

INSIGHT



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A CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD

By: Chrissy Buteas, Capital Impact Group

With the New Year upon us, the Legislature is starting its second half of their two-year session. This year is shaping out to be quite contentious with several hot button issues on the horizon, as well as legislative redistricting and state-wide elections.

Between now and March, aside from typical legislative business, members appointed by both the Democratic and Republican parties will be meeting to redistrict the legislative map of New Jersey, which is done once every decade. As can be imaged, redistricting is a hot political issue where some existing legislators will be forced to primary their own party if they choose to run for re-election in November or they may be districted into a region where it is unfeasible for them to win re-election. As the entire Legislature is up for re-election in November, the legislative map is something they will closely pay attention to for the next few months.

Chief among the topics to be discussed this year is pension reform legislation. Just this past week Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D-3) and Assembly Speaker Oliver (D-34) proposed overhauling the pension system, modeling it after private sector funds. With a pension system that is underfunded by \$53.9 billion, Democratic leaders in both houses feel this new proposal will take the decision making power out of the hands of the elected officials and into the hands of public employees.

Governor Christie delivered his State of the State address this week, where he announced that pension reform is one of his three highest priorities for the year. In order to save the pension system and ensure that money is in the fund when employees retire, he wants to raise the retirement age, adjust COLA allocations, require employees to contribute more into the pension system, and make a state contribution into the system as well. As both sides have put forth plans to reform the pension system, this item will certainly be a prevalent topic of discussion during the upcoming months.

As the year unfolds, PANJ will continue to be engaged in all topics that impact their membership, along with the guidance from Capital Impact Group.

A Message From The President



I want to take this opportunity to greet all of our members as we begin a new year. I am hoping that 2011 is a good year for all of us because you all deserve it. We survived 2010 with very little negativity as our contracts were honored. We are part of a great profession and we should consider ourselves blessed to have the ability to make a difference in the lives of others while providing a great service to society.

Last year we were faced with a new Governor who wanted to fix all the problems in New Jersey and what really became evident was that the public workers seemed to be getting the brunt of all the bad publicity. We made it through the year because we were one of the groups who made sacrifices through our contract which saved the state money and kept our newer officers working. Your selfless acts were something I was very proud of and it made me proud to be a leader in PANJ.

Our friends in the police and fire services were not quite as lucky as PANJ. These public safety groups saw thousands of layoffs and other cut backs. Together with our lobbyist we met with key leaders in Trenton, like Senate President Sweeney, and Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Cryan. We were successful in convincing these leaders that collective bargaining works as indicated by your concessions in this process. We were successful in not having a hard two percent cap put on us without exemptions. The hard two percent cap would have given us no future raises because it would have included the money the state puts in for your pension and you're medical. In fact we would have been looking at pay cuts each year.

This past year we also lost several of our members who loved probation and loved being part of PANJ. We also lost our good friend Bill Thomas from the Friends of Amanda Foundation who was a great supporter and believed that the hard work performed by the Probation Officers and their supervisors was important and had meaning. He believed that there are many times that you have a positive effect on someone sometimes without even knowing it but we are all better off because of it.

I am proud of the work performed by our legal committees led by Dwight Covaleskie for the line officers and Brad Fairchild for the supervisors. These men are dedicated to all of you and work tirelessly to protect your rights.

We should keep a positive attitude in 2011 with the hope that the state will continue honoring our contracts. However we will continue to keep a close watch in Trenton to be sure that the Bills that are being proposed will not hurt our members. Our Legislative Chair, Stuart Martinsen, as most of you know works very hard to keep you all informed of Trenton activities.

The Finance Committee led by Stephanie Hennessey will continue to keep a close watch on our finances and to make sure that our investments are sound. In my 17 years as the President of PANJ and with the help of the Finance Committee we have never had a year where we lost money or over spent.

Finally I must praise our Business Manager, Ellen Cribbin, who serves as the President of Monmouth Line staff, takes care of the PANJ business and supervises a juvenile caseload at the same time. She along with several other younger members are without a doubt going to be the leaders of PANJ for many years to come. We should all be happy that these intelligent hard working individuals are willing to serve.

In closing I must say I hope God blesses all of you and also the families of the members and close friends who left us too early in their lives.

George Christie

OFFICIALS

George P. Christie
President

Dwight Covaleskie
First V.P., Line Staff

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

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Second Vice President

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Central Regional V.P.

