

LOCAL 237

NEWSLINE

Vol. 58, No. 3

★ ★ Fall 2024



LABOR DAY

In this edition of Newsline, we mark the end of summer and the onset of Fall. For some of us, the change is met with a little sadness—some hating to see the sun set so early and the baseball season drawing to an end—while for others, Fall is greeted with enthusiasm from the excitement of Halloween, to planning the Thanksgiving menu and stockpiling the Christmas gifts. It is also the time that we celebrate the labor movement, not only with a day off from work, but with parades and tributes to our union brothers and sisters and the labor leaders across the nation who have fought for equality and dignity in the workplace.

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. Whether during the height of the pandemic, a time of sudden, unimaginable grief that rocked the entire world and our own personal world, or the present, with historic challenges from Mother Nature, and a migrant crisis sputtering out of control, union members — and especially public sector workers — didn’t give up; they got up and went to work. These essential municipal workers keep the City and the State running, and are owed a gigantic: “Thank You”.

Unfortunately, union membership across the nation has declined from its peak year of 1954 at around 40% to only 10.7% currently. New York is among the states with the largest number of union workers —nearly 24% — and 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 decline, union membership in both the public and private sectors is slowly increasing. The Covid-19 crisis played a role in this factor, when so many workers, scared and frustrated by a perceived lack of assistance from our government and medical institutions, turned to their unions for help. The remarkable win by Amazon workers in Staten Island to unionize is an example. No small feat — just three 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 young Black man could be used to unionize. Amazon fired him, but their strategy backfired, and the repercussions have been felt throughout the nation.

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.”

So as you pack away the beach ball and swim suit and start to think about your Halloween costume, let’s not forget that in the Fall we traditionally acknowledge the work of the worker... especially those in the public sector. And, when you see the words “Union Made”, that means “Union Strong”. We’re a movement not just a moment. ♪



SEE THE CENTERFOLD FOR ADDITIONAL PHOTOS



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 Carezza, Director
Long Island Welfare Fund:
For information on the various
funds call 800-962-1145

RETIREE, 6th 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

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.
Diana Nappi, Director
Len Proctor, Deputy Director

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

LEGAL SERVICES, 4th Fl.
212-924-1220
Lawyers advise and represent mem-
bers on covered personal legal prob-
lems, including domestic relations
(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., Chief Attorney
Jennifer Hudson, Esq.,
Assistant Chief Attorney

EXECUTIVE OFFICES, 5th Fl.
212-924-2000

GREGORY FLOYD
President

RUBEN TORRES
Vice President

DONALD ARNOLD
Secretary-Treasurer

JEANETTE TAVERAS
Recording Secretary

**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**, 2nd 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.
Diana Doss, Esq.
Grievance Coordinator

CIVIL SERVICE BAR ASSOC.
6th Fl., 212-675-0519
Saul Fishman, President
Aldona Vaiciunas,
Office Administrator and
Grievance Coordinator
Lee Gordon, Esq.
Business Agent
CSBA Welfare Fund
Alicare 866-647-4617

COMMUNICATIONS, 5th Fl.
646-638-8501
Phyllis S. Shafran, Director &
Editor Local 237 Newsline and
Editor, Retiree News & Views

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
6th Fl., 212-807-0550
Provides a variety of training
and educational advancement
opportunities for members.
Shanell Grayson, Director

USEFUL NUMBERS FOR PRE-RETIREES

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

General 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



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 generally considered the political party of middle-class working families, and the Republican Party was associated more with big business and the wealthy corporate 1%. Yet lately, many political pundits and historians have written—citing polling data for factual backing — that there's been a change — which some would call a reversal of party ideology, identification and a shift in party affiliation. The Republican Party has been trending toward a multi-racial, working-class, blue-collar coalition, while the Democrats now have a larger share of followers among white college graduates. And another change: Union support for Democratic political candidates is no longer 100% assumed, assured, guaranteed or delivered.

Many wonder what conclusions can be drawn. Do we now have an establishment progressive party and an anti-establishment conservative party? Some would point to radical fringes on both sides. The question that now begs an answer: Are there so many factions in both parties that their previous, main-stream core beliefs and fundamental values are hard to define, or perhaps worse! They have dwindled to the point of uncertainty. They seem blurred, vague and ever-changing — causing alarms to go off. Many ask: "What do we really stand for"? Many worry: "Can obscurity be far behind"? Today, because it's not easy to explain where either party stands on certain issues, large numbers of voters are not affiliated with either party — no surprise there! They're turned off by both, causing some voters to show interest in having a choice that includes third party candidates.

