



LOCAL 237

NEWSLINE

Vol. 56, No. 3

Fall 2022

Falling Leaves Rising Membership

In this Fall edition of Newsline, we mark the end of summer and the beginning of a new season. For some of us, the change is met with a little sadness, while for others, Fall is greeted with enthusiasm: It ushers in the start of the new school year; the excitement of Halloween and Christmas looming ahead, and the annual holidays that salute labor and regale the discovery of the New World.

Local 237 would like to thank our members for their tireless efforts on behalf of so many New Yorkers, whose lives and livelihoods depend on municipal agencies operating seamlessly despite the challenges. As former President Barack Obama said: "When times are tough, we don't give up. We get up." That's precisely what you did and continue to do. During the height of the pandemic, at a time of unimaginable grief, when a sudden, highly contagious virus rocked the entire world and our own personal world, union members — and especially public sector workers — didn't give up; they got up and went to work. During a time that overwhelmed us in dread and paralyzed so many with fear — an unnerving time that, for some, meant there would be no final hug, goodbye or sacraments to meet our maker—these essential municipal workers were on the job. Now, as we are trying to revive the City and the State, our members remain an essential element in New York's recovery.

Union membership across the nation has declined from its peak year of 1954 at 35% to only 10.8% currently. With New York among the states with the largest number of union workers — roughly 22% — about 70% of the union workforce is in the public sector. This is consistent with the

national percentage of public sector union membership being approximately five times that of the private sector — with African Americans making up the largest component of that group.

But today, after a decades-old hiatus, union membership in both the public and private sectors is on the rise. The remarkable win by Amazon workers in Staten Island to unionize was no small feat. Just two years ago, this newly formed "Amazon Labor Union" did not exist. A Staten Island Amazon warehouse worker, Christian Smalls, led a walkout in protest of deplorable, Covid-related workplace conditions. Amazon general counsel's meeting notes said of Smalls: "He's not smart, or articulate, and to the extent to which the press wants to focus on him versus us, we will be in a much stronger PR position." WOW! They not only dismissed Smalls as insignificant, but arrogantly condescended that an unpolished, tattooed young Black man could be used to unionize. Amazon fired him, but their strategy backfired, and the repercussions have been felt throughout the nation. In fact, recent surveys show that union membership is on the rise. Many well-established unions, such as the Teamsters, have seized upon the opportunity and are making the most of the momentum, using their organizing skills and resources to help enroll workers into a union.

Even though Ralph Chaplin wrote the song "Solidarity Forever" in 1915 for the Industrial Workers of World War I, its refrain is as relevant and important today as it was more than 100 years ago: "When the union's inspiration thru the worker's blood shall run, there can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun, yet what

force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one, but the union makes us strong. Solidarity forever, solidarity forever, solidarity forever, for the union makes us strong." The formal acknowledgment of the importance of workers came in 1894 when Congress created Labor Day by making the first Monday in September a national holiday. But it only did so in response to the death of 34 striking Pullman workers from the American Railway Union at the hands of U.S. Army soldiers and Marshals.

Labor Day is very unique. It's not so easy to find a holiday that crosses all religious, racial, ethnic and gender lines. Your political party, favorite color and years of education matter little. For sure, it's not easy to find a holiday which most Americans celebrate in similar ways, parade or not — usually involving a hot dog or two. Yes, Labor Day is a rarity: A holiday we can all agree upon. And, here's where labor unions shine their brightest. Just like our role in helping to build the middle class in America, we are both the ramrod and equalizer... and the bridge to the "American Dream". We fight for the rights of workers while helping to create a level playing field where the "American Dream" is not the sole property of the corporate 1%.

That's why recognizing the labor of workers — especially those in the public sector—is important. Certainly, it's a well-deserved acknowledgment and also a message to our elected leaders, political wannabes, big business and to the public at-large: You can bash us. You can try to bust us. But you need us. And, when you see the words "Union Made", they also mean "Union Strong", a movement not just a moment. ■



Local 237 Member Services

UNION HEADQUARTERS

212-924-2000
216 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011-7296

LOCAL 237 DIVISIONS

CITYWIDE, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director

LAW ENFORCEMENT, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Derek Jackson, Director

HOUSING, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Carl Giles, Housing Director

SPECIAL PROJECTS, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Debbie Coleman, Esq., Special Projects Director

LONG ISLAND

631-851-9800
100 West Main Street, Babylon,
New York 11702
Benedict Carenza, Director
Long Island Welfare Fund:
For information on the various
funds call 800-962-1145

RETIREE, 8th Fl.

212-807-0555
Provides a variety of pre- and post-
retirement services, including
pension and health insurance
counseling to members. (Pension
counseling by appointment, Thurs-
days only). General retirement
counseling and retirement plan-
ning series during spring and fall.
Julie Kobi, Director

LOCAL 237 DEPARTMENTS (Citywide and Housing)

SKILLED TRADES, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director

HEALTH AND SAFETY, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director
Susan McQuade, Coordinator

MEMBERS HEALTH, 2nd Fl.

212-924-2000
Susan McQuade, Director
smcquade@local237.org

MEMBERSHIP, 3rd Fl.

212-924-2000
Jean Stokes, Director
Provides membership services and
records, including address changes.

WELFARE FUND, 3rd Fl.

212-924-7220
The Fund administers the eligibility,
enrollment, disability, optical and
death benefits directly by the Fund's
in-house staff, as well as prescription
and dental programs indirectly.
Mitchell Goldberg, Director
Jean Stokes, Director of Collections

SOCIAL SERVICES, 3rd Fl.

646-638-8608
The Local 237 Social Services Depart-
ment features free social work
services that are available to all
members. Social workers connect
people to much needed assistance
and resources. The union knows that
its members have tough jobs and
that when encountering tough per-
sonal challenges, learning about pos-
sible solutions to those challenges
would make things that much easier.
Contact us to learn about the many
service we can provide.
Karla Steinberg, Membership
Social Worker

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212-924-1220
Lawyers advise and represent mem-
bers on covered personal legal prob-
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(family court proceedings, divorce
and separation), purchase and sale of
a primary residence, wills, adoptions,
credit and consumer problems, ten-
ant rights and bankruptcies.
Mary Sheridan, Esq., Director
Kenneth Perry, Esq., Deputy Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICES, 5th Fl.

212-924-2000
Gregory Floyd, President
Ruben Torres,
Vice President
Donald Arnold,
Secretary-Treasurer

PERSONNEL, 5th Fl.

212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director and
Chief Negotiator

POLITICAL ACTION & LEGISLATION, 5th Fl.

646-638-8501
Local 237 protects members'
rights by helping to sponsor
legislation that is important
to members, and by communicat-
ing with and supporting elected
officials serving our best interests.
Phyllis S. Shafran, Coordinator

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS, 7th Fl.

212-924-2000
For grievances and job related
problems, first contact your
shop steward and/or grievance
representative. If they can't
resolve the issue, contact your
business agent.
Mal Patterson, Director of
Grievances and Hearings
Diana Doss, Esq.,
Grievance Coordinator

CIVIL SERVICE BAR ASSOC.

7th Fl., 212-675-0519
Saul Fishman, President
Aldona Vaiciunas,
Office Administrator and
Grievance Coordinator
Lee Gordon, Esq. (Retired)
Business Agent
CSBA Welfare Fund
Alicare 866-647-4617

COMMUNICATIONS, 5th Fl.

646-638-8501
Phyllis S. Shafran, Director
Local 237 Newsline and
Editor, Retiree News & Views
Website: www.local237.org

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

8th Fl., 212-807-0550
Provides a variety of training
and educational advancement
opportunities for members.
Bertha Aiken, Director

USEFUL NUMBERS FOR PRE-RETIREEES

NYCERS

(New York City Employees
Retirement System)

By Mail:
335 Adams St., Suite 2300,
Brooklyn, NY 11201-3751

In Person:
340 Jay Street, Mezzanine,
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Gen'l Information:
347-643-3000

Outside NYC toll-free:
877-6NYCERS

NYCERS Internet

www.nyclink.org/html/nycers

NYC Department of Education Retirement System

65 Court St., Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-935-5400

Social Security Administration

800-772-1213

NY State and Local Retirement Systems

518-474-7736



A message from the President

The More Things Change...

