

CHAPTER ELECTIONS

Election of officers for several GAA Chapters were held in late Fall of 2013. Holding elections were the General Fund, Nurses, Airport and Mental Health Authority Chapters.

Although previously reported on GAA's web site, following are the actual results of the elections:

GENERAL FUND CHAPTER

President:	Votes:
Cassandra McDonald	27*
Rita Whitley	26
Mark Plackowski	19
Alonzo McCann	10

Chapter Representatives (Eight to be Elected):

Felicia Mack	53*
Chuck Bonza	51*
Mimi Sullivan	50*
Anthony Cavalli	48*
Candace Robinson	48*
Jackie Szafranski	47*
Stephanie McDonald	45*
Jean Chaplain	36*
Joe Budzinski	31

Vice-President:

Vacant - to be appointed.

Secretary:

Zelda Thomas (Elected by Acclimation)

*Elected

PROFESSIONAL NURSES CHAPTER

An election for officers was averted as single nominations were made for all offices; thus, such nominees were all elected by acclimation. Elizabeth Patterson was reelected Chapter President; Mildred Neal, 2nd Vice President; and both Lea Howe and Todd Spreitzer, Directors at Large-Health Department.

AIRPORT AUTHORITY CHAPTER

Similarly, an election became

Continued on Page 4

GAA MEMBER OF THE YEAR 2013 LATANYA CATO



*LaTanya Cato and Association
President Margaret Keyes-Howard*

At its Annual Meeting and Christmas party held December 5, 2013, LaTanya Cato was honored as the GAA Member of the Year for 2013. Cato received the distinctive Award while serving as a Department Manager at the 36th District Court. That is, she was until her most recent elevation by the Court to the position of Deputy Court Administrator for the 36th District Court.

The Association is proud to recognize LaTanya's long experience and excellence in performance as a distinguished member of its organization.

The award is given each year to a Government Administrators Association member for job dedication, employment recognition, notable accomplishments and significant contributions to the Association or community.

During Cato's long tenure at the 36th District Court, she has worked in the capacity of Supervisor in a number of Divisions within the Court. She has trained, motivated, and encouraged staff to educate and elevate themselves to enhance their work skills and knowledge of the judicial system. She was also recently appointed Interim Manager of the Criminal Division prior to her latest promotion.

Staff members have expressed appreciation for Cato's initiatives and dedication to ensure smooth operations at Court functions during the present restructuring of the Court. Her commitment to represent Association members at the Court is especially noteworthy. Cato's tireless efforts to ensure the rights of her colleagues are recognized. She made certain that all Articles of the Collective Bargaining Agreement are resolved in the many capacities in which she served the Association.

Congratulations LaTanya. Best wishes on all your future endeavors. Keep up the good work!

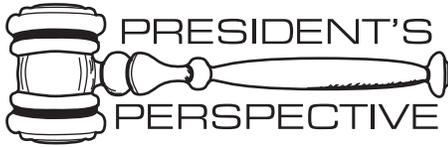
COUNTY SUBMITS REDUCTION PLAN

Wayne County Executive Robert A. Ficano submitted a Budget Deficit Reduction Plan to the Wayne County Commission Tuesday, February 11, 2014. The Plan still has to be adopted by the Wayne County Commission and accepted by the State of Michigan.

The Plan, in order to be successful, faces staff opposition from many quarters, including 37 local communities participating in waster water treatment, conversion of both a portion of restricted and unrestricted

Delinquent Tax Revolving Funds, wage and benefits reduction to active employees, pension cuts for retirees, transfer of Judges health care funding to the Circuit Court, cut-back appropriations to the Prosecutor and Sheriffs offices, aggressive increase in leasing office space in the Guardian Building among other savings sought.

Reaction from several of these affected sources has been extremely negative thus far, especially from County unions who have conceded so much in wages and benefits for the past eight years.



As we are well into the Year 2014, it is my sincere wish for all that this will be a year, not of continued recession and concessions, but one of progress and wealth.

What is happening to the City of Detroit work force as well as retirees is indeed appalling, if not tragic. The cut backs in the work force with reduced wages cannot produce better service to Detroit citizens and taxpayers. Even more distressing is the reduction of pensions looming for those retirees, who devoted their entire careers to public service, but now must face reductions in promised monthly pensions. The news media portrays a truly unjust picture of the amount these pensions really are. In many cases, they amount to less than the poverty level. Media reports only the political benefactors who retire with much higher pensions for time less earned.