All of this makes for a very interesting 2024 election season...one that also presents opportunities for union members and methods. So many factors — from big to small — all backed by countless surveys, focus groups and consultants brimming with fresh ideas and nuance-savvy advice to guide every aspect of a candidate's life, whether a first-time contender or a seasoned politician working to keep the win column. From the candidate's appearance to where they are from and what they might say will all be researched, orchestrated, rehearsed and made spontaneity-free and politician-lite. The guidelines and guardrails will be installed; stump speeches created and memorized for televised rallies, (great for optics, but mostly "preaching to the choir") with snippets posted on social media platforms and worked into costly media ads.

With baby boomers and senior citizens, who until most recently served as the largest and politically savvy voting population starting to decline in number, and with the current push to entice younger, new voters to the polls, how to effectively reach voters has become the topic of the day. Surely, for such diverse voting populations and so many variables, a "one size fits all" solution will not work. But

what medium to use? From TikTok to direct mail, audience demographics will be analyzed, scrutinized, tested and tested again to help predict who, what or where are the best influencers?

This is where the lessons learned, and methods used by union organizers can come in handy.

After years of declining numbers, union membership shows signs of making a comeback. Currently, there are many examples of workers in industries throughout the nation previously thought to be out of the possibility of union-izing. From Amazon to Starbucks to McDonalds — workers are slowly but surely signing-up. The method used is old fashion but tried and true... the union drive comes from within. Workers talking to their fellow workers. They know the problems. They see the solutions. They wear the same uniforms. They are trusted as "one of us" and their co-workers listen. While the various social media platforms, catchy TV ads and high-profile interviews, oversized post cards and lawn signs have proven to reach millions of people with evidence of their individual and collective impact, directly talking to voters — shaking their hands — coming face-to-face with the candidate or a well-chosen surrogate and taking a selfie, has an important role in winning elections too.

Gone are the "whistle-stop" campaigns, but the need to see the candidate — get a vibe — know that you saw him or her, but more importantly, feel like you were also seen, that has its place in winning elections as well. So, perhaps in this time of great change — this time of altered dictionary definitions and role reversals — labor unions, which have remained steadfast in who they represent and what they represent, are now presented with a newly created vacuum they can fill. We span all the demographics and political ideologies and have the outreach network and skills—new and old—to make impact. As the adage says: "The more things change, the more they remain the same." When applied to politics, labor unions have always been and still are today, great influencers. They provide a template for communication and action. The labor movement has endured union bashers, union busters, unfavorable court rulings and anti-labor appointees, but workers remain confident that we're on their side largely because we "see" one another and have never forgotten the value of the "human touch". That's our secret weapon. As many of our union brothers and sisters will no doubt get involved in the upcoming election — knocking on doors and making calls — political strategists, the campaign gurus and operatives at all levels should take a cue from us: Nothing replaces that human touch. Just ask Christian Smalls, a Staten Island Amazon worker, who would have his lunch or grab a smoke in the company's parking lot day after day all while talking up joining a union — a previously unthinkable achievement that was ultimately achieved. ■



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

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:

Heroic SI SSAs at New Dorp HS



School Safety Agents who apprehended a knife from a student, who attempted to stab a participant at a football game at New Dorp High School.

(l-r) **Jeanette Taveras**, Local 237 Recording Secretary and Business Agent; **Level 3 Lindalee Garner**; **Level 1 Wanda Hunt**; **Level 1 Natalie Scamardella**; **Level 1 Anthony Trani**; and **Derek Jackson**, Law Enforcement Director.

A Round of Applause for SI SSAs at Curtis HS



SI SSAs found a firearm inside the backpack of a 17-year-old student at Curtis High School. (l-r) **Jeanette Taveras**, **SSA 3 Castillo**, **SSA Walton**, **SSA Creese**, **SSA Joseph**, **SSA Quaranta** and **Derek Jackson**.

Local 237 NEWSLINE

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Executive Board

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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.



