

INSIGHT



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PANJ'S ANNUAL AWARDS

By Dotty Robinson, Recording Secretary

Every year at the PANJ Conference several awards are given out by President George Christie. The awards are; Probation Officer of the year, Supervisor of the Year, the John Augustus Award, and the William H. Thomas Citizen of the Year. Both the Probation Officer of the Year and the Supervisor of the Year are nominated by our members, and the nominees are exemplary examples of what these positions should be. The Awards Chair has the responsibility to select one recipient for each award out of all the qualified nominations. The John Augustus Award recipient is nominated by past John Augustus recipients. The William H. Thomas award is named for PANJ's friend Bill Thomas, who is a supporter of our Union. Bill is the founder of the Friends of Amanda Foundation which is an organization dedicated to protecting children. The Legislator of the Year award is given to a member of the Legislature that shows not only support for our causes, but for their humanitarian efforts.

This year those honors went to Elizabeth Ramos as Probation Officer of the Year, and Barbara Vignola as the Supervisor of the Year. Elizabeth Ramos is a Senior Probation Officer in the Cumberland Vicinage. She has worked for Probation since 1998 and is assigned to Juvenile Intake, and also supervises a sex offender caseload for juveniles. Elizabeth's compassion, work ethic, and professionalism have made her a truly valued asset to the Cumberland Vicinage and to her fellow co-workers.

Barbara Vignola is currently a Supervisor in the Family Division in Gloucester Vicinage. She works in Family Intake, and wears many hats during her work day. She is always willing to lend a hand to her co-workers. Barbara is greatly respected by everyone she comes in contact with, from the public to judges, to outside agencies that she works with, like Social Services, and DYFS.

This year's John Augustus recipient is a Supervisor from Camden County, Glen Moton. Glen came to Probation after serving in the Armed Forces and after his service as a Police Officer. With his rich and varied background he has brought a wealth of knowledge to his position. As the John Augustus recipient Glen has earned the respect and admiration from his fellow Union members. He not only works in the capacity of a Supervisor, but is also instrumental on several PANJ Committees. Glen addresses every situation with a clear head, and a calm steadiness that is respected by us all.

The William H. Thomas Citizen of the year for 2011 is Bryan Adams. Bryan is a graduate of Palmyra High School and joined the Army after graduating in 2001. He moved quickly through training, and excelled in heavy mechanized personnel carriers and sniper school. In 2004 Bryan was wounded in an ambush in Tikrit and was given a Purple Heart. Since leaving the military he has continued his education at Rutgers University in Camden, and created a Veterans student organization called Veterans for Education. His organization is responsible for transitioning veterans from combat to college. Bryan's organization has also established the first and only military and veteran's scholarship at Rutgers and had raised over \$40,000.00 for veteran's education. Bryan is a spokesman for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and for Active Minds, and speaks all over the Country. Bryan is truly all that embodies our Citizen of the Year.

The 2011 Legislator of the Year is Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin, a Democrat from the 34th District. Assemblyman Giblin served as Democratic Chairman from 1997 through 2011. His career began on 1977 when he was elected as and Essex County Freeholder. Assemblyman Giblin is the Business Manager for Local 68 of the International Union of Operating Engineers, AFL-CIO. He has been involved with many charitable organizations over the years including Director of Cerebral palsy of North Jersey for 22 years.

These recipients are among many throughout our State and Union who work hard for someone else's benefit every day. They make our world a better place and it is our pleasure to honor them.

DANJ'S
Annual
Awards



OFFICIALS

George P. Christie
President

Dwight Covaleskie
First V.P., Line Staff

Bradley J. Fairchild
First V.P., Supervisor's Unit

Stephanie Hennessey
Second Vice President

Daniel M. Bergin
Northern Regional V.P.

Kevin Farley
Central Regional V.P.

Patrick Barrea
Southern Regional V.P.

Carmelo Velazquez
Northern Regional V.P., Supervisor's Unit

Gavin Cummings
Central Regional V.P., Supervisor's Unit

Glen Moton
Southern Regional V.P., Supervisor's Unit

Dorothy Robinson
Recording Secretary

Susan Ornsby-Cuozzo
Financial Secretary

Jacqueline Guarini-Sheehan
Treasurer

Linval Lewis
Parliamentarian

Ellen Cribbin
Sergeant-at-Arms / Business Manager

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Region 1

Anne Dutton, Morris
Bridgett Patillo, Essex
Anthony Persico, Morris

Region 2

Edda Burry, AOC
Michael LaCosta, HUnterdon
Susan Smith, Middlesex

Region 3

A. Francis Nunan, Cape May
Roberta Scull, Atlantic
Susan Lively, Cumberland

A Message From The President

Brothers and Sisters,

I want to take a moment and wish you a very Happy and Safe Holiday season. While I know that we're all very busy during this time, with both family and work events, it is the perfect time to take a minute to thank your Local Union Representative for all the hard work they put in for us. I know that without them our organization wouldn't be as effective as it is. So here's my thanks to them; Thank you for your dedication to PANJ, all of your hard work and effort this past year has not gone unnoticed, each day that you stand up and speak the voices of your members makes their work environment the best place it can be, you are truly a valued asset to the Probation Association of New Jersey.



