



Allegheny County

December 2018

Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 112615 • Pittsburgh, PA 15241-0215 • 412-459-7674

Visit our website at: <http://acretirees.org>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Guy Tumolo, *President*
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Pamela Long
Marge Lubawy
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to take this opportunity to review our County retirement benefits. There are two financial benefits. They are insurance and a pension. You have to be alive to collect one and dead for your beneficiary to collect the other. Let's get death out of the way first. The death benefit is insured by an insurance policy administered by the County office of Human Resources and distributed by the staff of the Retirement Board. Currently the County, under the insurance plan pays for a \$4,000 benefit for each retiree with an option for each retiree to purchase up to a \$10,000 benefit at a monthly rate of \$3.46 per \$1000. Some retirees will receive a free benefit of more than \$4,000 based on union contracts; but the benefit cannot exceed \$10,000.

Now let's switch to the Pension Plan. When you joined the County, you were obliged to contribute a portion of your compensation to the Pension Plan. You are now enjoying benefits of that savings plan. There are three sources of revenue supporting those benefits: your contribution, the County's contribution, and investment income. The funds are entrusted to the County Retirement Board, an independent agent whose existence, rules and activity are governed by State law. Changes in the operation of the Plan can only be made by a Bill that is voted into law by the State legislature. The Pension Board, as the trustee of the pension contributions, hires professional money managers and financial advisors to invest the funds in order to have sufficient funds to pay all pension obligations.

In calendar year 2017 active employees contributed \$35.2 million; the County, \$35.1 million to the Fund and investments netted \$115.4 million. At the end of 2017, according to the published financial report, there were \$940.7 million available for pensions. During the past year we have periodically published a table on the status of the Fund based on reports from the County Controller to the Retirement Board. We will continue this practice so that you will have facts on the condition of your plan.

Your Retiree Association will continue to propose ways to help you enjoy your retirement. Join us when you can. In the past year your association has hosted six luncheons with speakers, a picnic in June and a holiday party in December. They have also arranged three very interesting and entertaining outings.

We have also improved our communication capabilities with improvements to the website, the expanded newsletter, a new voice mail vendor, and email notifications to those who have shared their email address with the Association. We hope you have enjoyed the efforts of your volunteer board.

ACRA ELECTION RESULTS

The current Board of Directors (Angela Conte, Connie Przybyla, Joan McMahon, Marge Lubawy, and Pam Long) were all voted in for another two-year term.

SAVE THE DATE

December 12, 2018

ACRA Annual Holiday Party

March 20, 2019

Marketing of the Presidency

April 4, 2019

Phipps Flower Show

April 17, 2019

Alzheimer's Disease - An Update

**For more details visit our website at
<http://acretirees.org/>*

**There are no meeting/luncheons
in January or February*

HISTORY OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH PARKS by Connie Przybyla



The Cascades at South Park

In the 1920s people only had to look as far as East Liberty to see farmland but a swell of industrialization was seizing the Greater Pittsburgh area. County Commissioner, Edward V. Babcock, urged the preservation of rural land in their natural states. Babcock's concept was a two-part system in the north and south regions of the county. He purchased land for the parks which he then turned over to the county at cost. His inspiration was to give poorer people the same recreation that wealthier people paid for at private clubs: golf, tennis, swimming, picnicking. The parks would offer people the chance to escape to rural campgrounds. That became the spirit of "the people's country clubs."

In 1927 Babcock chose landscape architect Paul B. Riis to design the county's first two parks. The parks were part of a national trend to create county park systems. The envisioned design for North and South Parks followed the principles of the naturalistic school of park design. Riis designed road layouts, swimming pools, golf courses, athletic fields and picnic areas, and oversaw the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees.

Among his first projects in South Park was the construction of three shallow wading pools known as The Cascades at Stone Manse. These pools were fed by a spring and were connected by a spectacular waterfall designed with stacked stones quarried in the park. It was the country's largest naturalistic swimming pool. In July of 2018 it was announced that this special area is going to be revitalized and restored to its original glory.

In December of 1928 plans were made to add top level golf courses to both North and South Park.

In the summer of 1930, "the great drought" scorched Allegheny County as no rain fell between June 15 and the last week of October. Many park projects were delayed because of the water shortage, including the opening of the golf courses. In North Park, Pine Creek ran dry, and another source of water had to be found. Two permanent wells were eventually established to supply the park with water.

By 1931 North and South Parks were in the last phase of their early development of additional bridle trails, nature trails, groves, horseshoe courts, ball diamonds and tennis courts. North Park received additional parcels of land and developed a beaver meadow, a bird sanctuary and a primitive trail.

