



Allegheny County

September 2024

Retirees Association

NEWSLETTER

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

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NEWSLETTER

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Message from **PRESIDENT JACK EXLER**

It is the end of July; and we are still talking about the Pittsburgh Pirates who are still in the mix for a playoff spot. We had a great time and turnout of 45 retirees, family and friends to cheer on the Pirates to a victory over the St. Louis Cardinals.

You may have heard or read that the Allegheny County Pension Fund is struggling and underfunded. Marge Lubawy, Vice-President of ACRA Board and I met with Allegheny County Treasurer Erica Brusselars, President of the Allegheny County Pension Board and Walt Szymanski, Manager of the Retirement Office. The meeting went well and was very informative.

The following was written by Mr. Szymanski in response to our meeting: "The Retirement Office wants you to know that the Retirement Board is working hard to ensure that your pension is safe and secure. There are three sources of revenue supporting your benefits: your contributions, the County's contribution, and investment income."

The funds are entrusted to the Allegheny County Pension 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 Retirement Board, as the trustee of the pension contributions, hires professional money managers and financial advisors to invest the funds to have sufficient funds to pay all pension obligations.

For our November ACRA luncheon, I have asked the Board President Erica Brusselars and Walt Szymanski to give an update on the pension fund status and be there to answer any questions you may have.

One last comment, come out to the ACRA programs and luncheons, you never know who you may run into. At the May luncheon, I reconnected with Alan Colker, who hired me and was my first manager at the Allegheny County Department of Development in February 1980. You can find out more about Alan as he is in the Member Spotlight.

Jack Exler
President

Address Service Requested

Pittsburgh, PA 15237
P.O. Box 15285

Allegheny County
Retirees Association



Congratulations

NEW RETIREES LIST

MAY

Austin, Crystal
 Clemons, Emily
 Conroy, Kathleen
 Crew, Raymond
 Dzurik, Cynthia
 Goodwin, Mia
 Hildenbrand, Girard
 Millender, William
 Muic-Theil, Tania
 Mullenix, Jean
 Platko, Loraine
 Schwartz, Joseph
 Tunie, Stacey
 Xu, Baiyang
 Zazac, David

JUNE

Gibbs, Steven
 Heintz, Denise
 Murga, Susan
 Prosser, Larry
 Rienhart, Lorraine
 Weber, Marie
 Bielewicz, Richard
 Coyer, Louis
 Harrison, Courtney
 Lauro, Anita
 Roberts, Randolph
 Rohm, Marjorie
 Ulyas, Rona
 Vidt, Victoria
 Wynn II, Walter



JULY

Alverson, Patricia
 Ardella, James
 Alexiades, Patricia
 Dorman, Kenneth
 Domaracki, Matthew
 Goings, Kenneth
 Gritz, Koraleigh
 Ireland, Michael
 Mangan, Donna
 McNeal Stacy
 Martinelli, Cynthia
 Province, Dena
 Regan Woods, Renee
 Rielly, Michael
 Smith, Edward
 Stahl, John
 Stockey, Rebecca
 Tevis, Donna
 Tierney, Annette

AUGUST

Bailey, Dawn
 Banovski, Janet
 Beatty, David
 Berger, Randelle
 Bloom, Carrie
 Brown, Clinton
 Cassidy, Theresa
 Coleman, David
 Gigliotti, Jamie
 Good, Kenneth
 Hazlip, Cheryl
 Helvy, Thomia
 Holleran, Kenneth
 Hunter, Andrew
 Kidd, Cynthia
 McDonald, Gregory
 Nylander, Karen
 Placko, Kimberly
 Ricupero, James
 Roof, Dawn
 Tuttle, Kelly

BRAIN SHARPENING PITTSBURGH SCRAMBLER

See if you can unscramble the letters of each word to name things that are noteworthy in Pittsburgh. Then, take it a step further and unscramble the highlighted letter to reveal the secret Pittsburgh's celebrity.

