Allegheny County Retirees Association NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2026

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

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

Message from PRESIDENT JACK EXLER

Season's Greetings to all! The Holidays are upon us, and it is a time of year to celebrate family and friends as well as the great community of Allegheny County retirees. As we reflect upon the year gone past, we hope for positive new beginnings as another year greets us. I know I speak for many when I say that while there is much to be grateful for, we keep those who are suffering in our hearts and prayers. We look forward to a new year with thoughtful optimism.

On that note, I am sure many of you have heard much of the discussion about the soundness of our pension fund. As president of Allegheny County Retirees Association, I speak on behalf of our board when I say that we are cautiously concerned about the solvency of these funds and are closely monitoring the discussion around this issue. We have been notified that the investigation is ongoing and a new course action is still in the early phases of implementation.

We recognize that our members have cumulatively contributed thousands of years of dedicated service to the citizens of Allegheny County. Our county government has been nationally recognized as exceptional, and it is a well-known fact that it is a great place to live and work. For that reason alone, retirees of the county, both present and future, deserve financial security in their retirement years. I can assure you that we will continue to voice our concerns to all who are involved.

On a more positive note, the ACRA board has been diligently planning the new luncheon programs for 2027, and although I can't disclose them just yet, I can say that the prospects are exciting. As we enter the new year, we will have more information to reveal about the monthly lunchtime presentations as well as other events for our members.

Again, I wish you all a happy holiday season and a prosperous, happy new year.

Jack

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ACRA Holiday Party

by Connie Przybyla

Join us for the annual ACRA Holiday Party on December 16th from noon to 2 p.m.

We're adding a fun new tradition this year: a cookie table! If you're attending, please bring a dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies to share, and remember to mark your container NO NUTS or NUTS INCLUDED.

We'll also be collecting items for the local food bank. You can drop off donations at the container near the registration table.

We can't wait to celebrate the season with all our members. The cost per person is $30 for members and guests alike. Reservations are due by December 9.

The Year in Review













In the Spotlight

HOWARD "BUD" SCHUBEL:

Committed to Hearth and Home (Career, Too)

by Guillermo Cole



Howard Schubel, known as "Bud" to family, friends and colleagues, retired in 2022 from the Allegheny County Economic Development Department.

Bud worked 41 years in various managerial positions and his career in Economic Development ran almost parallel to that of ACRA President Jack Exler. In fact, they started their careers just a few months apart and ended up retiring on the very same day in 2022.

After graduating in 1980 from West Virginia University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry, Bud put his education to work in a job with the Allegheny County Conservation District. He believes his experience in that job helped him land his entry level environmental specialist position with Economic Development.

A 1975 graduate of North Allegheny High School, Bud is a lifelong resident of Franklin Park and has lived on the same street his entire life. His home is next to the house he grew up in and was on the market when he and his soon-to-be wife, Christine, were engaged and looking for a place to live after getting married.

While Bud wasn't so sure about buying the house, Christine loved it and that sealed the deal. So much for having any reservations about living next door to your in-laws, as was the case in the popular TV sitcom *Everybody Loves Raymond*.

And the tale of living on the same street comes full circle with the fact that Bud and Christine's son, Nicholas, is now *their* next-door neighbor after he moved into Bud's childhood home when it became vacant following the death of Bud's father.

By the way, Bud and Christine met when both worked in Economic Development. She left when they had their first born, Nicholas. They also have a daughter, Laura, who lives in Washington. D.C.

In July, Bud and Christine enjoyed a long-desired bucket list trip to Alaska. It started with a seven-day cruise originating in Vancouver and navigating along Alaska's inner passage and was followed by seven additional days on land traveling to Anchorage, Denali, Seward and other distant points viewing spectacular wilderness and wildlife.

One of the highlights of the trip was a stop in Juneau to visit with their nephew Zac Parkhill, who has lived there many years and is a well-known fisherman on YouTube. "Captain Zac" took them out on his boat for a day of halibut fishing and aquatic sightseeing.

In retirement, Bud likes outdoor gardening and tending to the landscape around his home as well as spending time with his son and brother archery hunting for deer and turkey and fishing from a kayak on the Youghiogheny and Allegheny rivers and on French Creek.

