



**June 2001**

**ISSN 10**

**PUBLISHED BY THE PROBATION ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY**

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# **INSIGHT**

# **PANJ Reaches Tentative Contract Settlement**

by Peter A. Tortoreto

The Probation Association of New Jersey has reached a tentative contract settlement for the case related professional unit. This is pending ratification by the membership. The terms of the contract calls for a five-year term commencing July 1, 1999 and ending June 30, 2004.

At the May 24, 2001 Executive Board Meeting a presentation was made to the board followed by a question/answer period in which the entire negotiations team spoke about the terms and conditions as well as the process of negotiations, and how and why it was presented at this time. David I. Fox, Esq., the lead negotiator and attorney for PANJ, was present to answer questions and concerns.

Prior to ratification by the members, PANJ has requested an individual printout of individual salaries as well as the contract proposals and changes to the current document for our members in order that they have a completed package for review prior to casting their vote for ratification. This is in the process of being prepared and will shortly be available. We expect the ratification to be completed by the end of June 2001.

Some of the terms of the economic proposals are as follows:

## **Salary Ranges**

**\$32,000-\$56,956 - Probation Officer**

**\$41,967-\$71,000 - Senior Probation Officer**

**\$46,579-\$75,250 - Master Probation Officer**

## **Salary Increases**

**Effective Date**

**Amount**

<b>1/1/00</b>	<b>\$400 ATB</b>
<b>7/1/00</b>	<b>2.5% Increase</b>
<b>7/1/01</b>	<b>2% Increase} calculated on 6/30/01 salary.</b>
<b>1/1/02</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>7/1/02</b>	<b>2% Increase} calculated on 6/30/02 salary.</b>
<b>1/1/03</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>7/1/03</b>	<b>2% Increase} calculated on 6/30/03 salary.</b>
<b>1/1/04</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

Regarding the salary ranges will be a joint request from PANJ and the AOC to the Department of Personnel to approve the new minimum salary range. Assuming the DOP approves the request the Judiciary agrees to make equity salary adjustments for employees hired between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2000 so that such employees will be at a salary level of \$33,000 after application of the across the board (ATB) increases and any performance/length of service payments made to such employees. Employees hired on or after July 1, 2000 will be adjusted to the new minimum of \$32,000. Provided the new minimum is approved.

Maximum of Senior Probation Officer Range - Effective in the pay period including 1/1/04 and after application of the 2.5% across the board increase, the request to the Department of Personnel shall be for an additional increase to the maximum of that range so that the new maximum for Senior Probation Officer shall be \$71,000.

Maximum of Master Probation Officer Range - Effective in the pay period including 1/1/04 and after application of the 2.5% across the board increase, the request to the Department of Personnel shall be for an additional increase to the maximum of that range so that the new maximum for Master Probation Officer shall be \$75,250.

**Advancement to Senior Probation Officer and Master Probation Officer**

Effective in the pay period that includes 7/1/01 and provided a signed contract with PANJ is in place, a 5% salary increase for advancement from Probation Officer to Senior Probation Officer and from Probation Officer/Senior Probation Officer to Master Probation Officer will be implemented and made applicable to all employees who achieve advancement during the term of this contract (7/1/99 - 6/30/04). For employees who achieve advancement from 7/1/99 to 6/30/01, the 5% salary increase will be effective for the pay period of 7/1/01 and will be calculated on the base salary at that time following application of the 2% across-the-board increase. Employees who achieve advancement from April 1, 1998 to March 31, 2001 shall be entitled to a one-time lump sum payment of \$125. Those advanced and not raised to minimum will be adjusted.

Employees who were advanced under the terms of the prior collective negotiations agreement between the parties either from the promotional list or under the terms of the 9 year/competency satisfaction agreement will receive a 5% increase, provided such increase does not result in the employee's salary exceeding the maximum, effective in the pay period that includes 7/1/01.

Effective 7/1/01 the length of service required for advancement from Probation Officer to Senior Probation Officer for those who satisfy the competencies will be reduced from nine years to seven years. Effective 1/1/04 the length of service requirement will be further reduced from seven years to five years.

**Provisional Time** - Provisional time shall be counted in determining the length of service required for eligibility for advancement to Senior Probation Officer and Master Probation Officer, and this benefit shall be applicable Statewide.

**Bilingual Duties** - The Judiciary recognizes that those employees who perform bilingual duties perform a special service in their work to the Judiciary and the community, and that this work and other work will be appropriately balanced.

**Alternative Work Week** - The Judiciary recognizes that those employees who adjust hours in connection with their work, which adjustment is referred to as the alternative work week-field duty, have in some vicinages flexibility in the scheduling of such work. Efforts shall be made to allow for reasonable flexibility in all vicinages, including where appropriate and agreed to, assignments on weekends.