Members GAA represents, particularly employed by Wayne County apprehensively lie in the shadow of the same public scrutiny as Detroit workers and retirees. Can it happen to us? Not if we stay the course and remain united in total force. The "Right to Work Law" is certainly not the answer to sustained and continued economic compensation, or morally negotiated health and retirement benefits justifiably earned.

We must remain united to remain strong. I urge you to actively support your union, GAA. We are in a battle for our work rights, but do not count us out until the battle is won. May peace continue to reign over our daily lives!

Margaret Keyes-Howard, President
The President may be reached at keyesbelieves1@gmail.com or at 313.333.1248

VOL. 33 • No. 1 February, 2014
Official Publication of the
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATORS
ASSOCIATION
2625 Cadillac Tower, Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 224-5076 FAX (313) 224-0064

EDITORIAL BOARD

Lawrence N. Verbiest, Editor
Patricia Peña, Associate Editor

THE UNADULTERATED WORD

BY LAWRENCE VERBIEST
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE

As we embark upon the New Year, we express our best wishes to you and your loved ones. We hope you enjoyed the blessings of the past holiday season. Now it is time to "buckle" down and prepare for the busiest of schedules for the coming year. It is a most daunting schedule we face; the necessity of negotiating contracts for seven of our chapters with five of our six employers wherein one of our contracts, the Nurses, has already expired. The remaining six expire September 30, 2014; namely the General Fund/Engineers with the County of Wayne; the Third Judicial Circuit Court; the Wayne County Probate Court; the 36th District Court; and the newly created Detroit-Wayne Mental Health Authority. The lone exception for this year is the Wayne County Airport Authority, which contract extends late into 2015.

This is an awesome task that confronts us, especially in this most difficult climate wherein economics are depressed, rising costs of health care continue to soar, pension plans are realistically underfunded; emergency manager placement lies in the shadow, and an unfriendly to labor Governor and Legislature exists.

Ideally, in order to achieve any measure of success and satisfying to the greatest extent the members we represent, we must be well prepared to do our job with the understanding and cooperation of all our leaders.

As required by the GAA Constitution, a survey of all our members individually by Chapter will soon be conducted by the Association. Once this process is made, the bargaining teams of each Chapter will analyze the surveys and develop a bargaining agenda that best serves the wishes of the collective group. That process is commencing now.

LAYOFFS/DISPLACEMENTS

Prior to the holidays, Wayne County took action to reduce the work force, which affected all unions.

The County's initial notice involved a total of 15 movements in GAA, four layoffs and 11 displacements. Through investigation and discussion that number changed. To date, there has been one layoff that occurred in December, two more effective January 13, 2014, one of which is a requested voluntary layoff. Additionally, there have been nine displacements. Of these nine, three have been lateral moves with no loss in pay. Of the remaining six, all are downgrades due to the County's eliminating certain positions. Of the latter six, three are being contested still by the Association. This report is to allay you of any false rumors that may be being disseminated.

FROM YOUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Engineering Professionals Chapter

Happy New Year everyone! It has been quite a New Year so far; lots of snow and bitter cold weather. Do we get a winter break?

The Professional Engineers Chapter has been pretty quiet. This year we are facing the expiration of our Collective Bargaining Agreement and the negotiation of a successor agreement. A questionnaire will be arriving in your mailbox, if it has not arrived already, regarding your opinions of items for the successor

collective bargaining agreement. Please be sure your voice is heard. Fill out the survey and return it to the GAA office.

Negotiations are a stressful time for me as my definition of negotiate and the County's are very different. My definition is to strive for an agreement that is beneficial to both parties. The County's definition is to take what they can from us, and then put more work onto our already burdened shoulders. The County's Labor Relations players have changed, and from what I have seen and heard they are more adversarial than the previous regime.

Thanks to the State of Michigan’s Department of Licensing and Regulation, we now have to have 30 continuing education units to renew our professional licenses (architect, engineer, and surveyor). These professional licenses are a condition of our employment. We do have in our collective bargaining agreement that our tuition reimbursement can be used to offset these costs; however, the reimbursement is “subject to available funding”. These needed continuing education units and the “available funding” issue are sure to collide in the coming year.

Ending on a more positive note..... Spring is how many days away????

Amy Miller-Vandawaker,
Chapter President

Airport Authority Chapter

The new year has arrived and the conversation was all “Polar Vortex” the first week. Of course this meant bad roads, dead batteries, endless shoveling or snow blowing, incredible lines at the grocery store at times and hopefully extended time with the family in a warm house. I’m sorry if your power was impacted in the worst of times. I’ve been there, it is the absolute most frustrating time when nobody can help you, and you just have to wait. Overall I loved the view of new snow from the window of my house.

