

# INSIGHT



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## REFLECTIONS OF PANJ

By George P. Christie, President

I have been involved in the leadership of PANJ for 27 years and during all those years I have been blessed to have worked with many great officers and supervisors. The list is long but all of these leaders had a deep care for PANJ and its members. I know that it is impossible for me to acknowledge all of these key people in any given speech which leads me to put my thoughts down on paper.

One day well over 20 years ago before unification I met this feisty attorney named David Fox in Trenton as he was speaking for another small union. What it was about him I cannot quite answer but I knew he should be our attorney and we brought him on board. His contributions are too numerous to count but unification would not have happened with our input without him. His filing of a federal law suit to get fair treatment for all officers resulted in contracts and equalization. Together with his staff they have represented us better than any union could hope for.

Then I turn to our first vice president of the line unit, Dwight Covaleskie, who has been in charge of all legal issues and other things that I can't get to. He is dedicated to helping his fellow officers and is pained to see one person treated unfairly. Unfortunately he is in a position that attracts a lot of criticism but he handles it and does not get deterred.

Ellen Cribbin is one of those officers who cares deeply for the union and its members. She is an excellent probation officer in Monmouth and brings that excellence to PANJ every day. She has been a great leader in her county and in the state as the business manager of PANJ.

Bradley Fairchild, first vice president of the PANJ supervisory unit is another in a long line of supervisors who have displayed a caring concern for his fellow supervisors. Brad puts a great deal of effort into his responsibilities.

Gavin Cummings, Glen Moton and Donald DeHart are all vice presidents of the supervisors unit in the various regions. They are all good men and good friends of mine who help others by giving of their own time.

Dan Bergin, Kevin Farley and Patrick Barrea are the three regional vice presidents of the line unit who also give of themselves for their peers.

Stephanie Hennessey our second vice president and Susan Ormsby Cuzzo our financial secretary have been handling our finances for 20 years. These ladies along with our newest treasurer Jacqueline Sheehan keep the PANJ finances in excellent order. Our former treasurer, Ann Rizzi was also a key participant overseeing the PANJ financial records for many years. Together with a special accounting firm PANJ has a monthly accounting and certified public audits at year end.

Jacqueline Sheehan is now the head of the PANJ Educational Fund a special 501c3 corporation which oversees the PANJ annual training conference which was run for many years by Susan Cuzzo. This conference is one of our crown jewels and I have to thank these ladies and the new conference chair Deneen Hohman.

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## Reflections of PANJ Cont'd

Some of our other leaders that need to be mentioned for their sacrifice are Dorothy Robinson, recording secretary; Linval Lewis parliamentarian; and our regional representatives Anne Dutton, Anthony Persico, Bridgette Patillo, Edda Burry, Michael LaCosta, Susan Campbell, Francis Nunan, Susan Lively, and Greg Wolf.

Then there are the local presidents and the local shop stewards and representatives who also keep us informed at the state level which helps the members.

All in all this is the group that I have the pleasure of working with for your benefit. While I get praised for our accomplishments and get to take some bows it is because of so many great leaders who have put me there.

God bless all the leaders in PANJ and give them the wisdom to always do the right and honorable thing.

God bless all the members of PANJ and thank you for your support for this great union.

## Legislative Update

### **By Chrissy Buteas, Capital Impact Group**

Summer is quickly approaching, but not before an action-packed budget season full of political and legislative battles. With the Governor's race, an unexpected U.S. Senate seat up for grabs, and a state budget which must be passed before the end of June, New Jersey's state capital is anything but quiet.

The race for Governor is fully underway, with Republican Governor Christie and Democratic State Senator Barbara Buono becoming their parties' official gubernatorial candidates after winning the June primary elections. Governor Christie still leads Buono by a considerable margin, all the while racking up key Democratic endorsements across the state.

Additionally, every member of the Legislature is up for re-election this November as well. While there are a few districts each party believes is up for grabs, control of the Legislature is not expected to change hands unless the Governor's strong coattails impact down ballot elections. And, to add further intrigue to this year's election season, the death of longtime U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg left a vacancy in the United States Senate. It goes without saying; New Jersey's already jammed-packed election season just went into overdrive.

