

INSIGHT



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MEMBERSHIP DO'S AND DONT'S

By Ellen Cribbin, First Vice President, Line Staff

Over the past 9 months I've learned so much about the legal side of PANJ. One of the biggest things I've learned, and have been trying to share with our brothers and sisters, is about how preventable most disciplines are.

As employees we are expected to be at work on time each and every day, if we aren't we may be disciplined. With the advent of the JLMS training system, the Judiciary tracks each training session that we are required to attend, including Judiciary policies. Once we sign off that we have received and understood the policy we are expected to follow that policy. As employees, if we don't follow policies such as reporting involvement in litigation, whether it's criminal or quasi criminal, we may be disciplined. If we access Judiciary-run systems such as CAPS or FACTS for our own personal use, and not for Judiciary business, we may be subject to discipline.

As colleagues and brothers and sisters we should be treating each other with courtesy and respect. If we threaten each other with harm, even out of frustration, we may be subject to discipline. If we fail to follow guidelines or timeframes for our cases we may be subject to disciplinary action. Most, if not all of us, as employees sign in and out during the day for when we arrive to work, when we take our lunch and when we leave for the day. If what we're writing down isn't an accurate accounting of our time we can face a discipline. Most employers consider this type of inaccuracy time theft, and in the recent past it has been dealt with by lengthy suspensions and even terminations.

While a member is involved in a discipline it affects not only their work product, but their health and well-being for themselves and for their families. If we follow judicial policies, use good judgment and make sound decisions most of us will be able to avoid the crushing blows that disciplinary actions have on all of us.

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A Message From The President

Brothers and Sisters,

I just wanted to take a moment to thank all of our members. The Probation Officers, Supervisors and other covered titles that fall under PANJ's representation. Without you, PANJ could not be the independent organization that provides the best representation to you.



Both the Line Staff and Supervisors are still in the process of securing a fair contract for all members. Sometimes doing the right thing is not always easy. However, PANJ and its leadership is committed to securing a fair contract that addresses economics, working conditions and other important issues that affect each member's welfare. We have your interests at stake and will continue to defend our members.

Please feel free to contact myself or your representatives with any questions or suggestions.

In Solidarity,

Dwight Covalleskie

Dwight Covalleskie
President

A Message From The Editor

Brothers and Sisters,

The Fall 2014 Edition of the Insight is here! This is my favorite time of the year; the colorful leaves, the crisp autumn air, the smell of freshly baked apple pie, and the Holiday Season! The fall also brings with it the PANJ-EF Annual Training Conference in Atlantic City. It is going to be a great one and I hope to see you all there!

The fall is the time of year to relax and reflect, to spend time with your friends and family and to prepare for a new year filled with endless possibilities. My hope is that every one of you gets the chance to appreciate and enjoy this beautiful, albeit busy, season and has the opportunity to get a fresh start in 2015! Wishing you and yours a happy and healthy Thanksgiving, a warm and wondrous Holiday Season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year!

In Solidarity,

Nick Briscuso

Nick Briscuso
Editor

PANJ-EF Conference

By Deneen Hohman, Conference Chair

The 72nd Annual Training Institute in Atlantic City, New Jersey will take place November 23-25, 2014 at Bally's Hotel & Casino. YES, IT'S STILL OPEN! The Conference is open to all Judiciary Personnel. This year's theme is "**Embracing Change, Beating the Odds & Achieving Positive Outcomes.**"

Full registration includes the Sunday Welcome Reception, two delicious breakfasts, Awards Luncheon, Exhibitor Reception and the Monday Night Social. Family Rates are also available for spouses/significant others. Sunday's Welcome Reception will feature a Quizzo/Trivia night competition with a yummy First Prize. Monday Night's Social Dance Party will feature a "Casino" theme along with the popular Monday Night Football Game. For further details and for hotel and workshop information go to our website, at www.panj.org, and click on the 2014 Conference tab.

PANJ-EF would also like to Give Back to the Community. Please bring a non-perishable food item and receive a ticket for a special prize. Keep in mind that it is Thanksgiving and we will be donating everything collected to a local Food Bank in Atlantic County. We are hoping to collect more than the 190 pounds we did last year. We will also have items for purchase such as portfolios, clothing, ID holders, tote bags and travel mugs at the "PANJ Store" near the registration desk.

We are still accepting nominees for the PANJ awards: PO of the Year, Supervisor of the Year and the John Augustus Award. For more information on these awards, please go to the website.

Don't forget to place an AD or acknowledgement in this year's Conference Program Booklet. Be sure to visit the PANJ website at www.panj.org for all your conference related information and forms.

We hope to see everyone soon in AC!!!!

Legislative Update, September 2014

By Gerry Gibbs and Jeanette Hoffman, Capital Impact Group

PANJ-backed Bill to Study Probation System Passes Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee

A2417, 2014: Directs the collection of recidivism data for adults sentenced to a period of probation.

Bi-partisan legislation to analyze the effectiveness of the state's probation system unanimously passed the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee on September 18th. The bill, A-2417, would require the Administrative Office of the Courts to establish a program to record and analyze recidivism rates for adults sentenced to a period of probation. The bill is modeled on a similar program established in 2009 to record and analyze recidivism rates for adult and juvenile inmates released from incarceration.

"This legislation is an important measure in analyzing the effectiveness of the community supervision system and, in turn, ensuring our officers have the tools and training they need to safely and effectively perform their jobs," said PANJ President Dwight Covaleskie, who testified in support of the bill.

