



# Allegheny County

MARCH 2020

## Retirees Association

# NEWSLETTER

P.O.Box 15285 • Pittsburgh, PA 15237 • 412-459-7674

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## Message from THE PRESIDENT

It's the start of another year. Hopefully another year filled with peace, good fellowship, fun and adventure, all enjoyed at our own pace. While you are thinking of what there is to do, pull out your calendar and review the subjects and dates for luncheons and other activities that have been arranged so far with your ACRA friends. Check the "Save the Date" column of this newsletter for further information and the website for information between newsletters. We look forward to seeing each other and having fun.

Among the activities scheduled is the June picnic. The Board decided to rotate the picnic to different parts of the County. Since there are so many County parks throughout the County, we will continue using them as venues with sites that meet the needs of our membership. So, this year we will be visiting South Park and next year a possible site is Boyce Park in the eastern part of the County. Keep tuned for more specific information. Just plan to picnic on June 17, 2020.

At the January meeting of the Retirement Board, the County group that oversees our pension plan, the County Controller delivered her report on the financial status of the plan covering the period of January 1, 2019 thru November 30, 2019. This report is delivered monthly to the Retirement Board. In summary the report states that during this period current employees contributed \$36.3 million to the fund and the County \$36.2 million; investments net of management fees added \$107.9 million. Over \$100 million was paid out in benefit payments and \$5.5 million was refunded to former employees with the associated interest. The fund at the end of November had slightly over \$949 million for payment pensions, an increase of almost \$75 million over the amount reported for December 31, 2019. So, sit back, relax, enjoy your retirement as those checks will continue to be sent out on the fourth Thursday of the month.

## SAVE THE DATE

**3/18/20**

Battle of Homestead

**4/15/20**

Identity Theft

**5/20/20**

U.S. Brig Niagara

**6/17/20**

ACRA Picnic

### NO LUNCHEON IN JULY OR AUGUST

**9/16/20**

Subject to be announced at a later date

**10/21/20**

Subject to be announced at a later date

**11/18/20**

Retirement & Medicare Updates

**12/16/20**

ACRA Holiday Party

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

## RETIREMENT CHECK DATES

- |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| • 1/23/20 | • 5/28/20 | • 9/24/20  |
| • 2/27/20 | • 6/25/20 | • 10/22/20 |
| • 3/26/20 | • 7/23/20 | • 11/25/20 |
| • 4/23/20 | • 8/27/20 | • 12/24/20 |

# *In the Spotlight:* **PETE TOWNSEND**

by *Connie Przybyla*



**Pete & Marilyn Townsend**

many river cruises throughout the years. Some of their destinations were, the Hudson River in New York, the Columbia River and Puget Sound in State of Washington, Chesapeake Bay in Virginia.

Pete is also quite a cook. He prepares all meals for him and his wife. Three days a week he gets a Blue Apron meal delivered and prepares those meals and the other four days he plans and cooks the meals. When asked who cleans up, he was noncommittal.

Pete was married for 24 years to Wanda. He was widowed and then married Marilyn on December 8, 2001. Pete has one stepchild, Neil Gearhart.

In April of this year, A & E network will be airing a documentary about medical miracles. Pete is one of the subjects of the documentary. Cameras followed Pete and his wife for approximately one year filming his story. Pete has a condition called Neurofibromatosis, also known as NF. Pete says NF stands for "No Fun." Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disorder. It mainly affects how nerve cells form and grow. It causes tumors to grow on nerves. It is not contagious; it is genetic and there is no cure. Although it is rare, (1 in 3,000 births are affected) it is the most common genetic disorder in the world.

Pete has thousands of cutaneous tumors (tumors that grow from small nerves in the skin or just under the skin and appear as small bumps) on his body. Up to the age of 45, Pete only had the tumors on his body, not his face. Many people are not so lucky. He started to develop tumors (bumps) on his face later in life.

Pete is the only one in his family to have this condition. Many people with NF become shy and isolated because of their condition and the way they are treated by people. Pete was very lucky in his childhood. Growing up he said he had many friends and never felt uncomfortable in front of his friends at Avonworth High School. He was never bullied or made fun of growing up. He had many friends and was very popular. The condition never prevented Pete from doing anything he has wanted to do in his life.

In 2006 Pete Townsend retired from the Adult Probation Department, Pre-Sentence Unit, after 37 years as a Probation Officer.