Last week, Governor Chris Christie appointed state Attorney General Jeff Chiesa to fill the seat of U.S. Senator Frank Lautenberg on an interim basis, who passed away in early June at the age of 89. Chiesa previously served as Chief Counsel to Governor Christie from January 2010 through December 2011, when he was nominated to be New Jersey Attorney General by Governor Christie.

The Governor called for a Special General Election to fill the seat on October 16, with the primary election slated for August 13, 2013. With Lautenberg's term expiring in 2014, the Governor preempted a potential lawsuit expected by the Democrats by holding a special election not only before the general election in 2014, but the 2013 general election as well. Still, a Democratic Assembly candidate filed suit claiming the Governor's decision to hold an election a few weeks prior to the November general election, where his name is on the ballot, is designed to suppress the vote.

With the August U.S. Senate primary election just a couple of months away, Newark Mayor Cory Booker, Congressman Frank Pallone, Congressman Rush Holt and Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver have declared their intent to battle it out in the Democratic primary. Former Bogota Mayor Steve Lonegan, and Alieta Eck, a doctor in Piscataway, will run for the Republican nomination.

Aside from the fiery hot election season, the Legislature and Governor are in the midst of balancing a state budget by the June 30th deadline. The good news is both Governor Christie and legislative leaders believe the budget will be agreed upon before the deadline.

On the legislative front, PANJ continues to be at the forefront advocating for the transfer of probation officers to the Parole Board. Support exists from Assembly Law and Public Safety Chairman Mainor, along with bill sponsors and many members of the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee. PANJ looks forward to advancing this bill when the Legislature reconvenes after summer recess.

## OFFICIALS

**George P. Christie**  
President

**Dwight Covalesskie**  
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.

**Donald DeHart**  
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  
Greg Wolf, Salem  
Susan Lively, Cumberland

## A Message From The President

Brothers and Sisters,

As of July 1, 2013 I will no longer be the president of PANJ. While I will no longer be in a leadership position I will be nearby to lend my assistance whenever needed. This union of ours has been very important to me and others as it has determined through negotiations with management issues that affect all of our lives.

PANJ has made it possible for a unified judiciary, pay equalization, livable wages, benefits, fair treatment in disciplines and grievances. PANJ has developed many associations with other public safety associations and with groups that help and protect people who may not have the ability to help themselves. PANJ has developed and maintained an educational program for the members which has been recognized nationally. You will have a new president soon and that person will need all of your support to continue the PANJ mission.



In Solidarity,

*George Christie*

President

## A Message From The Editor

Brothers and Sisters,

With the school year coming to a close, the sun setting later, and your vacation plans fast approaching I just wanted to let you know that our union is still hard at work this summer. Both the Line Staff and the Supervisor Staff's bargaining teams are still negotiating successor agreements. Unfortunately for all of us negotiations have been an uphill battle, and the AOC is waging a war against us for almost everything in our contracts. The AOC would like to see "at management's discretion" inserted just about everywhere. The AOC would also like to negotiate a two-tiered system. Historically two-tiered systems have worked to the detriment of employees in other public forums. Both Line Staff and Supervisor Staff have pending unfair labor practices filed against the AOC for consistent abuses against our contracts. All the while both units continue to represent us in disciplines and grievances. As most of you are already aware, our current President George Christie will be retiring this July, which means we will have a change in leadership in a few short weeks. I know that our new leadership will work just as hard as our current leadership.

In Solidarity,

*Ellen Cribbin*

Editor

## Supervisor Update

**By Brad Fairchild, First Vice President, Supervisory Unit**



The Supervisor Negotiations Committee has been hard at work in the last several months trying to come to a resolution with the Judiciary on several key issues. The efforts have been very frustrating and the Committee has to report that any chance of a settlement agreement is many months away.

