

RETIREE news&views

A PUBLICATION OF LOCAL 237 RETIREE DIVISION

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RETIREE DIVISION TURNS 41 AND GOING STRONG!

The Retiree Division is forty-one this year. And while the pandemic continues to cause delay of our June Founder's Day celebration — we will celebrate at a later time when it is safe to gather — let's take a moment to reflect on all of those achievements of hard working retirees before us who have paved the way for generations to come, as we enter this 41st year with pride and hopes for the future.

I, Jona Harr and my husband Elliot Harr would like to let it be known the Retiree Division of Local 237 have been so accommodating in our new endeavor of reaching a milestone in our senior lives. Your patience with us was so important. You went the extra mile in educating us on what procedures were necessary for benefits education. God bless you all and stay safe.

— Elliot Harr, retired from NYCHA

P.S. We are the second generation of 237. Max Harr father of Elliot Harr was a Teamster as well. Thank you for everything.

Retiree Division is so important. It's a necessity. Retiree Division has helped so many especially now more than ever.

— Juan C. Rivera, retired from NYCHA

The Retiree Division is so helpful, very informative, vibrant. Great programming. We are like a family. There is no other Retiree Division better than Local 237. You do so much for retirees.

— Ken Fox, retired Cook, HHC

I retired in 1995 after 25 years of working. When I moved to Puerto Rico several years ago I learned there was a Local 237 Community group. I had no idea how good it would be. I thought upon my retirement it was over with the union. To my surprise, I was inspired to continue participating and connecting with colleagues and former co-workers. I saw people that I did not think I would see again. We have a wonderful union, and we stay together, Thank god for Teamsters Local 237 Retiree Division.

— Babel Ruiz, Rincon Puerto Rico, retired from NYCHA





by Gregory Floyd

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

It was recently reported that hedge fund billionaire Daniel Loeb of Third Point LLC and his wife Margaret, Citadel founder Ken Griffin, and Citadel Securities CEO Peng Zhao have contributed a total of \$1.5 million to increase voting among Blacks, Latinos and Asians for next month's mayoral primary. Led by the NAACP, the Asian American Federation and Hispanic Federation, a campaign is beginning to contact voters in these communities.

This time, New York City elections are different from previous elections in many ways: There's a new, June 22 Primary date, with early voting beginning on June 12, and, for the first time, Rank Choice voting. And yet, the stakes have never been greater! All citywide offices are

up for grabs--Mayor, Comptroller and Public Advocate. Borough Presidents are all term-limited, as is the City Council, with 2/3 of that body up for election, with nearly 300 contenders vying for seats.

While this new, billionaire-funded effort to encourage New Yorkers to vote through direct mail, phone, texting and messages on the App WeChat — which is popular in the Chinese community — most current data indicates that Black voters play a very significant role in a candidate's success, especially at the top of the ticket. Against the backdrop of immense and unequal suffering in communities of color due to Covid-19, NAACP-New York Chapter President Hazel Dukes describes the move to increase Black voter turnout and its results as empowering. "This past year, Black communities across New York City have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, beaming a spotlight on the racial inequities that harm and oppress our own residents." "Our mission now," Dukes said, "is

to increase voter turnout and empower Black voters to make their voices heard in New York City's June 22 primary."

With the Mayoral election the focal point and marked disparity in positions from defunding the NYPD to the City's economic recovery---mixed in with many distractions and political theater ripe with various forms of mudslinging---there is justified concern that down-ballot candidates may be ignored. This is a shame, since, as a practical matter, Council members are often the most in-touch elected officials a community can have and rely upon.

All in all, the key to the next four years and having a city that we want to live in --and a city that is welcoming and supportive of us, is to vote. Former President Obama said it best: "I'm hopeful that despite all the noise, all the lies, we're going to remember who we are, who we're called to be. Out of this political darkness, I see a great awakening," he said. "If you vote, things will get better, it will be a start." ■

a message from the president

VOTING IS EMPOWERING

As Co-Directors of the Retiree Division, we are truly delighted to extend our congratulations to all of you on your 41st anniversary. Local 237 is the largest local in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. With over 11,000 retirees strong, our local represents the largest number of retirees in one Teamster Local. At Local 237, we truly believe that membership is lifelong. Forty-one years ago, the executive board of this Local made it clear by establishing a division for retired members. President Floyd and his executive staff continue the tradition of "retired from work, not from the union."

