ACRA member Ken Bell to the post of Treasurer. Ken retired after nearly 30 years at the Allegheny County Jail where he worked in a variety of positions. He and Mary Lou are familiar faces at our monthly luncheon programs. Mary Lou is an Allegheny County retiree herself, having spent 24 years with the Allegheny County Health Department.

This November you, the membership, will be asked to ratify Ken's appointment. He will serve out the remaining one year of the current term; then in November 2015 he will be eligible to run with the other Officers for his own two-year term as Treasurer. (Elections for officers alternate every two years with elections for Board members.)

Our thanks also to Angela Conte who has been filling in as Acting Treasurer for the past eight months. Angela will continue to serve as Assistant to the Treasurer, and handle the mailings for the luncheons and for the Walk 'n' Talk programs.

Gearing up for fall:

Hard to believe, but it's time for our fall luncheon series. You'll soon be receiving your postcard reminder for the September luncheon (Wednesday, September 17) and that month's Walk 'n' Talk—a walking tour of the Mexican War Streets (Friday, September 12). Dr. Karl E. Williams, Medical Examiner of Allegheny County, will be our speaker on the 17th. Dr. Williams was one of the speakers you requested on last year's questionnaires, so mark your calendars and make your reservations now. We expect a lively discussion on the topic, "CSI Pittsburgh."

In October, we'll welcome back Bill McKendree from Apprise. We expect Bill to have the latest details on the local health care provider landscape for 2015.

Then in November we'll once again offer individual health care conferences to members and their spouses (appointments only, please). November 19 is also the date for our Annual Meeting, plus . . . we're working on a novelty idea to add to November's luncheon program. (More about that later.)

And December 10, of course, is our Annual Christmas Party. Mark your calendars now; you won't want to miss it. You'll see many of your colleagues and co-workers, you'll have a good lunch, and you might just go home with one of the many prizes in our Chinese Auction and door prizes. It's a fun way to usher in the holiday season.

I hope everyone's had a pleasant summer. I'm looking forward to seeing you in September. If I haven't had a chance to meet you yet, come on up and say hello.

Warmest wishes,



Your Responses!

Your responses to the last newsletter were fantastic. Over 1,055 people returned their signed petitions asking for the first raise in six years in our pensions. Many of you added personal comments that will be most helpful in making our case to the Retirement Board for an increase. Your personal notes of needs and hardships touched us, and hopefully the Board will listen, too.

It is not too late to send us your petition or to write your own note to the Retirement Board and send it to us at ACRA, PO Box 5335, Pittsburgh, PA 15206. We will add your responses to the others and make sure the Board receives them. Collectively we can make our voices heard. An ACRA representative attends all Retirement Board meetings.

We also had 268 new members join for a total membership now of 1,272. That's the highest ever but there's always room for more, so

tell your colleagues, especially retirees, to join and make ACRA an even greater voice to work for our interests. Only paid members get all the mailings and can vote. Anyone who is a member of the Retirement System—retired, surviving spouse, or active employee—should join.

We want to heartily thank the hundreds of you who, in addition to their dues, sent in an additional donation. Some sent as little as \$5.00, others \$15.00, and one even sent a \$100.00 donation to help ACRA work for you. Thank you!

Just to note, many of you submitted another check for your dues even though you had already paid earlier for the calendar year 2014. Don't worry, you have been credited towards your 2015 dues and will receive a notice that you've paid for next year instead of the regular dues renewal notice in December.

By Roger Westman

SUMMER'S FAVORITE GAME

Currently, the Pittsburgh Pirates are 3 ½ games out of first place in the National League's Central Division. (Yes, that will change in a day or two.) I know there are many knowledgeable baseball fans in western Pennsylvania who may be bored with this information. However, I thought I would explain the various skills required at each position in order to be a successful major league player. All readers can decide for themselves if they believe the current Pirate inhabitants of the various positions qualify as top-notch major leaguers or not. The starters do change and rotate, but try to concentrate on the players who have the most starts at each position. Yes, Josh Harrison defies all categorization.

As a catcher, you must have a high threshold for pain as you will be hit with many foul balls. Catchers should have strong legs, as the position requires squatting at least half of the game. You should possess a strong accurate throwing arm, but a quick release can somewhat negate the need for arm strength. A catcher should hit with some power and a batting average around .260 is adequate.

At first base, a left-handed thrower has an advantage, as all of his throws in the infield go to his right. A first baseman doesn't need a strong throwing arm nor foot speed. A valuable first baseman should hit with power and have the potential to hit over 30 home runs in a season and drive in over 100 runs. The position requires that the player has soft hands to handle many low errant throws from infielders. It is preferable to have a tall first baseman to be a target for other players on his team.

A second sacker should possess quick and soft hands. Getting rid of the baseball quickly during a double play is

essential (Bill Mazerowski). It's an asset for a second baseman to have running speed to steal some bases, and a quick first step to get to ground balls is paramount. Power hitting isn't required but very helpful. An all-time great at 2nd base was Joe Morgan of the Cincinnati Reds,

Shortstop is the most difficult position to play. A player must own great range to reach balls in the hole near the third base side of the infield. Obviously, a powerful throwing arm is needed to throw from the hole to first base. Because of the defensive skills required, power hitting isn't a must but very valuable. A player who combined defensive skills and power hitting was Ernie Banks from the Chicago Cubs. The shortstop is generally the captain of the infield.