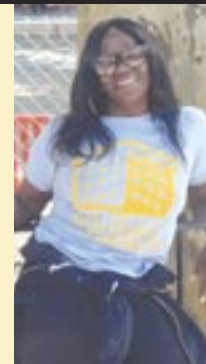
Shop Steward Shoutout

Housing Division



Frank Wright
Caretaker J
Chelsea

Since the start of Frank Wright's career in 2021, he has been a true advocate for his fellow coworkers. Frank is not only the Shop Steward, but he is also a Safety Associate. He is passionate about safety and worker's rights. Frank is loved and respected by everyone he works with and always finds ways to uplift those around him.



Roslyn Reed
Caretaker J
Butler Houses

Let's shout out Shop Steward and Caretaker J, Roslyn Reed of Butler Houses for her dedication to the membership. As a member of over 14 years, Roslyn is known for fighting for equality.

Law Enforcement Division



Mark Gardiner
Public Safety
Officer CUNY

Mark is a Public Safety Officer and Shop Steward. He is dedicated to his job and as a Shop Steward is always there for his members to keep them informed of all activities with Local 237. As well as helping his colleagues when it is needed, we could not have a better person to represent Local 237 and our members.



Pepe Ramos
Hospital Police
Officer, Queens
General Hospital

Officer Pepe Ramos has been our Shop Steward at Queens General Hospital for 4 years and continues to be a great bridge between the members at his location and the union hall.

Citywide Division



Jesse Spinelli
Elevator
Mechanic
DCAS

Jesse has been a loyal and dedicated Shop Steward for DCAS and is currently celebrating his 10th year of service.



Tamara Nelson
Ultrasound
Technologist
Kings County
Hospital

We would like to give a shout out to Tamara for being the newly appointed Shop Steward for Ultrasound Techs at HHC Kings County Hospital.

IDENTITY THEFT

THINK YOU'RE A VICTIM?

At Local 237 we take your identity management seriously. With our partner, **ID Resolution** we provide you with a **FREE** comprehensive program should your identity be compromised.

If you have concerns or questions and to learn more about the program, go to <https://idresolution.net/teamsters-local-237>



Call us at
877-308-9169

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS Public Housing Division

So many of our members distinguish themselves by their professionalism on the job. Here are some of their pictures and stories.



(l-r) **Keith Toussaint**, Caretaker X at Ocean Hill Houses and **Carl Giles**, Local 237 Housing Director. Mr. Toussaint is also a DJ at 94.7, The Block, radio station.



Five graduates from the Plasterers class, which was a joint venture between Local 237 and NYCHA.

Ken Roper, Housing Business Agent and Assistant to the President visiting NYCHA members.

Added to the Roster of Retirees

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



(l-r) **Kangela Moore**, Business Agent with **Hospital Police Officer Haigler** retired from Metropolitan Hospital.



(l-r) Carl Giles, Local 237 Housing Director presents **Lord Raleigh** a plaque. He retired after 32 years of service.



(l-r) **Bianca Jones**, Business Agent; **Victor Ortiz**, Water Use Inspector; **Curtis Scott** and Trustee and Business Agent.



(l-r) **SSA Valerie Cook** retired after working 33 years pictured with **Charlie Cotto**, Director of Operations, Law Enforcement and Citywide Divisions.



(l-r) **Charlie Cotto** with **SSA Jonathan Seabrook** from Bronx West who retired after 27 years.



(l-r) **Kangela Moore** presents **Hospital Police Officer Robinson** from Metropolitan Hospital a retirement plaque.



School Safety Agent Joe Adams retires after completing 30 years of service to the school community of Brooklyn. (l-r) **SSA3 Stephanie Jones**; **Commanding Officer Andwar Wood**; **SSS D' Arlene Cameron**; **Derek Short**, **Business Agent**; **SSA Joe Adams**; **Executive Officer Divina Rosario**; and **SSA3 Donna Jones**.



(l-r) **Jeanette Taveras**; **Retiree Michelle Miller**; and **Donald Arnold**, gave her a plaque for years of service. She started with CUNY in 1977.



Congratulations to **MTF SSA Edwin Gonzales** for his 20 years dedicated to school safety.