Pete and his wife, Marilyn, love to travel since his retirement. They are planning a cruise to Russia and Norway later this year. Last year's cruise was to Ireland and Iceland. They have also taken

Recently a new drug, Selumetinib, has been developed to help people with Neurofibromatosis. It is claimed to shrink tumors. It has not been approved by the FDA, but its application has been accepted by the FDA. Pete is considering joining a study which involves that drug.

While watching the TV show The Doctors, Pete saw a woman named, Libby, who has the same condition. The program discussed a procedure, electrodesiccation, whereas a specialist, was able to remove thousands of the tumors at a time from a person's body. Previously, only a few tumors could be removed at one time. Although the tumors/bumps can be removed they continue to steadily grow and are very painful.

Pete contacted Dr. Hubert Weinberg, a well-known New York plastic surgeon in New York, and has had four electrodesiccation treatments which have resulted in some good results for Pete. The procedure is done as an outpatient at Manhattan Surgical Center under general anesthesia.

A & E film crews, from Bancroft Studios (U.K.), have interviewed and followed Pete throughout this past year and have gone on his doctors' appointments and treatments for the documentary.

One of the things the film crew asked Pete to do was walk on a beach without a shirt on. Pete was very apprehensive about being out in public without a shirt. But one day this past summer he faced his fear and he took his shirt off and walked on the beach with his wife at Presque Isle. Pete says he was amazed that no one stared at him or made him feel uncomfortable no one seemed to care about his condition. He said all these years he stayed away from the beach because of his condition.

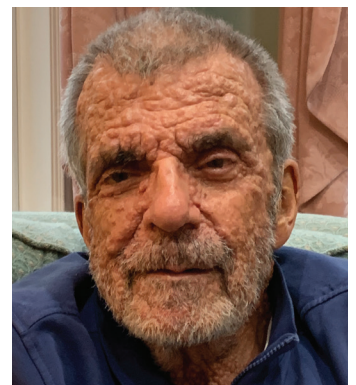
Pete has been speaking to groups about facing adversity and wants to help others with the same condition.

He is an amazing man with a lot to say and deserves to be recognized. Set your recorders for the A & E Special. As soon as Pete has a firm date, we will email members with the date and time.

We wish Pete much success with his treatments and hope he keeps enjoying his retirement.



**Before Surgery**



**After Surgery**



# A LITTLE HISTORY ABOUT THE LIBERTY TUNNELS

*by Connie Przybyla*

The following article is the first in a series of upcoming articles where we will be detailing some fascinating and interesting history of our great County. We hope you enjoy.

The Liberty Tunnels were originally proposed in 1909 to ease commuter access to the South Hills. There were two plans proposed: the “high tunnel” and the “low tunnel.” The “high tunnel” placed both the northern and southern ends of the tunnel higher than they are today. The “low tunnel” would have access to Saw Mill Run but no direct link to a Monongahela River crossing. The “low tunnel” was adopted, but the Allegheny County Commissioners ruled it would link with a bridge across the Monongahela, today’s Liberty Bridge.

The tunnels were designed by Amos D. Neeld, who also supervised the construction of the adjoining Liberty Bridge, which gave travelers a way to cross the Monongahela River after passing through the tunnels. The design was two vertical wall horseshoe profile tunnels, each consisting of two lanes of traffic and a 4 ft sidewalk. The dig took 388 working days with an average of 200 men per day. There were no serious accidents while moving approximately 400,000 tons of rock. The total cost of the Liberty Tunnels was six million dollars.

On May 10, 1924, there was a mass-transit strike that idled the Pittsburgh Railways streetcar service. Thousands of commuters who normally took the trolley to work turned to their automobiles to make the commute, resulting in bumper-to-bumper traffic jams all around the city. During the morning rush hour, cars backed up inside the Liberty Tunnels from one end to the other, and soon traffic came to a staggering halt. While vehicles idled inside the tunnels, many motorists began to succumb to the dangerous buildup of carbon monoxide gas and literally passed out at the wheel of their vehicles.

The quick reaction of the police and firemen prevented any fatalities, but several people were overcome with fumes, treated and taken to the hospital. The catastrophe caused an immediate urgency in ventilating the Liberty Tunnels by the quickest means available.

