

# INSIGHT -----JULY 1999

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**July, 1999 ISSN 1065-7800**

## **INSIGHT**

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

by Stuart Martinsen, Co-Chair, Legislative Comm.

Assembly Bill 2855 was passed by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 17, 1999 after it had been amended to make certain Probation Officers eligible for body armor grants. This legislation will fund bullet proof vests for Probation Officers, as administrated by the Attorney General. PANJ President, George Christie, and other PANJ members were present at this hearing in order to support this important legislation. On June 24, 1999, it was passed by the General Assembly and now awaits a hearing in the Law and Public Safety Committee of the Senate.

PANJ members from all over the State of New Jersey appeared at the Assembly Judiciary Committee hearing held on June 14, 1999, in regard to Assembly Bill 492, which gives Probation Officers the power to arrest and enforce the laws of the State of New Jersey, and carry firearms in the performance of their duties. One of the sponsors of this bill, Assemblyman Frank Blee (Atlantic) testified on behalf of this legislation before the committee. Also, Mr. William Thomas, the grandfather of murder victim Amanda Wengert and a victim rights advocate, testified on behalf of this legislation and in support of all Probation Officers in the state.

After lengthy discussion by the Assembly Judiciary Committee, the bill passed 6-2 and is now awaiting a hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. An amendment was made to the bill by the Judiciary Committee which mandates that all Probation Officers who are eligible under this legislation complete both a firearms training course and a police training course.

Further, the New Jersey Judiciary budget was approved June 28, 1999. It allocates funds for 175 more Probation Officers to be hired in New Jersey. Of those, 25 are new positions and 150 are to be replenished from previous attrition.

We wish to thank all PANJ members who appeared at these hearings in order to lend support to our legislative efforts.

## **Supreme Court Ruling**

by George P. Christie, President

The week of June 19, 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court made decisions that may have greatly affected PANJ in its pursuit of justice for the members. The court's conservative members ruled 5 to 4 to disallow individuals from filing suits against the state for violating federal laws. In particular, 68 Maine Probation Officers sued the state of Maine for overtime compensation. The new court ruling acknowledges that there are federal laws such as those outlined in the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, but there is no way to enforce those laws if your employer is the state government.

The ruling was termed as unrealistic and indefensible by some of the dissenting justices, and of course PANJ would whole heartedly concur. In effect, the ruling allows state government administrators to be unfair and inefficient without having to be held accountable for their actions.

Government seems to protect poor business behavior rather than correct it. Probation Officers in Maine had their rights violated by not being paid a fair wage covered under federal law, and will never be able to recover from that loss of income as well as their loss for legal expenses.

The issue comes home to New Jersey because we have hundreds of Probation Officers who also have been deprived of their fair wages on overtime.

## **GLENN KRANTZ RETIRES**

by Richard Lusardi, Somerset

Glenn Krantz, Assistant Vicinage Chief Probation Officer for Vicinage 13, has announced his retirement effective July 1, 1999. Glenn was an active union member as both a Senior Probation Officer and as a Principal Probation Officer, having served on the Executive Board of PANJ for over ten years, and was Sergeant at Arms and Treasurer during that time. As well, he held the position of the line officers' Union President at the local level for eleven years. Due to his outstanding dedication to the job, he was named Probation Officer of the Year in 1984.

Glenn began his 27 year career in the Pre-Sentence Unit, then as a field officer before moving on to supervising both field officers and the Intake Division at Somerset County. He was named Assistant Vicinage Chief in 1998. Due to both his in-depth knowledge of our system and his ability to think on his

feet, coupled with the fair and impartial manner in which he conducted business, he truly earned the title of the "go to guy." He was the glue that helped keep the department together and on an even keel throughout the turbulent and rapidly changing work environment we have been experiencing in the last few years. His expertise with the CAPS system, both at the state and local levels is unparalleled and whatever success it has achieved is due in large part to him.

Although it may be difficult to summarize his outstanding career in such a short space, it can truly be said that to those of us for whom he was a mentor, or a leader, or a friend, or all of the above, he will be surely missed. FORE!

Glenn Krantz is pictured below:



## **HEARST: UNIONS REFLECT THE AMERICAN IDEAL**

(Reprinted by permission from *Executive Book Summaries*)

For the legendary newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, unions represented the ideal of American democracy in action. In his editorials, he would point out that the motto of the U.S. is "In union there is strength." The American Revolution, he wrote, was fought by a band of rebels who "organized" themselves for the common good.

Hearst unequivocally backed workers' rights to unionize but warned that unions must not stop the creation of wealth. When wealth was created, both labor and capital benefited. Neither labor nor capital could exist without each other—a fact both sides needed to recognize.

## **STATE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE APPROVES \$75,000 BODY ARMOR GRANT FOR PROBATION OFFICERS**

by Daniel M. Bergin

TRENTON, MAY 17 - In a victory for personal safety and legislative recognition that Probation Officers face increasing danger in the field, the New Jersey Assembly Appropriations Committee unanimously endorsed a \$75,000 spending plan to provide bulletproof vests for Probation Officers.

Sponsored by Assemblyman Francis Blee, (R-2), a one-dollar surcharge on motor vehicle traffic fines statewide would fund the measure.

"Probation Officers are very dear to my heart," said Blee before casting his committee vote for the appropriation. The bill's enactment into law is not expected to meet with serious opposition, according to political observers.

The bill also provides funding to buy body armor for correction officers working in New Jersey state prisons. Probation Officers assigned to field duties would be given priority to receive the vests, under an amendment to the bill endorsed by Blee.