Here at Wayne County-Detroit Metropolitan Airport and Willow Run Airport things are continuing to carry on during these circumstances. It takes hundreds of staff and a great number of members of our chapter to help keep things going. People working 12 hour shifts for days on end so that aircraft can land and take off. Hundreds and thousands of stranded passengers seeking comfort talk with the airlines, and us during these times. Didn’t Sparty nation get a surprise when they got back to Michigan from the Rose Bowl?

Important to us in a personal level, the administration has indicated that new position changes and availabilities will be opened to everyone. As we know in the past positions are not always open for all employees to try for them. This impacts our members as they are denied opportunity for the high salaried positions they have trained for many years. This truly doesn’t help the administration fill positions with the best people available. They indicate positions in the future will be open to everyone. This will be good news for our managers and

administrator positions looking for new opportunities.

Congratulations to Veronica Caston-Frost who has been appointed Vice-President for the Authority Chapter. Veronica will help as a new voice on issues we face these coming years.

Jim Osborn, Chapter President

General Fund Chapter

Happy New Year to General Fund and all GAA members, I am wishing you great health, wealth and success throughout the year.

General Fund Members; thank you so much for your vote of confidence. It is an honor to serve as your President. I am looking forward to the endeavor with great expectations. I am committed to serve you with dignity, professionalism and a commitment to ensure the quality of standards as set forth by the Government Administrators Association are upheld. I promise to maintain a level of excellence and ethics as we embark on this new adventure together.

A heartfelt welcome and thank you to our Executive Board Members, incumbents and newly elected members alike for your time and efforts in the months to come. I also would like to thank Association President Margaret Keyes-Howard and the GAA Administration staff for all their support. Lets continue to Grow Strong and United as we make 2014 the very best!!!

With much respect and admiration.

Cassandra A. McDonald, Chapter President

Mental Health Authority Chapter

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable holiday season. If you didn’t attend the Annual Membership Meeting and Holiday Party last December, you missed a fun time. The food was good and the company was better. Please make sure you attend the next one. I promise you will enjoy it.

I want to thank all the members of the new Mental Health Authority Chapter who voted for your new Officers: Onice-na Jones (Secretary), Stephen Ogundipe

Continued on Page 4

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Robert A. Brazeau, Treasurer's Office
- Jonathan E. Dunn, Dept. of Public Services
- Gary R. Herman, Dept. of Technology
- Anita D. Jackson, Mental Health
- Jacqueline Y. Longmire, Circuit Court
- Darlene Owens, Mental Health
- Keri L. Riemke, Treasurer's Office
- Carmen Smith, Mental Health
- Harriet Weaver, Probate Court

WHAT'S NEWS

RETIREES:

- Margaret D. Brown, WCPNC
- Paul Brown, General Fund Chapter
- Pamela L. Hyde-Shelton, General Fund
- Paul A. Brown, General Fund Chapter
- Clarence Davis, District Court Chapter
- Peggy L. English, General Fund Chapter
- Carolyn D. McCray-Wilson, Circuit Court
- Ronald E. Kolito, Ph.D., Circuit Court
- Margaret E. Tatum, WCPNC
- Princella Buckhannon, WCPNC
- Constance Joyner, WCPNC
- Debra D. McGinnis, Circuit Court Chapter
- Rita R. Strong, Circuit Court Chapter
- Virginia Walker, WCPNC
- Fred L. Conerly, General Fund Chapter
- Tim B. Turner, General Fund Chapter

CONDOLENCES TO:

- Sheila Hartley-Shippings**, whose husband passed away.
- Sheila Johnson**, whose mother-in-law passed away in January.
- Elizabeth Patterson**, whose sister-in-law passed away in December.
- MaDalla Principe**, whose mother-in-law passed away in December.
- Marie Shoulders**, whose father passed away in December.
- To the family of Desiree Thomas**, who passed away in February.
- Jim Williams**, whose sister passed away in September.
- Toni Wilson**, whose sister passed away in November.

SPEEDY RECOVERY TO:

- Kathy-Ellen Kups, Wayne County Professional Nurse Chapter

CHAPTER ELECTIONS

Continued from Page 1

unnecessary for the Airport Authority Chapter as James Osborn continues as President of that Chapter and Veronica Caston-Frost assumes the Vice Presidency.

MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

The election chose the first officers of the newly created GAA Mental Health Authority Chapter. The results were:

President:	Votes
C. J. "Kip" Kliber	36*
April Siebert	8

Vice-President:	Votes
Stephen Ogundipe	32*
Esther Twitty-Maxwell	11

Secretary:
Onicena Jones
(Elected by Acclimation)

*Elected

FROM YOUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Mental Health Authority Chapter

Continued from Page 3

(Vice President), and I (President). We are honored to be selected. It is a strong and intelligent cadre of officers. We look forward to working hard on your behalf.

As you know, negotiations on a new contract for our Chapter will begin soon. We want to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to have their voice heard. In accordance with the GAA Constitution, the GAA office will send a survey to all members asking for each member's most important bargaining issues for the new contract. So if you want to be heard, please complete and return the survey. If you need additional sheets to explain your specific issue(s), please do so. If you want to talk with your Officers, individually or separately about your personal bargaining issues, please approach us. But do it before the end of February because negotiations may move quickly.

As members of the new MHA Chapter, we have a unique opportunity to forge a new reality without the constraints of Wayne County. Let's work together to make it the best reality possible.

Kip Kliber, Chapter President

36th District Court Chapter

The 2013 year was challenging for unions in our great State with the passage of the "Right to Work Law." Members of the 36th District Court Chapter ratified a one-year agreement. The contract was ratified by a margin of a single vote. Members, for the first time in the Chapter's history, agreed to a 10% wage reduction and a universal health care plan. The plan requires our members to pay more money out of pocket for health care services. The action clearly demonstrates the power of voting. In 2014, if anyone entertaining the notion that a vote does not count, think again. Our history details the struggles during the voting rights movement. Exercise your right to vote in 2014.

In spite of Michigan being a "Right to Work" state, our history books also tell us of the many men and women who fought for unions. As members, we are obligated not to change history in such a way that their sacrifices are in vain. Now is not the time to complain or bail-out; it is time to STAND.

District Court members let us remain optimistic and stand together as we prepare for negotiations in 2014.

Congratulations to our retirees in 2013, Clarence Davis, Nancy Dinkins, June Griffin, and Patricia Smith.

Solidarity in 2014

Denise Gray, Chapter President

3rd Circuit Court Chapter

Hopefully, a new day has begun with renewed hopes for a much better year in 2014 and succeeding years for the Circuit Court.

We are pleased with the appointment of the new Chief Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit, the Honorable Robert J. Colombo. He has surrounded his leadership with new top administrators in his appointments of Zenell Brown as Court Administrator and Alisa M. Shannon as Deputy Court Administrator-Criminal Division. Both bring to their new responsibilities a wealth of knowledge and experience. We look forward to the most positive working relationship.

As you know, our existing labor contract, negotiated for a one-year period,

expires this Fall. The Parties, the Court and GAA, are obligated to commence negotiations April 1st or thereabouts, on a new agreement. To that end, the Association, on the Chapter's behalf, will shortly be sending surveys to the membership for their desirable wishes on the New Agreement. Be sure you timely respond to the surveys so that the bargaining team can review these and appropriately consider them in setting the bargaining agenda.

Priscilla A. Wells, Chapter President

Wayne County Professional Nurse Council

There is little to report on happenings in negotiations towards a successor contract for GAA's Professional Nurse Chapter. Resumption of negotiations to effect a renewal contract remains at a standstill. It appears that Wayne County remains steadfast in its pursuance of concessions on all defined benefit plans and some adjustment to Plan 4 that no County union has yet to agree upon. That, principally is the cause of the present stalemate in reaching an Agreement at this time.

Our unit recognizes the difficulty facing the entire work force because of the County's huge budget shortfall, but we neither created it, nor are responsible for it. Quite the contrary, we have conscientiously done our part in accepting economically deprived concessions over the past two years. It is time for County Administration to look for increased revenue possibilities from sources other than off the backs of its employees such as eliminating non-mandated services, and the possibility of selling off property assets that would not be harmful to its citizens. Let us hope that prudence and sound judgment will now prove to be of better service to the public than layoffs and wage and benefit cutbacks.

Foremost, we must remain united in these crucial times. Keep the Faith!

Elizabeth Patterson, Chapter President

Probate Court Chapter

Negotiations for the GAA Probate Court Chapter will commence shortly. We ask that you complete the negotiation survey and return it to the GAA office this month so that the bargaining team may formulate an agenda.