**Performance Pay** - The performance pay shall remain in effect in addition to the across the board increases, however, they will be for performance excluding the time for the full amount of \$2,000 for the evaluation period of 2001 and 2002. In the final year of the contract, the amount of \$2,000 shall be changed to a straight 4.15%. This will be effective in the evaluation period of 2003 and payable in January 2004.

### **Ratification Process**

The PANJ Executive Board voted overwhelmingly to present this package to the members for ratification. The feeling was that we have made some major gains and the economic package offers both acceptable and advanced career paths for our professional members.

As has been past practice PANJ will conduct three presentations (North, Middle, South). This is in order that our members are provided an opportunity to discuss and review the proposals along with the negotiators, Regional Vice Presidents, and Statewide Officials.

PANJ members are the most knowledge-able, most educated, and most deserving of the recognition, protections and compensation this contract will provide to our highly valued professionals.

## **INFORMATIONAL PICKETING**

by Dwight Covalleskie, Burlington County

Each of us as members of PANJ should be proud of our informational picketing which took place on March 30, 2001. Picketing took place in each county throughout the state. This action showed that we are able to band together and get our message out. Our message is clear. PANJ members need proper training, a suitable contract, support and recognition from the Judiciary. We need to remain solidified as a bargaining unit throughout the state. We have strength in our numbers and we have shown that we can send an effective message when we set out to do so.

Coverage of the informational picket spanned the state. Major newspapers and television stations carried our informational action. People have asked and are asking questions and our message is receiving attention. It affects us as officers, as well as citizens who are not familiar with our perils or how the Judiciary works.

Speaking before the United Mine Workers of America in 1902, Mother Jones stated, "My friends, it is solidarity of labor we want. We do not want to find fault with

each other, but to solidify our forces and say to each other, we must be together, our masters have joined together and we must do the same thing!"

This holds true today in our fight with the Judiciary for proper recognition.

## **A View from Gloucester County**

by Kristi Drummond, President Local 108

In 1776 our forefathers sat down and declared their independence from a tyrannical ruler. 225 years later probation officers are fighting a battle of our own against oppression. Our forefathers had George III. We have the AOC.

In Gloucester County it is simple to list the grievances:

*He has preached "customer service," yet has declared that our working hours are 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. only, totally eliminating the possibility of clients reporting to their officers prior to the beginning of their work day. I guess Camden County has a greater commitment to "customer service," since their probation officers work various shifts: 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

*He has required increased field visits, without self defense training, preaching instead, the NOVA mantra "run away."*

*He has instituted a dress code, without a clothing allowance or reimbursement for damaged clothing, even though we work in buildings frequented by PEOSHA and spend large quantities of time in the field where dogs roam, houses are collapsing and serious offenders lurk, preying on officers who can't "run away" in dresses and heels.*

*He has mandated more home visits in unsafe cars, missing rear view mirrors, lights and God knows what else.*

*He has changed evaluations without the contractual input of the PANJ.*

*He has required information on personal litigation, quoting a non existent part of the Code of Conduct.*

*He has proclaimed the judiciary motto is "fairness, integrity and service" and guaranteed them to all except probation officers.*

*He has allowed caseloads to climb to unmanageable levels, then declared performance based results will determine a probation officer's future.*

*He has failed to negotiate fairly, leaving hundreds of probation officers without a contract for 21 months.*

Our forefathers had to fight a five year bloody war. Our salvation will only come with independence from the AOC. For we are fighting a war on an unbalanced field, where Orwellian double speak is the order of the day.

The AOC fought for the State takeover of the courts, claiming it would reduce middle management at the vicinage level. But State takeover actually meant increasing the vicinage management to a size never thought possible as a county court system. The AOC said State takeover would result in a system where all court employees were treated equally. They saw a State where an officer in Gloucester County was the same as an officer in Passaic County. Once again, State takeover has done just the opposite, each vicinage has become its own little kingdom, where officers are treated like serfs to serve at the whim of the local assignment judge. In what other State organization would State policies be superseded by local vicinage policies? Would a parole officer assigned to the Vineland office have different rules and regulations than a parole officer assigned in Newark? Do DYFS rules change from county to county? Only in this Court system could this happen.

We are dealing with a system that seeks atrophy. They are attempting to establish a system where failure is the only option. Our forefathers fought a war to win independence. Our independence will only come when probation is removed from the judiciary and placed in the Executive Branch of government, alongside our sisters and brothers in parole. Until that time, PANJ must ensure that all officers are treated with respect and dignity. PANJ must work diligently to ensure that officers in every part of the state are treated equally with the same rights, privileges and responsibilities. The concept of “separate, but equal” is incompatible. PANJ can only be as strong as its members. We must remember that if one probation officer suffers, all probation officers suffer. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, “We must all hang together, or surely we will all hang separately. Of course, this is just the view from tiny Gloucester County, God only knows what mayhem is being inflicted on the other 20 counties.