In 1932, a board of newly elected commissioners dismissed Riis, leaving his vision and plans for the county parks unfinished. Later work by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) continued in a naturalistic vibe, though other changes, such as straight boulevards and developments related to an annual county fair, were in clear contrast to Riis' vision, heavily impacting the parks' historic designs.



North Park Boat House

The North Park Lake Boathouse was designed by Henry Hornbostel and built in the mid-1930s, North Park was completed during the Great Depression using New Deal programs. In 1933, the CCC established a camp in the park housing 200 men to carry out the park plan.

In the early days of the park the county commissioners brought two

tribes of Native Americans from a Montana reservation, with Chief Big Beaver and his tribe living in North Park and Chief Wild Eagle living in South Park. The bison came from Colorado. Thirty-six of them were divided among the two parks, but it was a short-lived set-up. In North Park, the Native Americans used the bison for food and clothing and were asked to leave. In South Park, the Native Americans left on their own because of the Pittsburgh winters. The bison remained and are still roaming the South Park Animal Preserve,

The idea of North Park Lake, and of fishing in the lake, was promoted by County Commissioner John J. Kane. When the Old Pine Creek flowing into a marshy area was eventually transformed into a lake, the idea of stocking the lake with fish naturally followed. Some 50,000 people surrounded the well-stocked lake on the first day of fishing in 1937, and KDKA broadcast the ceremony as Commissioner Kane tossed the first line into the waters.

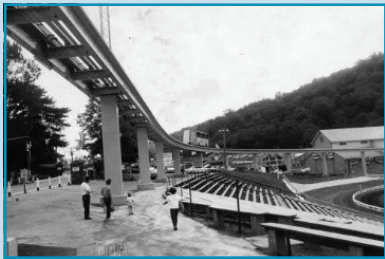
In the 1930s South Park came to be used as a county fairground, requiring expansive development: grandstands, racetracks, and support buildings. At the time Allegheny County had many more farms, bounteous produce and livestock, and a larger rural population. The County Fair was the biggest event of the summer, and for more than thirty years attracted an estimated half million people each season. In 1940 the Pittsburgh Press headline read, "Million to See Big County Fair at South Park - Grand Opening Set for Thursday; Many New Events Scheduled"

Continued on next page



Oliver Homestead

The Oliver Miller Homestead in South Park has remained a site of authentic historic significance. In 1794 the first shots of the famous whiskey rebellion were shot at the site. Oliver Miller's original log house received a stone addition by his son James in 1808, and in 1830 a second stone addition replaced the original log house. In 1973 a volunteer group, the Oliver Miller Homestead Associates, became the official curators. Through the years with the help of the Department of Parks the group has improved the conditions of the house and grounds. They have added structures and developed programs to educate the public.



Skybus

During the 1960s, an automated mass transit project known as the Westinghouse Transit Expressway, or Skybus, was tested in the South Park. An experimental track was built along Corrigan Drive and the system was in operation for several years. The test ended in May of 1972 and the transit expressway program came to a halt.

The 200-acre Latodami Nature Center opened in North Park. In 1969. Since then it has been providing quality environmental



Go Ape Course at North Park

education programs to schools, scouts and the public.

In the spring of 2013 North Park opened the "Go Ape" outdoor course. The course has ziplines, Tarzan swings and a series of ropes, ladders, bridges, swings and trapezes.

Today, North Park consists of over 3,075 acres of wooded trails, a 75-acre lake with a magnificent boathouse. Visitors can enjoy golf, tennis, swimming in one of the largest outdoor pools in America, platform tennis, biking, hiking, baseball and ice skating. The park has a trail for the visually impaired, known as the "Braille Trail" and the Rachel Carson Trail runs through North Park, as well.



Today, South Park covers more than 2,000 acres and provides a wide variety of sports facilities, including golf, swimming, tennis, ice skating, BMX track, and biking and hiking trails. It features an Amphitheater that draws large crowds for concerts. South Park is connected to the Montour Trail, a feeder to the Great Allegheny Passage, a rails-to-trails project that connects Western Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.



