



Allegheny County

March 2021

Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER

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

Website: <http://acretirees.org> • Email: acretireeassociation@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Message from THE PRESIDENT

We begin a new year, a year full of caution and hope. We hope, that by abiding by the public health advisories and being vaccinated, we can avoid the flu and the corona viruses. Remaining free of these two debilitating diseases we can devote more time to improving those parts of our lives that we enjoy and share with others. Your Association is planning to begin programs in April. The program originally scheduled for March (Identity Theft) will be rescheduled. We will make a final decision on the programs scheduled for April (Battle of Homestead) and May (U.S. Brig Niagara) as the dates near. Check the website for updates. If the situation is such that there is extraordinarily little risk to health, notices of the luncheons will be sent out. In the meantime, stay healthy.

Some members have voiced concern about our pension plan. We have not attended pension Board meetings due to pandemic concerns since the beginning of 2020. We have kept in touch with the manager of the retirement system, Walt Szymanski. He provided an update in the December newsletter. Another appears in this newsletter.

This year we will have election for officers of the Association. There will be openings. Some of us are wearing out and would appreciate new candidates to continue and lead the Association forward. Please help by volunteering to serve on the Board. Just contact us by email, voicemail, or snail mail. Contact information is on the masthead of this newsletter. I will get back to you and answer any questions you may have. Thank you in advance.

BE SAFE AND ENJOY YOUR LIFE!

2021 LUNCHEON DATES

- March 17, 2021 - CANCELLED
- April 21, 2021 - Battle of Homestead*
- May 19, 2021 - US Brig Niagara*
- June 16, 2021 - ACRA Annual Picnic*

*All luncheons are tentative pending on COVID-19 restrictions.

*Please check the ACRA website for more details. Visit our website at <http://acretirees.org/>

PENSION FUND News

by Walt Szymanski

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, 2020 thru November 30, 2020. This report is delivered monthly to the Retirement Board. In summary the report states that during this period current employees contributed \$37.5 million to the fund and the County \$37.5 million; investments net of management fees added \$2.5 million. Over \$106 million was paid out in benefit payments and \$5.3 million was refunded to former employees with the associated interest. The fund at the end of December had slightly over \$980 million for payment pensions, an increase of almost \$15 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.

A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT INCLINES IN PITTSBURGH

by Connie Przybyla

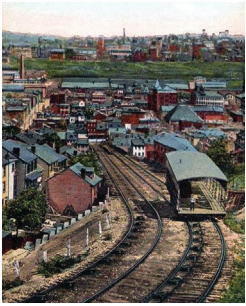
The following article is the third in a series of articles where we will be detailing some fascinating and interesting history of our great County. We hope you enjoy.

During the first half of the 20th century inclines, called Gravity Planes, or Funiculars, in the City of Pittsburgh were scattered throughout the landscape. They were made of steel, wood, and train rails. Cables and pulleys, powered by large engines, enabled the vehicles to scale up and down the hills surrounding our city.

Altogether, there were a total of twenty-four inclines built on the hillsides of Pittsburgh. Most of the earliest ones were constructed by the various mining ventures in the area. The inclines made it a convenient way for workers to get up and down the hills. Some inclines averaged over 2000 riders a day.

As time passed and transit opportunities began to increase, the popularity of inclines declined. By the mid-1960s, the coal planes had been dismantled and financial losses forced closure of all but two of the passenger and freight planes.

Some of the earliest inclines in Pittsburgh that are no longer here are described below:

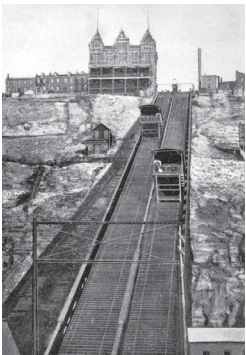


The Pittsburgh Incline Plane, or Knoxville Incline, was 2460 feet long and rose 375 feet with an 18-degree curve midway. It was one of only two curved inclines built in Pittsburgh. It ran for 71 years, from August 1890 to December 1960. The upper loading platform was located on Warrington Avenue.



The Castle Shannon Incline measured 1,350 feet in length. Originally steam powered, the incline was electrified in 1918. It was built to handle the passengers of the Pittsburgh and Castle Shannon Railroad,

which had a terminus nearby. Later, after being acquired by the Pittsburgh Railways Company, the incline was a popular way for hilltop residents to get to and from town. As ridership decreased the incline became a money pit losing approximately \$50,000 a year. Community efforts saved the structure for a few years, but in 1964, the incline was closed and dismantled.