In Solidarity,

George Christie

President

A Message From The Editor

Brothers and Sisters,

Let me start by saying Happy Holidays! I can't believe it's already December, with the New Year right around the corner. This past year has brought us many successes; our new building is almost complete, the PANJ-EF conference went off without a hitch, we passed a fiscally responsible budget, won several cases at arbitration, and opened a PANJ Facebook fan page. As your Executive Board and Local Presidents keep standing up and speaking out for what right, 2012 will be just as successful. I wish you a safe and happy holiday season, and a very happy New Year.

In Solidarity,

Ellen Cribbin

Editor

Conference News

By Dotty Robinson, Recording Secretary

I am extremely happy, joyous, pleased, well you get the point, to write about our 69th Probation Association's Training Conference. It took place as usual in Atlantic City, more specifically Bally's Casino from November 20th through the 22nd.

This year's conference kicked off on Sunday night with the faithful conference committee behind the registration desk. Once again everything ran as smoothly as possible thanks to a very organized committee. One change this year included a food drive, and the proceeds were donated to the Atlantic County Food Bank. Together we donated 2 large boxes of non-perishable food items. Upon donating a food item members were given a raffle ticket to win a gift basket donated by myself and Stephanie Hennessey. The winner was picked at the closing of the conference.

To give credit where credit is due, the classes that we all take are coordinated by Deneen Hohman. Each year Deneen offers us new and exciting sessions. Thea Fitzpatrick coordinates the moderators for each class, and works at the registration desk. Sue Cuozzo heads the committee and each year the conference gets better and better. Other members of the committee that do everything from fill conference bags, to registering everyone, and setting up for the lunch, include Anne Dutton, Georgette Warren, Connie Dolan, John Smack, Linval Lewis and Tracie Woodall.

I want to thank all of our members who come to the events and fill the classes because without you there would be no conference. There were plenty of new faces this time around, and I hope you spread the word about what a great time you had. Our goal each year is to grow and with the AOC's support to get stronger. I hope everyone had a safe and Happy Thanksgiving and also a blessed upcoming holiday.



Supervisor Update - - "No Absence of Malice"

By Brad Fairchild, First Vice President, Supervisors Unit

As we enter 2012 PANJ must report that labor relations with the Judiciary have reached a new low level. At a time when morale has plummeted due to relentless attacks on state workers by a coalition of pandering politicians and press pundits, the Judiciary has piled on with assaults on the very basic foundations of personal management.



On many occasions PANJ has documented how the Judiciary has increasingly abused Article 9.8 of the Professional Supervisors contract by removing Unclassified Supervisors for no reason in order to evade addressing issues through the standard discipline procedure. By circumventing discipline the Judiciary avoids having their actions reviewed by third parties and witnesses cross examined by PANJ representatives.

What has now become the new low is management threatening union witnesses while conducting disciplinary investigations. In recent months PANJ has been advised by witnesses in several cases that they have been threatened with discipline if they agreed to testify in support of Supervisors accused of violations. Such extreme misconduct is contrary to enlightened labor relations but the lack of any effective policing of such behavior by the AOC has left the situation deteriorating with each passing day.

What is truly sad is that our present disjointed system of personal management is not what we were promised when the state took over the previously county run Judiciary in January 1995. The AOC told us that we would have a true state system where the rules would be applied uniformly in every division of every county. Instead what has been allowed to flourish is an environment where some vicinages operate with total autonomy and when abuses occur, the AOC looks the other way or claim that local prerogative must take precedence.

The Judiciary's alleged "unification" is now almost a generation old but so many of the old attitudes about "home rule" still prevail. In terms of objectivity and neutrality in matters of labor relations, the 2800 members of PANJ are STILL waiting for the state to take over. While we can sometimes be patient, we are now VERY, VERY frustrated.

The View From Health and Safety

By Brad Fairchild, First Vice President, Professional Supervisors

An ongoing issue of contention between PANJ and the Judiciary is safety in the conduct of community supervision. Completing field work safely in some of the most dangerous communities in the nation requires not only up to date Probation polices, but ensuring the application of those policies are consistent in every county.

It has been nearly six years since the AOC issued Directive #14-06 which included instructions to counties for developing police/probation communication polices.