By Gregory Floyd

President, Teamsters Local 237 and Vice President-at-Large on
the General Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

There was a time, not long ago, when the Democratic Party was considered the political party of the working class and the Republican Party was aligned with big business and the wealthy. Yet a recent New York Times/Sienna poll — for the first time ever — revealed results that indicated a reversal. The Republican Party is trending toward a multi-racial working-class coalition, while the Democrats had a larger share of support among white college graduates. Many wonder what conclusions can be drawn. Do we now have an establishment progressive party and an anti-establishment conservative party? Making matters even more complicated are recent findings that many voters are not affiliated with either major party, with polls indicating that 62% of Americans favor having a third party.

All of this should make for a very interesting 2024 Presidential election! Questions abound: What will the candidates look like? What will they need to feature to get our vote? With so many of the usual guidelines and guardrails gone, what's the pitch? And how will it be communicated? That has changed too. Stump speeches on the back of a railroad car are a relic of the past. Even huge, televised rallies have their limitations — great for optics, but mostly “preaching to the choir” without really picking up many new converts. Twitter and other social media platforms are the bumper stickers of today... less costly, no car needed, and having the ability to reach millions with one click of a cell phone by influencers who make adding followers a game. And, with baby boomers, who now dominate the politically savvy voting popu-

lation, starting to decline in number, this medium of choice will become a legitimate, powerful tool — a king- or queen-maker.

But with so much change—and so much of it of questionable positive value, there is one change that offers some real hope for the future. After years of declining numbers, union membership is now on the rise. Currently, there are many examples of workers in industries throughout the nation previously thought to be un-organizable or showing little interest in the union movement—from Amazon to Starbucks to McDonalds — now signing-up members. And the union drive comes from within. Workers talking to their fellow workers. They know the problems. They see the solutions. And their co-workers listen. Talk about “influencers”!

So, perhaps in this great time of change — this time of altered dictionary definitions and role reversals — labor unions, which have remained steadfast in what they represent, are now presented with a path from which they had lost their way, and a newly created vacuum they can fill. We span all the demographics, political ideologies and have the communications network and skills—new and old—to make impact. As the old adage says: “The more things change, the more they remain the same”. When applied to labor unions, that says it all. We have endured the union bashers, the union busters, the unfavorable court rulings and anti-labor appointees, but workers instinctively know that we are on their side. Our task ahead is to make all Americans know it too, and that the current slogan, “**Union strong**”, is one definition that will never change. ■



**You're not
in Newsline?
Why not?**

**YOU ARE
NEWSWORTHY!**

We want to hear from you!

*Send us your photos, stories and ideas. We're interested in you:
On the job, special accomplishments, family news, etc.*

Email pshafran@local237.org or call Phyllis Shafran at 646-638-8501

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Above and Beyond

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures and stories they want to share:

"Good Job", Brooklyn South



When shots rang out in the public park next door to JHS 278, **School Safety Agents Williams and Ramos** (pictured with Law Enforcement Business Agent **Derek Short**, left, and the Director of Law Enforcement, **Derek Jackson**) put the school on a “shelter-in” and transmitted over Citywide radio to get immediate help from the local precinct. Along with the precinct response, Brooklyn South Task Force assisted as well. The Agents were instrumental in safeguarding the school, conducting canvases, and getting the students that were left in the building back to their loved ones.



TLC Captain Saves the Day!

Firearm Seized at the Site of the US Open

A sharp-eyed, quick-thinking TCL officer, **Captain Philip White**, helped to prevent the possibility of a firearm being brought into the heavily attended US Open, and police officers being placed in harm's way. Captain White, while on the assignment of escorting TLC officers to a parking lot, observed an SUV parked next to the car of two NYPD officers at the Queens Museum, which is adjacent to the major entrance of the US Open. There, he sees a black object flying in the air, the SUV fleeing the scene and one officer struggling to place a suspect under arrest. Captain White called for assistance and located what appeared to be a gun in the bushes. The suspect was transported to the 110th police precinct. Captain White's heroic actions surely helped to save the day.

Local 237 NEWSLINE

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Phyllis S. Shafran
Editor

Special thanks in the preparation of Newsline to:
Gisela (GiGi) Reyes, Executive Administrative Assistant

IF YOU MOVE – Please send your change of address in writing to **Membership** to ensure that you continue receiving your newspaper.



MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

All in the Family

We celebrate the accomplishments and meaningful times in the lives of our members and their families



Jerett Benjamin, Jr., (seated, first row, left), son of SSA **Jerett Benjamin**, got the opportunity of a lifetime — to perform with 15-time GRAMMY Award-winning singer, songwriter, musician, producer, and accomplished actress, Alicia Keys, at Radio City Music Hall in August, through Jammcard, an organization that sets up choirs for her tours.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Law Enforcement Division

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures and stories they want to share:



School Safety, Queens North and South, book bag handout at PS 11.



Members of Staten Island School Safety Division doing the YPA proud. YPA IS/HS 43 Crew. The kids thank you!



Members of Staten Island School Safety Division — awesome job by an awesome group. YPA Curtis HS Crew. SSA III Toro, SSA Finnegan, SSA Cordova, SSA Delvalle-Mota, SSA Rivera, SSA Miller.



NYPD School Safety Division Manhattan North Command SSA1 Alston, High School For Climate Justice/Eleanor Roosevelt HS (I) and Mrs. Sandra Lennon, Chairwoman of Paratransit from Transit Workers Union Local 100.



Hospital Police Officer **Raymunda Desir**, was Carter Hospital's Idol of the Month for July. She has definitely made a positive impression on the hospital community at Carter.

Manhattan North Appreciation Day for School Safety



In attendance was **Jeanette I. Taveras**, Business Agent and Local 237 Recording Secretary; **Derek Jackson**, Law Enforcement Director; **Carlton Bailey**, Commanding Officer Manhattan South; **Santhosh Panicker**, XO Manhattan South. **L3 Quinn Beauford**, **Luciena Black**, **Maxine Kelly**, **Cheryl Talovera**, **Louis Williams**, **L3 Daniel O'Brien**, **Tiffany Easley**, **Errol Powell**, **Omar Ruiz**, **Sharese Thompson-Harkless**, **Lorn Cadore**, **Ryan Featherstone**, **Edward Lopez-Vasquez**, **Diana Garavito**, **Semontha Brown**, **SSS Esperanza Evangelista** (for the SSSs), **Julie Colon** (for MTF), **Emily Akade** (for Operations), **Lori Giargias** (for Payroll), **L3 Kim Tilson**, **L3 Howard Glover**, **L3 Denise Pabon**, **Marc Worrell** and **SSS Antoinette Kendall**.



Darryl Miles, former Liaison for Manhattan South was provided with a plaque upon his retirement. (l-r) Commanding Officer **Carlton Bailey** of Manhattan South; **Jeanette I. Taveras**, Business Agent and Local 237 Recording Secretary; **Darryl Miles**; and **Derek Jackson**, Director Law Enforcement Division.



PO Sanchez and **Sgt. Kozlowski** are assisting new students get acquainted with the campus by explaining the identification procedures for Queensborough Community College.



Sergeant Freytes of Lehman College is welcoming new students to the campus.



Central Headquarters Blood Drive, on July 29, 2022. 43 pints of blood were donated to help save lives. Thank you to all those who donated. We even had some of our executive staff & recruits helping the cause.



School Safety Agents who volunteered to learn about active shooter situations to keep the staff and children safe in the New York City Public Schools.



(l-r) Former Deputy Director **Alfredo Jones**, **Lt. Lorne Hargett**, **Sgt. Simona Gillard**, **Officer Saira Flores**, Bx. Asst. District Attorney **Jeanette Rucker**, **Officer Stephany Morillo**, **Officer Michael Wiggins**, **Officer Dwight Smith**, and Chief of Hospital Police in North Central Hospital **Vito Ale**.



Bronx East Picnic (l-r) **Stacy Washington**, **Joy Davis**, **Lorraine McClain**, **Minorka Camarena**, **Eugenia Boykins**, **Jennifer Cru** with **Charlie Cotto**, Dep. Dir. Law Enforcement and Citywide Divisions.



SSAs Manhattan South Command at National Night Out, 2nd Annual book bag giveaway for Lower East Side Community.