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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 Editor

Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to the new 'green' version of the Insight! As the New Year is upon us we thought it would be a great time to make some earth friendly changes. For each quarterly edition, your Local Representatives will be notified when the new edition of the Insight is out and they in turn will notify you that it is on our website. In this quarter's edition we have some new authors letting you know about events that have taken place in their vicinages. As always everyone is welcome to submit articles, you can send them to the PANJ office at our new email address; panj1@optimum.net. I want to wish you a happy and healthy New Year!

In Solidarity,

Ellen Cribbin

Business Manager
Editor

A Fan of All Things Irish

By A. Francis Nunan, Regional Representative, Cape May

Senior Probation Officer Karen McGarr assigned to Drug Court in the Atlantic Vicinage passed away at the age of 37 on December 31st, 2010. An avid fan of the annual Irish festival in North Wildwood, she leaves behind a husband, a Team Leader in the same vicinage, John McGarr III. SPO McGarr and her husband took a trip to Ireland in 2005, a trip that John will never forget. Karen and John were married on St. Patrick's Day in 2006. When SPO McGarr passed she was close to getting a dual citizenship, Irish and American. She leaves behind two children John McGarr IV, 3 and Kylie McGarr, 1.

Two Locals within PANJ have contributed to a trust that was established for the McGarr children. In addition our Statewide Executive Board approved a donation to the trust. If you or your Local is interested in contributing, checks can be sent to the PANJ office at 617 Union Ave, Brielle NJ 08730. Checks can be made out to 'John McGarr IV and Kylie McGarr Trust Fund.'

The View From Health And Safety

By Brad Fairchild, First Vice President, Supervisory Unit

The physical safety of our Probation Officers conducting field supervision remains a big concern for PANJ as we start a new year. Presently we are focused on the process of how certain neighborhoods are determined to be temporarily "unsafe" for field work and when those areas have been later cleared and determined to be "safe" for our Officers to conduct home visits and investigations.

Unfortunately, for the safety of our members, county policy for this process varies significantly from vicinage to vicinage. Many vicinages have established effective ongoing communication procedures with local law enforcement officials who provide updated information regarding gang activity and other violent crime. Others counties, regrettably, have very vague and general policies that basically say "if an Officer does not feel safe in a certain neighborhood, they should not go there". PANJ believes that this approach is unacceptable. We will continue to advocate for procedures that base these critical decisions on facts, data, and current crime trends in specific neighborhoods and not on how an individual "feels" when they enter a particular area. In an era of daily shootings, stabbings, gangland style executions, and even terrorist activity, the process of how we make the business of community supervision safe must take advantage of all most up to date supervision practices and policies and those policies must be consistent in all counties. The State Health and Safety Committee is also reviewing health and safety related incidents related to conditions in specific buildings. If members witness situations which may harmfully impact Judiciary employees they should contact their local PANJ President and make the PANJ office aware of the incident.

Stuart Martinsen, who has served on the Health and Committee as the Line Staff member for many years is stepping down and has been replaced by Thea Fitzpatrick. We thank Stuart for his tireless efforts on behalf of his colleagues.

Earn Your Way Out

By George P. Christie, President, PANJ

This is a Bill sponsored by Senator Lesniak which will allow the early release of 1,000 non-violent drug addicted inmates as part of a pilot project. The program is to be operated in the correctional system.

The funding for the project will come from the restructuring of the corrections one billion dollar budget taking 40 million for this purpose. According to Senator Lesniak the tax payers will not have to pick up any extra costs. Qualified inmates will participate in a six month intensive program before release. They will then be turned over to Parole for an intensive two year program. The hope is that inmates who are non-violent drug addicted can get their lives turned around and become productive citizens in society. The support comes from various Christian groups along with drug treatment centers.

Senator Lesniak is hoping to get bipartisan support and from the Governor as well. He believes it will keep New Jersey safer and save the state money. One of his big supporters is Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. He would like to see the Bill go through in the next budget.

Supervisor Update

By Brad Fairchild, First Vice President, Supervisory Unit

As we pass from 2010 into 2011 one thing that has not changed for the 850 Supervisors in the Judiciary is the concern regarding the abuses of Article 9.8 of our contract which stipulates that management has the non-reviewable right to remove unclassified Supervisors.