ETESRSLE	VERRI DUSHON
NIINLCE	HCYLIL LYBIL
IRANECEG OMELNL	ERTEH VISERR
STEPAIR	IEGHOSTWESUN
SPUNGINE	TEDRACLDH FO GLINAREN
FAMANKNUS OCCLK	RM GORSER

Celebrity Hint: People come from all over the world just to see his soup cans and pictures of Marilyn. Who is he?

(If you can unscramble these words, you are not just smart, but exceptionally talented as well.)

Images of Summer at the ACRA Picnic on June 17th



In the Spotlight

AL COLKER:

Still Playing Bridge After All These Years

by Guillermo Cole

Al Colker started playing bridge when his parents introduced him to the card game as a child. It's an avocation that has continued throughout his adult life. Even now, at the age of 92, he remains an avid player, passionate as ever, playing as often as four days a week for two and a half hours a day.

Al's wife Lynne has been not only his life partner but his bridge partner as well over the years. In fact, they first met playing bridge on their lunch hour when both worked at the U.S. Steel Research Center in the 1960s.

Throughout their marriage, the two have played in many regional and national bridge tournaments that have taken them to numerous cities, including Dallas, New Orleans, St. Louis, Toronto, Cleveland, Philadelphia and New York. They remain active to this day in the Pittsburgh area bridge circuit and play in a number of weekly club games.

"Bridge is something that Lynne and I have been doing together forever. It has added immeasurably to our joy in life. I'm convinced that playing bridge helps keep the mind sharp and the social interaction that's part of the game also enhances your quality of life," said Al.

Another hobby Al enjoys in retirement is woodworking, in particular constructing small wooden ships. Among his creations are the Nina and the Pinta from the fleet of ships that Christopher Columbus piloted on his voyage to the Americas.

Al worked in the Allegheny County Department of Development from 1967 to 1987. He was hired as a planner and worked for many years in the Model Cities program, which provided funding for capital improvements to homes and infrastructure in the Turtle Creek Valley.

By the time of his retirement from the county at age 55, Al had been promoted to Deputy Director. He is proud to say that one of his accomplishments in that capacity was the hiring of none other than ACRA's current president, Jack Exler, who went on to become a Deputy Director himself and like Al have a successful career in the Department of Development.



After retiring from county government, Al continued working and joined his wife's janitorial supply firm, the L.M. Colker Co. in the Strip District. He worked there full-time into his early 80s and then part-time until just a few years. He and Lynne ran the business, which currently employs 30 workers, until turning it over to two of their children and their spouses.

Al lived in Morningside as a young child. After his parents moved the family to Mt. Lebanon, he attended schools there and graduated from Mt. Lebanon High School in 1949. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering and administration from Carnegie Tech, now known as Carnegie-Mellon University, in 1953 and 1954.

Following his college career, Al served two years in the U.S. Army and then worked for Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG), U.S. Steel and several consulting firms before joining county government in 1967.

Al and his wife reside in Dithridge House, an Oakland condominium, and have four surviving children, Barbara, Sandy, Susan and Greg, and eight grandchildren.

APRIL 8, 2024: A DAY UNLIKE ANY OTHER

By Hugh Hackmeister



During the Summer of 2017, I was able to view the partial eclipse of the sun. It was neat to see the moon partially block the sun and the skies partially dim. But it did nothing to prepare me for what we were in store to see on April 8th. My college roommate, Joe lives along the lakefront in Mentor, Ohio, located within the 115-mile-wide path of totality that stretched from Dallas, Texas to Montreal,

Quebec. My wife, Sandy, and I joined Joe for the opportunity of a lifetime – to view the total eclipse of the sun.