SSA Graduation



193 School Safety Agents graduated.



Valedictorian **SSA Salvatore Bonello** with **Charlie Cotto**.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Law Enforcement Division

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures and stories they want to share:

DHS Police Graduation Day



On Thursday, May 26, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Police held its 25th commencement ceremony at 4 World Trade Center in the Dr. James R. Dumpson Center. The graduating class was comprised of 47 newly minted officers who had finished three months of rigorous training.

Hospital Police Graduation Day



Hospital Police Graduation, August 19, 2022, Jacobi Hospital

SQUAD A OFFICERS

Shadid Ahmed, Minhaj Ahmed, Kenny Alexandre, Dhiraj Bhakta, Fernando Cardona, Tamara Casey, Manuel Cruz, Katreese Davis, Christina Dorsette, Silvia Duran, Keiyona Fontanez, Sarah Ford, Valentina Govorva and Veronica White.

SQUAD B OFFICERS

Kaylan Gray, Vanessa Green, Yvonne Guerrier, Kyle Hunte, Tiquane James, Nickenson Jean Pierre, Saad Khalid, Abdullah Kahn, Roderick Lawes, Janies Leiva, Stephanie Leon, Chrisitan Lopez, Quentin Mahai and Anny Marte Cuello.

SQUAD C OFFICERS

Maxim Borisov, Anthony Martinez Diaz, Shawn Martin, Sharice Mas, Jordahn Mohammed, Gael Moleus, Jalisah Montgomery, Celonia Pace, Milton Ramirez, Vitaliy Savynski, Demetrius Terrell, Jaleesa Toussaint and Demountria Wallace.

CUNY Graduates



Ravindra Arnold, Francisco Britez, Bryan Carlozama, Shanae Coleman, Kia Copeland, Marcus Garcia, Katrina Harris, Laquanta Lilly, Ilian Marcano, Cristal Ortiz, Pedro Perez, Joane Regis, Christopher Robinson, Shernan Samuel, Emmanuel Simon, Alexander Supit, Kevin Vazquez-Garcia and Jannile Williams.



Chief Arnaldo Bernabe, of Hostos Community College and Director of Law Enforcement Division Derek Jackson (r).



Honor Guards:
PO Butera, Specialist Singh and Sgt. Pancham.



Manhattan South Command National Night Out 2022. We all came out together to celebrate with the community.



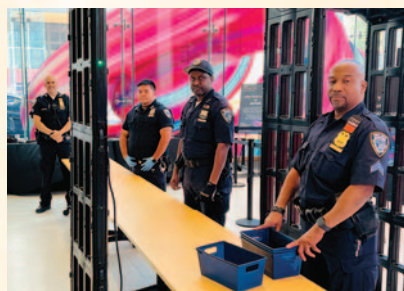
Hospital Police Officers ready to bring in some Halloween cheer. (l-r) SO Irwin Lopez-Maldonado, SO David Boakye, Lt. Tiffany Carter, Sgt. Earl Mayers, Sgt. Noe Cabrera and SO Derun Zhou at Coler Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.



Thomas Jefferson Agents (l-r) L3 Harvey, Agent Centeno, Agent Garrett, Agent Sarker, Agent Oakes and Agent Anthony keeping students safe while outside for dismissal.



Some of the Midnight and Morning crews at Brooklyn College. (l-r) PO Simon, CSA Sherry, PO Golden (Shop steward), Sgt. Testa, Sgt. Davis, Sgt. Foo, PO Sutton, PO Hill & PO Marbury.



Some of the members and prospective members of the safe team an elite group of officers from various colleges who assist with special events. (l-r) Sgt. LaCadre from Guttman College, PO Smith (Shop steward) from Medgar Evers College, PO Accardo from College of Staten Island, and Sgt. Diaz Command from Baruch College. They were on assignment at NYC Technical Community College for a special event checking visitors and manning the magnetometer to keep a safe educational environment.



The Public Safety Officers at CUNY work hard to protect the lives of students, faculty and visitors. CSA Chance (l) and PO Pereira (r) are just two of the officers at Medgar Evers College.



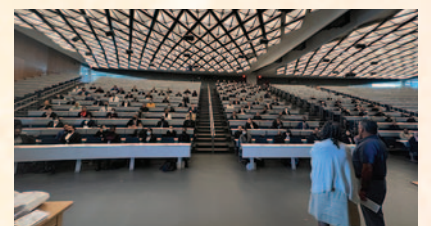
CSA Jackson is responsible for allowing entry in the building by checking students, staff and visitors identification at York College.



Sgt. Lassalle (l) and Det. Washington (r), Jamaica Health Center.



On the first day of college, Sgt. Lui is helping students enter campus grounds at Kingsborough Community College.



The Law Enforcement Division met with 150 new probationary School Safety Agents at the Police Academy.



Law Enforcement Officers who work the night tour at LaGuardia College keep the students, faculty and visitors safe. (l-r) CSA Brown (Shop Steward), CSA Gloder, PO Felder, CSA Lehnert, CSA Foster, CSA AL-Mamun, CSA Datta, CPL Allen, PO Stanton, PO Vaseline, CPL Angurli, CSA Burton, Sgt. Gadsen and PO Dai.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

NYCHA Workers

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures and stories they want to share:

NYCHA Members in the Bronx Feeling Better Equipped to Address Security Issues With Their Smartphones

Communication is a key part of any safety and security plan. Staff needs to be able to talk to each other, especially when there is an incident like an active shooting or serious issues to report. NYCHA employees in many locations have poor radio reception, as there may be many dead zones, especially in basements and buildings that are farther from the supervisors' offices. There are other problems, such as outdated radios, insufficient battery power, and excessive waits for new radios.

Andy Rodriguez, the Supervisor of Caretakers at 1010 East 178th Street was concerned, and worked hard for four years to get the phones into the staff's hands. "The Office of Safety and Security came out to do an assessment, and found too many dead zones, which we knew was the case, because our radios didn't work anywhere. We also have two locations, and having a remote location six blocks away made it impossible to communicate effectively without a better device."

The staff is now equipped with a Smartphone, and they are breathing easier. **Greg (Bam) Barnes**, Caretaker X, noted that "these phones are accurate in real time, they have much better service quality,

and we are much more confident that we can be in touch when we need to be connected. It's also very helpful to get emails with notices about weekend schedules and other messages, like reminders or trainings and other group communications." More employees, such as the Caretaker Xs, are being given phones to conduct mold inspections, and maintenance workers have had phones for years. Staff having iPhones is not new to NYCHA. "Having the

phone has really improved communication and relationships between staff and management. It gives employees access to resources and other pertinent information without solely having to rely on getting the info from supervisors," says Safety Associate, **Shana Cook**.

"Almost every development I work with has some issue with radios," said **Jaleesa Moye**, Local 237 Business Agent. Sometimes they just don't have enough for the entire staff, other times the radios die out before the end of the shift, and then there are the dead zone

issues." The union is conducting a survey including all developments to identify the major issues for radios in that location to better address the problems, and to put pressure on NYCHA to take more action



Andy Rodriguez, NYCHA Supervisor of Grounds.



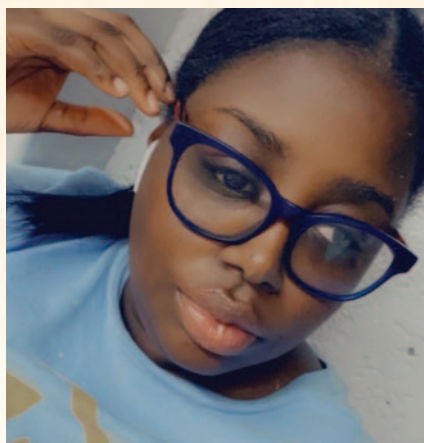
1010 Consolidated NYCHA Staff with Business Agent **Jaleesa Moye**.

to correct this longstanding safety issue.

Carl Giles, the union's Housing Director, is working with NYCHA to ensure that all staff across the agency have access to a good communication device. "We have been pushing the agency on this issue to address this problem for years," noted Giles. "How do we train workers on active shooter procedures if they don't have a way to get the information that there is an active shooter on the property or in the area? NYCHA needs to upgrade their communication systems to ensure everyone's safety, and they cannot continue to rely on the use of the staff's own personal phones to provide that service." ■



Ryan Ali (l), **Erick Aguilar** (r) Elevator mechanics working out of 1200 Waters Place, with Housing Director **Carl Giles** (c).



