



Allegheny County Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER

November 2023

P.O. Box 15285 • Pittsburgh, PA 15237 • 412-459-7674
 Website: <http://acretirees.org> • Email: acretireeassociation@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Guy Tumolo, *President*
 Marge Lubawy, *Vice President*
 JoAnna McQuaide, *Secretary*
 Cathy Thomas, *Treasurer*

Connie Przybyla
 Donna Johnson-Smith
 Hugh Hackmeister
 Pam Long
 Sharon Silvestri

NEWSLETTER
 Kathy Burk, *Editor*
 Guillermo Cole, *Contributing Writer*

Message from THE PRESIDENT

This is the last time I will have the privilege of writing this column. In January a new president, Jack Exler, will take over leadership of our association. Now that he has retired from the County Development Department, he volunteered to run for president of the Association. He will be joining a truly dedicated and dynamic board.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board members for all their dedicated work in bringing you entertaining, informational, and social activities. Their efforts have resulted in a significant increase in attendance at luncheons and special events. The annual

picnic and the holiday party have each drawn nearly 100 members and guests. Special events have increased and in the past two years have been concentrated in the summer months when there are no scheduled monthly luncheons.

Contact with members has improved. Our main communication vehicle, the newsletter, has expanded. A website, email, and answering service have all been significantly improved. Members now have multiple ways to get answers. Email has been used to keep you informed and remind you of activities. For these improvements we owe a debt of gratitude largely to

Connie Przybyla.

Cooperative arrangements with the Retirement Board have resulted in information exchanges, good working relations, and were instrumental in securing a \$30 increase in monthly payments two years ago.

I wish to thank Marge Lubawy for being my back up, getting speakers and handling voice mail inquiries, Thanks to my longtime friend, JoAnna McQuaide for recording the history of the organization in the board minutes and providing order to the luncheon process with her golf balls. *Continued on next page*

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Allegheny County
 Retirees Association



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Message from THE PRESIDENT continued

Thanks to Cathy Thomas for paying the bills, keeping track of the money and handling all the mail. Thanks to Pam Long and Hugh Hackmeister for planning and organizing our picnics and special events. Pam also regularly publishes recipes in the newsletter.

A special thanks to Connie Przybyla for being the heart of the organization. Besides the work she does communicating with members, she devises entertaining games for picnics, members appreciation day and the holiday parties and takes pictures to share with the members. Thanks to former board member Joan McMahon for all her contributions, especially her work on the newsletter and together with Sharon Silvestri registration and door prizes: Donna Johnson-Smith for handling the luncheon menu selections. I also wish to thank Kathy Burk for taking over the newsletter and running for secretary, and to Guillermo Cole for contributing his writing talents to the newsletter. Special thanks to Pete Schepis and Ed Przybyla for handling the 50/50 raffle.

Thank you all. It has been a great experience for me. Now I can sit back and enjoy.

POET'S CORNER

Broken Dishes

By Celeste Pomerantz

Whenever a dish

Falls to the ground

I hate to hear the crashing sound

For my angry mother comes rushing in

And acts as if I committed a sin

Oh what would she do

If she only knew

I didn't break one

But two

Celeste Pomerantz retired from Allegheny County Department of Health Maternal Child Health Program.

Calling all poets, composers and bards, weavers of words, and writers of cards, if you carry a rhyme, and are willing to share, send us your poem and see that we care. Yes, we do care about you and your poetry, so please send us a poem or two that you, yourself, have written.

Congratulations

NEW RETIREES LIST

SEPTEMBER

Barnisin, Debra
 Bonacci, Raymond
 Evancho, Daniel
 Milcarzyk, Julie
 Ritz, Maryann
 Shane, Scott
 Tucker, Barbara
 Tutokey, Valerie
 Gurchak, Kevin
 Kopa, Christine
 Deonis, Sarah
 Flodine, Kurt
 Zang, Angel

OCTOBER

Reinhart, Linda
 Ryan, Kimberly
 Argotti, Michelle
 Cringle, Sean
 Torris, Karen
 Rowland, Marcell
 Pronobis, Barara
 McNally, Debora
 Brubach, William
 Evrand, Stephen
 Wetzel, Ronald
 Huges, Maria
 Whiteman, Laura
 Robert. Thompson

NOVEMBER

Bednar, Mary Jo
 Bright, Wallace
 Bryant, Richard
 Calabrese, Nicholas
 Clunis-Lee, Evelyn
 Conlon, Patrick
 Fechter, Gail
 Hamrock, David
 Harper, Orlando
 Herchelroath, David
 Karnes, Theresa
 Keenan, Beth
 Kemmerer, Barbara
 Kiesel, David
 Klingensmith, Benjamin
 Lawton, Nancy
 Lundy, Eric
 Mazzarini, Paul
 McGuire, Edward
 Meyers, James
 Payne, Cynthia
 Reedy, Brian
 Restori, Mark
 Risher, Joseph
 Seymour, Franklin
 Smarra, Susan
 Sloan, Kami
 Tice, Diana
 Turner-Allen, Tammy
 Wells, Kevin
 Williams, Corey

HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED?