(l-r) **Jeanette Taveras**; **Luis Garcia**, Level III, retired after 30 years; **Rosa Garcia**, Level I, retired after 28 years; and **Curtis Scott**. These retirees are husband and wife. They both worked out of School Safety Staten Island Command.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS Citywide Division

So many of our members distinguish themselves by their professionalism on the job. Here are some of their pictures and stories.

NEW APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM



Teamsters Local 237 Secretary Treasurer **Donald Arnold** (left) with **Norberto Luna**, Assistant Director of Public Housing, signing a letter to the New York State Department of Labor seeking to create the first ever Elevator Apprenticeship in collaboration with NYCHA. The goal of the Elevator Apprenticeship is to address both present and future operational needs. The apprenticeship of each individual will be fully registered with the NYSDOL and is a prerequisite for entrance into and continued appointment to the Civil Service title.

ELEVATOR MECHANIC CONTRACT TALKS RESUME



In addition to President Gregory Floyd, members of the Local 237 Negotiation Committee (pictured) included Secretary-Treasurer Donald Arnold, Union Attorney Martha Bodhnarain, Trustee Curtis Scott, Assistant Housing Division Director Norberto Luna, Assistant to the President Ken Roper, DOE Elevator Mechanic Damian Pusey, NYPD Elevator Supervisor Thomas Paul, DCAS Elevator Mechanic Jesse Spinelli, NYCHA Elevator Supervisor Ronald Hall, NYCHA Elevator Mechanic Steven Echandy, NYCHA Elevator Supervisor Vincent Carren, NYCHA Elevator Helper Bobby Rice, DCAS Elevator Supervisor John Sullivan, DCAS Elevator Helper Michael Dangel and DOE Elevator Mechanic William Moreno.

The Local 237 Negotiation Committee met with City and Housing Authority representatives again on September 25th. Management presented its cost of how the outside prevailing wage and benefit package could be applied to Elevator Mechanic titles, as well as comparisons to the Citywide pattern. The contract covers Elevator Mechanics, Supervisors and Helpers. Local 237 will evaluate the figures provided by the City and the union committee will decide whether to choose between the pattern or outside private sector rate and then formulate a proposal. Local 237's negotiation committee identified several contract priorities. As with all Local 237 contracts, President Floyd remains focused on the preservation of member benefits.

NYPD'S EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY CONTROL SPECIALISTS



(l-r) **George Wade**, Assistant Director; **Dominique Lynch**; **Matthew Ginty**; **Angelica Kaganovsky**; **Curtis Scott**, Trustee and Business Agent; **Ashley Silva**; **Carlos Funghak**; **Charlia Lloyd**; **Samuel Laude**; **Bianca Jones**, Business Agent; and **Len Proctor**, Welfare Fund Deputy Director.

DCAS GRADUATION CEREMONY

2024 DCAS GRADUATES

Taysir Alhanshali
Terrace Archer
William Jordan
Rondain Primo
Bryan Rios-Hernandez
Eric Ross
Jonathan Sohun
Christopher Watson



Charlie Cotto (l) with graduates and **Commissioner Luis Molina** (r.)

NYPD EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY CONTROL SPECIALISTS, LEVEL II, HONORED WITH PATROL BOROUGH BRONX AWARD



Isaac Tirado



Earl Thomas



(l-r) **Charlie Cotto** with Valedictorian, Officer **Bryan Rios-Hernandez**.



(l-r) DCAS Officer **Taysir Alhanshali** and wife Bronx DA Special Officer **Jovanny Nieto** with **Charlie Cotto**.

RADIOLOGY TECHNICIANS



Marie Stines and **Philbert Mitchell**, Radiologic Technologist at Kings County Hospital.

DEPT. OF CITYWIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES 2024 QWL CEREMONY HONOREES

JUSTIN CAPOTE
JOHN SULLIVAN
ALIBYAMIL DELGADO
MARC GASTON
JOHNATHAN JONES
JOWEN PICHARDO
MICHAEL DEAK
DAVID TIERNEY
GWOK WAI
EVELYN BAYNE
NEIL BELL CUSTODIAN

ZYGMUNT DABEK JR
JOHNNY DUNBAR
MARTHA GARCIA SANCHE
ALEXANDER GONZALEZ
CLODEAN JACKSON
WAYNE MATOS SR
ANDRES MOORE
ISRAEL RIVERA
GIUSEPPE RIZZI
ANTHONY SEALEY
DANI WHITTED

JASON BREWSTER
MIRANDA ANTOINE-LATIMOSUP
ADDESH LAL
PASQUALE CALDARELLI
FELICE HARRIS
MARIE ACEVEDO
SHAWN WITTEN
FRANK CIULLA
GERALDINE MOORER

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS Law Enforcement Division

So many of our members distinguish themselves by their professionalism on the job. Here are some of their pictures and stories.