It's no surprise that Article 9.8 of the contract (the Judiciary's non-reviewable right to remove Supervisors without giving any rational or reason) is a major sticking point. PANJ strongly believes that the Judiciary abuses the Article repeatedly as a way to avoid discipline. The number of removals has dramatically increased over the last two years and a number of the removals involved Supervisors with no previous discipline and good performance advisories.

Another contentious battle has developed over the Judiciary's economic proposal which would implement a secondary pay scale for new hires which substantially reduces the pay for all new Supervisors. Such a plan could cripple this union and have a tremendous negative impact on morale throughout the Courts. What is particularly egregious is that the Courts plan is based on a report prepared by the Segal Group that says PANJ members are overpaid when compared to surrounding states. When the negotiating committee received and studied the report they found many errors in the research. The Judiciary's economic proposal conveniently avoids including the dramatic impact of the increased health care costs that will hit every paycheck over the next three July's. The impact of the health care increases is a crippling pay cut!!

What is also sad is that the Courts believe that the pay raises received over the last 13 years were excessive and the reason for present budget crisis. PANJ Supervisors are proud of the contacts negotiated since Unification as they lifted many PANJ members from near poverty level income to a living wage. We refuse to go back to days when members practically qualified for food stamps and other economic assistance.

The Committee includes President George Christie, Gavin Cummings, Donald DeHart, Glen Moton, Susan Ormsby -Cuozzo, Linda Clark, Pat Jackson, Greg Wolf, JoAnne Morrison, and Brad Fairchild. Chief Counsel to the Committee is David Fox.

## Contract Update

**By Dwight Covalleskie, First Vice President, Line Staff**

As we approach one year without a contract, your Negotiations Committee continues in its efforts to secure a fair and equitable contract for our officers and other represented employees. The process has been slow. It is extremely important to make sure that we have fair Articles regarding grievances, disciplines and safety. We have received a proposal on economics and have responded in what we believe is fair for our represented members. We will continue to negotiate until we are able to bring to membership a fair contract.

The committee is comprised of Daniel Zirrieth, Representing PANJ in Negotiations, George Christie, President, Kevin Farley, Ellen Cribbin, Patrick Barrea, Daniel Bergin, Anthony Persico, Dorothy Robinson, Linval Lewis, Sabrina Beyah, Susan Campbell, Jackie Sheehan, Lynne Taylor, Stephen McMullen, Georgette Warren, Francis Noonan and Bridgett Patillo.

There will be much more to follow as negotiations progress.

# Ad Hoc Committee Update

## By Stuart Martinsen, PANJ Legislative Assistant

The fourth meeting with the Chief Justice's Probation Ad Hoc Committee was held at the AOC on May 7, 2013. Present from PANJ were President George Christie; PANJ 1st VP Dwight Covalleskie; PANJ 1st VP Supervisors Brad Fairchild; PANJ Legal Counsel David Fox Esq. and this writer. Committee members included the Chair; Judge Yolanda Ciccone, A.J.S.C.; Judge Donald J. Volkert Jr, A.J.S.C; Elizabeth Domingo, Assistant Director of Probation Services; James Agro, Assistant Director of Management Services; Janet Zatz, AOC Assistant Director of Employees Relations; John Pizarro, Chief of Adult Probation Services; Deidre Naughton, AOC Director of Professional and Governmental Services and Erin Catalfamo (staff) also of AOC.

It should be noted that the purpose of the formation of this committee by Judge Grant and Chief Justice Rabner, was to foster improved and direct communication between PANJ and the AOC in order to address mutual labor, safety and workplace concerns. During this May 2013 meeting, it was explained to PANJ by Chief John Pizarro, that the TAC PRO safety courses and curriculum for the Family Division were being developed for roll out during the summer of 2013.

PANJ President Christie asked the committee if further development of sheriff's radio communication devices were being implemented throughout the vicinages. Chief Pizarro advised that six counties now use police-sheriffs radios including the Ocean vicinage as of late. President Christie stated that this was a positive move by the vicinages and the AOC and that all vicinages should have this equipment.