We set up our viewing picnic on the playground of the local elementary school that Joe went to growing up, we caught up on what was going on in our lives, as we waited for the moon to begin its path to block the sun. The clouds began to clear near the lake, creating ideal viewing conditions. With our viewing glasses on, we began to see the moon move in front of the sun and

the skies began to dull, not like in a typical early evening but at 360° around the horizon. As the skies continued to darken, we noticed the birds stopped singing and traffic along the boulevard pulled to the curb to see this amazing event begin.

The skies quickly darkened, as if someone threw the switch. The moon became black, as it blocked the normally bright rays of the sun. The moon was now outlined in brilliant pure white. For the next 3 minutes, we stood in awe and watched this amazing natural event that only occurred a few times in our lifetime. As the Earth & Moon continued their orbits and the skies began to brighten - loud cheers could be heard throughout the neighborhood surrounding the school.

Kate Russo, a psychologist and eclipse chaser was quoted in *Scientific American*, "When totality happens, then we have this moment of awe. And the emotion of awe is complex because we feel in the presence of something greater than us and more powerful than us. And then because of that, it makes us think about our lives in a different way." Russo has viewed 13 total solar eclipses.

It was truly an amazing experience for everyone who had the chance to view the eclipse in our own backyard.

SPECIAL OUTINGS

Occasionally ACRA will arrange tours/activities to interesting sites throughout Allegheny County. These events will be advertised in the ACRA newsletter and on the calendar located on this website. Not only are they a great way to learn about interesting sites in Allegheny County, but they are also a way to make new friends.

Outings in the past have included trips to historical sites, museums, sports arenas and much more.

We hope you join us on our next tour/activity.

IN MEMORIAM*

Name	Date of Death	Name	Date of Death	Name	Date of Death
WHITNEY, MARYLOU	5/28/2022	BOWSER, JUDY	3/31/2024	AUSTIN, CRYSTAL	5/20/2024
SNYDER, CHRISTOPHER	9/1/2023	GUEST, DAVID	4/5/2024	GORNY, MICHELLE	5/23/2024
CRAY, PATRICIA	10/7/2023	KUCHTA, VIRGINIA	4/8/2024	TRAPANI, ANGELO	5/23/2024
SCHACHNER, JOYCE	11/10/2023	GOLDIE, MARY	4/9/2024	BARRETT, JAMES F	5/24/2024
HARRISON, RANDOLPH	12/18/2023	PUDIS, ROBERT	4/18/2024	KUMPF, ROBERT	5/28/2024
PLATEK, WALTER	2/24/2024	THOMAS, ANTHONY	4/19/2024	ANGEL, ELMER	5/28/2024
KNOTTS, GARY SR	2/25/2024	MATUSZAK, TERENCE	4/21/2024	ECONOVICH, AGNES	5/28/2024
CUMMINGS, TERRANCE	3/6/2024	BOYKINS, MILIANA	4/23/2024	BRYAN, FLORA	6/3/2024
GNIAZDOWSKI, EDWARD	3/8/2024	VASHIE, MARYJANE	4/24/2024	MOOG, DENNIS JR	6/8/2024
KING, RUTH	3/9/2024	REEDY, BRIAN	4/28/2024	DESANO, JOSEPHINE	6/11/2024
ROSSMAN, BERNARD	3/16/2024	DEAMICIS, ALBERT	5/1/2024	TORTELLA, ARLENE	6/18/2024
SMITH, CONNIE	3/17/2024	SANGER, ELEANOR	5/2/2024	CONNER, ANN	6/20/2024
LAVSA, PATRICIA	3/21/2024	JONES, DAVID L	5/8/2024	BERGER, MARGARET	6/20/2024
CRAMER, HARRY	3/24/2024	YOEST, DONALD	5/11/2024	MACKEY, RICHARD	6/25/2024
GALTZ, MARY	3/28/2024	POLIDORA, ELIZABETH	5/13/2024	VERCELLI, JOHN	6/25/2024
DAVIS, DANA	3/29/2024	WECHT, CYRIL	5/13/2024	SANDS, ARLENE	6/26/2024
WISEMAN, WILUAM	3/29/2024	BRYANT, MAUREEN	5/16/2024		

*As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR RETIREMENT YEARS

By Kathleen Burk

So many times throughout our lives, we are confronted with idyllic images of what retirement is supposed to look like. We envision people engaged in rounds of golf or social travel, dining and dancing while sipping pink champagne over ice. Or we see glorified images of older people surrounded by gaggle of adoring grandchildren who bring joy and comfort to their old age.