Bronx West SSA **Montilla** joined youngsters at PS 57 for a special reading session. Our agents not only keep our students safe but also inspire and support their learning.



Susan Wagner High School's SSAs **Burke and Rodriguez**.



CSA **Ali** from New York Technical College is signing in everyone entering the campus.



Sgt. **Grenald** and Officer **Andujar** from Department of Homeless Services Police at Hostos Community College employment fair.



The Safe Team was at Queens College to ensure everyone was safe from outside protesters.



CSA **Lehnert** at LaGuardia Community College is providing a safe environment for everyone at the college.

SSAS HELP PROVIDE SAFETY AT NYC RISE UP CONCERT



Various School Safety Agents from different boroughs as well as Special Services working together covering an event, NYC Rise Up Concert on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 and Thursday, August 15, 2024 at Midland Beach in Staten Island.



Rudolph Robert, Sergeant at Baruch College. He has been at the college for 21 years.



Campus Police Officers **Smith and Banks** are from Kingsborough Community College. Making students feel safe on campus.



CSAs **Hemayet and Boyer** welcome staff, students and visitors at LaGuardia Community College.



Captain LaBoy from Metropolitan Hospital and **Sgt. Rivera** from Harlem participating in Harlem Hospital's hiring pool for special officers.



The staff at Henry J Carter celebrated the end of summer with a barbecue. (l-r) **Hospital Police Officer Bonifacio and Chief Hart**.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS Law Enforcement Division *Continued...*



Louis Leysath, Traffic Specialist, received the Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect Award.



Hospital Police Officer Elliott-Brown from Bellevue Hospital.



Queens Hospital hosted “Coffee with a Cop”, the first one since Covid. **BA Frank Rella** (fourth from right) joined the event.



SSA 1 Shawnta Alston of A. Philip Randolph Campus with Sandra Lennon, Chair for Para Transit and Vice Chair for school buses in Westchester at the West Indies Parade (left) and the African American Day Parade (right).



John Bocuzzi, Staten Island School Safety Agent always ready to work.



Meeting at the NYPD Academy for School Safety Agents with **Derek Short**, Business Agent addressing the audience.

Keeping you in the know



Social Security Installs New Kiosks to Improve Customer Check-in Process

By **Ravi Gopaul** Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in New York

At Social Security we strive to make our services more accessible while maintaining your privacy. We installed new kiosks in most of our local offices to make it easier for you to check in and conduct business with us. The kiosks are private, easy to use without assistance, and provide consistent service to our customers.

Modifications to earlier screens have improved the check-in process, especially for our customers who are blind or have low vision. Each kiosk is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and includes the following features:

- Accessible keypads
- Audio headphone jacks (complimentary headphones are available upon request).
- Braille instructions for how to use the kiosk and report any accessibility issues.
- Built-in thermal printers and ticket dispensers.
- Enhanced 508-compatible check-in software.
- Touchscreen monitors with privacy filters.

These kiosks are just one more way we’re improving the customer service experience in our offices. Last year, we began offering Mobile Check-in Express. It allows customers to use their mobile device to scan a QR code at their local office to check in for scheduled and walk-in appointments.

By turning on their device’s location services and mobile notifications, visitors receive:

- An electronic ticket so they know their place in line.
- An alert when an employee is ready to help them.
- Information about their interview location.
- An invitation to participate in our feedback survey.

With our new kiosks and Mobile Check-In Express, our check-in process has never been easier. To learn more about our commitment to accessibility, visit: www.ssa.gov/accessibility.





LABOR DAY

It's not so easy to find a holiday that crosses so many boundaries: racial, religious, ethnic, generational and gender lines. Your political party, favorite color, married or single, home-owner or renter, blue collar or white collar workers, years of education, driving an SUV or compact car—all matter very little. For sure, it's not easy to find a holiday which most Americans celebrate in similar ways—usually involving a hot dog or two...whether it's all beef or tofu, yes, Labor Day is a rarity: A holiday we can agree upon.