Tatiana Henry-Bean NYCHA Safety Associates Caretaker J at Wald Houses. "The safety of my co-workers is important to me."

Queens Safety Associates



Lonnie Hicks (l), SA at Queensbridge is a Caretaker J.

"PPE is the way to be.
They say we are not superheroes; we are NYCHA's justice league to keep it safe."

Lisa Thompson (c), SA Ravenswood is a Caretaker G.

"100 in 100 our safety always.
The three safety busters."

Gary Davis (r), SA Woodside is a Caretaker X.

"Safety is the way to go.
Hard hat or bandage?
Radio for safety.
Everyone hop on the safety train.
We three stand to make it safe."



Eastchester staff.



Talesha Bell, NYCHA Caretaker X, Farragut Houses, loading truck.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Citiwide Division

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures and stories they want to share:



Belvis Health Center, Bronx, NY. (l-r) Stockworker **Timothy Walden** and Supervisor Stockworker **Juan Oyola** with Citywide Assistant Director **George Wade**.



(l-r) **George Wade**, **Min LI**, **Liyun Lin** and Ultrasound Tech **Alma Nieves**.



Belvis Health Center, Bronx, NY. (l-r) Radiologic Techs **Min LI** and **Liyun Lin**.



At Bellevue Hospital (l-r) **Yeasmin Farida** EKG Tech; **Curtis Scott**, Business Agent; **Luisa Pons**, EKG Tech; and **Carmen Balbuena**, Sr. EKG Tech.



(l-r) Citywide Assistant Director **George Wade**, Bellevue EKG Tech **Darlene Michi** and Business Agent **Bianca Jones**.



(l-r) Fire Department LIC, Stores Personnel, **Chris Tarus**, **Sergio Vargas** and **Steven M. Griswold** with **George Wade** (foreground).



Anthony E. Di Orio (Bird), Receiving Supervisor Lvl. 3, Jacobi Hospital, 43 years of service. Hobby: keyboard musician.



Contract ratification August 1st for full-time and part-time cleaners and set-up employees, Javits Center. (l-r) **Donald Arnold**, Citywide Director; **Martha Bodhnarain**, Sr. Counsel; **Julius Centron**, Grievance Rep.; and **Ken Roper**, Housing Business Agent.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Added to the Roster of Retirees

Local 237 wants to thank the following members for their years of dedicated service, and wish them well in their retirement:



Tamar Smith (c) School Safety Officer. Pictured with **Jeanette Taveras**, Local 237's Executive Board Recording Secretary and Law Enforcement Business Agent (l) and **Ruben Torres**, Vice President on the Executive Board (r).



CSA Trevor Johnson from York College retired after 10 years of service. Flanked by Business Agent **Kangela Moore**, Chief James Assmann Director of Public Safety at York College (l) and Lieutenant Carlos Suarez (r).



Carl Giles (l) presenting retirement plaque to **Cheryl Hart** for 31 years of service.



(l-r) **Captain Moises Suero** with **Charlie Cotto**, Deputy Director, Law Enforcement/Citywide Division.



Housing Director **Carl Giles** (r) presenting retirement plaque to **Bruce Samuels** for 35 years of service.



Sergeant Errol Nicholas (center) of Medgar Evers College retired. He completed 29 years of service at the City University of New York. Pictured with **Jeanette Taveras** (right); **Derek Jackson**, Director of Law Enforcement Division (top row, left) and **Derek Short**, Business Agent (top row, 2nd from left).



SSA Retiree Barbra Jones. In her own words: "I thank you so much for all you've done for me. Today I'll never forget walking out of 1PP as a retired School Safety Agent after 27 years and 3 months."



Leroy Anderson, Supervisor Stockworkers Lvl. 1, Harlem Hospital.



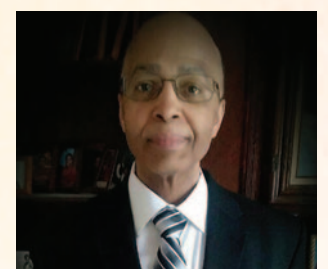
Carl Giles (l) proudly presented **Roosevelt Glenn** a plaque for 35 years of service.



(l-r) **Carl Giles** presenting retirement plaque to **Cliff Williams** for 25 years of service.



Stanley McEntire, Caretaker J retires after 14 years with NYCHA at Albany Houses. He was also a Shop Steward and Safety Associate.



Michael Lawrence worked for NYCHA as a Housing Manager at Roosevelt for 37 ½ years.

**A Well-Deserved
“THANK YOU!”
for Public Workers**

Teamsters Local 237 would like to thank its members and other public sector employees for their tireless efforts on behalf of so many New Yorkers, whose lives and livelihoods depend on municipal agencies operating seamlessly despite the challenges. As former President Barack Obama said: “When times are tough, we don’t give up. We get up.” That’s precisely what public employees did and continue to do. During the height of the pandemic, at a time of unimaginable grief, when a sudden, highly contagious virus rocked the entire globe and our own personal world, union members—and especially public sector workers—didn’t give up; they got up and went to work. During a time that immersed us in dread and paralyzed so many with fear— an unnerving time that, for some, meant there would be no final hug, goodbye or sacraments to meet our maker—these essential municipal workers were on the job. Now, as we are trying to revive the City and the State, public workers remain an essential element in New York’s recovery. On behalf of all New Yorkers, let’s give them a well-deserved “THANK YOU!”





LONG ISLAND REPORT



Business Agent **John Gallagher** (l) presents **Jeremy Gustafson**, new night custodian at Half Hollow Hills East High School, with his first Union 237 pin . Good luck Jeremy!



Long Island Business Agent **John Gallagher** (l) welcomes new Head Custodian **Pasquale Romeo** from West Islip Bayview Elementary school. Good luck in the new position!



Village of Brightwaters crew keeping the village pristine! Great job Teamsters!



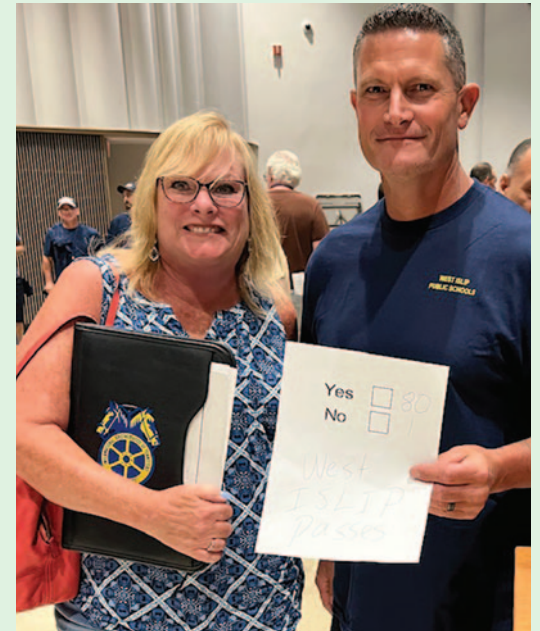
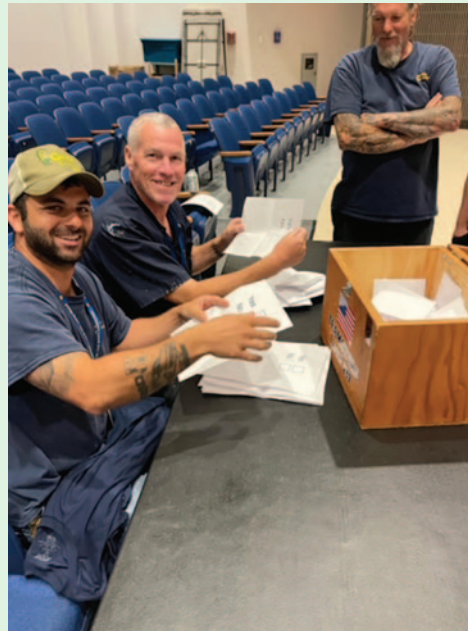
West Islip members are recognized by the Superintendent and Board for their hard work and dedication all year long. Great job Teamsters!



Commack Teamster members participate in “Stop The Bleed” training. Great training for addressing serious cuts.