The reality is that not everyone lives that way. And I might dare to say that most of us probably do not. As we journey into our retirement years, we soon realize that our jobs really did provide a halfway decent distraction from every other aspect of our lives. While it is great having all the extra free time that retirement offers, sometimes we can also experience a sense of loss or emptiness, or a feeling that we lack purpose in this world. If you feel that way you are not alone. But all is not lost. There are several steps you can take to pull yourself out of the slump.

First, of all if you are seriously depressed or thinking of self-harm, please seek help from a behavioral health specialist. A little therapy can make a world of difference to those who are suffering.

As human beings, we need to be motivated before we can act. This requires a little internal dialogue about how important this is to our own well-being. In other words, we need to give ourselves "a good talking to." Once we convince ourselves that we are worthy of a better life, we need to ask ourselves what it is that we would like to do and how we will go about doing it.

Is there a particular hobby you have always wanted to pursue, or a musical instrument that you would like to learn to play? Make a list. And then agree to make one phone call or visit one website per day to make it happen. Take notes as you gather information. And then be sure to make a check mark after each item on your list after it has been investigated. A little research can go a long way.

There are many adult learning classes available through Community College of Allegheny County, or through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Pitt, or even through your local county-funded senior community center.

And for those who are ambitious about realizing your own value while making a difference in the community, why not consider volunteering? There are some fascinating volunteer opportunities that are geared directly toward making the most of the skills that older retirees possess.

AmeriCorps offers an array of programs that are tailored to capture the talents of older adults to provide services to the community. Examples include AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program, the AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent Program and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. To find out more specific details about these programs visit www.americorps.gov.

Pittsburgh Cares is the local organization that sponsors the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Find out more at Seniors (55+) — Pittsburgh Cares

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) also lists volunteer opportunities locally. To find out what is available in Pittsburgh visit <https://local.aarp.org/pittsburgh-pa/volunteering>.

Certainly, do not forget that Meals on Wheels and your local food bank are often looking for people who are willing to pitch in and lend a hand to those who are in greater need. These are just a few of the many volunteer opportunities in our area.

So, to increase your odds of good health, longevity, and a positive disposition, stay active and engaged. And always, reach out to others when you are feeling blue, because that other person may need a friend as well.

AN ISSUE AFFECTING THE PENSION PLAN

We have been made aware of an issue that will affect the Pension Fund. It involves a 10 year agreement between the County and the Airport Authority in which there is a provision allowing Airport employees to participate in the County Pension Plan. The issue that concerns us is that the County, who is responsible for paying the pensions, and the Airport Authority have two different employee compensation systems drawing on the Fund. The Authority has a higher salary scale and pays bonuses.

Inclusion of bonuses in the determination of an Authority retiree's monthly pension provides a significant advantage to a non-county employee participating in the County Pension Plan.

The County Controller, Corey O'Conner, has taken a position opposing the inclusion of Airport Authority bonuses in these calculations. Your Board has submitted a letter to the members of the Pension Board supporting the Controller's position.

The agreement between the County and the Authority expires this year. In view of that, we have requested the Pension Board study the financial effects of any new agreement on the stability of the Fund. We have asked them to consider the impact of having two different compensation system drawing on the same Fund; the amount of contribution the active employees and the County will have to provide to meet cash flow of the Fund and the feasibility of the Authority accepting joint liability for keeping the Fund solvent.

Just one last comment. County Operations are funded by tax dollars; the Authority operations are funded by the revenues they generate. As things stand now, future pension obligation of retired Authority will be paid by the taxpayer not their employer.