Congress created Labor Day in 1894 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. And then there's the Labor Day Parade. It's not held on Labor Day. That's usually when so many of us are sad about the summer's end and reserve the day to get in those last rays of summer sun, a swim at the beach, flipping burgers on the BBQ, watching the US Open tennis match on TV or hunting for "Back to School" sales. Instead, the parade is held a week later.

New York City's Labor Day has some major distinctions: It's not only the largest one in the nation, but also the oldest. The parade was organized by the New York City Central Labor Council in 1882, when an unheard of number of workers—25,000—took off from their jobs in celebration of worker solidarity and pride, and marched on Union Square to City Hall. Through the years, Labor Day and the parade have come to symbolize the long-lasting presence and indestructible power of the labor movement, despite the efforts by many in corporate America who decry unions as contributing to driving up production and service costs—and affecting their bottom line. They, and some others in power who fear the power of our unity, are simply trying to do us in. And it's working. Currently, union membership is at an all-time low of only around 10.7% nationwide (equaling one in 10 workers) as compared with peak years of the mid-1950s, when membership was 40% of all American workers (or four out of every ten workers). New York State leads the nation with the highest percentage of union workers, nearly 24%. Of that number, nearly 70% are public sector workers, with African-Americans making up the largest component of that group.

At Teamsters Local 237, we understand the value of unity. And our commitment to it is both practical and moral. We know, for example, that non-union workers earn on average 20% less than union members. We know too, that the 40-hour work week, health benefits, paid vacation and family leave, and the \$17 an-hour minimum wage are just some of the hard fought—and won—battles. We also know that workers' rights and civil rights are unquestionably intertwined. Let's not forget that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, when he

joined striking sanitation workers—men who made \$1.65 an-hour and were treated by their bosses like the garbage they collected. Dr. King believed that: "The labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standard of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers."

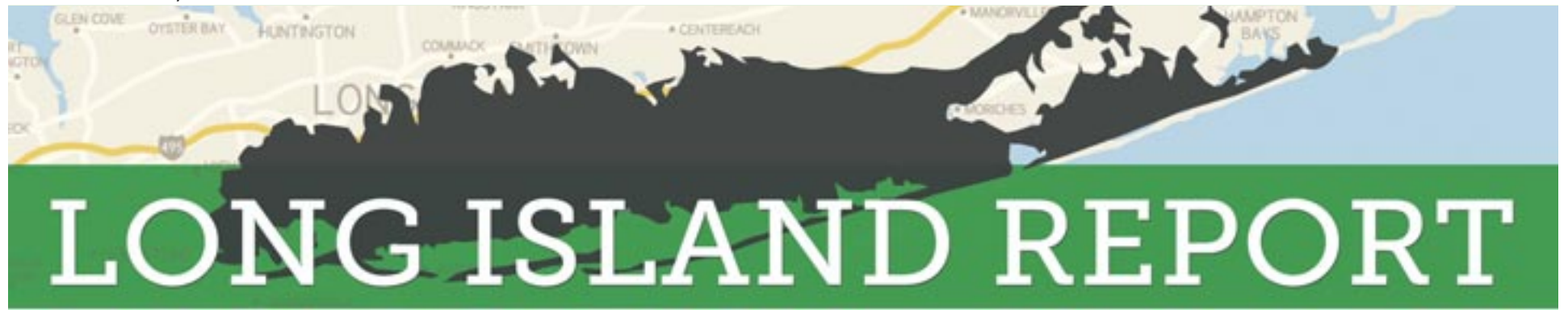
It seems that many average Americans are starting to agree—again. In fact, the approval rating of labor unions has recently been on the rise. Some have speculated that the Covid crisis helped with this current trend. Too many Americans learned the hard way, that many of our government institutions and leaders were ill-prepared for the catastrophes so many endured. They came to rely on their union to distribute the face masks, to provide health benefits, and to lend them and their families a sympathetic, compassionate ear.