Until the solution could be implemented by contractors, the city began counting vehicles and tunnel use was restricted. Engineers worked with the US Bureau of Mines to install a ventilation system consisting of two pairs of 200-foot vertical shafts that continuously pumped fresh air into the center of the tunnels while simultaneously pumping air out from a mechanical plant located atop Mount Washington, creating

a directional air flow in each side of the tubes. Ventilation intake and exhaust shafts were installed near the center of each tube. The air flowed with the direction of traffic. At the exit of each tube, a pergola-like windbreak above the portal prevented crosscurrents of outside air from obstructing the air flow leaving the tunnel. The ventilation shafts were operational by August 1924. After a month’s trial period, on September 1, 1924, traffic restrictions were eliminated.

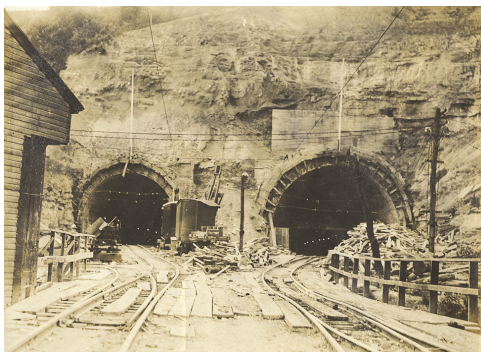
Another problem that became apparent just a short time after the original opening of the Liberty Tunnels was the increasing traffic congestion at the intersection of Saw Mill Run Boulevard and West Liberty Avenue. The congestion resulted in a number of accidents. In 1930 the busy intersection was identified in a Pittsburgh Press feature documentary as one of the city’s ten deadliest traffic locations. By 1932 there were 25,000 vehicles using the Liberty Tunnels each day, already exceeding the designed capacity. Today, the Liberty Tunnel serves more than 63,000 vehicles a day.

At the time, there were no traffic signals at either end of the tunnels. The traffic pattern inside the tunnels was a nightmare, exacerbating the conditions outside. In the dimly lit tunnels, vehicles could change lanes at will, large trucks could drive in the center, and horse-drawn wagons were still allowed to pass through.

At the northern end of the tunnels was a traffic circle at the intersection of the tunnel thresholds and Mount Washington (McArdle) Roadway which made matters worse. By 1930 the circle had become a serious obstacle to the traffic flow and a serious safety issue. In 1933, the circle was reduced to a point that tunnel traffic had a straight line onto the bridge and County police were positioned to direct traffic. In time, traffic lights were installed outside the thresholds. The circle and “Liberty” monument were removed altogether in the 1940s.

In 1941 the Liberty Tunnels became the first tunnel in the world to provide AM radio reception throughout. The sidewalks, seldom used and in disrepair, were removed during a renovation in the 1970s in order to widen and increase the height of the traffic lanes and cellular phone reception was provided in August of 1987. Since the inaugural opening in 1923, the Liberty Tunnels has had five renovations in 1932, 1939, 1975, 1996 and 2008.

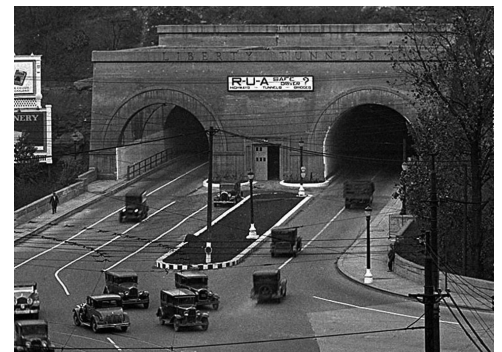
Sources: Bryan Rubican/Pittsburgh Neighborhood Photos/Pittsburgh: Off the Beaten Path & Local Curiosities/Off the Bluff