Unfortunately this contract provision is being abused in the same few vicinages that continue to experience extremely antagonistic labor relations which are of no benefit to management or labor.

What is also regrettable is that when Article 9.8 was negotiated in the first contract after state takeover, it was never intended to be utilized as the arbitrary "stealth" weapon that is the present day reality. When the late Chief Justice Wilentz and the Judiciary presented this issue to PANJ in 1995 it was with the understanding that when the Courts wanted to move a supervisor they would be "transferred" not "terminated" from their former assignment.

The result of the current budget crisis has been to make 9.8 even more dangerous, arbitrary, and unfair. As vicinages begin to contemplate possible future layoffs several supervisors with long careers have been suspiciously served with 9.8 removals. Our contract does provide Supervisors with previous classified titles with the option of going back to those titles although it is with significant economic loss, sometimes exceeding \$10,000.

The individuals served with the removals are left with choice of taking a significant pay cut or consider retirement since the economic hardship of the removal is so severe that their retirement salary would be close to their salary after the demotion. Such actions create suspicions that the removals actually represent a conscious strategy to downsize the Judiciary by targeting supervisors who cannot question such removals because they are "non reviewable".

The end of 2010 has also singled the end of the career of one of the outstanding leaders of Professional Supervisors Unit. Candy Tice, who was the Ocean County Supervisor President and served the Judiciary and her co-workers for 36 years, retired on December 31. We wish her well in her retirement and thank Candy for years of dedicated service. Terrence Foley will be our new Supervisor President in the Ocean vicinage.

It is with deep sadness that we also announce the passing of another longtime distinguished leader of the Supervisors Unit. Dan Debbie, who served the Union Judiciary for over three decades, passed away on November 11, 2010. Dave Goodman will now be our President in Union County.



Probation Officers Give Back

By Deborah Kier

Local Probation Officers from Gloucester and Camden Counties volunteered at Philabundance Community Food Center (CFC) on October 16, 2010. Senior Probation Officer, Chastity Robinson organized the outreach in an effort to bring probation officers together, to serve the public in a different way and bring awareness about hunger in our neighboring communities. A group of probation officers and from PANJ Local 108 and 109 (Ejuliet Njoku, Howard Evans, Diana Archer, Kim Fortune, Patricia Delp, Deborah Kier, and Lisa Kearsley) volunteered their time in serving citizens who depend on the food provided by Philabundance. The probation officers had the opportunity to assist local management through their daily preparation and processing. The officers unloaded the food trucks, sorted food, loaded shelves and freezers, assisted families in finding food items, cleaned the facility and assisted the local families with their shopping.

Philabundance was founded in 1984. After integrating with the Greater Philadelphia Food Bank in 2005 they became the region's largest hunger relief organization. In the fiscal year of 2009, Philabundance distributed 17 million pounds of food throughout the Delaware Valley and reached out to approximately 65,000 people per week! They have a network of some 500 member agencies, such as food cupboards, shelters, residential programs, social service agencies, emergency kitchens, and neighborhood/church distribution programs. This agency employs approximately 100 individuals and the majority of the workers are volunteers.

Our local CFC manager, Colleen Otremsky told us how necessary volunteers are to their Community Food Center. "Without them, we could not keep our doors open," she stated. Each week this local CFC distributes approximately 20,000 pounds of food to 1,500 members of the community. Recipients of the food are registered in advance and scheduled for their weekly grocery shopping trip.

We had an opportunity to speak to many of the clients and found that in all the hardship they face, they remain optimistic and thankful for all the staff's efforts. To some low income and even middle income families this is aide that keeps the family unit stable. For others, it is a lifeline they cannot do without. It certainly made us aware of the overwhelming need to get involved at any level. That day we ended up serving 470 families and gave out 16,105 pounds of food. No small feat.

All the probation officers agreed the local staff of the Community Food Center (Americorps Vista) were organized and energetic in assisting the people of the community. At the end of the day we certainly received more from the experience than we gave.

If you are interested in assisting the organization, you may find out more about them at CFCvolunteer@philabundance.org or call 215-229-2221 extension 4. We hope that more probation officers will be able to join us in our next community service endeavor.

Probation Officers Give Back...Cont'd



Stocking the freezers in preparation for families.