Third base requires quick reflexes and is called the hot corner for a reason. A powerful throwing arm is required especially on ground balls that can only be knocked down and still make a successful throw to first base. Power hitting is desired at third base but fast foot speed is not essential. A successful hot corner player would bat 3rd, 4th or 5th in the batting order.

Left field is the easiest position to play. He makes the shortest throws so he can possess an average arm. The one negative aspect of Barry Bonds as a baseball player was an average throwing arm. Is Sid Bream coming to mind? A left fielder should be a power hitter and hopefully also hit for an average over .300. Fly balls to left field don't slice as much as they do to right field.

Center fielders should have a quick first step, overall running speed and a strong accurate arm. If a center fielder charges the ball extremely well and has a quick release of the ball, he can

survive with an average arm. The position requires a good jump on the ball. Excellent lateral movement is a must and leadership ability is helpful, as he is the captain of the outfield. If you call for a catch, the other outfielders must give way. Hitting for power and high average make for a very valuable center fielder. Willie Mays was a center fielder any manager would covet.

In right field a strong throwing arm is a great asset, as he has to make longer throws than anyone else on the field, sometimes throwing from deep in the right field corner to third base or home. (Roberto Clemente). It is a hitting position and being a power hitter along with a high batting average today can earn a person many millions of dollars.

Today most starting major league pitchers should possess at least four pitches. Those pitches should be some semblance of a fast ball, curve, slider and a change-up which is thrown 6-10 miles per hour slower than the fastball, but with the same motion. Fastballs should be a least 90 mph with some late movement. Command of the pitches generally means having the ability and confidence to throw the pitches at any time with any ball/strike count on the batter. In today's professional baseball, being at least 6 foot 3 inches is becoming almost a necessity. Because of space constraints, this writer won't dissect relief pitching except to say a successful team better have a closer who can obtain three outs in the ninth inning throwing close to 100 mph. Thanks for the interest.

*By Vincent Kirk,
retired Probation Officer*

In Memoriam

BACCO, DAVID.....12/28/2013
 BERARDELLI, JOHN A.05/30/2014
 BLAIR, MIRIAM.....05/28/2014
 BRYAN, RITA MAE06/10/2014
 CALABRO, MICHAEL F.....05/07/2014
 CAPARELLI, FRANCIS J.....06/17/2014
 CHAMBLISS, TONI R.....06/15/2014
 COX, MARY ELLEN.....05/24/2014
 FITZGERALD, JAMES J.....06/03/2014
 GAINES, THOMAS J.....05/12/2014
 GOLDRING, TERRY L.....06/22/2014
 GONCAR, DAVID J06/16/2014
 GORHAM, GEORGE E.05/11/2014
 HOLT, MARY K.....05/26/2014
 HOUCK, AUDREY J.....06/04/2014
 HOWELL, ELAINE.....06/28/2014
 IWANOSKI, RONALD.....06/22/2014
 KIGER, JOAN C.07/06/2014
 LACHER, RICHARD06/06/2014
 LANGSTON, JEANNETTE A. .. 07/11/2014
 LEBEDA, FREDRICK M.....06/21/2014

LOPEZ, DONNA L.06/10/2014
 MATUSZESKI, FRANK A.....06/06/2014
 MAY, EDYTHE.....07/19/2014
 MCGINN, FRANCIS R.05/31/2014
 MORWITZ, HYMEN.....05/15/2014
 NERONE, F. REGAN07/27/2014
 NORTON, KATHLEEN G.....06/23/2014
 PENNINGTON, DOROTHY G. ... 05/23/2014
 RAY, EDWARD D.07/12/2014
 ROBINSON, MILDRED F.06/11/2014
 ROLL, MARY07/11/2014
 SCHNEIDER, WILLIAM H. ...05/06/2014
 SMITH, RICHARD W.06/06/2014
 SNAITH, JANET A.07/22/2014
 SPRINGER, CHARLES P.....07/14/2014
 TAFELSKI, ALICE07/05/2014
 TOLBERT, RAYMOND S.05/07/2014
 UTZIG, EDWIN07/01/2014
 WILLIAMS, DONNA P.05/30/2014
 WYLIE, TERRY D.....06/20/2014
 ZURAWKA, ROBERT F.07/04/2014

CONGRATULATIONS, JOE SCORPION!

Our vice-president, Joseph Scorpion, received an outstanding service award on June 12, 2014 from area Emergency Medical Services Programs. The award was presented to Joe “with heartfelt gratitude for your tireless efforts in the interest of our Emergency Medical Services communities”. As the Deputy Director for Medical Services with Allegheny County Health Department, Joe was appointed many years ago to coordinate the numerous EMS Programs that were developing locally. Since the coordination was transferred to Community College of Allegheny County, Joe has continued to serve as a member of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Medical Services Council. Again, our congratulations for well-deserved recognition!

By Ginny Bowman

TWO IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

**Allegheny County
Retirees Association (ACRA):
412.539.9307**

Call for questions about your membership,
luncheons or other activities.

**Retirement Board
of Allegheny County (RBAC):
412.350.4674**

Call for questions about your pension
or life insurance.