Since that Directive some counties have established effective communication policies that include police advising probation which specific neighborhoods have recently experienced gun/gang related violence and planned police activity that probation should avoid. There are other counties, however, that continue to avoid providing such essential safety policies and with reductions in many municipal police departments some existing procedures have significantly deteriorated or have already collapsed.

One of the primary defects of the State Judiciary since the inception of "unification" in 1995 is the independence granted to local vicinages. For those of us who believe that a state system means that the central office shall direct local jurisdictions to follow uniform policy, we have been greatly disappointed. It appears that 21 autonomous counties have been replaced by 15 autonomous vicinages. Call me crazy but this is NOT progress!

Empty excuses by the Judiciary will no longer suffice when the safety of our members has been compromised. The fact that police/probation communication is minimal or ineffective in areas such as Newark, Jersey City, Hoboken, Bayonne, Asbury Park, Neptune, and Bridgeton is unacceptable. The fact that a generation after "unification" we are so "un-unified" should be embarrassing and the lack of a commitment to correct such grievous errors is truly distressing.

As PANJ re-energizes its efforts to push the passage of a Probation transfer to parole, safety is the main issue between the defenders of the status quo and those who know we must improve Probation field safety or we risk a serious injury or even a fatality. PANJ will keep its members updated on our progress in this fight and we encourage everyone to contact their legislators and advocate for the critical transfer bill.

Legislative Term Coming to an End

By Capital Impact Group

As 2011 comes to a close, we are reaching the halfway point of the Legislature's lame duck session. The current lame duck session proves to be full of contentious issues, several of which are of particular interest to us.

The first topics that need to be touched on, however, are the recent redistricting and subsequent elections. These events were something to be very aware of in November, if only because redistricting may have forced some legislators to primary their own party if they chose to run for re-election or they may have been districted into a region where it was unfeasible for them to win re-election. Fortunately, the elections brought only minimal changes. Both the Assembly and the Senate remain Democratic with one additional Democratic Assembly seat. Leadership in both houses remained basically the same, with the most glaring difference being the removal of Assembly Majority Leader Cryan and Senate Majority Leader Buono (most likely due to disagreement with the Senate President and Speaker on the pension reform legislative package) and their replacement by Assemblyman Lou Greenwald and Senator Weinberg, respectively.

One major lame duck issue of interest to PANJ is the proposal for drastic civil service reform, which includes the Governor's call for the elimination of sick-time buyout and the institution of highly controversial disability benefit reform. The elimination of sick-time buyout would effectively get rid of employee compensation for unused sick-time. Additionally, the disability reform bill, S3123, would replace the accidental disability benefits afforded to several retirement systems with a new work-related disability benefit that is the same as the previous 1.5% of compensation for each year of service but no less than 40% of compensation. As one can imagine, this topic will be one that will be opposed strongly on many fronts and will be something to keep track of in the coming months.

Also of interest is the Governor's new initiative to reduce recidivism rates. The Governor's plan calls for several things: an expansion of the Drug Court program, the introduction of a "Task Force for Recidivism Reduction" which will be co-chaired by the new Coordinator for Prisoner Reentry, an ongoing reentry program assessment and measurement to evaluate effectiveness of said programs, and a real-time recidivism database using the data from the previously mentioned assessments. The task force, created by Executive Order 83, is led by both the Chairman of the State Parole Board, James Plousis, and the Governor's Coordinator for Prisoner Re-entry, Lisa Puglisi. Its members include representatives from the Department of Corrections, the State Parole Board, the Motor Vehicle Commission, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health and Senior Services, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Department of Law & Public Safety, the Juvenile Justice Commission, and the Department of Community Affairs. The Governor's Office has invited PANJ to meet with them to share our ideas and experiences on this important issue. This issue greatly concerns the states' probation officers and supervisors. We will keep an eye on it as it continues to unfold.

As the new legislative year is set to unfold mid-January, PANJ will continue to be engaged in all topics that impact their membership, along with the guidance from Capital Impact Group.

Finance Committee Prepares 2012 Budget

By Stephanie Hennessey, Second Vice President

The PANJ Finance Committee met in October, 2011 to craft a budget for 2012. This budget will serve as the financial directive for the union for the year. Difficult decisions were made to bring about a balanced budget. The Committee wanted to ensure that services could be delivered effectively yet within the projected revenue available. However, cuts were made to every Committee proposal to obtain the Budget that was brought to the Executive Board. The budget was presented and passed unanimously. Again, this year's budget included no dues increase.

The Committee works throughout the year on many things one of them being a review of all budgetary and financial issues. 2012 will be challenging with unknown legal expenses and the anticipation of relocating to a brand new Business Office. But the Finance Committee will be vigilant to the needs of the members as well as the efficient day-to-day operations of the Union.

Finance/Membership Notes

By Stephanie Hennessey, Second Vice President

We all have milestones in our lives, good AND bad, - - births, graduations, marriages, divorces, deaths. But when it comes to the Union, you can help us to be more effective by keeping us abreast of those changes.