Town of Babylon Landfill members: Shop Steward **Marco**, Labor Crew Leader **Kim** and Sanitation Site Crew Leader **Stanley**. Also pictured on the right are Operators **Jeremy** and **Paul**. They do great work for all at the landfill.



West Islip Schools ratifies their first Teamsters Local 237 contract. Leaving their former UPSEU union was the best thing they did. Proof was an 80 - yes to 1 - no contract vote. All were very happy and excited about what we accomplished. Congrats to our liaison **Jamie Triail**, the entire committee, and thanks to our attorney James Versocki. Great work and a great result for all!

Great Day for the Annual Brentwood Picnic

For more than 50 years, we have been having this picnic. Special thanks to **Britt Antoine** and **Shawn Dimperio** for cooking. Great job by all!



POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS

Joint Council 16 Welcomes General President Sean O'Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman



General President Sean O'Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman and (l to r) Joint Council 16 Trustees Bernadette Kelly, Lou Calemine and Matthew Brucoleri; Joint Council 16 President Thomas Gesualdi; General President Sean O'Brien; Joint Council 16 Secretary Treasurer Demos Demopoulos; Joint Council 16 Vice President Harry Nespoli; General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman and Gregory Floyd, Joint Council 16 Recording Secretary and Vice President at-Large on the General Board of the IBT.



General President Sean O'Brien addresses the members.



General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman at the podium.

General President Sean O'Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman attended the September 7 Delegates' meeting of Joint Council 16. They were enthusiastically greeted by the members and the Executive Board as they each addressed the audience. Secretary-Treasurer Zuckerman discussed the decline in union membership throughout the nation from its peak years in the 1950s, when it was about 35%, to 2020, with approximately 10% of the workforce being unionized. He noted that, among Teamsters Locals, there was a significant decline as well, from nearly 700 Locals to today's under 300 Locals. Mr. Zuckerman noted, however, that, currently, interest in joining a union is on the rise, and said that the Teamsters will be using the opportunity to increase union membership. Organizing will be the focus of Teamsters' efforts, and he asked all current members to assist in the endeavor.

General President O'Brien told the audience that he was happy to be back in New York City, and delighted that there were so many representatives from the City on the IBT's General Executive Board. Mr. O'Brien went on to discuss the decades-long decline in overall national union membership but sounded a note of optimism due, in part, to new leadership in Washington D.C. Mr. O'Brien said that, unlike previous administrations, President Biden has been very supportive of labor unions and publicly acknowledged their role in creating and maintaining America's middle class. Mr. O'Brien also mentioned that the current Secretary of Labor, Marty Walsh, has had a long and distinguished career as a champion of labor, fighting for equity and fairness as a union president himself. In addition, Mr. O'Brien said that he recently met with Vice President Kamala Harris, and discussed how the IBT has the know-how, technological tools and a well-documented wealth of experience to take a leadership role in union organizing. With our track record of success and extensive expertise, Mr. O'Brien told the VP that the Teamsters want to be THE union to organize and represent Amazon workers and are willing to set aside millions of dollars for the effort. In his final note, Mr. O'Brien told the audience that Teamsters should welcome the opportunities that legalized cannabis sales and distribution bring to many states such as New York, where a multi-billion-dollar business looms with prospects for many good-paying Teamsters union jobs. ■

Teamsters Women's Conference in Seattle



(l-r) Local 237's Jeanette Taveras, Sobeyda Rodriguez, Gisela "GiGi" Reyes and Kathy Rice.



(l-r) Jeanette Taveras, Sean O'Brien, General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and Kathy Rice.



(l-r) Gisela "GiGi" Reyes, Sean O'Brien, and Sobeyda Rodriguez.

The Teamsters Women's Conference was held September 18 – 21, 2022, in Seattle, Washington. The conference brought together more than 1,200 Teamsters from the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico, in sisterhood and solidarity, and Local 237 was well represented. The annual conference is an opportunity to learn and strategize to strengthen and grow the union. **More than 30 educational workshops** on topics including how to bargain strong contracts, become powerful stewards, run successful organizing campaigns, and more, took place. In addition, one thousand Teamsters and local community supporters held a massive rally outside of Amazon's corporate headquarters to demand the company end its union busting tactics and dangerous labor practices. During the rally, protesters marched around Amazon's HQ holding signs that read, "Organize Amazon" and "Amazon Hurts Workers." Members were joined by Teamsters General President **Sean M. O'Brien** and General Secretary-Treasurer **Fred Zuckerman**, as well as other Teamster leaders. GP O'Brien told the crowd: "Amazon should be afraid — the Teamsters are here standing shoulder-to-shoulder with so many communities demanding change," "The Teamsters aren't going away. Wherever Amazon abuses workers, we'll be there. Amazon will not bust unions and get away with it. Amazon will not churn and burn American workers and get away with it. This corrupt corporate giant must answer to the Teamsters now, and we're ready for the fight." ■



A Crisis That Can Be Avoided

By Saul Fishman

CSBA President

As this article goes to press, CSBA Attorneys in virtually every NYC mayoral agency and authority, are in or near crisis. More than two hundred of our colleagues have already resigned rather than work for an administration and agency that doesn't even try to bolster morale and offer us anything approaching what is customary for professionals in 2022. Each day, the ranks of former colleagues grow, and almost everybody who hasn't already left is actively seeking employment elsewhere.

We have lost:

- Taxi & Limousine Commission ("TLC"), our members have decreased a shocking 43%, from 46 attorneys to 26 attorneys.
- Administration for Children's Services ("ACS"), we went from 246 attorneys to 177 attorneys, a drop of approximately 28%.
- Commission on Human Rights ("CCHR"): we went from 25 attorneys to 15 attorneys, a loss of approximately 40%.
- Department of Buildings, an approximately 40% reduction, having gone from 48 attorneys to 29 attorneys.
- OATH, the tribunal which hears the violations issued by most city agencies: down from 35 attorneys to 25 attorneys, a reduction of approximately 29%.

What has been the city's response? The media reports that the Mayor's office is actively recruiting "pro bono" young attorneys from large law firms to do our jobs. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/9/12/23350073/mayor-wants-hire-pro-bono-lawyers-fill-city-lawyer-job-vacancies> The Office of Labor Relations is denying it, in carefully couched language: "We are not currently planning on placing attorneys in agencies with CSBA members. Agencies included are the Mayor's Office, OLR, OMB, DOE and DOI." Should we believe them? Let's just say, charitably, given the current "concern" they have been expressing for us, in deeds rather than empty words, that there is considerable room for doubt.

To advance our interests, I testified on September 9th before a New York City Council joint hearing before the Committees on Oversight & Investigations and Civil Service & Labor on "Maintaining the City Workforce." The entire hearing is available as a link on the CSBA website (www.csbanyc.org), as is my full testimony as submitted to the Council (more comprehensive than time permitted at the hearing). Also available in the "CSBA in the News" tab of our website is hearing coverage and quotes (including of yours truly) by the newspaper THE CITY.

STEPS THE CITY COUNCIL SHOULD TAKE THAT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

- **Closely scrutinize the delays involved with onboarding.** A high percentage of interviewed applicants wind up going elsewhere due to the months of delays in the system.

- Insist that each agency **show their attempts at recruiting**, and whether or not they have had difficulty in recruitment. Almost without exception, they have had tremendous difficulty, especially when the applicants find out that they can only get the posted minimum (and not the range indicated in the posting).
- Given the difficulty in recruiting, our titles should be exempted from **Administrative Code Residency Requirement**.
- Amend the Administrative Code to **cover not only difficult to recruit but also difficult to retain titles**. Absolutely no knowledgeable Agency Commissioner or General Counsel will tell you that we are not difficult to retain!
- Enact **legislation requiring each agency** prepare a policy offering employees the ability to work remotely.
- Hold hearings demanding commissioners explain the need for excess restrictions on eligibility.
- Require each agency provide all internal reports, studies and documents related to worker productivity during the period when many performed their duties remotely.
- Help create paths for advancement to better retain personnel. One way is to **require DCAS to update/ modify their Job Assignment by title**. Hardly anyone performs these "Typical Tasks", and some tasks more typical of higher levels are inserted into lower-level titles to defeat out-of-level grievances.