The Retiree Division has grown tremendously over the last 41 years. Many of our retirees connected with former co-workers and made new friends. Retirees all came together to try something new, whether it was art, salsa, poetry, politics, tai chi, theater, and many other activities offered through the retiree division over the years. We are truly honored and proud. Our division includes retirement planning, pension

counseling to aid transition from work to retirement, community meetings, educational programs, benefits education and assistance, cultural activities and committees, telephone support group, and an oral history project conceived by **Nancy B. True**, Former Retiree Division Director. In 2019, Local 237 published its first oral history book in Spanish, entitled *Memoria de boricua peregrinos*. The book encompasses union stories and history of retirees as they experienced their work years. Our second oral

*We are family.
Somos Familia.*

history book in English will be published in 2021. To read the book *Memoria de boricua peregrinos*, go to Local 237 website at <https://local237.org/retirees/overview>

We continue to hold Bi-Annual community meetings in Florida and Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico, our retirees have in many ways shaped the benefit network on the island. When we are not in Puerto Rico, members hold their own meetings. Our hope is to resume meetings once everything is safe for gathering.

In 2020, due to the pandemic, many of our programs were offered virtually and/or telephonically. This was the first experience bringing a



Susan Milisits
LCSW

Co-Director of the
Retiree Division



Julie Kobi
LMSW

Co-Director of the
Retiree Division

class and seminars via telephone/ online and you joined us on a journey. For some, you took a leap with us exploring new technology. This was a first for many of us and this truly speaks to your dedication and unwavering commitment to the union.

Our staff of professionals provides assistance to Retirees and their family members with personal matters, benefits education and much more. Our award-winning Retiree News and Views continues to communicate with Retirees on a bi-monthly basis to provide the updated information.

Local 237 retirees are recognized as a force within the labor movement — whether at a rally chanting "We are the Teamsters, the mighty mighty Teamsters wherever we go people want to know who we are"— Sung the loudest by Nancy, parades, voter registration and more. So many union members have contributed and touch the retiree division, which contributes to the success and growth of the Retiree Division. We are grateful to the retirees for working with us and sharing your stories.

The entire Retiree Division Staff — **Edith Johnston, Luz Carty, Shavon Banks, and Noelia Quinones** — join us in saying, "retired from work, not the union." ■

RETIREE news & views

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Imani Douglas pictured on the right with cast members of "Before the Mountaintop there was Memphis... The Lorraine Motel..." Cast members in the photo LaVonda Elam and Michael Green.

with deepest *Sympathy*

It is with profound sadness we learned of the passing of beloved theater instructor Imani Douglas on May 9, 2021. Imani was the Artistic Director of the Richard Allen Center for Culture and Art (RACCA) and professor at the NYU Gallatin School of Individual Study. Imani has worked with the Retiree Division for over 25 years. She brought an extraordinary amount of knowledge and enthusiasm about the theater world. She led the retirees to many theater performances over the years. She will be missed dearly by all.



by
Luz Nieves-Carty MPA

Assistant to the Directors Retiree Division

Men's Health Month

June is Men's Health Month, a national observance used to raise awareness about health care for men and focus on encouraging boys, men, and their families to practice and implement healthy living decisions, such as exercising and eating healthy. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, men in the United States, on average, die 5 years earlier than women and die at higher rates from the three leading causes of death, heart disease, cancer, and unintentional injuries. During Men's Health Month, we encourage men to take control of their health, and for families to teach young boys healthy habits throughout childhood. In other words, take care of grandfathers and grandkids.

During Men's Health Month, one week is celebrated each year as the week leading up to and including Father's Day. This year Men's Health Week is June 14-20, 2021. Recognition from the White House provides encouragement to men, boys, and their families around the globe. It's important to understand that men's health is a family issue. To quote Congressman Bill Richardson (Congressional Record, H3905-H3906, May 24, 1994): "Recognizing and preventing men's health problems is not just a man's issue. Because of its impact on wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters, men's health is truly a family issue."