**Liberty Tunnels Under Construction**



**Traffic Circle**



**Completed Liberty Tunnels**



## OCTOBER 2019 TO DECEMBER 2019

Name	Date of Retirement	Date of Death
AHEIMER, JOHN J	4/2/1998	12/3/2019
BEVAN, BRIGITTE	7/1/2001	12/20/2019
BROWN, DIANA	4/11/2003	10/16/2019
CANCILLA, AUDREY C	5/29/1991	12/15/2019
CHAPMAN, DESSIA LYNN	7/11/2012	11/5/2019
CHARDELLA, NELLIE J	4/28/1996	11/1/2019
CORRIGAN, JAMES M	11/1/1994	10/25/2019
DEMASI, VINCENT J	12/27/1992	12/5/2019
DEPACE, MARY G	6/11/1989	12/4/2019
DIMARCO, TERRY P	6/30/2018	11/13/2019
DOERR, WILLIAM F	11/3/1987	10/14/2019
FRANCUS, CAROLE L	12/20/1992	10/26/2019
GRANITE, MICHAEL G	12/27/1992	12/21/2019
GROVES, ROBERT E	3/1/1998	10/20/2019
HUFF, JUNE E	6/1/1989	10/25/2019
JONES, GEORGE H	3/29/2014	11/10/2019
KAVALUKAS, GREGORY	8/12/2017	10/16/2019
KIRSCHMAN, ALLAN C	1/1/2006	10/22/2019
KNOPFEL, DONALD C	10/1/2004	11/25/2019
KRALL, EDWARD J	8/20/1997	11/2/2019
LAPIA, JOAN L	3/18/1998	12/31/2019
LEVINE, WARREN	4/28/1996	12/8/2019
LORD, WILLIAM G	2/12/1976	12/8/2019
LYNN, DENNIS	5/10/2014	12/8/2019
MACDONALD, MARK DEXTER	1/21/2011	12/24/2019
MERES, PHILIP M	1/31/2015	10/21/2019
MROZ, VIOLA	5/16/1996	11/10/2019
POWERS, ROBERT M	3/25/1993	10/19/2019
SCHINOSI, ANGELO	3/11/1998	11/18/2019
SERRA, JOHN E	6/2/1981	11/30/2019
SKOLNEKOVICH, DOROTHY	4/26/2001	11/3/2019
SPRINGER, GARY R	3/25/2017	10/22/2019
SULLIVAN, JOSEPH P	5/20/1990	10/20/2019
TEDESCO, GEORGE J	12/27/1992	10/27/2019
THIEL, NORMAN T	6/26/2004	12/12/2019
VIDRICK, ELSIE L	5/22/1983	10/7/2019
WATKINS, WILLA	12/27/1992	12/29/2019
WERLING, WILLIAM	10/1/2003	11/6/2019
WILLIAMS, BENJAMIN S	5/25/2013	12/12/2019

\*As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board

## NEW RETIREES LIST



	NEW RETIREE	DEPARTMENT
NOVEMBER	Arrington, Sheldon	Courts
	Brown, Cathi	Jail
	Byrd-Smith, Ruth	MWDBE
	Clark, Carol	Kane
	Deramo, Susan	Courts
	Hampton-Giles, Lillian	Health
	Jeffries, Linda	Kane
	Kleiber, Annett	Kane
	Retamal, Eileen	DHS
	Ross, Gary	Courts
	Scheer, Michael	Health
	Smith, Dana	Shuman
	Wahler, Jamie	Kane
DECEMBER	Askew, Leslie	Public Defender
	Baker, Kathleen	DHS
	Bassetti, Lawrence	Public Works
	Daubner, Barbara	DHS
	Eberhart, Gregory	Public Works
	Galanko, Bernard	DHS
	Habazin, Beth	Airport
	Hoffman, Michael	Facilities
	Huston, Robert	Medical Examiner
	Jenkins, Mary	Health
	Johnson, Sharon	DHS
	Macleod, Mary Beth	Health
	McConaha, Timothy	911
	Onderick, Dennis	Courts
	Phillips, Linda	DHS
	Rainey, James	Sheriff
	Scholtz, James	Sheriff
	Sloan, Geter	Sheriff
	Swan, Suzanne	Public Defender
	Williams, Arthur	Jail
JANUARY	Dedominicis, Linda	DHS
	Donnelly, Keith	Public Defender
	Duffy, Kevin	Courts
	Gavlik, Joseph	Computer Services
	Harrison, Sharon	Kane
	Lukens, Stephanie	Kane
	Massaro, Jane	Courts
	Murzyn, Mary	Admin Services
	Namey, David	Health
	Owens, Carol	Courts
	Xides, Byron	Law
	Yeager, Daniel	Jail

As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board





## ACRA ANNUAL Holiday Party

The annual ACRA holiday party was held on Wednesday, December 11th. We had a great crowd this year. Member, Lenny Garlicki, led the attendees in singing several Christmas carols. It was especially fun singing the 12 Days of Christmas. Lenny coordinated with each table to sing one verse of the song. In addition to a great meal and fellowship with other retirees, there was a Chinese auction and 50/50 raffle.



### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL *Annual Dues*

## ACRA ANNUAL DUES

Your ACRA renewal membership dues for 2020 were due by January 31, 2020.

If you haven't paid your dues yet, please send your \$15 to ACRA, RENEWAL DUES, PO Box 15285, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. Thank you.