At the beginning of the hearing, three high-ranking NYC officials (Barbara Dannenberg, DCAS Deputy Commissioner for Human Capital; Dan Pollak, OLR First Deputy Commissioner; and Kenneth Godiner, OMB First Deputy Budget Director) tried to present the usual spin on the "great job" that this administration is doing in maintaining the workforce and in recruiting. Fortunately, Oversight & Investigations Committee Chair Gale Brewer didn't buy much of what they were saying, demanded that they come up with "more creative ways" of accomplishing recruitment and retention, as what they are doing "is clearly not working".

Councilmember Brewer and Civil Service & Labor Committee Chair Carmen De La Rosa specifically asked about why the onboarding process isn't being expedited, and why hiring for badly depleted titles can't be approved in advance so that applicants come aboard before finding jobs elsewhere. The pathetic bureaucratic response from OMB was that each applicant must be reviewed and individually approved so that the agency doesn't hire an extra person above their total allocated budget. And when asked why some hybrid work/ work from home is not being allowed despite it having been done successfully for many months, DCAS' Barbara Dannenberg cited the Mayor's "strong belief" in the value of working in person. She did not have an answer with respect to what studies he is relying upon to back up that theory. ■

POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS

UNION ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW TEAMSTERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

General President **Sean M. O'Brien** and General Secretary-Treasurer **Fred Zuckerman** announced the inaugural dinner for the Teamsters Scholarship Fund to be held on Saturday, January 14, 2023, at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida.

All proceeds will go to scholarships for the children and financial dependents of Teamster members planning to attend college or trade school. ■

New York State AFL-CIO Endorsements at COPE Convention



Governor Kathy Hochul.



National President of the AFL CIO Liz Schuler.



Senator Chuck Schumer.



NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.



(l-r) Local 237's Executive Board members, Vice President Ruben Torres; Trustee Curtis Scott; Secretary Treasurer Donald Arnold; Trustees Benny Carenza and Kathy Rice; Housing Director Carl Giles and Deputy Director Law Enforcement/Citywide Division Charlie Cotto.

On August 16, the 2.5 million member New York State AFL-CIO announced endorsements of candidates running for Congress, NYS Senate and Assembly. Among those endorsed are: Governor Hochul, Senator Schumer and NYS Comptroller DiNapoli. For a complete list of endorsements go to <https://nysaflcio.org/endorsements2022>.

The endorsements took place at the state federation's 2022 Committee on Political Education (COPE) Convention at the Sheraton NY Times Square Hotel in New York City. Delegates, representing union members from the public sector, private sector and building trades, were in attendance, joining members of the NYS AFL-CIO's Executive Board, which includes Local 237 President, Gregory Floyd.

Mario Cilento, President of the New York State AFL-CIO said, "We endorse these candidates with great confidence that they will fight hard on issues that will impact the lives and economic well-being of working people. We look forward to a grassroots campaign to get our members to the polls to elect all our endorsed candidates."

Earlier this year, the state federation announced endorsements for races that had primary elections. ■

FALL 2022 REVIEW AND REPORT

By **Vito R. Pitta, Esq.** Member, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno, LLC

Election Season

In an unusual turn of events, New Yorkers were asked to turn out twice this summer for Primary Elections. While the original Primary Election for all New York State offices had been scheduled for June 28, 2022, litigation related to newly drawn legislative district maps for the United States House of Representatives and New York State Senate following the decennial census resulted in the New York State Supreme Court declaring those maps unconstitutional and postponing of the Primary Election for those seats. The Primary Election for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, United States Senate, and New York State Assembly, as well as political party positions, was held on June 28, 2022. The Primary Election for the offices of Member of the House of Representatives and New York State Senate was held on August 23, 2022.

Primary Results

While there were several high-profile races in many areas in New York (such as a four-way democratic showdown in NY-10 and a lively republican primary in NY-23), the two gubernatorial primaries captured the most attention. With over 67% of the vote, incumbent Governor Kathy Hochul prevailed over her democratic primary opponents, New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, and United States Representative Tom Suozzi. Her general election opponent was decided in another interesting battle that saw United States Representative Lee Zeldin edge out Andrew Giuliani, former Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, and Harry Wilson, with over 43% of the vote.

General Election

With the summer over, all eyes are once again on the next election. On Tuesday, November 8, 2022, the nation will be heading to the polls in the first mid-term election of President Biden's first term in office. This election will decide a slew of elected officials, including many hotly contested races in the United States Senate and House of Representatives. Here in New York, where early voting will allow voters to cast their ballots as soon as October 29, 2022 through November 6, 2022, there are several state-wide elections that will be closely followed:

Governor/Lieutenant Governor
Democratic – Kathy C. Hochul / Antonio Delgado
Republican – Lee Zeldin / Alison Esposito

Attorney General
Democratic – Letitia A. James
Republican – Michael Henry

State Comptroller
Democratic – Thomas P. DiNapoli
Republican – Paul Rodriguez

United States Senator
Democratic – Charles E. Schumer
Republican – Joe Pinion

Greg Russ steps down as NYCHA CEO

On Thursday, September 15, 2022, Mayor Eric Adams announced that Greg Russ, who served as both the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), would be stepping down in his role as CEO. This news, which came in the wake of an arsenic scare in the water supply of the East Village's Jacob Riis Houses

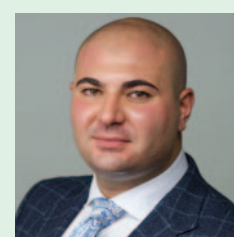
complex in August, effectively splits the two roles, which Russ held since having being appointed by former Mayor Bill de Blasio in August 2019.

Mayor Adams has appointed Lisa Bova-Hiatt, NYCHA's current Executive Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel, as the new interim CEO while the city seeks a permanent replacement. She began in this new role on Monday, September 19, 2022.

New York City Department of Education adds Hundreds of New School Safety Agents

On Wednesday, September 7, 2022, New York City Schools Chancellor David Banks announced a revamped school safety plan which includes a significant increase in the employment of school safety agents. This announcement came a day before the opening of New York City public schools for the 2022-2023 school year, and Chancellor Banks lauded the partnership with the NYPD which allowed for a newly graduated class of 200 safety agents to enter NYC schools immediately.

Along with the city being on track to add 750 new agents by the end of the school year (bringing the citywide total to near 4,000 agents), the school safety plan also includes new technology that would allow principals to send push alerts to parents and guardians during emergencies or lockdowns, active shooter trainings for school staff, and a comprehensive survey of all building entrances and exits to determine repair needs. ■



Vito R. Pitta is a partner at Pitta LLP, a firm whose practice consists primarily of traditional union-side labor law, employment law, employee benefits law, and campaign finance compliance law. The firm counts more than forty local and international labor unions as its clients. Mr. Pitta's practice consists of counseling the firm's clients on traditional labor and employment matters, as well as advising the firm's political campaign and political action committee clients with respect to federal, state, and local campaign finance laws. Mr. Pitta is also a Partner in Pitta LLP's affiliated personal injury firm, Pitta & Baione LLP, which represents victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks; and a member of Pitta LLP's affiliated lobbying firm, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC.



Short-Term Disability Benefits

By Mitch Goldberg

Director of the Welfare Fund

If you become disabled and cannot work because of an injury or illness that is not job-related or is not covered by no-fault auto insurance, you are eligible to receive short-term disability benefits. There is a 14-day waiting period for benefits to begin. A physician must examine you within 3 days of your disability for these days to be included in the waiting period; otherwise the 14-day waiting period begins only when you are examined.

You will lose your right to this benefit if the Fund requests that you have an examination by a physician and the examination does not take place within two weeks of the Fund's request. If you are being treated for substance abuse, your treatment at a particular center or institute is required, in writing, by the physician who certifies that you are disabled. In addition, if the treatment continues for more than two weeks, the treatment center or institute must have a licensed physician on duty who can provide certification of your continued disability.

The amount of the benefit is 50% of your weekly salary up to a maximum benefit of \$300 a week. Benefits begin on the 15th day of your disability, unless you are hospitalized; in that case, benefits are paid from the first day you are confined to the hospital. In any event, you must miss a day of work due to your covered disability for disability benefits to start.

You will be entitled to receive no more than 52 weeks of disability benefit payments during any 104-week period regardless of how many separate disabilities or recurrences you experience during that period. If you return to work before you use up your 52 weeks of disability benefit payments and you are again disabled, you will be entitled to receive benefit payments only for the remainder of the 52 weeks of eligibility you have left during the 104-week period.

