



*The Tree Unites the  
Branches; The Branches  
Bear the Fruit*

# The ORANJ TREE

Quarterly Newsletter of the Organization of Residents Associations of New Jersey  
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## ORANJ: THE NEW NORMAL

**Monthly Zoom Conversations Collaboration with LeadingAge**

**New Personnel New Goals New Plenary**

"Goals and Resources" was the lead article in the spring issue of this newsletter. At the time it was unclear whether ORANJ would survive. There was a personnel shortage and oldtimers were aging out and getting discouraged. Looking back, though, we see that even before March a transfusion had started. [Jim Gallagher](#) had arrived. After the March newsletter [Rick Ober](#) and [Andy Kleppe](#) came aboard. Follow links to learn about our new blood. For old blood use links from bylines.

We had no legislative or advocacy goal back in March. Our goals then were to find leaders for ORANJ and to become better connected with the leaders of the member resident associations. In the fall of 2020 our attempt to build connections through Zoom failed. However, by the spring of 2022, Zoom had become a new normal, and since April we've had monthly Zoom conversations that are quite well attended.

On June 24 Ron Whalin forwarded an email concerning the staffing crisis. Liz Fandel, a VP at Fellowship Senior Living, said that they wanted to meet with representatives of each of the communities in New Jersey. Our response was to invite visitors from Fellowship Village and LeadingAge NJ/DE to attend the July 13 Zoom conversation.

LeadingAge has given us a goal that will keep us working for months and years to come. Gary's article about advocacy and legislation has more on the topic of the workforce crisis.



### Executive Committee

RON WHALIN, *Fellowship Village*  
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Vice President, Northeast Region

HERB FREIND, *Cedar Crest*  
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RICK OBER, *Stonebridge*  
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BARBARA TROUGHT, *Medford Leas*  
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GARY BALDWIN, *Seabrook*  
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PAUL BASHAM, *Wiley Christian*  
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MAGGIE HEINEMAN, *Medford Leas*  
Treasurer

GARY BALDWIN, *Seabrook*  
Legislative Committee

MAGGIE HEINEMAN, *Medford Leas*  
Communications Committee

### Members

Allegra at The Fountains, *Atco*  
Applewood, *Freehold*  
The Atrium at Navesink, *Red Bank*  
Bristol Glen, *Newton*  
Cadbury at Cherry Hill, *Cherry Hill*  
Cedar Crest, *Pompton Plains*  
Crane's Mill, *West Caldwell*  
Crestwood Manor, *Whiting*  
The Evergreens, *Moorestown*  
Fellowship Village, *Basking Ridge*  
Friends Village, *Woodstown*  
Harrogate, *Lakewood*  
House of the Good Shepherd,  
*Hackettstown*  
Lantern Hill, *New Providence*  
Laurel Circle, *Bridgewater*  
Lions Gate, *Voorhees*  
Meadow Lakes, *East Windsor*  
Medford Leas, *Medford*  
Monroe Village, *Monroe Township*  
The Oaks at Denville, *Denville*  
The Pines at Whiting, *Whiting*  
Seabrook, *Tinton Falls*  
Stonebridge at Montgomery,  
*Skillman*  
Wiley Mission, *Marlton*  
Winchester Gardens, *Maplewood*

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# PLENARY MEETING

[by Barbara Trought](#)

Events that never happened during the pandemic include ORANJ plenary meetings. Spring and fall prior to COVID-19, residents from all 25 CCRCs met to share a day of new ideas, stimulating speakers, fellowship, and good food.

The site would be one of the facilities large enough to accommodate about 150 people with not only a well-appointed theater or auditorium, but also sufficiently spacious dining rooms and available parking areas. Another question the planners consider: is the site centrally located?

Good news! We will meet this fall.

Wednesday, October 19. Dan Seeger  
*Finding Stability Within Change:*

*NaCCRA's Role in Maintaining Hope as CCRCs Evolve*

Dan advocates for all of us in CCRCs as he challenges some current practices and points toward more resident engagement. Dan, formerly a resident at Medford Leas and now at Pennswood, is vice president of NaCCRA. He is a retired not-for-profit administrator and organizational leader, and a Quaker religion and social issues writer.

ORANJ Executive Committee has invited presidents of local associations to register for the event. Plan now to discuss this with resident leaders in your community. Each local association may send up to six members.

Come to the ORANJ Plenary Meeting at Fellowship Village in Basking Ridge.

## NaCCRA

[by Ron Whalin](#)

NaCCRA is the [National Association of Continuing Care Resident Associations](#). There are three kinds of membership. ORANJ is a state member. Fellowship Village is a community member. I am an individual member.