If you change your marital status, change your name or relocate, please contact the PANJ Business Office by email at panj1@optimum.com with any changes that apply.

Also, if you are promoted from the Line to the Supervisory Unit or transferring in from another County, you will need to complete a new "Dues Card". Such changes place you in a Non-Member status with the Union until you complete a new Dues Card. You can obtain a card from the PANJ Representative in your Unit or from the PANJ Business Office. Complete the card and return it to your Local PANJ Representative. They will have Human Resources complete the card and then will forward it to the PANJ Business Office.

This may sound like a long process, but what matters is that your time as a Non-Member with the Union be a brief one. If you have questions, please contact the PANJ Business Office.

Legal Matters of Importance to PCR Members

By Dwight Covaleskie, First Vice President, PANJ

This year has been very busy year legally, protecting our members' rights and filing suit to enforce our hard earned pensions, benefits and healthcare, at both the state and federal levels. PANJ has been faced with more potentially damaging assaults at all levels, than ever before in its history.

PANJ currently has pending the state and federal lawsuits, regarding the Legislation that was passed earlier this year, which will drastically affect our pensions and benefits. This will eventually result in a non-negotiated reduction in salary to all state employees. Both of these matters are currently in the discovery period, and more information will follow immediately, concerning the scheduled court dates in these matters.

Oral arguments were held in the Master Probation Officer vacancies on Wednesday, December 7, 2011, which is currently pending in the Appellate Division of Superior Court. A statewide grievance was filed in this matter at Step 3 and was denied by the Judiciary at that level. This was a result of the Judiciary not filling vacant positions. PANJ requested arbitration in this matter, and the Judiciary filed a SCOPE Petition with the Public Employee Relations Commission. PERC stated that it was non-negotiable. However, PANJ and General Counsel, David Fox felt there is a very complex history accompanying this matter, which resulted in the settlement of a Federal Law Suit, Judicial unification legislation in 1994 and had approval of state agencies which, PANJ believes, makes this negotiable. A decision will be rendered in the near future.

In defending our contract and members rights, Arbitrations have become very important to PANJ. Currently pending before arbitrators are matters regarding violations of our contract which include, weapons screening at satellite offices with no security, the discipline procedure contained within the contract, schedule change matters, employee job duties, and the dress code. PANJ has had awards regarding pager duty, out of title pay and comp time issues. Over the course of this current year PANJ has been successful in settling matters for affected employees. In an arbitration matter out of the Camden Vicinage, two employees received, monetary settlements, from the initial date that they were working out of title and there was language contained within the agreement which protects our members' and union rights in the future. We also settled a FOCUS Group matter out of Hudson which protects union and members rights. In the Middlesex Vicinage, a matter was settled favorably for PANJ, resulting in the affected employees' being paid for all time spent on pager duty on the weekends, including their commute. There are also numerous other matters that are awaiting assignment of an arbitrator.

Please contact myself, at 732-223-1799 or you're Regional Vice Presidents, if you have any further questions, regarding these or other matters. Your Regional Vice Presidents are: Patrick Barrea, Southern Regional Vice President, (Camden); Kevin Farley, Central Regional Vice President, (Mercer); Dan Bergin, Northern Regional Vice President (Passaic).

PANJ Local 108 1st Annual Holiday Luncheon

By Chastity Robinson, PANJ Local 108 Secretary

“Tis the season to be jolly.....Fa La La La!”

Each year PANJ Local 108 (Gloucester County) collaborated with PANJ Local 109 (Camden County) to host a holiday celebration outside the office at a local restaurant in New Jersey at minimal cost to Probation Officers. Over the years there have been good turnouts and we have had a pleasure spreading holiday cheer with them. We have become one big happy family and enjoyed each other's company dancing the night away. Together we collected gifts for Toys for Tots, made a Very Merry Christmas for a child under the custody of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) through their Adopt-a-Child program and collected items for our local Domestic Violence Shelters. Some lucky Probation Officers went home with a gift card or basket that they won from our raffle. We had noticed the attendance of our PANJ Local 108 Probation Officers slowly dwindling and we wanted to bring the spirit of the holidays back into the office. So, this year the local executive board for PANJ Local 108 (Gloucester County) has decided to host its 1st Annual Holiday luncheon at no cost to our Probation Officers. Having a luncheon at the office gives all Probation Officers an opportunity to be merry with us without having to go out in the cold.

Happy Holidays!!!

At the close of another year, we gratefully
pause to wish you and yours a warm and
happy Holiday Season and a peaceful and
prosperous New Year!



Yours in PANJ,

George P. Christie, President

Dwight Covaleskie, First Vice President

Bradley Fairchild, First Vice President