Statistically, men have a lower life expectancy due to stress, heart disease, prostate cancer, and stroke. Men's health issues can be dramatically reduced through educational and promotional health awareness products. Americans are living longer than ever, but American men still are not living as long as American women. The average life expectancy for men in the US is now roughly 75 years. For women, it is more than 80.

Exactly why men are shorter-lived than women isn't entirely clear. Research suggests that a leading reason for the "longevity gap" between men and women is that men do not take care of themselves as well as women do. For example, surveys have found that women are much more likely to have a regular healthcare provider, and to see their provider within the course of the year, than men are. Men are also more likely to engage in "risky" behaviors – like smoking and drinking heavily – than women.

Experts agree that by taking better care of themselves, men can increase their odds of living healthier, longer lives. The Health in Aging organization offers the following tips for older men.

1. See your healthcare provider regularly. Even if you feel perfectly healthy, you should see your provider at least once a year for a checkup.

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH**
www. Minorityhealth.HHS.gov
1-800-444-6472

HEALTH IN AGING
212-832-8646
www. HealthinAging.org

AARP.org
1-888-687-2277

you stop. For additional help, call 1-800-QUIT NOW or visit Healthfinder.gov's section on quitting smoking. It's never too late to quit.

8. Eat right. In later life, you still need to eat healthy foods, though you need fewer calories.

9. Exercise your brain. Join a book or discussion club. Sign up for a class at the local library, senior center, or community college (some offer free classes for older adults). Do word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles – whatever interests you.

10. Exercise your body. Regular exercise is important for good health, no matter how old you are. Along with a healthy diet, exercise helps you reach and maintain a healthy weight. It tones up your heart, circulation, and muscles; strengthens bones; boosts brain function; lifts your mood; and can help prevent and ease depression.

11. Drink alcohol only in moderation. Check with your healthcare provider to make sure that drinking alcohol—in light to moderate amounts—is alright for you. If you have a health problem or take certain medications, you may

Continued on back page



by Mitch Goldberg

Director of the
Retiree Benefit Fund

Important Information for Local 237 Medicare Eligible Retired Members

In lieu of my article for this edition, we would like to reprint our letter that was sent out to all retirees regarding the Medicare Advantage Plan for retirees. The letter may not have been received by all and the hope is that if you did not receive the letter by mail then receiving the reprint in News and Views will give information regarding the status of this change. Please note: No decisions have been made as of June 1, 2021. ■

Dear Retiree,

Many letters, rumors and articles have been published concerning possible changes in health care benefits available for our Medicare eligible retirees and their dependents. Much of the information that members of Local 237 have received is either inaccurate or only partially true. We would like to briefly review the status of potential changes in the current GHI Senior Care Plan. This covers more than 80% of Medicare eligible retirees and their dependents. The remaining 20% are in HIP or another Medicare Plan.

The City and the municipal unions through the MLC (Municipal Labor Committee) are evaluating several proposals to determine if and how changes and improvements can be made to the Senior Care program now available to Medicare eligible retirees. This does not affect your Medicare benefits. It does not affect the reimbursement you now receive for the Medicare Part B Program.

NO DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AS OF May 7, 2021.

We want to stress NO CHANGES will be made that would eliminate any doctor, hospital or other provider that accepts Medicare.

What is true is that the cost of medical coverage has far exceeded the overall cost of living for many years, and it has been a constant struggle to maintain a base medical/hospital plan for families without premiums for both active members and retirees. The public sector unions in New York covered by the City have resisted all efforts to have active and retiree members pay a portion of the health benefit premium. For example, New York State retirees pay 28% (approximately \$2,700 a year) for their health coverage and the costs increase each year by about 10%. Without a substantial change soon, it will be impossible to continue family health coverage without a premium contribution by the active and retiree members.

The goal is to make the changes to the GHI Senior Care plan that will maintain the same free choice of providers, including specialists, and to improve the plan, if possible. Providing quality health care has been a joint effort of both the City and its unions since the end of WW II. During that period, there has been many collaborations by the City and unions to keep pace with the ever-changing health care environment.

At this point, all proposals from various insurance carriers offer networks that include all the providers who participate in Medicare. The process for evaluating any change in the Medicare benefit has been ongoing for more than two years and has included input from representatives of all the parties including City retirees. No decision is final until all union leaders have been thoroughly informed and a vote to approve is taken. At this point, any change agreed upon could not be implemented before October 1, 2021 at the earliest.