If so, please keep us updated so that you don't miss a single correspondence.

NAME: _____

NEW ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Send to ACRA P.O. Box 15285 Pittsburgh, PA 15237
 Email: acretireeassociation@gmail.com

PONDERING HISTORY WITH THE MCKEES ROCKS BRIDGE

By Kathleen Burk

The McKees Rocks Bridge, at 7,293 feet, stands nobly as the longest bridge in Allegheny County. Proudly built in 1931 by engineers and architects from the Allegheny County Department of Public Works, it has given passage to millions of vehicles carrying people from all walks of life. The continuous bustling traffic belies the wealth of history that surrounds this mighty structure.

The bridge is named for the quaint and colorful borough of McKees Rocks, which derives its name from Alexander McKee (c.1735-1799). McKee made his way as a regional trader who often conducted business with the native inhabitants along the river, where the bridge is now located. Eighteenth century explorers had reported seeing rocks with writing on them, known as petroglyphs. When McKee set up his homestead near these rocks, they became a geographical reference point known as "McKee's rocks." Later, the apostrophe was dropped, the R was capitalized, and the name was adopted as the official name of the borough - and later the bridge that connects it to the northern bank of the Ohio River.

Among the archeological findings in the area was the "Indian mound," located in an area near the bridge that is referred to, colloquially as the "Rock Bottoms." Built by the Adena people between 200 BC and 100 AD, it holds some of the earliest known human remains in the eastern part of the continent. Unfortunately, much of it was bulldozed over and undermined during a period of industrial development.

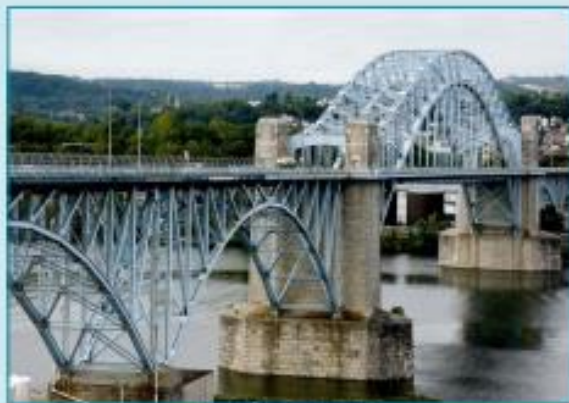
Before the McKees Rocks Bridge was built, Albert Graham ran a ferry service that regularly conveyed passengers across the Ohio River along a route close to the current location of the bridge. On May 11, 1909 Graham launched his 24-foot long gasoline-powered ferry boat in the usual fashion. Nineteen of his 33 passengers had just completed their shift at the nearby Pressed Steel Car Company. One can surmise that these men were willing to assume the risk of riding in an over-occupied boat because they were eager to get home after a long day of hard work. Well, disaster struck. By mid-point the boat began to rapidly sink. The ill-fated excursion ended with 24 of the passengers being pulled to a drowning death beneath the cold, murky currents of the Ohio.

Tragedy followed tragedy on July 13 of that same year with the notorious Pressed Steel Car

Strike of 1909. A force of nearly 800 workers made this one of the largest strikes of its kind. Security guards, assisted by state militia used violence to quash the strike, leaving more than a dozen workers dead. Many of the strikers were immigrants struggling to adapt to life in the new country.

The McKees Rocks Bridge persists in the shadows of an illustrious history, an emblem of the enduring strength of the various people that have inhabited the land for more than two millennia.

Information obtained from Marylynne Ritz, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, August 16, 2009; Albert Vrabal, Mt. Lebanon Magazine, March 9, 2021; Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. Thank you to ACRA member Nancy Lottes for suggesting the Graham's Ferry Disaster.



The McKees Rocks Bridge
Photo credit Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

FOCUS ON PREVENTION

FALLS IN THE HOME: A LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR OLDER ADULTS

By Kathleen Burk

In the United States, more than three million injuries from falls are treated in emergency rooms every year. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 800,000 of these falls lead to hospitalization. Even more astonishing is the research that projects that by year 2030, there will be seven fatalities every hour resulting from falls. Most of the victims will be older adults, making falls the leading cause of death for people over the age of sixty.