August

Abbondanza, Flavio
Anderson, Donald
Auvil, Margaret
Bishop, Suzanne
Bruni, Ronald
Crawford, William
Deighan, John
Devereaux, William
Diegan, John
Fagan, Jean
Greese, Andrew
Harmon, Gail
Henkel, Diane
Holderny, Diane
Horgan, Michael
Kovach, Deborah
Lewis, Gary
Luckey, Carolyn
McDonald, Norma
McGuire, James
Mitchell, Kathy
Murphy, Patrick
Pollard, Deborah
Reppy, Donna
Smith, Karl
Smith, Walter
Spanitz, Edward
Stegen, Jay
Thomas, Edward
Truss, Vincent
Willis, Dolores
Wroblewski, Mark
Yarsky, David
Yost, Jaqueline

September

Baburich, Marlene
Benning, Joyce
Chemer, Debra
Fite, Denise
Gibbs, Audrey
Henderson, Mary
Hills, Kathleen
Klippa, Diane
Little, George
Ondek, David
Petrolio, Marilee
Reveille, Kathryn
Spagnoletti, Michael
Stajduhar, Paul
Thompson, Contance
Thornburg, Donna

October

Adams, Dewayne
Andrejick, John
Ballard, Lillie
Becker, Janice
Capuano, Michele
Claus, Lawrence
Crawley, Lonnie
Donaldson, Kathy
Eackles, John
Frasca-Shaw, Cheryl
Ghafoor-Howard, Michal
Hauser, Edward
Hurley, Robert
Kyne, Michelle
Leddson, Linda
Miechzkowski, Robin
Miller, Arlene
Reilly, Lawrence
Stein, Marlene
Vasser, Cheryl
Wolosik, Mark
Zilich, Nancy

IN THE SPOTLIGHT – Kathy Burk

by **Connie Przybyla**

In 2011 Kathy Burk retired from the Department of Human Services (DHS) where she held the position of Communication Specialist. Prior to that she worked in the same position at the Department of Aging before it was merged into DHS. Kathy worked for the County for approximately 15 years.

Because of her lifelong love of local history and learning, three years ago Kathy began volunteering as a Volunteer Concierge at the Heinz History Center. This gives her an opportunity to speak to patrons about exhibits and learn more about our local history. Her favorite exhibit was on Prohibition, because it tied in women's rights and ways they got around those rights.

In 2011 Kathy started the process of earning her PhD at Duquesne University. She has finished her course work and is currently working on her dissertation and is headed to defend it in late spring 2019. If that wasn't enough, Kathy is an Adjunct Professor at Duquesne University. She teaches Public Speaking and is assisting in two business communication courses.

For the last two years Kathy has had a side business reviewing and revising journal articles for Brazilian dentists. The manuscripts are submitted to her and she then makes the necessary changes to conform to the English language/grammar.

Kathy has a love of literature and is a board member of the Charles Dickens Fellowship. She enjoys going to the movies and on wildflower identification hikes with her two dogs, Quincy, a Border Collie and Cookie a Shiba Inu.

Kathy has three daughters, one son and three grandchildren. Her one granddaughter, Bridget, is an Irish dancer and Kathy delights in going to her competitions.

Kathy is living proof that life doesn't stop at retirement, it is only beginning. You go Kathy!



Kathy Burk

GATEWAY CLIPPER TOUR

by **Pam Long**

All aboard the Duchess for a Gateway Clipper Cruise!!!! On September 13, 2018, a beautiful sunny day in Pittsburgh. Seventy-eight ACRA members and their guests boarded a Gateway Clipper Cruise at Station Square. The boat traveled on the Mon and Allegheny rivers. The narrator described various points of interest along the shores of the rivers. A wonderful time was had by all who sailed.



Joan McMahon & Pam Long getting ready to check members in



ACRA members ready to board the Gateway Clipper

KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE by Joan McMahon

A stroke is a condition which occurs when the blood supply to the brain is cut off (an **ischemic stroke**) or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts (a hemorrhagic stroke). Most strokes are of the ischemic type. Without oxygen, brain cells begin to die. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some 795,000 people in the U.S. suffer a stroke every year. It is the fifth leading cause of death in the nation, with an estimated four million survivors living with impairments. Risk factors for stroke include: smoking, drinking too much alcohol, a sedentary lifestyle, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes. Treating these can reduce the risk of stroke.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of stroke and taking quick action is critical to assuring that appropriate treatment may be promptly started.

What are the common signs of stroke? The SUDDEN appearance of these symptoms is what indicates a possible stroke.

- Numbness or weakness of the face, arms or legs
- Confusion or trouble speaking or understanding others
- Trouble in seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause

If you think that someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T and do the following simple test:

F – FACE: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A – ARMS: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S – SPEECH: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T – TIME: If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

It is also important to note the time when any of these symptoms first appeared, and to give that information to the responding health care providers so that the best treatment for the patient may be determined.