There will be no interruption in any care currently in progress.

If there is a decision to make any change, there will be an extensive education effort to inform all participants about how to use the plan benefits well before any change is implemented.

This Evaluation Process is ongoing. Local 237 will continue to provide updates when more information becomes available.

In Solidarity,

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



by Mary E. Sheridan, Esq.

Director of Local 237
Legal Services Plan

Moving to a new state?

If you live in New York State, your Legal Services Plan can prepare your Will, Power of Attorney and Health Care Proxy documents. But what happens if you move to a different state? Should you have a new Will and other estate planning documents prepared in that state? Well, it turns out the answer is maybe.

In the United States, each state gives "full faith and credit" to another state's laws – meaning they honor the other state's laws. The reality is you may run into issues in the new state with your New York estate documents. One of the most common hurdles is when using a Power of Attorney from a different state. Also, there may be different requirements in the new state that result in a portion of your Will being invalidated.

Unlike the majority of retirees in the United States, not only do you have New York attorneys – free of charge – for covered legal matters in New York, retirees are also entitled to a schedule of reimbursement for matters outside of our jurisdiction. So, if you hire an attorney to prepare your non-New York Will, you can submit for reimbursement for some of your legal expenses. The same is true for any legal matter we would cover in New York. Your Legal Services Plan represents active and retired members in the following areas of law: real estate (buying and selling primary residences); matrimonial actions; family court matters; consumer actions; bankruptcy filings; Will, Power of Attorney and Health Care Proxy preparation; and other civil matters.

Please call **(212) 924-1220** to request your reimbursement form. ■



by Anny Rosario Diaz

Assistant District Manager,
Social Security in
Downtown Manhattan

Check the status of your Social Security Benefits Claim online



If you applied for Social Security benefits, or have a pending reconsideration or hearing request, you can check the status online using your *free* personal my Social Security account. If you don't have an account, you can create one at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to see the following information about your claim:

- Date of filing.
- Current claim location.
- Scheduled hearing date and time.
- Re-entry numbers for incomplete applications.
- Servicing office location.
- Publications of interest, depending on the claim and current step in the process.

Use your personal my Social Security account to check the status of your application or appeal at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

If you have questions about retirement, disability, Medicare, or survivors benefits, as well as Supplemental Security Income, visit our webpage at www.ssa.gov/benefits. ■



A LA MANERA DEL MAR

*El mar no tan solo nos rodea, nos ama.
Protégelo. Cuídalo.*

Por Néstor Murray-Irizarry
historiador y gestor cultural

Para Patricia Stryker, Julie Kobi, Susan Milisits y Nancy True (QEPD)

I Primer bolero-vals

Consejos para el verano...

En verano muchas personas se bañan en el mar. Es una de las actividades tradicionales de muchas familias; y el nadar, es el ejercicio más completo que los seres humanos pueden practicar. Eso sí, hay que aprender a nadar. En Puerto Rico, una inmensa cantidad de puertorriqueños no sabe nadar. Nosotros somos caribeños, y al igual que los indígenas nos encanta bañarnos en el mar o en el río, pero principalmente en el mar. El verano cada año es más caluroso. Esto se debe principalmente a el daño que los seres humanos le hemos hecho a naturaleza. Cuando tiramos basura a la calle también estamos echando basura al mar porque esa basura cuando llueve se deposita en las cunetas y de ahí va hacia el río y del río al mar. Proteger la naturaleza es vida para todos. Tampoco llenes de cemento los patios de las residencias. Oriéntate. Busca información de cómo proteger y rescatar nuestra naturaleza.

II Primer bolero-vals

Definiciones...

En el Gran Caribe habitan muchas islas y como islas están rodeadas de agua. Mucha agua que conocemos como océanos, mares con una profundidad muy intensa. Puerto Rico forma parte de esas inmensas profundidades, solo que asoma su pico desde hace millones de años. Tiene una plataforma común con Cuba y la República Dominicana y Haití, que estas dos últimas naciones se le conoce por el nombre hispano de La Española. Somos simbólicamente, los tres dedos de una misma mano y de un solo cuerpo. Por esa razón, entre muchas otras, somos pueblos hermanos, una especie de primos hermanos; que nos une un solo idioma y lazos de historia, tan profundos, tan inmenos como el mar que nos baña, acaricia y besa cuantas veces quiere. Claro, el mar nos quiere a su manera. A la manera del mar. Es un **baile** interminable de emociones. Es un arrullo palpante; es un eterno **bolero-vals** que no quiere despegarse. Es el baile de la eternidad. Es un danzar, danzando, y como danza, encanta.