## STATE MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SITES



Pennsylvania residents 65 years of age and over are eligible for a reduced fee to Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's museums, sites and properties. There is no application process for the reduced admission.

Simply show up at the site you select and tell the front desk staff that you qualify for the reduced senior rate. That should be all there is to it. Because admission rates at sites vary, so does the reduced rate. Some of the sites included are Daniel Boone Homestead, State Museum of Pennsylvania, Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Military Museum, Fort Pitt Museum and many more sites.

For more information visit:

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Museums/Pages/default.aspx>  
or call 717-787-2723.



## TAX CHANGES

*by Cathy Thomas*

Now that the holidays are over, it is time again to think of filing your taxes. Seniors have benefited this year with a new form, 1040-SR, just for those of us 65 and older! This form resembles the old 1040-EZ.

The fields that you need to complete are larger and much easier to read. The form has highlighted areas of concern to seniors: IRA distributions, pension income and social security. Also included is the tax credit for children or other dependents.

This is a two-sided form and includes an easily accessible chart to view the standard deductions. For those of us who wish to itemize and use this form, we can. There is an additional schedule that needs to be attached, but you do not lose the ability to file using the 1040-SR.

If you are married and filing a joint return, both of you must be 65 and older, although you do not need to be retired. If you are a business owner 65 and older, you need to complete your Schedule C.

Remember you can always visit the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), for additional information regarding this form or others.

Good Luck!

# CHOOSING AN ASSISTED LIVING, PERSONAL CARE OR NURSING HOME

by Joan McMahon



Whether faced with the prospect of choosing an assisted living, personal care or nursing home for one's self or for a family member, the decision requires much thought and serious consideration. The following checklist which appeared in the **ALLEGHENY COUNTY 2019 SENIOR RESEARCH GUIDE** provides an excellent reference in evaluating the suitability of a facility being considered.

## COMFORT

Is the home clean, well lit, odor free and at a comfortable temperature? Yes ☐ No ☐

## SAFETY

Does the facility have an emergency plan for patients in case of fire, flood, or other disaster? Yes ☐ No ☐

## SAFETY

Is it a safe environment with fire extinguishers, open pathways and smoke detectors? Yes ☐ No ☐

## ROOMS

Are personal items displayed for each resident? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are call buttons within easy reach? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many residents are in a room? \_\_\_\_\_

## BATHROOMS

Are bathrooms clean and equipped with handrails and a call button that is easy to reach? Yes ☐ No ☐

## DINING

Observe mealtimes. If meals for the month are not posted, request a copy.

Does the food look and smell appetizing? Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the staff spend time feeding residents, who require assistance, and not rushing them through their meals? Yes ☐ No ☐

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Is an activities calendar posted? Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, request a copy.

Are there a variety of activities to meet your needs or the needs of your loved one? Yes ☐ No ☐

## STAFF

Is there enough staff to meet the residents' needs? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are they visible and willing to talk with you? Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the staff get residents up and dressed each day?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Is there a social worker and dietician on staff? Yes ☐ No ☐

## RESIDENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Ask residents and their family members what they like most and least about the facility.

Do residents appear to be content? Yes ☐ No ☐

## CONSULT AN OMBUDSMAN

They advocate for residents of nursing and personal care homes, or consumers of any long-term care service. Yes ☐ No ☐

## DOCUMENTS

Request the state facility inspection report. Yes ☐ No ☐

# RECIPES BY PAM

by Pam Long



## LEMON BUTTERMILK ICEBOX PIE

### CRUMB CRUST

- 1 1/2 cups crushed graham crackers
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. Salt
- 6 Tbsp. butter melted
- Vegetable cooking spray

Process crushed crackers, sugar, and salt in a food processor until finely crushed and well combined. Add melted butter and mix until thoroughly combined. Lightly grease 9-inch pie plate with cooking spray. Press crust on bottom and up sides of pie plate. Bake 8-10 minutes in a 325-degree oven. Cool.

### LEMON BUTTERMILK ICEBOX PIE

- 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1/4 cup buttermilk

Preheat oven to 325. Whisk together the first 3 ingredients in a bowl.

Beat egg yolks with a hand mixer at high speed for 4-5 minutes. Gradually whisk in sweetened condensed milk until thoroughly combined and then whisk in the buttermilk. Pour mixture into the prepared crust.

Bake at 325 for 20-25 minutes or until set around edges. Cool on a wire rack for 1 hour. Cover pie with lightly greased plastic wrap and refrigerate for 4-6 hours