The Penn Incline carried passengers and freight between the Strip District to Ridgeway Street in the Hill District. It was debatably the longest incline in the world at the time. Built in 1884, at a cost of \$72,000 it operated until 1953. The large structure to the left of the upper platform was a saloon and entertainment hall called the Penn Incline Resort it was built to boost business by the Penn Inclined Plane

Company. The building was destroyed in 1892 by a fire that spread from the incline's boiler house.



The Keeling Coal Incline was built around 1870, connecting mines along the Southside Slopes with the railroads on the flats. The incline was located between the Mount Oliver and Knoxville Inclines.

Coal was transported straight from a mine shaft to the upper loading platform. The cable cars then declined along tracks that went under Birmingham (Brosville) Street and on to an elevated platform, where the coal was dumped into rail cars of the Pittsburgh, Virginia, and Charleston Railway. It was in operation until 1928.

Today, only the historic Monongahela Incline, still the world's steepest, and the Duquesne Incline, owned by the Port Authority, are still in existence.

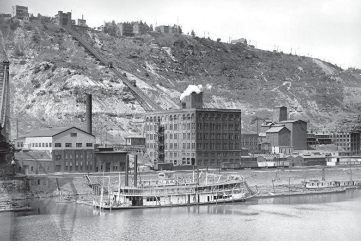


The Monongahela Incline spans 642 feet from Carson Street to Grandview Avenue. It was the first passenger incline in the city, opening on May 28, 1870 at a cost of \$47,000. On the first day 994 people paid a six-cent fare for a ride, and on the second day, 4,174 people paid for a ride. Today over a half a million people ride the incline yearly.

The Monongahela Incline was originally powered by steam, generated in a two-story brick power house located across the street. The operator of the incline sat in a glass enclosure overlooking the incline tracks, using hand throttles and a foot brake to control the cars. The first engineer was George Naysmith, and his assistant was Campbell K. Smith. It is recognized as a National Historic Landmark and a historic structure by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT INCLINES IN PITTSBURGH

Continued



The Duquesne Incline, which opened on May 20, 1877, scales the slopes of Mount Washington, from a lower boarding station located along Carson Street to an upper platform on Grandview Avenue in Duquesne Heights. At the time of its public opening, it was one of four inclined planes serving the summit of Coal Hill, which later came to be known as Mount Washington.

The Duquesne Incline gave workers of the growing hilltop community of Union Borough, later renamed Duquesne Heights, easy access to downtown Pittsburgh.

Prior to the opening of the incline, workers often walked a-mile-long path along the Mount Washington hillside called the Indian Trail. In 1909 the city constructed the “Indian Trail Steps” along that route. These steps were, for many years, a valuable alternative for factory workers who could not afford the five-cent fare to ride the incline.

Like the Monongahela Incline, today approximately a half a million people ride the Duquesne Incline yearly.

Sources: Pittsburgh: Off the Beaten Path & Local Curiosities, Brookline Connection, Amazing Facts and Guide to Pittsburgh Inclines, Pittsburgh Inclines Tribute, Wikipedia

In the Spotlight: **GINNY BOWMAN**

by Connie Przybyla



Ginny & her husband, Ray

After 30 plus years of service, Ginny retired from the Allegheny County Health Department in 2003. Ginny was the Director of the Maternal and Child Health Program. Prior to becoming the director, she held the position of Public Health Nurse.

Ginny has volunteered for various service opportunities at her church throughout the years. For the past fifteen years she has been a Stephen Minister. A Stephen Minister provides one-to-one care to people experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. During the pandemic Ginny has been performing this ministry via phone or sometimes meeting the person outdoors. She is also part of *Adventures in Friendship* a mission related group of retirees who meet once a month. She has been active in ACRA for several years and was the editor of the ACRA newsletter for many years until the end of 2016.

Ginny's hobbies include reading, sewing, and gardening. She is an avid reader and recommends the book, *Love is the Way - Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times* by Bishop Michael Curry. She is a fantastic seamstress, even making her daughter's wedding gown! Ginny loves gardening and has lots of opportunities to garden at the home they downsized to five years ago.

Ginny and her husband lived in Puerto Rico four years before moving to Pittsburgh for graduate school. There they volunteered two years at Interamerican University, through a church program like the Peace Corps, and then continued working there. They have traveled on a Mediterranean cruise, a whale-watching cruise (Sea of Cortez), a Caribbean cruise and road trips around the United States. The highlight of last summer was vacationing with their daughters and their families at a cabin in central Pennsylvania.