BEWARE OF INTERNET DATING SCAMS

by Kathy Burk

Throughout the past year the ACRA luncheons have featured excellent speakers that were both entertaining and informative. One of the more recent presentations was by representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Our guest speakers shared important information so that we may be better equipped to avoid falling victim to scams that target older adults.

On-line dating was an area of concern, for many elderly people who may be experiencing loneliness, and are often more vulnerable to dating site shysters. Dating sites can be a great place to meet other people, but one must always proceed cautiously. There have been many cases where potential suitors were not who they said they were. These disingenuous people, known as "cat fishers," often give false names, provide fake pictures, and often claim to be living or working overseas. They are very skilled and often know the right words to win the hearts of their potential victims.

The FBI warns all dating site users to proceed cautiously and think twice about giving your birth date to people you don't know, and never, for any reason, give them your social security number. Most importantly, if your sweet-talking suitor asks you to send money, you are most likely being scammed. It is probably in your best interest to end the relationship on the spot.

One of the best ways to protect yourself from financial fraud is to remain informed. Learn more about financial scams through the Elder Justice Initiative.

Two information resources are:
consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts
elderjustice.gov/senior-scam-alert



NEW RETIREES LIST

August

Bailey, Brandon
Coleman, Regina
Cregan, Jayne
Dangelo, Paula
Deasy, Jerry
Degnan, Valerie
Dish, Steven
Feeney, Michael
Gastgeb, Vincent
Grimes, Robert
Hall-Brooks, Cheryl
Holmes, Teresa
Lewis, Lynn
Mason, Alicia
Mcmurdy, Scott
Middleton, Lisa
Monteverde, Clare
Moore, Margaret
Morgan, Bruce
Nesbitt, David
Nord, Marcy
Rose, Coleen
Skirtich, James
Sporrer, Jane
Vertes, Tina
Veselicky, Michelle
Wicks, Wendy
Woods, Mark

September

Altmeyer, Edward
Bodner, Ruth
Carter, Rochelle
Castric, David
Flavell, Bruce
Fox, Terrence
Kosco, Michael
Lentz, Randy
Lopresti, Kathleen
Maloney, Elizabeth
McRae, Fatima
Parkinson, Davis
Popovich, Stanley
Pratt, Robin
Stasiowski, Joan
Volkay, Joseph
Watkins, Robert

October

Wuenstel, Eileen
Trohaugh, Lucille
Davis, Darcie
Caldwell, Janice
Biedinger, Joseph
Marvich, Shelley
Meekins, David
Martinelli, Jeffrey
Caulfield, Thomas
Asturi, Joseph
Beatty, Sharmaine

Know Your State Capitals

Let's see how much you remember from geography class. Draw a line from each capital to the state it belongs with:

Tallahassee	**New York**
Carson City	**Michigan**
Sacramento	**Nebraska**
Lansing	**South Carolina**
Harrisburg	**Florida**
Lincoln	**New York**
Columbia	**Nevada**
Springfield	**New Hampshire**
Concord	**California**
Boise	**Vermont**
Albany	**Pennsylvania**
Baton Rouge	**Illinois**
Montpelier	**Idaho**

Score ten points for each pair you correctly match. As a bonus, add 10 points for each of the four United States Commonwealths you can name. If you score more than 160 total points you are a true geography genius

TIME TO RENEW YOUR ACRA MEMBERSHIP

by Connie Przybyla

It's time to renew your membership with the Allegheny County Retirees Association. Dues are $25 for the calendar year 2027. This year you have the option of either renewing your membership online or by mail.

To renew your membership online go to the ACRA website https://acretirees.org/, and click on the Membership tab. If paying online it is very important to ***CHOOSE #2 - IF YOU ARE A CURRENT MEMBER OF ACRA – RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP HERE***. The online system will be available for renewal payments for the 2027 dues starting on 12/10/2026.

To renew by mail simply complete the form below and mail it, along with your check, to the address listed. We also take this opportunity to update our records. Please provide us with any changes that have occurred in the past year.