## **PANJ Raising Key Issues in Trenton**

by Rob Nixon, Princeton Public Affairs Group

The Probation Association of New Jersey has developed into a unified and informative voice for probation officers and public safety in Trenton.

Earlier this year the Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Bill Gormley invited PANJ President George Christie to review and make recommendations to improving the probation system in New Jersey. PANJ was one of only nine organizations, including the Department of Corrections and the Administrative Office of the Courts, invited to give testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee in this matter. Expressing concern about the direction of probation in New Jersey, Mr. Christie testified that probation officers need to be better trained and provided with more equipment to deal with the growing number of dangerous criminals on probation. In addition to hiring more officers PANJ called for giving officers authority to arrest criminals who violate probation. PANJ also

called for support from the committee to permit probation officers to be more aggressive in tracking and arresting the over 25,000 individuals who have absconded from probation.

In addition, PANJ continues to be successful in the consideration of Assembly Bill 1448 (Blee/LeFevre) and Senate Bill 950 (Singer). Assembly Bill 1448 was recently released by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. The bills await the consideration of the Assembly and Senate Budget and Appropriations Committees. PANJ has held several meetings in the past few months with Senate and Assembly members to raise awareness of the legislation. These meetings have generated bipartisan support in the measure. The increased press attention gained by PANJ recently on probation officer concerns continues to raise key questions in the Legislature about the safety of officers and the public. Finally, for the fourth consecutive year PANJ has actively pursued financial support for probation officer training and caseload reduction. The proposed Judiciary Budget calls for another increase in probation officers (150 new probation officers) as well as for drug programs and probation/police initiatives.

## **PANJ PROFILES**

by Peter Savage, Parliamentarian

**NAME:** George P. Christie

**TITLE:** President of PANJ

**INVOLVED:** Since 1987

**SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** One of his most important accomplishments was to revive the PANJ Annual Training Conference. When PANJ became a labor organization in 1987 the conference ceased, as it lost the support of the administration. However, through George's persistence the AOC saw the benefit of joining with PANJ in a worthwhile training event. The first conference under the new PANJ was chaired by George in 1991 and was a complete success. Every year since it has grown having its highest attendance in 2000 of over 600 people. George also had a provision included in the contract that allows people the time off to attend, thereby solidifying the partnership with the AOC in terms of training.

George has also led PANJ through the turbulent years of the state takeover to fend off the big unions and helped create a strong independent union of case related professionals and professional supervisors. PANJ negotiated the first statewide contract under the judiciary, which led the way for all the other unions to follow.

**GOALS:** George would like to see that all the case related professionals (especially the probation officers) and their supervisors are ultimately treated with dignity and respect. Hopefully, that respect will be reflected in their salaries and in their working conditions.

One day our officers and other case related professionals will not only be proud of their role but will have that role equally respected by the rest of society.

**HOBBIES:** George is a sports fan beginning with Seton Hall University basketball, the METS in baseball, and the JETS in football.

**PERSONAL:** George is the husband of Colleen Christie, a supervisor in Monmouth Probation, and the father of two children, Sean 13, and Samantha, 9, He also has three children from a former marriage, George who runs a winery in California, Cathy who is an attorney in New Jersey, and Greg who works with a computer company building web sites.

George served in the Marines during the 60's and joined the New Jersey State Police in 1965. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree at Stockton State College taking advantage of federal grants to law enforcement officers. As a trooper he received seven letters of commendation and was honored for bravery as a result of an incident where two troopers were shot and one of the perpetrators was killed. After leaving the State Police he became a probation officer. In 1979 he was hired in Monmouth County where he is still officially assigned.

Once dubbed a "zealot" by a federal judge in Newark, George has a commanding presence and has the ability to bring together both the radical and conservative factions of PANJ. He has put Monmouth on the map and given them a great deal of clout in PANJ. He is an able speaker with a good sense of humor, and has been a steady, unselfish leader who never compromises the union's principles.

### **A Word of Thanks to PANJ and to George Christie**

by Tricia LeFebvre, CADAC

I want to thank you for your time and effort in resolving the salary/retro money issue for TASC in Bergen County. My salary is now correct as per the contract and I have received my retro monies. I know TASC is a very small sector of PANJ so I am grateful that you helped our voice be heard.

### **Hennessey Appointed to APPA Post**

by George P. Christie, President

Second Vice President, Stephanie Hennessey, was recently appointed Program Chairperson of the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual APPA Training Institute to be held in Cleveland, Ohio in the summer of 2003. The dates for this Institute are yet to be determined.