The National Council on Aging also reminds us that falls can be deadly, but not to despair because they are also very preventable. A combination of practices will greatly increase your chances of averting a fall or surviving one if it should happen. Recommended safeguards against falls and their resultant injuries include the following:

- Wear proper footwear with slip-proof soles
- Have annual eye exams and new glasses as needed
- Exercise regularly to help with balance and mobility
- Make sure that floors are clear of debris and clutter
- Either eliminate small throw rugs or secure them to the floor with double-sided tape
- Install grab bars by the tub and commode
- Make sure there is sufficient lighting in every room
- Put reflective tape on pet collars to ensure they can be seen if you get up at night
- If you live alone, carry a cell phone or smart device on you whenever possible

**MORE INFORMATION AND VIDEOS
ABOUT FALL PREVENTION CAN BE
FOUND ON THESE WEBSITES:**

National Council on Aging website:
www.ncoa.org/older-adults

Center for Disease Control and Prevention website:
www.cdc.gov/falls

MEMORIES OF SOUTH PARK - PART TWO

By Hugh Hochmeister

South Park is where I started my lifelong love affair with ice hockey and I learned to ice skate when the weather turned cooler in the fall. Mom, my sister Gretchen and I would head to the rink at South Park every Saturday, where we would follow Pirate Third Baseman, Richie Hebner, who worked as a skate guard in the off season in a spirited game of follow-the-leader. Hebner was a top Prep hockey player in New England before he chose baseball and joined our beloved Pirates.

As my skating improved, I joined the South Pittsburgh Amateur Hockey League, playing on teams with exciting team names- Flyers, Spartans & Falcons. Each team had colorful uniforms that we wore with great pride. During hockey season we would be on the ice as early as 6am, no matter the weather: Clear, Snow or Cold. We would be on the ice every weekend for practice and games against teams from around the region. It was great fun making friends from other schools, as we tried all of the moves of our favorite Penguin heroes: Jean Pronovost, Syl Apps & Les Binkley.

While playing hockey was my favorite thing, my mom and sister, both loved horses and we took riding lessons at the park on horses named Morning Star, Junior & Paint Brush. My sister, now living in Connecticut has a horse named Pawue and rides several times a week.

Today, while driving along Route 88, I think back to stops at the original walk-up McDonald's for a 15c hamburger or a hot slice of Danny's Pizza, after one of the many adventures of my childhood with family and friends at South Park.

While many things have changed over the years at Allegheny County's South Park, the 2000-acre park has aged gracefully and continues to be enjoyed by county residents young and old, for many activities and family get-togethers. County residents owe a debt of gratitude to generations of county leaders for development of the Allegheny County Park system and its preservation.

★ ★ ★ ACRA ELECTION RESULTS ★ ★ ★

Congratulations to the following ACRA members who were elected to a two-year term to the ACRA Board of Directors: Jack Esler, President, Marge Lubasz, Vice President, Kathy Burk, Secretary, Cathy Thomas, Treasurer. We have no doubt their skills and years of experience will prove to be a major asset to ACRA.

ACRA LUNCHEONS AND OUTINGS

The Member Appreciation Luncheon was held on September 20. Highlights included a Scavenger Hunt, with the winners brought front and center for an elimination round of Price is Right. The final competition was a game of Family Feud with Connie Przybyla serving as the mistress of ceremonies.



The October Luncheon featured Dawn Keezer, Director of the Pittsburgh Film Office (pictured with ACRA member Alan Millinger)



President Guy Tumolo presented medals to the four final winners. From left to right: Karen Cirrincione, Joe Stengell, Guy Tumolo, Carolyn Grubb, and Colleen Grzelka



Gathering outside PNC Park in anticipation of Pirates vs. Brewers on September 6

In the Spotlight

Genealogical Journey Traces Family Origin

by Guillermo Cole

When he retired in December 2022, Jack Exler knew he would have a lot more time to pursue his passion for genealogy, something he took up while working in the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development.

So, Jack rolled up his sleeves and went full steam ahead into researching his family history.

Using online tools like ancestry.com is a good place to start and can be helpful, according to Jack, but going to the Pennsylvania Room at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in Oakland is where you'll find a treasure trove of historical documents dating back hundreds of years.

"You can spend countless hours there exploring your family history, examining a variety of documents - mostly on microfilm - that include birth and

death records, naturalization papers, even passenger lists for ships travelling from Europe to America," said Jack.

Another good local resource is many different legal documents, such as wills and deeds, recorded by Allegheny County and available to the public at its downtown Pittsburgh offices.