In order to receive these disability benefits, you must obtain a claim form from the Fund Office. There are three sections to this form; you should complete the employee section, your doctor should complete the "Attending Physician's Section," and your supervisor should complete the employer section.

Return the completed claim form to the Fund Office within 30 days of the first day of your disability. If you cannot submit a claim form within that time period, you must send a letter explaining the reason for the delay and the details of your disability. If the Fund Director determines that the delay in submitting the form was not for good cause, your claim for benefits may be completely or partially disallowed.

In general, the Fund's short-term disability benefits are not payable for the following injuries or illnesses:

Automobile Accidents. If you are injured as a result of an automobile accident that is covered by no-fault insurance, you are not entitled to receive the Fund's short-term disability benefits. Automobile accidents that are covered by no-fault insurance include accidents involving cars, vans, SUVs, taxicabs, private car service vehicles and buses. If you are injured in such an accident, you should contact the insurance carrier covering the vehicle involved in the accident and apply for no-fault insurance benefits, as the Fund will not provide benefits in such cases.

Job-Related Injuries or Illnesses. If your injury or illness is job-related, the Fund's short-term disability benefit would not be payable and you would need to file a workers' compensation claim for benefits. If the Fund receives a notice (Workers' Compensation Form C-7) that the claim is controverted by your employer, then the Fund will pay its benefit, pending the resolution of your workers' compensation claim. In such case, the Fund will have a lien on the workers' compensation benefits awarded to you (if any). This means that, if you are paid by the Fund and you are later awarded workers' compensation benefits for the same illness or injury and time period, the Fund is entitled to recover the amount it paid to you, out of your worker's compensation benefits, so that you are not paid twice for the same illness or injury.

Please note that disability is for all city titles, full and part-time. The benefit differs for part timers but is applicable. Most of the Long Island Funds have their own disability benefits which varies by Fund. The Financial Planning provided by Stacey Braun is for Welfare Fund only. ■



What To Do When Grief Strikes

By Karla Steinberg, LMSW

Membership Social Worker

If you have suffered the loss of a loved one, relative or dear friend, you have likely felt the impact of bereavement and grief. Regardless of whether a death is expected or not, grief can show up in peculiar ways. While some people may cry at a loss, others may not and this might be mistaken for not feeling sad or upset. Grief can present as shock, anger, irritability, feeling in a fog or a daze, feeling more tired than usual, or even having a reaction that appears completely inappropriate, such as laughter or indifference.

What can you do if you find yourself in the position of losing someone you care about? The short answer is: let yourself feel it. You do not have to have been close to the person to miss them, or to feel impacted by their death. Sometimes we lose co-workers, colleagues, old friends we have not spoken to in years, but feelings of shock and loss remain. While there are some universally understood "stages of grief", there is no definitive cure or hard truth about how to process the loss. Listed below are the 5 Stages of Grief as written in Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's 1969 book, "On Death and Dying".

- 1. Denial.** "I don't believe it; you're lying to me!"
- 2. Anger.** "It isn't fair; it should've been me! I told him to put down those cigarettes! Where was God?!"
- 3. Bargaining.** "If I had just stayed at the house longer, I could've saved her; I could've stopped it."
- 4. Depression.** "I can't believe I'm never going to talk to this person again; I'll never see them again. I miss them so much I can't bear it. I'll never move past this!"
- 5. Acceptance.** "I understand (emotionally and mentally) that this person has died, and while I'll always miss them, I fully accept that this is the new reality."

Recently, author David Kessler updated the 5 stages to include a 6th stage; "Finding meaning". This can be something as simple as a reminder that life is fleeting, there are no guarantees. It should also be noted that the stages of grief are not fixed; you can feel them in any order and at any time. Reaching "acceptance" or "finding meaning" does not preclude you from feeling yourself "bargaining" or back in "denial". Additionally, "acceptance" does not necessarily mean that you are okay with the loss, or that you are "over it". Instead, you can take it to mean that you are over the initial shock of the loss, and while you may never "be okay" with it, it is easier to process this as "truth". Again, grief is not linear.

It is worth mentioning that grief comes back with other losses; it is cumulative. You can lose someone now, and it can bring up other losses you have encountered in your lifetime. For example, the loss of one parent may recall the loss of the other, or of someone else entirely. This is all completely normal. While there is no "cure" for grief, there are some suggestions for how to healthily move through it, none of which avoid feeling pain. When it comes to feelings (anger, depression, shock, etc.), the only thing to do is allow yourself to feel however you are feeling. Time won't heal all wounds per se, but with time you grow accustomed to the feelings and to the loss and you get further away from the initial sting.

If, after the initial time of bereavement (the period immediately following the loss, usually a few months), you are managing feelings of intense sorrow, or you are unable to carry on with your day-to-day life, unable to focus on things other than the loss, you may be suffering from complicated grief. You should speak with a doctor if you think this is the case. If you are not sure, you can always call me, your membership social worker, at 646-638-8608. ■



A First Time For Everything

By David Bonington, CPF

Financial Planner, Stacey Braun Associates, Inc.

Hello! If you don't already know, as discussed below, my firm is the provider of a covered financial planning benefit available to all Local 237 members. For my part, I'm thrilled to become a contributor here, and I am already working on future articles.

In keeping with a "first time" theme, I thought a first article should reach out to members who have not yet made their first appointment. Maybe you are new, or maybe the idea of a meeting makes you nervous. Please don't let this stop you. Because it's likely you will meet with me or my colleague, Ed Acker, I "interviewed" Ed to let him explain the service, our approach, and ways we can be helpful.

David: What should a member considering a first meeting know?

Ed: Three things – and each one is important. First, it's a 100% covered benefit; there is absolutely no cost to the member. Second, discussions are strictly confidential. And third, because we don't sell any products, there is never any sales pressure. Our goal is to provide helpful information, ideas, and suggestions.

A cost-free and confidential financial consultation with a Stacey Braun Planner can be arranged by calling, 888-949-1925.

David: What topics are discussed?

Ed: Before jumping into a discussion, I put a member at ease and gather background information to help shape my advice - things like age, years of service, family composition, assets and liabilities, and salary. A member can email this information in advance, but even if s/he doesn't I can work with estimates. I then invite the member to explain how I can help.

David: What topics come up?

Ed: Young members often ask about debt reduction, budgeting, and saving for a home, college, or retirement. Members over 50 usually discuss retirement preparation: strategies for a career's final phase, pension and Social Security, and retirement savings. Sometimes a tax, insurance, or estate planning question comes up. Even though we're not CPAs or attorneys, we help with these topics too.

David: Members have changing schedules and like freedom to accept overtime shifts. Does this complicate scheduling?

Ed: No. We understand life's pressures. Meetings can occur during a lunch hour, or late in the afternoon - and can always be rescheduled. Zoom meetings are available, too. The program covers six hours of annual benefit time, so all matters can eventually be discussed in detail.

David: So – is there any downside to a meeting?

Ed: I don't think so. This benefit is all about promoting financial literacy and assisting members with their financial well-being. I hope I've encouraged members to make appointments. We look forward to hearing from you! ■

Resumen En Español

Falling Leaves Rising Membership

En esta edición de otoño de Newline, marcamos el final del verano y el comienzo de una nueva temporada. Para algunos, el cambio nos encuentra con un poco de tristeza, mientras que para otros, el otoño es recibido con entusiasmo: marca el comienzo del nuevo año escolar; la emoción de Halloween y la Navidad que se avecina, y las vacaciones anuales que son un homenaje al trabajo y nos regalan el descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo.

Local 237 desea agradecer a nuestros miembros por sus incansables esfuerzos en nombre de tantos neoyorquinos, cuyas vidas y medios de vida dependen de que las agencias municipales funcionen sin problemas a pesar de los inconvenientes. Como dijo el ex presidente Barack Obama: "Cuando los tiempos son difíciles, no nos damos por vencidos. Nos levantamos". Eso es precisamente lo que ustedes han hecho y lo que siguen haciendo. Durante el apogeo de la pandemia, en un momento de dolor inimaginable, cuando un virus repentino y altamente contagioso sacudió al mundo entero y a nuestro propio mundo personal, los miembros de los sindicatos, y especialmente los trabajadores del sector público, no se dieron por vencidos; se levantaron y se pusieron a trabajar. Durante un tiempo que nos abrumó el temor y que paralizó a tantos por el miedo, un tiempo desconcertante que, para algunos, significaba que no habría un abrazo final, un adiós, o ni si quiera sacramentos antes de encontrarnos con nuestro Creador, estos trabajadores municipales esenciales estuvieron en el trabajo. Ahora, mientras tratamos de volver a poner de pie a la Ciudad y al Estado, nuestros afiliados siguen siendo un elemento esencial en la recuperación de Nueva York.