Community Food Center Management



Morning Shift (Left to Right)
Lisa Kearsley, Kim Fortune, Patricia Delp, Chastity Robinson, Howard Evans, Deborah Kier, & Ejuliet Njoku

Afternoon Shift (Left to Right)
Diana Archer, Aaron Lipscomb, Lisa Flemon, Sherell Law, & Kim Fortune



Believe

By Susan Lively, President, PANJ Local #100

I'm sure we all have seen the word "BELIEVE"; in stores, on ornaments, Christmas wrapping paper and such. This year a very special child "believed!"

For many years PANJ Local #100, Cumberland County has sent out their "Santa Sleigh" and delivered toys to needy families in the community. Every year the Local adopts three families from the Outreach Program and fulfills the Christmas wishes of the children. This year was another successful year. The elves of Santa's Sleigh delivered toys, clothes and jackets to every child on his list. Oh, the joy that filled these homes on Christmas morning.

However ... back to the word "BELIEVE." On the day before Christmas Eve, Santa's Sleigh delivered several gifts to a boy who lives in Millville. This 11 year old boy named Cody Watkins had always "believed." You see, not only did Cody believe in Santa but he also believed in miracles. Cody was born on September 27, 1999, a 2 lb, 9 oz baby who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, optic atrophy, and autism. As Cody grew he became more physically challenged, he had a shunt placed in his head and he has right side weakness. He has a very loving family and a very supportive Grandmother. He attends the Atlantic county Special School where he has many friends. Through the years he has underwent various surgeries. Then in November 2009, Cody underwent 10 procedures at one time for an 8 hour surgery and afterward he was on the road to recovery in 2010. Cody has done well because he believed. Cody now is playing baseball with the North Vineland Challenger League and he loves to go bowling. He also loves to go hunting, camping and fishing with his father. His favorite past time is listening to country music by Brad Paisley and Blake Shelton. Cody's favorite baseball team is the Phillies and his favorite player, Chase Utley. After Christmas we visited Cody and presented him with a Phillies hat and a #26 Utley baseball jersey, along with his very own bowling ball and bag which was donated by Steve Pavlinko of Pavlinko Pro shop. Cody is an awesome child who enjoys company and talking about his family and friends. He is coming along very well with his physical challenges and his Christmas this year was a very Merry one ... all because Cody believed!

To make this year's Santa's Sleigh such a success, we would like to thank all of PANJ Local #100 members who donated toys and clothes to our adopted families along with the support and donations from PANJ Local #200 Supervisors. May you all have a very Happy New Year and always ... Believe!



In Memoriam

By Stuart Martinsen, PANJ Legislative Liaison



William H. Thomas 1924-2010

Our great friend and supporter of PANJ members William "Bill" Thomas passed away on Christmas Eve Friday Dec. 24, 2010 at the age of 86. While he lived a long and fulfilling life, he had left us far too soon and no one can ever replace his contributions to the citizens of NJ, its crime victims and our vocation in Probation for which he gave us so much creditability. This creditability came from his own life during which he served in D-Day as a young Navy Corpsman and after the murder of his nine-year old granddaughter by an offender who had a juvenile history of voyeurism, in 1994. As a result, Bill and his family became one of the most active of victim rights advocates in NJ history.

The "Friends of Amanda Foundation" was established following the 1994 murder of Amanda Wengert of Manalapan, Bill's granddaughter. Due primarily to Bill's and his families efforts, the Amanda's Easel Program was also developed in Monmouth County to offer family counseling services specifically to child victims of heinous crimes.

PANJ President George Christie met Bill around 1999 at which time Mr. Christie decided to honor Bill for his work in this area of crime victim rights. After that year, PANJ established the William H. Thomas Citizen of the Year Award. This award has been presented annually to other parents of crime victims and other noteworthy individuals, all of whom contribute their time and efforts in order for organizations like Amanda's Easel, to continue to exist financially in our communities.

Throughout the years, Bill continued to work tirelessly to advance the concerns of PANJ issues from Probation Officer's being armed to vocally supporting our many other vital issues over the years. He also served on the board of trustees for Avenel prison and was an alternate member of the NJ Parole board up until 2009. His complete bio can be viewed at PANJ.ORG under our "In Memoriam" section.

We ask all PANJ members to remember Bill in their thoughts and his family during this time. PANJ will honor his memory by continuing to award other individuals with the William H. Thomas Citizen of the Year award in years to come.