Assemblyman Blee has been a longtime sponsor of laws benefiting Probation Officers. In 1997, he received the PANJ "Legislator of the Year" award at the association's convention in Atlantic City in recognition of his continued support of measures aimed at promoting professionalism in probation across the state.

PANJ President George P. Christie and Daniel M. Bergin, PANJ Representative from Passaic County traveled to Trenton to speak for the appropriation.

"This is part of more legislation benefiting Probation that we hope to enact in the coming months," Christie said in an interview after the vote.

"I congratulate members of the Appropriation Committee for realizing that probation supervision is law enforcement and thank them for putting the safety of our officers first," he added.

Bergin said the measure would bring additional weight to pending bills in the legislature that would provide full law enforcement authority to Probation Officers. "We need training to deal properly with the violent criminals that are on our caseloads today," Bergin said.

Last May, the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee unanimously endorsed a bill known as S-313 to standardize Probation Officers' authority among the 15 Probation Vicinages in the state.

Part of the issue stems from differing levels of supervision from county to county. Only two vicinages, Passaic and Camden, allow their officers to exercise authority as constables under state law. The disparity contradicts the Judicial Unification Act of 1995, which places all county probation departments under uniform state control. Previously, county governments funded judicial operations and local policy varied widely.

"Probation Officers and parole officers do the same job but parole is better equipped and trained and part of a unified system...we need parity with them," Bergin said.

## **INCIDENT REPORTS**

by George P. Christie, President

PANJ recently developed an incident report for the members so that our association can compile information about the nature and number of actual incidents that occur. Thus far, in the last two months, it has been reported that incidents took place in the following counties:

Hudson: A Probation Officer was traveling to Trenton by railroad for training and was apparently robbed while still on the train (no arrests were made at the time).

Passaic: Two Probation Officers conducted a search of a juvenile probationer's room and found a loaded hand gun (the youth was arrested).

Essex: 1. Two parties in a consent hearing in Family Court began having an altercation. One person was struck in the head before the Probation Officer could break it up. 2. A Probation Officer making a school visit in Newark had their personal auto struck by a church van causing \$2,500 in damages

Your PANJ Executive Board will continue to strive for ways to improve your safety. We can accomplish this goal by keeping our records of incidents up to date. Please contact your local president to obtain a PANJ incident form whenever you feel that you have been at risk.

## **Conference Announcement**

by John Morton

(who has virtually no connection with the Conference)

The Conference Committee has advised the PANJ Executive Board that the PANJ Conference will return to Trump Plaza November 21, 22, and 23, 1999. This year's theme is "Building a Bridge to the New Millennium." You can be assured of an informative assortment of workshops during the days on Monday and Tuesday, and the usual entertainment program at surrounding times. Last year's event set an attendance record, and the committee expects increased participation this year. There is a full page advertisement in the American Probation and Parole Association magazine, and coverage on the PANJ Website.

Registration information should be available from your local PANJ representatives, or contact Susan Ormsby-Cuozzo at 973-285-6994 or Anne Dutton at 973-989-6048. The tentative program is available, so you may plan for the week. Trump Plaza offers a much larger facility than last year's venue. Mark your calendars for continuing education and fun!

## **NEWS ITEM**

PANJ Members should know your rights as employees. Too often people have been called to interrogations or meetings with management only to find out that everything they said has been used against them at a discipline hearing. Therefore, I would like you all to know that you can have a union representative with you at an interrogation or meeting if it may lead to discipline.

## **WEINGARTEN CARD**

(If called to a meeting with management which you believe may lead to discipline, read the following when the meeting begins.)

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

## **ANNOUNCING PANJ SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**

by Robert Smith, Cumberland President

Before your kids prepare to head off to college this fall, tell them they have one more scholarship application to complete. PANJ will once again be presenting two scholarships at the annual training conference in Atlantic City this November. Each \$500 award will be available to all active or retired PANJ members and their children.

**The Dwight Watson Leadership- Scholarship Award** is available to a candidate, enrolled in a 2 or 4 year college in pursuit of a career in criminal justice or probation.

**The Ethan Janowitz Training-Educational Scholarship Award** is available to any candidate enrolled in a 2 or 4 year college or vocational / technical school.

The scholarships are fully funded by proceeds from the annual PANJ Golf Outing. Candidates must have completed high school and maintained a 'B' average for college students or a 'C' average for vocational/technical students.

Each candidate will be required to complete an application including financial data and copy of high school transcripts. Consideration will be given to the following characteristics: professionalism, personality, dedication, leadership, participation in school and community affairs and financial need.

**Applications are available at the PANJ office. Deadline for applications is November 12.**

PANJ Office- 617 Union Ave. United Professional Building 2, Brielle, N.J. 08730 Telephone (732) 223-1799

## **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP**

by John Morton, Editor

With the help of Doehler and Associates, PANJ financial advisors, our members have access to certain benefits. These benefits are available to Active Members only (Those who pay 100% of annual dues). Judicial employees who are represented by PANJ but pay representation fees (85% of dues) are not eligible, but you may sign up as Active Members at any time. See any PANJ Representative for membership information or contact the PANJ office. The staff of our information center can be reached by phone at 732-223-1799.

### **Liberty Mutual Group Insurance:**

Call 1-800-225-8285 for a competitive quote on auto and homeowner's insurance. Have your policies handy when you call. You must state that you are a **Member** of the Probation Association of New Jersey and our client number is **7057**.

### **Jos. A. Bank Clothier**

Discounts on men's clothing at store locations. Code number is **6328**.

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