The appointment came from APPA President-elect, Kathy Waters, of Arizona. Stephanie will oversee the dozens of workshops to be scheduled over the course of the Institute and will play a major role in the appointment of individuals who will speak at the Sessions during the Institute.

PANJ wishes Stephanie the best of luck!

## **PANJ SCHOLARSHIP GOLF OUTING**

by Jo Ann Schlindwein, Burlington County

The Dwight Watson and Ethan Janowitz Scholarship Golf Outing will be held at the Miry Run Country Club, 106 Sharon Road, Robbinsville, New Jersey on June 7, 2001. Tee off times will commence at 11:00 a.m. The cost of the outing will be \$85 per person which includes golf, cart, food and great prizes. All proceeds will go to the scholarship fund to assist two college-bound children of PANJ members. The goal this year is to again award two \$1,000 scholarships at the PANJ Training Institute. This year two sets of Tommy Armor Irons will be raffled off!!!

We are requesting that each PANJ Local sponsor a hole at the cost of \$100 respectfully. Other sponsorships are also welcome. Friends and family are encouraged to attend. Lunch, dinner, and beverages will be served, so make plans to stay and enjoy the festivities. A good time was had by all last year and the committee plans to improve upon that this year. Thank you for supporting the Annual Scholarship Outing.

Please make arrangements to have all payments in by the May Executive board meeting. More information will follow.

Please call Jo Ann Schlindwein at 609-518-2656 or Dwight Covalesskie at 609-518-2907 with any questions.

### **Incident Report Filing**

by George P. Christie, President

There has been a reduction in PANJ Incident Reports being sent in from the officers who are going into the field.

These reports are not only logged into our database, but are shared with our members on the Staff Safety Committee as well as with management.

The AOC reported that no Probation Officer was injured in the year 2000. I believe that there have been several incidents which may not have been reported.

Therefore, I urge all of you to take the time to report any incident to your local president so that it can be sent to the PANJ office.

Incident Reports can be obtained online at PANJ.org.

### **Enhancing the Retirement Security of New Jersey's Public Employees**

by George P. Christie, President

Many of you have probably heard some rumors about a proposal made by the NJEA and joined by the CWA to help improve the pension payments for people in the PERS and TPFA.

PANJ has also joined in the plan since all of our members are in PERS. PANJ believes that we should do whatever we can to get more money in the hands of our employees when they retire and also in the hands of all of our employees who are currently retired.

The present system is calculated on a formula of N/60 which is simply years of service over 60 which gives you the percent times the final average salary. For example, a person with 30 years of service would receive 50% of their final average salary. The state also uses the formula, which is 1.67% of the final average salary times the years of service.

The new proposal, which PANJ supports, would be calculated on a formula of N/55, which would raise the percentage of the final average. For example, a person with 30 years of service would receive 54.5% of their final average salary. It would raise the calculation from 1.67% of the final average times the years of service to 1.82% of the final average times the years of service.

The national average for pension benefits is 1.89% of the final average salary times the number of years of service. While the new proposal is not at the national average it is certainly a step in the right direction.

The end benefit of the new proposal would be an increase in excess of 9% for all of our employees and retirees.

We will let you all know of all new developments in this area and what if anything you should be doing to help.

### **McGrath Announces Retirement**

by Peter A. Tortoreto

On April 11, 2001 before his entire staff Vicinage Chief Probation Officer announced his retirement plans effective June 30, 2001. McGrath who has been a Probation Officer since 1968 leaves Camden County scrambling for a new administrator in the Probation Division. During his career McGrath has been involved in many leadership roles. He has served as PANJ First Vice President for many of his 16 years spent on the Executive Board. Prior to this he was involved with his local union negotiating with the county prior to state unification. He has served in organizing roles in the PANJ Annual Training conferences as well as the Child Support Conferences. As a Vicinage Chief Probation Officer he has also served as the President of the Chief's Association. He was involved as a member of the negotiation committee for the AOC and was instrumental in assisting us to settle the first statewide contract. Gene will be greatly missed and his legacy will continue long after he retires. Good luck my friend.

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Everyone at the Probation Division of Union County is saddened by the death of our friend and coworker, Senior Probation Officer, Maryellen Leonard Stochel on March 10, 2001.

She worked in the Adult Supervision Unit for 20 years. Before that she worked in Pre-Trial Intervention for four years. Maryellen always actively participated in our local union activities.

She was a friend to all and was always willing to help anyone in whatever way she could. We miss her and her ready smile which brought us warmth and kindness.

She is survived by her husband Joseph, her son Raymond, and her mother. The family has indicated they would welcome memorial contributions to the American Cancer Society in her name.

Else Garcia, PPO

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Revised: .