II Segundo bolero-vals

Le cantan al mar...

Al describir el mar de Puerto Plata en la República Dominicana, nuestro gran patriota y poeta Francisco (Pachín) Gonzalo Marín, nos indica:

"El mar se extiende a los pies de la ciudad dormida cual fuera un trovador, de voz ronca y triste, empeñado a un mismo tiempo en arrullarla con sus rumores y en protegerla con sus rugidos. Allá, paralela a la montaña y arrastrándose a gatas hasta Santiago de los Caballeros, la llanura salvaje, con su ropaje de esmeralda. Y oró..." [Ver: Cinco narraciones, editor Cesáreo Rosa-Nieves, edición del autor, San Juan: 1972. 53-54.]

IV- Tercer vals-bolero

Los aventureros marinos...

Puerto Rico, al igual que en muchos países o regiones han tenido una gran cantidad de aventureros del mar, conocidos como piratas o cosarios, que inundaron en su época de esplendor el lecho marino. Menciones, por ejemplo, a dos de esos entusiastas personajes: Roberto Cofresí Ramírez de Arellano y Miguel Henríquez. El primero nació en Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, y se destacó como Pirata en las aguas del Gran Caribe en el siglo 18. Era blanco de familia adinerada y sus parientes formaban parte de la aristocracia de Cabo Rojo y su región. Era un *ladrón de mar*, para algunos y un *Robin Hood criollo*, para otros. El historiador puertorriqueño Walter Cardona Bonet, investigó con gran astucia y profundidad la vida y obra de *Cofrei*, y me confesó que no encontró ni una gota de bondad y heroísmo de nuestro pirata. Era, según Cardona Bonet, un hombre malo, asesino, ladrón y abusador de los más débiles; además, asaltaba las embarcaciones enemigas de España. Por otro lado, nuestro amigo Roberto Fernández Valledor, estudioso del folclor y de la literatura caribeña, en sus múltiples publicaciones, se ha dedicado a analizar lo que nuestro gran novelista y dramaturgo puertorriqueño Alejandro Tapia y Rivera señaló de que Cofresí es valorado, no tanto por su vida un poco confusa y desordenada y si, por la memoria que dé la conserva todavía su pueblo.

Miguel Henríquez zapatero y calderero, hijo ilegítimo de una hija de una esclava llegada de África. Era contrabandista. Se cree que su padre fue un hombre blanco y perteneciente a las élites sanjuaneras. A parecer de alguna manera se ocupó de que su hijo se instruyera; ya que su biógrafo no tiene duda que un afrodescendiente instruido. Sabía leer y escribir y escritura era cursada y elegante. En 1700 abandona la banqueta de zapatero y se dedica al contrabando con la herencia de su desconocido padre. Así se convirtió, al paso de los años en fiel colaborador del rey de España y protector de las aguas del Caribe y defensor las embarcaciones militares y del gobierno de la realeza española, que tuvieron algún tipo de dificultad en su travesía entre la Madre Patria y el Gran Caribe.

Su posible *padre-mentor*, fue un presbítero muy amigo de su madre, quien le dejó una herencia o dote con la cual, según el historiador Ángel López Cantos fue amasando una fortuna y construyó una de las armadas más impresionantes e importantes de su época. Es nuestro personaje más importante del siglo 18. Henríquez no fue un héroe, según López Cantos, aunque consiguió que el rey lo nombrara capitán de mar y guerra, título nobiliario reservado, generalmente para los blancos. También llegó a solicitarle al rey el título de almirante, que nunca se le otorgó. Pero, fraseando a López Cantos, con su inteligencia y astucia llegó a dominar durante más de 30 años la política y la economía de Puerto Rico. Sus barcos de corso - o sea que podía capturar, asaltar y apropiarse de la tripulación y los bienes de los barcos de los países enemigos de España - fueron el vehículo que lo llevó a la cúspide. La patente de corso era una especie de licencia que le otorgaban los reyes de diferentes países o regiones a individuos que tuvieran acceso o eran propietarios de embarcaciones que se dedicaran a defender o asegurar que no iban a contrabandejar en los mares cercanos o que pertenecían a los reinos que ese marinero se comprometía a custodiar o defender. Parte o toda la mercancía hurtada era compartida con el rey que la había otorgado la licencia de corso. Henríquez si la tuvo; Cofresí, nunca se ha constatado si la tuvo. [Ver: Ángel López Cantos, "Miguel Henríquez, una aproximación a su vida", Revista de Historia, AHP, números 5 Y 6 , enero- diciembre de 1987.7-29]. ■