I'm also on the board of NaCCRA and I hope you will become interested in joining as an individual and that you will encourage your resident association to join as a community member.

Of course, I am delighted that you will be able to meet NaCCRA's Vice President Dan Seeger at Fellowship Village next October and I look forward to being with you again in person.

# NOMINATIONS

[by Paul Basham](#)

Our Nominating Committee members, Barbara Trought, Gary Baldwin and Paul Basham, Chair, are searching for candidates to fill two ORANJ vacancies: Treasurer and Vice-President of the Northeast Region, which includes Laurel Circle, Fellowship Village, Lantern Hill and Winchester Gardens. Please email your suggestions to Paul Basham, [pjbasham@gmail.com](mailto:pjbasham@gmail.com) or send them to Paul's address at 14 Privet Court, Marlton, NJ 08053. We welcome your recommendations.

## Communications

[by Maggie Heineman](#)

**Our newsletter** is published in two formats. We mail about 10 print copies of *The ORANJ Tree* to presidents of member associations. We send the same content in *ORANJ Blossom* format to any and all email addresses given to us. *ORANJ Blossom* comes in the body of the email, so recipients don't have to click on an attachment. Newsletters since 2005 are archived on our [Publications Page](#).

**Website:** A glance at the menu of our website at [oranjccrc.org](http://oranjccrc.org) together with a click on the "about" item on that menu will show you what's available if you are interested in learning about ORANJ.

**Zoom Conversations:** The newsletter and website only provide information one-way. Before Covid regional vice presidents were encouraged to hold meetings for residents in their region. This worked well in the Southeast Region with quarterly meetings led by Gary Baldwin. Other regions had less interaction; some had none.

The pandemic brought Zoom and we learned how to have conversations across distances. Zoom has become a new normal. Even as we start in-person meetings, ORANJ will continue with monthly Zoom conversations to reach across the miles.

**The Blog:** Whereas Zoom invitations are limited to association presidents and ORANJ liaisons, summaries of Zoom conversations are publicly available at [oranjccrc.org/blog](http://oranjccrc.org/blog) and linked below.

The April 13 [Notes](#) show that discussion included staff appreciation funds and auditing of financial records. At the May 16 Zoom, [Getting to Know You](#), we talked about Springpoint's outsourcing of the food service, acquisition of Friends Village by Fellowship Senior Living, and staff shortages everywhere. On June 7 Rick explained our [Response to 2022 bills on Refundable Contracts](#). The July 13 Zoom was about the [Workforce Crisis](#).

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

by Gary Baldwin

The Legislative Advocacy Committee met recently via Zoom to discuss issues of concern to residents. Two issues are being tracked by the committee.

The first is residents and management of CCRCs across the country are becoming more alert to the shortage of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and the high cost of hiring new aides through staffing agencies. ORANJ is working with LeadingAge of NJ/DE and the management of Fellowship Senior Living to determine a preferred way to engage legislators in New Jersey and at the federal level to alert them to the growing shortage and cost of hiring medical personnel. If legislation is introduced in the legislative bodies, we will support the effort in consort with LeadingAge of New Jersey and their associates. We must take action by encouraging our NJ legislators to implement solutions which support care of older adults in our state. Our legislature and our administrators must partner and find ways to expand the aging services workforce by making it more profitable for the workers and less costly to secure these workers through staffing agencies. The blog post [Workforce Crisis in the Senior Living and Health Care Industry](#) has more information about this issue and our collaboration with LeadingAge.

The second is our immediate concern. It pertains to recent legislation, introduced into both legislative bodies of the state, that seeks to create a mandatory provision in the state law for the return of deposits within one year following departure of the resident. Most of the laws regulating CCRCs are designed to insure their ongoing solvency. This proposed legislation could have the opposite effect which is why ORANJ opposes it. The financial health of CCRCs is the critical issue.

In the past there were issues with refundable deposits when the living unit in question had to be reoccupied before a departed resident received their refund. Legislation was passed in 2018 which required a sequential priority system to resolve these issues.

The percentage of residential units occupied varies significantly based on factors such as the economy, stock markets, housing prices, hurricanes and other weather events, and, very significantly, health crises such as the Covid 19 pandemic. If a significant number of residents pass or move away in a brief period of time and demand for residential units is low, the proposed legislation requiring refunds within a year could cause a financial crisis for a CCRC. This could force cutbacks in staff and services, which could further reduce demand, ultimately resulting in CCRCs seeking financial protection in the courts with residents' deposits possibly diminished or delayed. Newspaper reports reflect the

failure of CCRCs in other states due to occupancy declines due to winter storms, hurricanes, and especially the Covid 19 pandemic.