Ginny and her husband, Ray, will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary this year. They have twin daughters and seven grandchildren.

We wish Ginny and Ray a happy 60th anniversary. Ginny loves her family and is living a life filled with a commitment to help and support others in her community. Way to go, Ginny!



IN MEMORIAM**

OCTOBER 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2020

Name	Date of Death
Brenner, Cathy	9/10/2020
Byrnes, James	7/20/2020
Connery, Theodora	8/31/2020
Corron, Dolores*	1/1/2020
Costa, Anthony	10/11/2020
Dolessandro, Margaret*	9/25/2020
Grottenhaler, Catherine	11/15/2020
Hodge, Donal*	9/29/2020
Johnson, Carl	10/22/2020
Kempton, Peter	10/12/2020
Killmeyer, James	10/19/2020
Leach, Dellafae*	8/18/2020
Macklin, Kenneth	10/18/2020
Malley, Michael	11/5/2020
Morsch, Albert	11/10/2020
Mvros, Paul*	9/18/2020
Ottaviano, Lawrence	10/29/2020
Padden, John	10/16/2020
Pronobis, John*	9/30/2020
Rucienski, David*	5/8/2020
Rullo, Angelo	10/5/2020
Sands, Terry	10/7/2020
Schraeder, Barbara*	7/17/2020
Smith, Alberta*	9/15/2020
Smith, Collus*	9/21/2020
Smith, Mary T	10/3/2020
Steiger, Thomas	9/12/2020
Tennant, Kathleen*	9/20/2020
Ware, George*	3/14/2020
Wingfield, Ruth	11/15/2020
Wosko, Robert	10/23/2020

*Not listed in prior ACRA newsletter.

**As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board

NOT GETTING OUR EMAILS?

To make sure our emails and newsletters get delivered to your Inbox, you need to add our email address (acretireesassociation@gmail.com) to your contacts list:

EMAIL

If you do not readily find an email from acretireesassociation@gmail.com...

Please check your **Gmail Spam Folder**:

- If you see the email from acretireesassociation@gmail.com: Open the Email.
- Click the button on the toolbar, labeled **Not spam**
- Next, add acretireesassociation@gmail.com to your Contacts list.

COMCAST

Log into your Xfinity account and select your Comcast webmail:

- Find an email from acretireesassociation@gmail.com in your spam folder:
- Open the email.
- Click the **Spam** (not spam) icon on the top toolbar.
- Next, add acretireesassociation@gmail.com to your address book:
 - Open the email from acretireesassociation@gmail.com.
 - Click on the button at the top left of the email that says:
 - Email ADDRESS
 - + Add to Address Book
 - That will open your edit contact screen.
 - Then click **Save** and you're all done.

RECIPES BY PAM

by Pam Long



Beef Stroganoff

- 2 lbs. lean sirloin steak
- 3 tbsps. butter
- 2 medium onions
- 1 lb. sliced button mushrooms
- 1 tbsp. flour
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- Dash of red pepper
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 bag cooked wide noodles

Cut beef into narrow strips. Heat butter and add meat and onions. Cook on high heat until meat is brown on all sides. Lower heat. Add sliced mushrooms and more butter if needed. Cook covered for ten minutes. Add 1 tbsp. of butter, flour, and seasonings to skillet juices.

Add sour cream and heat until hot but not boiling.

Serve on cooked wide noodles.

LOOKING AHEAD BEYOND COVID-19

by Joan McMahon



2020 has been a year of continuous grim reports documenting pandemic cases and deaths. Social interactions and normal routines have been severely limited to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. For many, the past year has meant staying at home except for necessary, life sustaining excursions. "cabin fever" is a natural by-product of this extended isolation.

There is new hope that with the promised increasing availability of vaccine, we can once again cautiously begin thinking of expanding our horizons. As nature is slowly but surely welcoming Spring----with tiny buds beginning to appear, we may also begin anticipating a gradual return to normalcy. Here in Western Pennsylvania, we are blessed with many memorable sites to visit. Following are three to consider for whenever travel is once again advisable*.

FALLINGWATER

Fallingwater is a house designed in 1935 by renowned American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). The house was designed as a private residence for the family of Pittsburgh department store owner, Edgar J. Kaufmann Sr. It is in the mountains of Southwestern Pennsylvania, known as Laurel Highlands, about 70 miles east of Pittsburgh. Constructed of native sandstone, Fallingwater was built by local craftsmen from Fayette County.