The warrantless search module 1 training for supervision officers as per Chief Pizarro was completed and a Chief's subcommittee is working on module 2. After approval, Chief Pizarro advised that all officers will be able to conduct searches but only with proper training and that they must always be safe when conducting these searches. President Christie and PANJ 1st VP Dwight Covalleskie expressed concern as to what will happen if during these searches such items as guns or drugs are found and what procedures need to be followed. VP Covalleskie also stated that it would be safer for field officers to have police officers with them during these searches.

It was also noted by PANJ that there was a need to modify or change the conditions of probation or by adding special sentencing conditions of probation to address these home and field searches. It was agreed that this would be further discussed at the next ad hoc meeting. PANJ further noted that many probationers have been identified as active gang members and that the conditions of probation at sentencing or as a standard condition of probation be imposed to include the restriction of gang membership and gang activity. It was also agreed by the committee this would be further discussed at the next meeting.

Additionally, the committee advised PANJ that the monthly Judiciary's Court Management Report (JCMR) on the InfoNet was being improved to provide warrant information and other CAPS –Promis Gavel changes. President Christie expressed the ongoing concern PANJ has of the high number of almost 20,000 absconders from probation who pose a proven threat to both supervising officers and the community. PANJ also pointed out that due to judicial restrictions, the probation officer is not trained nor equipped to arrest a probationer known to them with an outstanding warrant if observed in the community by the officer in the field, on duty or off duty.

In response to Judge Ciccone's statement to PANJ that probationers are not necessarily a violent threat, PANJ pointed out concerns over the significant number of probationers state-wide being violently shot and/or killed who are on active probation and who are also being identified as active and violent gang members. Some probationers have also been shot more than once and have been killed on the second shooting attempt. (These probationers are also being charged with shooting incidents as well, which usually means they are armed and the supervising officer is not).

The specific concern raised by PANJ here is that the field officer can be at risk of being in this line of fire or be shot by a stray bullet, etc. The committee pointed out to PANJ that most of these shootings occur at night. However, Chief Pizarro acknowledged that as per the report he and the late TCA Mike O'Brien authored, several probation officers nationally have been killed and have been or are at high risk of field and office safety threats and concerns. In this regard, Chief Pizarro stated that with the usage of ROIC reports, Critical Alerts, TAC PRO training, radio communications and officers doing field work in pairs; these safety risks are being reduced. President Christie recommended that police officers accompany probation officers in the field, especially if the probationer they are seeing is a known gang member (who appears to be at a high risk of being shot according to LE reports).

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## *Ad Hoc Committee Update Cont'd*

PANJ President Christie further pointed out to the committee that smaller caseloads are more effective, and that caseload sizes need to be addressed by hiring more officers. Chief Pizarro pointed out that the AOC has hired an expert in this field to help set up a pilot program to address risk assessment and caseload sizes and classifications. He also advised that three vicinages are now running this pilot project. It was pointed out by PANJ that many probationers are gang members and this needs to be addressed by these risk assessment instruments. PANJ was advised that this study by the AOC will be completed in one year.

The committee advised PANJ to contact either Chief Domingo or Chief Pizarro, as soon as possible if PANJ determined that AOC Directive #14-06(field safety procedures) are not being properly implemented throughout the vicinages.

Also, PANJ noted that the distribution and usage of ROIC/Critical Alerts reports by managers, supervisors and line staff have been helpful to both office and field safety. PANJ expressed that the usage of these reports by managers is a step in the correct safety direction as well.

PANJ asked that the State Health and Safety committee as chaired by Asst. Director James Agro, address in the future specific concerns raised by PANJ over health and safety issues such as bed bug exposure, and other health and safety concerns of county- owned or leased judiciary office buildings. PANJ 1st VP of the Supervisors Unit Brad Fairchild expressed major concerns that the State HS committee was also cancelling meetings without the input of the PANJ members of the committee. Further, PANJ 1st VP Covaleskie pointed out that there is a lack of certain state-wide HS guidelines on these issues, such as bed bug exposure and how vicinages assess and address same. He also recommended to Director Agro that general HS guidelines be put in place on a state-wide basis. Further, Mr. Covaleskie also suggested that bed bug exposure procedures be incorporated into blood borne pathogen training.