By and large, the recent sensational newspaper stories in the *NJ Star Ledger* about long delays relate to contracts in existence before 2018. The sequential priority system is generally working well.

We do not wish any of our CCRCs in New Jersey to suffer severe financial difficulties due to temporary causes of low occupancy. The proposed legislation would exacerbate such situations by requiring refundable entrance fees to be refunded by a CCRC during a period when insufficient new entrance fees are being received.

Most of the CCRCs in New Jersey are nonprofits, which do not have the capacity to raise additional equity in the markets. Many have their origins in religious homes for the elderly. New Jersey CCRCs are required to provide sustaining charitable assistance to a resident who is experiencing financial difficulties, except in limited circumstances.

ORANJ has sent letters to the following key legislators asking for a withdrawal of their bills. Senator Codey and Senator Gill (S-1457), Assemblywoman Jasey and Assemblywoman McKnight (A-1196), and Assemblywoman Munoz (A-4078), who are all sponsoring legislators of the bills. ORANJ also sent letters to Senator Vitale, Senator Gopal, and Senator Singer, all key Senate persons, informing them that ORANJ has asked Senator Codey and Senator Gill to withdraw Senate Bill 1457 and suggesting nonsupport of the bills if they reach committee hearings.

Jim McCracken, President & CEO, LeadingAge NJ/DE, recently stated that their position on the proposed legislation is consistent with ORANJ and that they would like to coordinate our advocacy on this issue. He has suggested that ORANJ mobilize our membership to contact local district legislators to urge them to oppose the bills if or when they may begin to move in the fall of this Legislative Session.

Our final step will be to ask our ORANJ regional vice presidents to contact the CCRCs within their regions and ask them to suggest to their resident members that they contact their local New Jersey district representatives urging them to oppose this legislation. We would also ask each resident association president to publish internal information supporting the ORANJ position for distribution to the residents within their respective CCRCs.

Your support is urgently needed!



# ON THE LIGHTER SIDE: WHAT'S COOKING?

by [Paul Basham](#)

What are the challenges of cooking for a retirement community? To find out I contacted several chefs who cook at CCRCs in New Jersey. They all agree that socialization and a regular routine are vital parts of the dining experience. During mealtime people share their lives with others. Also, regular mealtimes provide consistency and a sense of security. A familiar routine in food service reduces stress and anxiety. A calm mind boosts digestion.



Arthur Marston, Chef at Fellowship Village

I have found that the chefs in our communities are a creative bunch that must steer around food allergies and serve crowd-pleasing favorites without becoming repetitive. They know how to use fresh local seasonal ingredients and maintain first class standards. They can take advantage of staff turnover, which can bring new cooking styles into the kitchen.

Our chefs have found that working in a community is like cooking in another person's home. They have the same customers every day and quickly learn an individual's likes and dislikes. My contact with the chefs has helped me to see how skillful they are in maintaining a family atmosphere in the hubbub of preparing a meal. They value feedback and learn from trial and error.

*What's Cooking is a work in progress. Chefs can still email stories and photos to Paul at [pjbasham@gmail.com](mailto:pjbasham@gmail.com).*

*The What's Cooking booklet is [on the website](#). There are 14 pages with reports from 13 chefs and many photos of both people and food. As more chefs respond, it will be updated online.*

## Highlights

**Heath Braunstein, Senior Director of Dining Services at Applewood** talked about their monthly "Culinary Institute of Applewood," which includes a lecture, demonstration and workshop is and is one of their most popular resident activities. Also popular are the Recipe of the Month and the Pop-Up Events, which are unannounced, when residents can sample new menu items. Some of the foods they have been asked to prepare are Tiramisu baked oatmeal, Romanesco broccoli, red wine poached pears, and alligator.

Several days a week **Kendra Jackman-Oakley chef at Winchester Gardens** has a cooking "Action Station" where residents can see their food being prepared. Some of their recipes are submitted by residents and are entitled "Whose recipe are we preparing tonight?" Kendra wrote, "When residents ask if our food will prolong their lives, I usually respond by letting them know that even though I look younger, we are all the same age. Working in the kitchen keeps me young."

## Kitchen Wisdom

Cooking done with care is an act of love.  
Craig Claiborne

In France cooking is a serious art form and a national sport.  
Julia Child

After a good dinner one can forgive anybody, even one's own relatives.  
Oscar Wilde