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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Hope you enjoyed the Christmas Holidays. For those of you who do not enjoy the festivities for Christmas, I hope you enjoyed a pleasant time with your families and friends. Keep your fingers crossed and let’s pray that the Covid disease is at its end. Now that I no longer drive, I look forward to my emails to keep me up to date with our Membership & friends. I prefer to receive your email messages rather than phone calls. Because of the bogus calls we all receive, I don’t always answer my phone. I hope you understand. If there is anything important you would like to talk to me about (or just chat!), please leave me a message with your name and number and I will call you back. Remember, your comments and/or information about any recent events at work or home is always welcomed for our Newsletters. I look forward to hearing from you.

CONGRATULATIONS.....to **Frank Maddalena** (C-TPAT Security Specialist JFK and V.P. for the Columbia Association), his Daughter **Samantha Abruscatti & Husband Tom**, presented Frank with his 1st Grandchild **Sophie Lynne**, born Sept 15, 2023 10:02am 6lbs 14ozs. Congratulations also to **President Phil Maddalena** for his 1st Great Grandchild! She is beautiful!!...**Bill Kuntz** (ret CBPO NWK) celebrating the birth of his 1st Grandchild, **Walter Hurst**, born to his daughter **Justine & Walter Hurst** in January 2024.

RETIRED.....**Ron Suess** (Supv CBP Officer JFK), a Lifetime Member of the Columbia Association retired in January 2024. Thanks for all your help with the Columbia Association. Your friendship was important to me... Best of Luck to **Chester Campbell** (CBP Officer JFK) on his retirement. Always a Gentlemen! Stay well guys! God Bless.

DECEASED.....we are all deeply saddened to inform our Membership and Friends of the passing of a former colleague and dear friend on February 9, 2024, **Susan Mitchell** (Former Port Director JFK and Director Field Operations NY Field Office)...**Mario DiCerbo** (Former President of the Columbia Association of U.S. Customs) passed away in FL on Nov. 7, 2023. I was notified by Mario’s wife, **Carol**, that memorial Services will be planned for 2024 but have no details at this time. Mario was a Former National Import Specialist at 6 WTC NY, a terrific colleague and good friend. We were honored to have his leadership and dedication for our organization. We all miss you, Mario!...**Maryann Verdi** (Former Entry Specialist JFK) a Lifetime Member of the Columbia Association and a good friend passed away on 11/20/2023...

Larry Mushinske (Former NIS) succumbed to Leukemia on 10/13/2023. Thanks for all the memories, Larry...**Glenn Gomez** dedicated member of the FTO Team JFK passed away on 10/3/2023...**Dave Casquarelli** (Father of **Paul Casquarelli** (ret Supv CBP JFK) and the Husband of the Late **Pia Casquarelli** (Executive Sect JFK) passed away on January 9, 2024...**John Amitrano** (Father of **Nick Amitrano** CBPO JFK) passed away on 1/14/2024. God Bless to a good friend...Chief of Dept NYPD, **Joseph Esposito** passed away on 1/8/2024. Joe was a Former Man of the Year for the Columbia Association. **Please Pray for our deceased.**

SICK.....Rich Pileggi (ret Deputy Port Director Immigration JFK) in and out of hospitals & rehabilitations since his retirement. He could write a book! He is currently in a wheelchair. Rich says he is looking forward to better days...**John Khantzian** (ret Supv CBPO JFK) recently had two stents put in. God Bless All. **Please pray for our sick.**

CHATTER.....thanks to **Frank Desiderio** (Customs Attorney) for staying in touch on Facebook...**Joe Scalici** (CBPO NWK) always ready to help our Columbia Association...always happy to hear from **Gil Hendler** (ret Imp Spec JFK). Enjoy your retirement in FL!...**John Swift** (ret CBPO JFK) writes from FL that he misses all the great times at JFK. We also miss you, John. Stay well Pal!...**Doug Montone** (ret CBPO NWK) writes to say he misses our Golf Outings. Doug was always our Co-Chairman. Thanks for your dedication and friendship...**Shelly Meza** (ret Entry Specialist JFK) also calls me to say hello...Can't thank **Fred Iavarone** (ret CBPO JFK) enough for your generous donation to our Scholarship Fund. Fred's family and my family have been friends for over 100 years. Our Parents and Grandparents were friends as children in the Navy Yard District of Brooklyn, NY. Fred never misses calling me at home to wish me Happy Holidays. I look forward to it, Pal!...I enjoy following **Diane McConnell & Dean Dimotsis** (Mr. & Mrs.) on Facebook as they travel the world. Keep the pictures coming!...I saw **Frank Russo** (Director Field Operations) at the Memorial Mass for Sue Mitchell but didn't get the chance to say hello. **Hi Frank!!**...Hello again to **Sal Ingrassia** (Port Director JFK)...**Donna Corsi** (ret Entry Spec JFK) in NY to visit her daughter **Angela Mazzeo & Grandson Giovanni**. Always nice to talk to you Donna...A big thank you to **Bob Meekins** (ret Asst Port Director JFK) for driving me to Sue Mitchells' Memorial Mass. Turnout was so great that Bob had to drop me off at the church and park two blocks away. God Bless you...Bet you didn't know that **Kompel Verdi** (Asst Port Director Orlando, FL), **Pat Orender** (Asst Port Director Washington Dulles) and **Leonard Morra** (CBP Officer JFK) were all U.S. Customs Explorer Scouts and marched in the Columbus Day Parade in NYC every year with the Columbia Association. Pat Orender and Leonard Morra are Lifetime Members of the Columbia Association. Len's Dad, **Joe Morra** is the President of the JFK Chamber of Commerce. Hope to hear from all of them.

DUES.....Thanks to **Joan Prato** (ret Import specialist JFK) for becoming a Lifetime Member... thank you **Jay Alweis, Richard Cotugno, Linda Hackett, John Khantzian, Tom Mattina, Alfonso Marciante, James Garr, Kristen Tursellino and Fank Cicero** for your dues.

2024 DUES.....starting in 2024, there will be a change in Membership Dues. Dues will be increased to \$30 for Active Members and \$15 for Retired Members. Lifetime membership will remain the same at \$200. Lifetime Members who join will receive a Membership card for their spouse.

Fraternally,

Phil

Philip Maddalena
President