ACRA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Your name: _____

Has your contact information changed? YES_____ NO_____

Updated address: _____

_____

Updated preferred tele phone number: _____

Updated preferred Email address: _____

If you are responding on behalf of a deceased member check here and we will remove their name from the membership list _____

Amount enclosed: Dues $_____ Additional Contribution $_____

Signature: _____

Do you know of a speaker or any activities your fellow members might enjoy? If so, please provide their name and contact information:

_____

Dues are $25 per person
Mail membership renewal, along with your check,
no later than January 10, 2027, to:
ACRA Membership Renewal, PO Box 15285, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

We hope you will join us for another year of socializing, good food, interesting speakers and special events.
Thank you!

ACRA FOOD DRIVE

Local food banks are struggling to meet the increasing demand for food. If you would like to help, please consider donating a canned good or other non-perishable food item at the December Holiday Luncheon. All donated items will be delivered to a local food pantry. Every little bit helps our neighbors in need.

We are pleased to report that more than 150 pounds of non-perishable food was collected at the 2026 ACRA Annual Picnic in June. The food that was collected was in turn donated to the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank to help struggling families in Allegheny County.

Please consider, once again, donating a food item or two at the Annual Holiday Party.



Congratulations

to the Newly Re-elected Board Members who will serve another two years:

Donna Johnson-Smith
Sharon Silvestri
and
Eric Buncher



History of The Pittsburgh Cookie Table

Did you ever wonder about those cookie tables that are so popular at weddings and other events in our region?

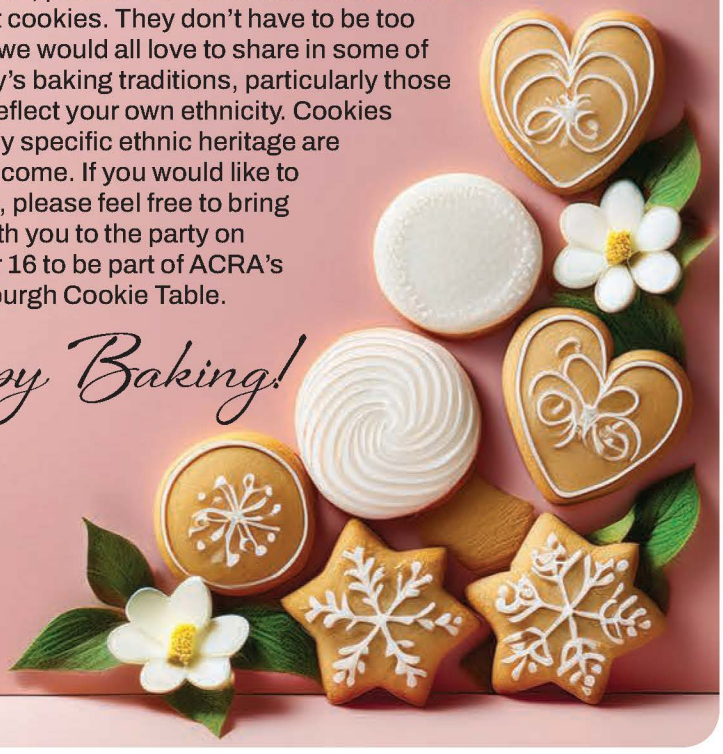
Pittsburgh is known for its wealth of immigrants from all over the world. Cookie tables, however, have their origin with immigrants from Eastern Europe, particularly Slovaks, Poles, Italians, Greeks who settled here during the industrialization of our region. Workers from these groups were recruited to work in the steel mills and other manufacturing plants, and their legacy remains woven into the fabric of our region.

Among the many rich contributions that these ethnic groups brought to the area was a strong baking tradition. Immigrants considered it to be an act of love, and a symbol of community involvement and family heritage. Cookies particularly reflected ethnic pride and close family ties within a greater community. They became popular at weddings and other celebrations because they were an inexpensive alternative to the costly wedding cake. Family and friends would each contribute a batch of their favorite cookies to be shared among all the celebrants.

As families and ethnicities began to intermingle, the cookie tradition remained a staple at many a wedding celebration in the Greater Pittsburgh region. The tradition has become so popularized that they are no longer just a wedding tradition. Pittsburgh Cookie tables can now be seen at graduations, baptisms, and Bar Mitzvah celebrations.

The Pittsburgh Cookie table will come to life as a new feature of the ACRA Annual Holiday Party. If you would like to make this our very own tradition, please feel free to contribute some of your finest cookies. They don't have to be too fancy, but we would all love to share in some of your family's baking traditions, particularly those that may reflect your own ethnicity. Cookies without any specific ethnic heritage are just as welcome. If you would like to contribute, please feel free to bring a batch with you to the party on December 16 to be part of ACRA's own Pittsburgh Cookie Table.