Jack's genealogical journey enabled him to trace his family's roots across multiple generations going back to 1831 and a tiny village in France. Now, his next challenge is organizing and compiling the wealth of data and information he has collected and sharing it with his family.

"I'd like to put it all together in a book so present and future generations will know the origins of our family and the path our ancestors followed to get to where we all are today."

Serving as president of six non-profit organizations that provide affordable housing for the elderly also keeps Jack busy and involved in helping lower-income residents find a place to live in East Pittsburgh, Turtle Creek, Braddock, Pitcairn, Port Vue and North Versailles.

Jack worked in the Department of Economic Development during his entire 42-year career in Allegheny County government, starting as a program administrator and rising to Sr. Deputy Director. He is a graduate of North Catholic High School as well as John Carroll University, University of Pittsburgh and LaRoche College.

Jack was born and raised in Etna and resides in Shaler with his wife, Paula. They have two children, Katelyn and Ryan, and three grandchildren.



RECIPES BY PAM

by Pam Long

CRANBERRY SALAD

- 4 (3 ounce) packages red raspberry flavored gelatin
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 2 cups fresh cranberries ground
- 2 oranges, unpeeled, seeded, and ground
- 2 apples, unpeeled, cored, and ground
- 1 (15 1/4 ounce) can crushed pineapple undrained
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Ground or chop finely all fruit in a food processor or blender.

Dissolve gelatin in the boiling water. Add the cold water and chill until consistency of unbeaten egg white.

Combine next 6 ingredients; mix well. Fold fruit/nut mixture into gelatin mixture. Pour into a lightly-oiled, 10-cup ring mold; chill until set. Unmold on lettuce leaves.

If you do not have a ring mold, you can pour mixture into a 9" x 13" glass dish and then chill. Cut into squares.

Enjoy for the Holidays!

IN MEMORIAM*

Name	Date of Death	Name	Date of Death
Linsenmayer, Robert	4/23/2023	Fennell, Connie	7/20/2023
Smith, Maurita	4/25/2023	Arnold, Mattie	7/20/2023
Prunty, Gary	5/15/2023	Whittaker, Sharon	7/22/2023
Benton, Carl	5/17/2023	Hickey, Constance	7/23/2023
Kaduke, Ruth	5/18/2023	Harper, Stephen	7/31/2023
Halikos, Michael	5/19/2023	Rothrauff, Robert	8/01/2023
Lukus, Lois	5/24/2023	Gilfoyle, Bernice	8/01/2023
Wallace, Donald Lee, Sr.	5/27/2023	Trenoff, Daniel	8/04/2023
Hansen, Linda	5/27/2023	Leonard, Alfonso	8/23/2023
Elton, Agnes	5/29/2023	Fagan, Suzanne	8/23/2023
Brennan, John	6/01/2023	Pristas, Tracey	8/24/2023
Politano, Camille	6/02/2023	Ventura, Miriam	8/24/2023
Jamieson, Helen	6/05/2023	Warner, Barbara	8/26/2023
Marszalek, Dorothy	6/05/2023	Scolieri, Agostino	9/01/2023
Ward, Lawrence	6/17/2023	Landis, Kerry	9/02/2023
McMullen, Jane	6/20/2023	Kinney, Joann	9/07/2023
Waldron, Catherine	6/22/2023	Hermes, H Roy	9/08/2023
Pasinski, Edward	6/23/2023	Vaughn, Amelia	9/13/2023
McLaughlin, Charles	6/27/2023	Holland, Phyllis	9/16/2023
Vertes, Erno	6/29/2023	Munsie, John	9/19/2023
Mikus, Daryn	7/04/2023	Burley, Angeline	9/20/2023
Reola, Patricia	7/08/2023	Puskar, Annette	9/22/2023
Manso, Beatrice	7/10/2023	Deglmann, Barbara	9/24/2023
Sandsberry, Samuel	7/10/2023	Story, James	9/24/2023
Klutch, Joseph	7/13/2023	King, Thelma	9/26/2023
Kladek, Marian	7/16/2023	Roberson, Ruby	10/10/2023
Thomas, William W.	7/19/2023		

*As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board

With Gratitude

The Allegheny County Retirees Association wishes to extend its heartfelt gratitude to outgoing board members Guy Tumolo, President and JoAnna McQuaide, Secretary. Guy served the board in various capacities from 2015-2023; and JoAnna served from 2016-2023. Their commitments were carried out with grace, dedication, and an abundance of resourcefulness. Best Wishes, Guy and JoAnna, in all that you do going forward!