La cantidad de afiliados de los sindicatos en todo el país ha pasado de su pico del 35% en el año 1954 a solo 10.8% en la actualidad. Con Nueva York entre los estados con mayor número de trabajadores sindicalizados -aproximadamente el 22%, alrededor del 70% de la fuerza laboral sindicalizada se halla en

el sector público. Esto se corresponde con el porcentaje nacional de afiliación sindical del sector público, que es aproximadamente cinco veces superior al del privado, y con el dato de que los afroamericanos constituyen el mayor componente de ese grupo.

Pero hoy, después de un paréntesis de décadas, la afiliación sindical, tanto en el sector público como en el privado, se halla en aumento. No ha sido poca cosa la notable victoria de los trabajadores de Amazon en Staten Island para poder sindicalizarse. Hace apenas dos años, ni si quiera existía este recién formado "Amazon Labor Union". Christian Smalls, un trabajador del almacén de Staten Island Amazon, fue quien lideró una huelga en protesta por las deplorables condiciones laborales relacionadas con el Covid. Las anotaciones de la reunión del consejo general de Amazon acerca de Smalls, afirmaban: "No es inteligente ni articulado, y en la medida en que la prensa quiera enfocarse en él frente a nosotros, estaremos en una posición de relaciones públicas mucho más fuerte". ¡GUAAU! No solo consideraban a Smalls insignificante, sino que de manera arrogante consideraban imposible que un joven negro, rústico y tatuado pudiera lograr la sindicalización. Amazon lo despidió, pero su estrategia resultó contraproducente, y las repercusiones se sintieron en todo el país. De hecho, encuestas recientes muestran que la membresía sindical está en aumento. Muchos sindicatos bien establecidos, como los Teamsters, han aprovechado la oportunidad y están tomando el máximo el impulso, utilizando sus habilidades de organización y sus recursos, para ayudar a afiliar a los trabajadores a un sindicato.

A pesar de que Ralph Chaplin escribió la canción "Solidaridad para siempre" en 1915 para los trabajadores industriales de la Primera Guerra Mundial, su estribillo resulta hoy tan relevante e importante como lo era hace más de 100 años: "Cuando la inspiración del sindicato a través de la sangre del trabajador se pone en marcha, no habrá poder

mayor bajo el sol. Cuál fuerza en la tierra es más débil que la débil fuerza de uno solo, pero el sindicato nos hace fuertes. Solidaridad para siempre, solidaridad para siempre, solidaridad para siempre, porque la unión nos hace fuertes". El reconocimiento formal de la importancia de los trabajadores llegó en 1894, cuando el Congreso creó el Día del Trabajo, volviendo el primer lunes de septiembre un feriado nacional. Pero solo lo hizo en respuesta a la muerte de 34 trabajadores de Pullman de la Unión de Ferrocarriles Estadounidenses, a manos de soldados y mariscales del Ejército de Estados Unidos.

El Día del Trabajo es muy especial. No es tan fácil encontrar una fiesta que cruce todas las líneas religiosas, raciales, étnicas y de género. Los partidos políticos, los colores favoritos y los años de formación importan poco. Por supuesto, no es fácil encontrar un día festivo que la mayoría de los estadounidenses celebren de manera similar, sea con desfile o no. Por lo general implica un hot dog o dos. Sí, el Día del Trabajo es una rareza: un feriado en el que todos podemos estar de acuerdo. Y aquí es donde los sindicatos brillan más. Al igual que nuestro papel en ayudar a construir la clase media en los Estados Unidos, somos a la vez la biela y la línea de transmisión... Y el puente hacia el "sueño americano". Luchamos por los derechos de los trabajadores mientras ayudamos a construir un campo de juego igualitario, donde el "sueño americano" no sea propiedad exclusiva del 1% corporativo.

Por eso es importante reconocer la labor de los trabajadores -especialmente los del sector público-. Ciertamente, es un reconocimiento bien merecido y también un mensaje a nuestros líderes electos, aspirantes políticos, grandes empresas y al público en general: Pueden golpearlos. Pueden intentar arrestarlos. Pero nos necesitan. Y, cuando vean las palabras "Union Made" ("logrado por el Sindicato"), también significan "Union Strong" ("fortaleza del Sindicato"): un movimiento, no solo un momento. ■





In Memoriam

“Autumn marks the changing of a season from one of flowers in bloom, to leaves that fall. But despite this change in weather, the one element that remains the same is remembering our colleagues and friends at Local 237 who are no longer with us. This is also the season of Thanksgiving, in which we must include thanks to our departed union brothers and sisters, and their families, for letting us share them with us.”



Veterans Message

By Lynn Johnson

Marine Corps Veteran, VA Outreach
Specialist-Minority Veteran Coordinator

Fall 2022:
IBT Local 237 Veterans and their Families - Thank You for Your Service!
VA is here for IBT Local 237 Veterans and Families to offer guidance. Did you know? The Sgt 1st Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 legislation (1) expands and extends eligibility for VA healthcare for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post 9/11 era, and (2) expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances at select military installations. Law takes effect August 10, 2022. It adds 20+ new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures and more locations for Agent Orange. October 1, 2022 – October 1, 2023, is the special VA healthcare enrollment period for Veterans who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf. The Department of Veterans Affairs is available with resources to assist with quality-of-life issues such as housing, home health aide, mental health, moral-spiritual injury, deployment related exposures, senior resources, Women’s Veterans Program, dental care, family and dependent benefits, and more. If you served in the United States Military in wartime or in peacetime and possess honorable or general under honorable DD-214 or DD-215 Discharge papers, let the US Department of Veteran Affairs recognize your service by offering you consultation at VA, either in-person or via virtual platform, to help you apply for benefits and services. Services you’ve earned may include VA Healthcare, Home Loan Certificate, GIBILL Educational Benefits, Military Injury-Compensation, Burial Benefits for the Veteran and Spouse, Homeless Services, Mental Health Benefits, Justice-Involved Support, Caregiver Program, and a host of ancillary services. Interested in finding out if you qualify for VA benefits as a Local 237 Veteran? Contact your local NYC VA Outreach Specialist Lyn.Johnson2@va.gov or call (212) 686-7500 ext. 4218 to speak directly with Mr. Johnson. ▮



Access Your Earnings History with “my Social Security”

By Thomas McMahon

District Manager, Social Security in Downtown Manhattan

It may have been years or even decades since you thought about how much you earned at your first job. Did you know that you can find out how much you made that first year? Or any year you worked? Your earnings history is a record of your progress toward your future Social Security benefits. We track your earnings so we can pay you the benefits you’ve earned over your lifetime. That is why it’s so important for you to review your earnings record. You should review your earnings history and let us know if there are any errors or omissions, even though it’s your employer’s responsibility to provide accurate earnings information to us. Otherwise, you will not get credit for money you paid in payroll taxes, and your future Social Security benefits will be lower than you should receive. You’re the only person who can look at your lifetime earnings record and verify that it’s complete and correct. If an employer didn’t properly report even just one year of your earnings to us, that error could reduce your future benefit payments. Over your lifetime, that could cost you thousands of dollars in retirement or other benefits that you’re entitled to receive. It’s important to identify and report errors as soon as possible. If too much time passes, it could be hard for you to get older tax documents. Also, some employers may no longer exist or be able to provide past payroll information. The best way to verify your earnings record is to visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount and create or sign in to your personal my Social Security account. You should review your earnings carefully every year and confirm them using your own records, such as W-2s and tax returns. Keep in mind that earnings from this year and last year may not be listed yet. When you have a my Social Security account, we send you an email three months before your birthday to remind you to check your earnings and to get future benefit estimates. You can find out how to correct your earnings record by reading our publication *How to Correct Your Social Security Earnings Record* at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf. Start a conversation. Ask a family member or friend what their first job was and let them know they can find out what they made that year. ▮

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