Keep in mind that stroke is treatable. Learn the signs and symptoms of a stroke and **call 9-1-1 immediately if you think that you or someone might be having a stroke. Getting fast treatment is vitally important to preventing death and disability.**



RESULTS OF SURVEY

Back in April members attending the luncheon completed a survey to help ACRA better serve our membership. Members asked for articles on asthma, lung conditions, discount deals for retirees, health issues for aging population, pension & life insurance issues, and free tax preparations for seniors. Some of subjects have already been addressed and the others are scheduled for future editions.

Members also said they would like outings to the Aviary, Carnegie Museum, Frick Museum, Gateway Clipper, Heinz Field, the Meadows, Niagara Falls, Phipps Conservatory, Pump House/Homestead Steel History, Science Center, Ohio Amish Village. In response, ACRA recently sponsored a Gateway Clipper tour with great participation. We are currently working on scheduling some of the other outings for next year.

We also found out that most members live a very active life with many hobbies and a love of travel. We have members who have traveled as far as Greece, Nova Scotia, Egypt, Jerusalem and many more countries. As far as hobbies, a majority of our members are gardeners. We have an article scheduled for our March 2019 newsletter on how to prepare for your garden.

If you have any suggestions for an upcoming article, please email us at acretireesassociation@gmail.com.



TAX SERVICES AVAILABLE

by Cathy Thomas

It is that time of year again that we are all thinking of tax preparation and where we can get our taxes completed by someone who is knowledgeable and reliable.

There are a number of services available and some with no fee.

AARP - offers Tax-Aide free tax preparation assistance beginning February 1st. There is no age requirement. Taxes are completed, both federal and state, for low- and moderate-income taxpayers (annual income below \$54,000). Your taxes are prepared by IRS - certified volunteers. AARP furnishes tax preparation at most libraries. Find a location near you by calling 888-227-7669 or online through the AARP website.

IRS Free File - Single filers and families with annual income below \$ 66,000 can use this service. This is only for your Federal return. Taxpayers can prepare and e-file their federal tax returns free of charge. Free File provides two options to taxpayers: Free File Software or Free File Fillable Forms. To find this service, go to irs.gov/filing/free-file

H & R Block - offers free filing of federal tax returns on simple 1040EZ. These filers are typically single or married couples who have no mortgage interest deductions or dependents and whose taxable income is less than \$ 100,000.

WHAT INFORMATION TO BRING WITH YOU:

- W-2 from all employers
- 1099 forms - examples are: 1099 Div. for Dividends, 1099 Int. for Interest, 1099 Misc. for non-employee compensation (over \$600). Other examples of 1099 Misc. are jury duty, lottery or gambling winnings, 1099 R for Distributions from pensions, annuities, retirement or profit-sharing
- SSA 1099 - Social Security Benefit Summary
- Copy of last year's tax return
- Social Security cards for all persons on your return
- Income from state or local tax refunds from prior year
- Business Income from any business that you own
- Unemployment Income
- Rental Property Income
- Charitable Donations - for amounts up to \$250 you can keep receipt if you prefer, but donations of more than \$250 require a written acknowledgement from the charity.
- Medical Expenses - Receipts for co-pays for doctor, dentist. Prescription costs for the year.
- Health Insurance premiums - you can deduct your health insurance premiums as part of overall medical expenses. The total including premium's, must be greater than 7.5% of your adjusted gross income to be deductible.



In Memoriam

Bursick, Mary P 7/7/2018

Bauer, Mary Frances . 7/12/2018

Junecko, Donald A . . 7/16/2018

Cox, Thomas 7/18/2018

Schmitt, Wallace L . . 7/18/2018

Clark, Norman M 7/21/2018

Fedorek, Harry L 7/28/2018

Michael, Frank C 8/3/2018

Miranda, Virginia 8/7/2018

Ulanowski, Frank J . . . 8/9/2018

Jochim, James 8/31/2018

Altman, Nancy L 9/9/2018

Colville, Robert 9/11/2018

Andrews, William M . 9/14/2018

Peluso, William R . . . 9/14/2018

Parker, Sumner L 9/18/2018

Borman, David C 9/21/2018

Clark, Edith C 9/21/2018

Wyckoff, Lynn S 9/22/2018

Mellet, Anna Mae . . . 9/27/2018

*Thank
you*

*Thanks to Janet Norkus, Gary
Dicroce and Ed Przybyla for
conducting the ACRA annual
audit report.*

*As provided by the Allegheny
County Retirement Board