NYC Free Summer Fun Activities

by Edith Johnston, LCSW

Assistant Director, Retiree Division

The Covid-19 Pandemic has made it very difficult for most of us to leave our homes and have some fun, however, with the restriction being lifted and the summer around the corner I want to provide you a list of summer activities. Please see the list below and enjoy the summer.

1. Free walking tours, it's the best way to get to know NYC and learn from different neighborhoods. <https://www.nycinsiderguide.com/new-york-walking-tours>
2. Central Park is a magical place, you can enjoy different events, like Free concerts, bird watching, Shakespeare in the park, stop to smell the roses at the conservatory garden and much more. <https://www.nycgo.com/articles/fun-things-to-do-in-central-park>
3. For art lovers, the summer has a lot to offer, visit the indoor and outdoor art activities. <https://www.nycgo.com/articles/summer-2021-new-york-city-art-guide>
4. If you are a movie lover, enjoy the indoor and outdoor movies, including drive in. Also, free movies under the start offered at different park around the city. <https://www.nycgo.com/articles/nyc-drive-in-movie-theaters>
5. NYC has more than 14 miles of sandy beaches, from the Bronx to Coney Island and Far Rockaway. All the beaches are open from Memorial Day until the Sunday after Labor Day, which for this year is September 12th. They are staffed with life guards from 10am to 6pm. <https://www.nycgo.com/itineraries/best-beaches-nyc/>
6. Dining out, find the perfect place for your preference. The following links gives you all the information you need to find restaurants on your neighborhood. It will also provide information on what's open and what is closed. <https://www.nycgo.com/things-to-do/restaurants-dining/>
7. Save on admissions to some of New York City's most iconic attractions with New York CityPASS, New York Explorer Pass, New York Pass and Build Your Own Pass by Go New York. Each offers a different experience, but all give you substantial savings. <https://www.nycgo.com/things-to-do/tours-in-nyc/attraction-passes>
8. Looking for a place to stay, the following guide will help find the hotel of your preference. Anything from pet friendly hotels to hotels near popular attractions. <https://www.nycgo.com/plan-your-trip/hotels-near-me-in-nyc/>
9. Thinking about traveling, here is a complete guide of what you need to know. Here you will find up today information about what you need to know about COVID-19, hotels, attractions, and much more. <https://business.nycgo.com/travel-trade/>

If you did not find what you're looking for in the information about, feel free to call me, Edith Johnston, at the Local 237 Retiree Division **646-638-8633** and I will be happy to spend some time over the phone and help you find fund summer information in your neighborhood.

Have fun and be safe! ■

on a personal note...

In Memoriam



To the family of retiree **Julio Gonzalez**, retired from the HHC, passed on May 2, 2021, we offer our deepest condolences.

Mr. Gonzalez was a Shop Steward and strong advocate always willing to help as an active member and even throughout his retirement. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife and his family. His service to the city will long be remembered.



RETIREE'S CORNER *A Note from a retiree*

My name is Brian Middendorf. I was a Maintenance Worker at Jacob Riis House and an Assistant Superintendent at Baruch Houses. I look forward to getting the Retiree News and reading it. It is an interesting and helpful newsletter. It makes me miss all of the wonderful people I met while working for NYCHA. The employees, tenants, and yes the holiday parties were all very nice. Outside of housing many people have a bad opinion of NYCHA. When I hear someone groan at the mention of Housing, I stop them and say, "You don't know, you can't know, what Housing is really like until you work and or live there." That silences them. When I tell them a story or two they begin to smile. So, I commend the Retiree Division staff on putting together a wonderful newsletter for a wonderful agency.