Judge Volkert reminded the committee that that many HS issues cannot be resolved at the local vicinage level due to chain of command problems, and getting the local counties or third parties to resolve these matters. Further, Assistant Director James Agro agreed with the committee to address unresolved state HS committee matters with the ad hoc committee as needed.

The next ad hoc committee meeting will be scheduled in the fall 2013. If a PANJ member has any items or matters that you feel the ad hoc committee should consider for discussion, please contact the PANJ office at [panj1@optimum.net](mailto:panj1@optimum.net) with your suggestions.

# *Congratulations President Christie*

**By Dwight Covalleskie, First Vice President, PANJ**

President Christie is retiring effective, July of 2013. George's union association dates back to 1987. During his tenure with the Probation Association of New Jersey, George was the State Treasurer, First Vice President, and President, a position he has held since 1993.

George was the President during unification and directed the association through this process which resulted in a Statewide Contract from A-Z. This resulted in Probation Officers and other represented employees being fairly compensated and more importantly, being able to represent members as a Union.

George has always had keen insight into the job that we perform in all areas and has been a champion of having probation moved to the legislative branch which would allow all officers to be properly trained and enable us to better do our jobs and more adequately serve the citizens of New Jersey. He has tirelessly educated the Legislature as to the jobs that we do, and brought much needed attention to our profession.

George's other accomplishments have resulted in reinstating the annual training conference, befriending groups such as the Friends of Amanda, Amanda's Easel, the New Jersey State Police Unions, the New Jersey State PBA, New Jersey Firemen's Mutual Benevolence Association and many others that support PANJ in its efforts.

Finally, George had the vision to accomplish our new building, which was designed and is owned by PANJ. It is able to hold our archives and accommodate meetings.

George has always had an even disposition to accomplish goals of the Association and keep us united. George has been a mentor and great leader which has left PANJ a strong union recognized throughout the State and Country through APPA.

George has left PANJ in a very good position to continue to grow and better represent our membership. For that we are thankful to you and your leadership.

**Wishing you a happy, healthy and lengthy retirement.  
Thank you for your leadership over the years.**

# Esther Torres

## Age 55: Sayreville



Esther Torres, 55, of Sayreville, went home to be with the Lord on June 3, 2013. Born in Brownsville, Texas, she resided in Jersey City with her husband and family most of her life before moving to Sayreville. Esther received her Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and worked as a Senior Probation Officer for the State of New Jersey for 28 years before recently retiring. She enjoyed reading, traveling and taking a run to exercise. She was most happy spending time with her family and her beloved grandchildren. She was a loving wife, mother, and grandma.

She was predeceased by her mother Maria Juarez.

Surviving her is her husband of 35 years Anibal Torres; son Alex Torres; grandchildren Genesis and Kristian; daughter-in-law Alexandra Torres; father Isaias Juarez; brothers Benny and Ernie Juarez; sisters Rebecca Soto and Mary Savitsky; brother-in-law David Fresse, Nelson Fresse and Hector Lugo and sisters-in-law Rosalina Bautista, Darlene Fresse, Jeanette Fresse, Olga Fresse and Carol Juarez.

## *Interim Presidential Election*

**By Ellen Cribbin, Editor**

On June 27th, 2013 a special election was held for the title of interim President of PANJ. PANJ is pleased to announce that Bradley Fairchild won the election. Bradley was previously the First Vice President of the Supervisor's Unit. On the same night Bradley appointed Gavin Cummings to the position of First Vice President of the Supervisor's Unit. Gavin was previously the Central Regional Vice President of the Supervisor's Unit. We wish both of brother's success in their new positions!

The election took place as this edition went to press, so you will see the changes reflected in our next edition of the Insight.

**George P. Christie is retiring!**

**Come join the celebration at  
Spring Lake Manor, Spring Lake Heights on  
July 14th at 2pm**

**Call the PANJ office for more info and to RSVP**