Guy Tumolo

When Are We Too Old?

At 100, Grandma Moses was still painting.

At 96, Titian painted "Battle of Lepanto."

At 93, George Bernard Shaw wrote "Farfetched Fables."

At 91, Éamon de Valera served as president of Ireland.

At 90, Pablo Picasso still drew and engraved.

At 89, Arthur Rubenstein gave one of his greatest recitals in New York's Carnegie Hall.

At 88, Pablo Casals still performed cello concerts.

At 82, Winston Churchill wrote the four-volume work, "A History of the English Speaking Peoples"

At 82, Leo Tolstoy completed "I Cannot Be Silent," and at the same age Goethe finished "Faust."

At 81, Benjamin Franklin engineered the diplomacy that led to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution.

--Submitted by Guy Tumolo, from Christ the King Parish Bulletin, July 14, 2024

ACRA and the Pittsburgh Pirates vs. the St. Louis Cardinals

June 24 was a perfectly beautiful sunny day when ACRA brought good luck to the Pirates as they beat the Cardinals by 5-0!



RECIPES BY PAM

by Pam Long

ZUCCHINI PIE

Serve warm, as an appetizer or as a side dish in place of potatoes.

- 3 cups diced unpeeled zucchini
- 1 large onion chopped (about 1 cup)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup grated Cheddar cheese
- ½ cup salad oil
- 1 cup Bisquick biscuit mix
- 4 eggs beaten
- 4 tablespoons minced parsley
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. Black pepper

Grease a 9-inch pie plate or 9" by 9" baking dish. Combine all ingredients, mixing them until the diced zucchini is just coated with batter. Bake in a preheated oven, 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve warm or cold. Freezes very well too.

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024 Fun Times – ACRA Luncheon



Where: Doubletree Hotel by Hilton, Greentree

Reservations are required to ensure adequate space and food. Reservations and money are due no later than **9/11/2024**. Tickets are unavailable at the door. **NO REFUNDS AFTER THE RSVP DATE.**

OCTOBER 16, 2024 Pennsylvania Trolley Museum



Where: Doubletree Hotel by Hilton, Greentree

PA Trolley Museum – Reservations are required to ensure adequate space and food. Reservations and money are due no later than **10/09/2024**. Tickets are unavailable at the door. **NO REFUNDS AFTER RSVP DATE.**

NOVEMBER 20, 2024 Medicare Updates



Where: Doubletree Hotel by Hilton, Greentree

ACRA LUNCHEON MEETING - Reservations are required to ensure adequate space and food. Reservations and money are due no later than **11/13/2024**. Tickets are unavailable at the door. **NO REFUNDS AFTER RSVP DATE.**

All luncheons start at Noon at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton

Take Exit 67 off Parkway West, I-376. Turn left onto Mansfield Avenue Turn right at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton sign.

ACRA members – \$20 • Guests with a reservation – \$25

Reservations are required to ensure adequate space and food. Reservations and money are due no later than the RSVP date. Tickets are unavailable at the luncheon.

Mail all reservation checks to:

ACRA • P.O. Box 15285 • Pittsburgh, PA 15237

PITTSBURGH SCRAMBLER SOLUTION

ETESRSLE	STEELERS
NIINLCE	INCLINE
IRANECEG OMELNL	CARNEGIE MELLON
STPAIR	PIRATES
SPUNGINE	PENGUINS
TEDRACLDH FO GLINAREN	CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING
IEGHOSTWESUN	WESTINGHOUSE
ERTEH VISERR	THREE RIVERS
HCYLIL LYBIL	CHILLY BILLY
VERRI DUSHON	RIVER HOUNDS
FAMANKNUS OCCLK	KAUFMANN'S CLOCK
RM GORSER	MR ROGERS

(The Pittsburgh celebrity is Andy Warhol)