Happy Baking!





RECIPES BY PAM

by Pamela Long

PINEAPPLE QUICK BREAD

2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp salt
2 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 large egg, beaten
½ cup sour cream
20 oz can crushed pineapple, drained (save 2-3 Tbsp. juice for glaze)

Glaze:
1 ½ cups powdered sugar
2-3 tbsp reserved pineapple juice

- *Mix the flour, baking soda, and salt in a medium mixing bowl.*
- *In a separate bowl, beat the egg, sugar, cream cheese, and vanilla until smooth.*
- *Add the flour mixture and mix well. Add the sour cream and mix just until combined. Stir in the thoroughly drained crushed pineapple.*
- *Pour into a greased bread pan and bake at 350° for 55-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.*
- *Cool in pan for about 15-20 minutes and then let cool on a wire rack*
- *PINEAPPLE GLAZE: Mix powdered sugar and pineapple juice together and drizzle over bread.*

ENJOY!

The Allegheny County Retiree's Association Board of Directors wish you and your family a wonderful holiday Season.

Know Your State Capitals Answer Key



"Aging gracefully means being flexible, being open, allowing change, and loving yourself."

--Author unknown

*IN MEMORIAM**

Name	Date of Death
JULY	
MIHALEK, REVINA	6/17/2026
BLASSEY, ROBERT	6/24/2026
TAYLOR, EDWIN	7/1/2026
MOORE, ELLEN	7/12/2026
SIROCHMAN, MICHAEL	7/12/2026
YOKEL, ROBERT	7/13/2026
PACE, SYLVIA	7/16/2026
COOK, WILLIAM	7/19/2026
WHALEN, MARY ANNE	7/19/2026
DREMSEK, GERALYN	7/21/2026
TATTERS, TIMOTHY	7/21/2026
GEARY, JAMES	7/24/2026
CIFELLI, GWENDOLYN	7/24/2026
GILES, RENEE	7/28/2026
QUINN, EILEEN V	7/28/2026
FIORE, EDWARD	7/28/2026
PASQUANONIO RICHARD	7/29/2026
KAVROS, JAMES	7/29/2026
BURLETIC, ROBERT	7/29/2026
AUGUST	
GROGAN, ALAN	8/1/2026
MOORE, CHARLENE	8/3/2026
HOFFMAN, PHILIP	8/4/2026
SANGUIGNI, MARGARET	8/7/2026
AMENDOLA, ANTHONY	8/13/2026
STUNDON, DAWN	8/15/2026
HESTER, CATHERINE	8/15/2026
ADAMS, BEVERLY	8/19/2026
TROZZI, JAMES	8/20/2026
GRESE, ANDREW F	8/21/2026
SHAKIR, ABDULREZAK	8/23/2026
VALISKA, RUDOLPH	8/25/2026
BASETTI, LAWRENCE	8/27/2026
CIVIC, RICHARD E	8/29/2026
NORCIE, RALPH D	8/30/2026
FENYL, MAGDALEN	8/30/2026
SEPTEMBER	
LABA, EMILY	9/1/2026
WHITEHEAD, SILAS	9/6/2026
ROSS, JUDY	9/3/2026
MCILVRIED, SHIRLEY	9/13/2026
DELIMAN, DAVID	9/20/2026
GASPER, CARL	9/16/2026
KIRK, VINCENT	9/16/2026
BENARD, CATTIE	9/18/2026
WARD, TERRY	9/20/2026
WELLMAN, RENEE	9/23/2026
MILLER, DAN	9/31/2026
MCKENNA, JOSEPH	9/30/2026
OCTOBER	
WISLIE, DAVID	10/2/2026
HEYL, EDWARD H	10/3/2026
SHIER, PATRICA	10/5/2026
GLASS, MARY K	10/5/2026
SHOOK, MARY R	10/6/2026
MOORE, MARGARET	10/8/2026
HICKMAN, DESIRE	10/8/2026
GRAYCAR, JOHN	10/10/2026
STAMPER, JOSEPH	10/13/2026
DARBY, RICHARD	10/15/2026

*As provided by the Allegheny County Retirement Board