Address: 1491 Mill Run Road • Mill Run, PA 15464 (About 1 1/2 hours to drive from Pittsburgh)

Phone: 724-329-8501 • **Email:** fallingwater@paconserve.org • **Website:** fallingwater.org

There is a fee and reservations are required for visits. Tickets may be purchased on-line or by calling 724-329-8501.

FLIGHT 93 NATIONAL MEMORIAL

On the morning of September 11, 2001, al Qaeda terrorists hijacked 4 commercial airliners.

One of these, United Airlines Flight 93, was headed toward Washington DC, most likely the Capitol Building. When the passengers and crew realized that the aircraft was part of an attack on America, they decided to act. These heroes rushed the terrorists, diverting the plane from its intended goal, and causing it to crash in an open field in Somerset County Pennsylvania---20 minutes flying time from Washington DC. Seven heroic crew members and 33 heroic passengers perished in the fiery crash.

Address: 6424 Lincoln Highway • Stoystown, PA 15563 (Approximately 1 1/2 hours to drive from Pittsburgh)

Phone: 814-893-6322 • **Website:** www.nps.gov

No fees are charged.

JOHNSTOWN FLOOD NATIONAL MEMORIAL

The history of the Johnstown Flood and the South Fork Dam is a story of an immense structure that was never given the care that it required. Sometime around 3:10 PM on the afternoon of May 31, 1899, the South Fork Dam failed, sending 20 million tons of water hurling toward Johnstown. The flood resulted in the deaths of more than 2000 people, the destruction of 1,600 homes, and over \$17,000,000 in property damage.

The Visitor Center has two floors of displays describing how and why the 1889 Johnstown Flood occurred, including a vivid 35-minute video entitled "Black Friday".

Address: 733 Lake Road • South Fork, PA 15956 (Approximately 1 1/4 hours to drive from Pittsburgh)

Phone: 814-886-6170 • **Fax:** 814-495-7463

There is no admission fee to visit the Johnstown National Memorial.

*Keep in mind that each of the above sites have put in place regulations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. So that even when travel restrictions have been eased, it is very important to contact the particular site prior to planning a visit. Hopefully, soon we will be able to not only safely visit our regional historic memorials, but also to return to normalcy in our daily lives.

NEW RETIREES LIST

NOVEMBER

Biondo, Patricia
 Buncher, Eric
 Case, Harold
 Curcio, Louis
 Hegner, Mary
 Hofacker, Carol
 Mongelluzzo, Barbara
 O'Neill, Luann
 Parees, Barbara
 Peck, Sarah
 Pinter, Brian
 Price, Christopher
 Ralston, Fred
 Ross, Lynn
 Smida, Carole
 Terreck, John
 Thompson, Leroy
 Valentine, Patricia

DECEMBER

Askew, Leslie
 Baker, Kathleen
 Bassetti, Lawrence
 Crapis, Michael
 Daubner, Barbara
 Eberhart, Gregory
 Frew, Michele
 Galanko, Bernard
 Grim, Wayne
 Habazin, Beth
 Harper, Charles
 Hoffman, Michael
 Houy, James

Huston, Robert
 Jackson, Bernadine
 Jacobs, David
 Jenkins, Mary
 Johnson, Sharon
 Kozup, Amy
 MacLeod, Mary
 McConaha, Timothy
 Mikus, Daryn
 Molnar, David
 Newby, Patricia
 Onderick, Dennis
 Phillips, Linda
 Rahuba, Daniel

Rainey, James
 Scholtz, James
 Schultise, Jeffrey
 Sciarrino, Johanna
 Sloan, Geter
 Swan, Suzanne
 Williams, Arthur

JANUARY

Babyak, Jeffrey
 Bauwin, Thomas
 Doria, Ron
 Kemerer, Gregory
 Longo, Vincent
 Smith, Loretta
 Swisher, Daniel
 Weis, Edward
 Winston, Renee



ACRA ANNUAL DUES

If you have not renewed your 2021 ACRA membership, please renew now by completing the form below and sending your \$15 to **ACRA, RENEWAL DUES, PO Box 15285, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**. Additionally, if you have not given us your email address, please consider giving it to us, so you are kept up to date on all ACRA events. We do **NOT** share information. Thank you.

ACRA RENEWAL FORM - \$15 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

Last Name _____ First Name _____

I am the Retiree ☐ YES ☐ NO I am the Spouse of a Retiree ☐ YES ☐ NO

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address _____

Dept. You Retired From _____ Year of Retirement _____