*As always with warm regards,
Sincerely, Brian Middendorf*

RETIREE news & views

216 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011



Affiliate of



MAY/JUNE 2021

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Men's Health Month

need to drink less or not at all.

12. Spend time with others. Spending time and doing things with other people, of all ages, can help keep you mentally, physically and emotionally fit. It can also give your brain a boost and lift your mood. So volunteer, or join community or other groups and get involved in activities you enjoy.
13. Get checked out! Screening, or checking, for early signs of certain health problems can help diagnose them early. The following screening approaches are generally recommended for older men; ask your healthcare provider if they're right for you.
- Bone health evaluation: Periodically. Your healthcare provider should evaluate your risk of osteoporosis, or "thinning of the bones." (It's not just a woman's disease.) Your healthcare provider should evaluate your risk and possibly recommend further testing. Remember: exercise strengthens the bones at any age.
- Blood pressure check: At least once a year.
- Cholesterol test for high blood cholesterol levels: Cholesterol screening should be done after consulting with your healthcare provider. Screening frequency depends on your age and general health.
- Diabetes check: At least once; if you have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol levels, or diabetes runs in your family, get checked every three years.
- Screenings for prostate cancer and colorectal cancer: Geriatrics experts now do not recommend screening for either colorectal or prostate cancer without first considering life expectancy. Studies have shown that the short-term risks may not be worth the benefits if life expectancy is under 10 years. You

should talk to your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about these screenings.

- Hearing and vision screening: every year.
- Depression screening: every year. If you feel down, sad, or hopeless for two or more weeks, or have little interest in or get little pleasure from things you once enjoyed, you may be depressed. Don't try to "tough it out." Untreated depression is bad for your mental and physical health. Talk to your healthcare provider and get the treatment you need.
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening: once between the ages of 65 and 75 if you've ever smoked. An abdominal aortic aneurysm is an enlarged or swollen blood vessel in your abdomen that can be dangerous. If your healthcare provider finds you have an abdominal aortic aneurysm, it can be treated.
- Dental check-up: As often as your dentist recommends, and at least once a year. Your dentist should clean your teeth and check for cavities.
- Sexually transmitted disease screening: If you are sexually active but not in a monogamous relationship, these screenings are important at any age. Talk with your healthcare provider about this and how to practice safe sex.
- Discussion about sexual concerns: erectile dysfunction (ED), or difficulty getting or maintaining an erection, is relatively common among older men. You should let your healthcare provider know if you have ED both because it can be treated and because it can be an early warning sign of heart and artery disease.
- Other screening tests: As recommended by your healthcare provider.

June is the month we celebrate Father's Day. We need to keep our men in our lives healthy, happy and alive. See box insert for some resources for further information and materials. ■

Celebrating Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, and the Alzheimer's Association is encouraging everyone to learn more about brain health, Alzheimer's disease, and other types of dementia. More than 410,000 New Yorkers are living with Alzheimer's, and many more family members and caregivers are affected. The Alzheimer's Association, New York City Chapter is here to help with free programs, support groups, and other care and support services.

Did you know that research shows some habits can improve your brain health? Diet, exercise, sleep, and social activity can all contribute to a healthier brain and may reduce your risk of dementia. Elizabeth Benouaguf, community engagement and education manager at the Alzheimer's Association, says, "We know we need to keep our bodies healthy as we age, but the same is true for our brains. Taking steps earlier

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in life can make a difference later." You can learn more about how to keep your brain in shape in our free on-demand class or by reading our 10 brain health tips.

It's also important to know the warning signs that you or a loved one may be developing a cognitive problem. Some changes to memory or thinking are typical as we age, but anything that interferes with your daily life shouldn't be ignored. Misplacing keys is normal. Forgetting how to get home from the grocery store isn't. If you notice concerning changes, see a doctor. An early diagnosis can ensure you get the right care, have time to plan for the future, are eligible to participate in trials.

To learn more about the Alzheimer's Association, our free resources, and how you can get involved to support the cause, visit alz.org/nyc. ■

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send photos, stories, fun recipes, share special occasions/events or a new hobby you want to share. Email us at retirees2@local237.org or telephone **212-807-0555**.

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