Under the bill, the program would record data regarding the types of crimes that result in a sentence of probation, the arrests for all offenses committed by probationers within three years following their sentence of probation and any convictions resulting from the arrests, crimes committed while on probation, the number of repeat offenders and the number of probationers concurrently serving a parole sentence. This data would be analyzed to determine whether the rates and nature of re-arrests and convictions differ according to the criminal histories and personal characteristics of probationers, the treatment they received while on probation, participation and involvement in rehabilitation initiatives and programs, and such other factors as may be relevant, including, but not limited to, race, gender, ethnicity, and age, but without referencing personally identifying information.

"When done right, probation can be a useful tool in rehabilitating and preventing further crime," said Assembly Law and Public Safety Chairman Charles Mainor, a sponsor of the bill. *"This bill will help give us a better idea of how the program is working and whether it is meeting its intended purpose, which is to keep people out of trouble and out of jail."*

"Probation, in lieu of incarceration, is a second chance to get it right," said bill sponsor Assemblyman Raj Mukherji. *"Analyzing recidivism rates and related data will help determine what is or is not working so that we can ensure we are effectively helping ex-offenders reenter and ensure public safety is not compromised."*

"Breaking the cycle of those on probation from committing another offense and reentering the correctional system has to be a priority in New Jersey," said Assemblyman Jay Webber, a Republican sponsor of the bill. *"We should measure the effectiveness of the state's training and reentry programs to understand what we do well, and what we need to do better."* The bill now heads to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for consideration.

"Duty, Honor and PANJ Service"

By Stuart Martinsen, Financial Secretary

After 29 years, I will be retiring from the Ocean County Probation Department on January 1st, 2015. At this time, I'd like to thank PANJ and our current leadership, led by President Dwight Covaleskie, for their continued efforts in fighting for and protecting our rights as judiciary employees. Equally as important, I'd also like to recognize the efforts of former PANJ President, Mr. George P. Christie, who has assisted in the evolution and organization of PANJ as we know it today.

My involvement in PANJ began in 1994 when, unfortunately, I was the subject of a disciplinary hearing. PANJ, at the time, was not as organized in protecting our members against disciplinary actions. The hearing resulted in a one day suspension, which likely should have been nothing more than a verbal reprimand. It's my belief that the positions and philosophies that the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has taken against PANJ have been unreasonable and one-sided for decades. PANJ has been outnumbered and outsourced by the Judiciary and yet our continued preservation on a number of fronts has allowed PANJ to win numerous battles over the years.

The Judiciary, in my view, is allowed to exploit our financial, safety and employment rights for its own advantage and disorganized goals. Proof of this is found in the Judiciary's recent decision to deny our 2014 annual raises while in contract negotiations. Also, the passage of NJ Public Law 2001, wherein Probation Officers were allowed to be armed, was refuted by one time Chief Justice Poritz, who then hypocritically filed a lawsuit against the legislature for the passage of this law. It was later determined that the law was invalid and unconstitutional, not surprisingly.

Our rights have been further negated in the form of the Judiciary's double-standard "Code of Conduct", which seems to be applied on a discriminatory basis through control and intimidation. For example, a Superior Court Judge with a personalized judicial license plate is acceptable to the Judiciary, yet a Judiciary employee displaying their identification lawfully during a motor vehicle stop is subject to discipline as an "act of impropriety".

It never ceases to amaze how the Judicial branch of government, in comparison to the Legislative and Executive branches, seems the most anti-union animus of state employers and the most vindictive when it comes to its employees' rights. Yet, little can be done to deter this by the legislature due to the fact that the Judiciary is insulated from the proper governmental oversight concerning their labor practices. In my opinion, they are a self-governing body that is just as "political" in a sense that they can be.

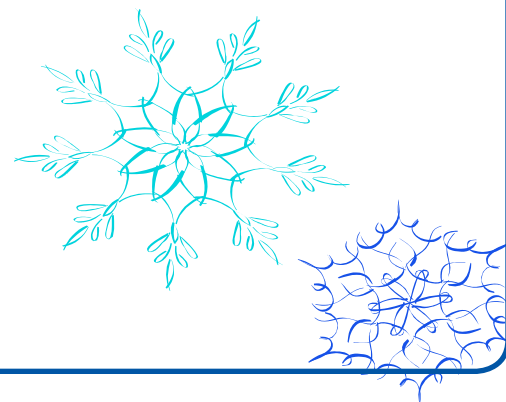
Despite the shortcomings and uphill battle, PANJ has had a positive history to reflect back on. PANJ has introduced and had passed several public laws on behalf of our members, and has testified over the years on behalf of our legislative and law enforcement related concerns. We have been a beacon in this area, as compared to our fellow State Judicial Unions. PANJ has also effectively led the way for employee representation over disciplinary matters and labor grievances. Recently, PANJ convinced the Judiciary to embrace modern criminal surveillance technology in the form of the N.J.S.P –ROIC daily reports and Critical Alerts. This has led to the safeguarding of our members safety needs, both in the field and in the office. Also, PANJ continues to address caseload sizes and monitor safety issues.

The above legacy of PANJ is one that I have enjoyed and benefited from as both a Probation Officer and Union Representative. I'd like to thank all of the present and past Local PANJ Presidents, State Regional Representatives, Executive Board members, committee members and all of my work colleagues and each and every individual PANJ member who has supported this great labor organization.

In closing, I have seen my role in PANJ as one of duty and honor, in accordance with my own beliefs, for the present and future benefit of our members. If granted, I'd like to remain involved with PANJ as a retired member and I hope to continue to give back to and support all of you. I sincerely look forward to supporting PANJ for many years to come.



**PANJ would like to wish
all of our members,
families and friends
a Bountiful Thanksgiving,
a Joyous Holiday
Season and
a Happy New Year!!!**



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