This increase may also have a link to the elusive quest of achieving the "American Dream." Coined by historian James Truslow Adams during the Great Depression, the phrase symbolizes the desire for a better future that could be obtained in this country through hard work. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his 1933 inaugural address, famously declared about the challenges of troubling times: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," and continued in his speech to emphasize the spiritual qualities underlying the "American Dream," by saying: "Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement." However it is defined, for some, the "American Dream" remains just a dream; for others, especially many new immigrants in the current surge of migration, the "Dream" has become a nightmare. Interestingly, in 1997, 72% of Americans thought the "American Dream" was possible. More recently, studies indicate, "not so much."

And, here's where labor unions come in. 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%. We help give everyone a chance. We help give everyone hope.

This is why we march. We joined our union brothers and sisters in the Labor Day Parade to send a strong message to our elected leaders and to the public at-large: ***"You can bash us. You can try to bust us. We are not going away. Be our friend, not our foe. We have a voice and a vote. We're labor strong, celebrating our solidarity and pride on a day unlike any other."***





LONG ISLAND REPORT



Town of Islip Resource Recovery member **Eric Bonilla** completing his route.



Local 237 member **Dave Fiordiliso** retires after 37 years, at the Town of Babylon. Dave was the MMIV Mason Crew foreman. Best of luck in retirement. **Business Agent Andy Viegas** presented him with his plaque.

COMMACK SCHOOLS

It's that time of the year at Commack Schools as the members are in high gear getting the schools ready for students and staff.



Al Cannizzo, retired after 31 years as a Bus Driver. He will be missed as he was a constant figure and well respected by all. Pictured with Bus Drivers Liaison **Dee Tietjen** (l) and Local 237 Trustee and Director of the Long Island Division **Benny Carenza** (r).



Local 237 member **Dan Raccamandato**, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, retires with 40 years of service. Danny did many projects for the town with his crews, which enhanced the whole town. He will be missed and we wish him the best on his retirement. **Business Agent Andy Viegas** presented him with his plaque.



LABOR DAY



POLICE SURGEONS ANNUAL FUNDRAISER



Local 237 was proud to participate in the Police Surgeons Annual Fundraiser for fallen police officers. This year officer Jonathan Dillers mom and sister were at the ceremonies. A big thanks to **John Gallagher** for all of his work to make this event awesome. At the end of the day we raised \$2,500 that went directly to the families. Thanks to all who stopped by.

POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS

DRIVE at the Men's Shelter in Brooklyn



Derek Jackson, Law Enforcement Director, addresses the attendees.

A Teamsters DRIVE (Democrat, Republican, Independent Voter Education) Meeting at the Men's Shelter in Brooklyn for DHS, ACS and HRA Members. 55 Members were signed up as a result of the meeting. ■

Back-to-School Politics

By Vito R. Pitta, Esq.

NYCHA Trust: As expected, the residents of Bronx River Addition Houses have voted to join the Public Housing Preservation Trust, a state-created public entity which continues to be managed and maintained by Local 237 members, and aims to help NYCHA raise funds for capital improvements and building renovations through bonds. Bronx River has been joined by Nostrand Houses in Sheepshead Bay and Unity Towers in Coney Island, both of which have voted in favor of the trust in the last two years.

However, this growing momentum in support of the trust came to a quick halt after residents of Coney Island Houses rejected the switch in August. A total of 239 residents voted against the plan, opting for the Section 9 status quo.

The administration continues to encourage NYCHA residents to participate in the voting procedures at their residences with the hope that the NYCHA Trust can solve some of New York City's public housing issues.

School Safety: Just as the city enters another back-to-school season, 2023 and 2024 data, reported by *The New York Post*, warns that New York City public schools may be ridden with dangerous objects. A staggering 4,000 dangerous items were seized by law enforcement during this past school year. 278 of those items were weapons.

There are two main culprits of this contraband: gang violence and interpersonal conflict between students. Many suggest that more security scans and increased school safety staff may remedy the issue.

While the statistics are concerning, there may be hope that this year's increase in School Safety Agents and enhanced security may help mitigate the problem. The NYPD has recently proposed a plan to hire assistant School Safety Agents in the hopes of addressing the issue. The plan involves hiring recent high school graduates to work to supplement New York City security needs while building job skills.

9/11: With the recent anniversary of September 11th, we remember the brave people who served as responders to the horrific attack, many of whom continue to suffer devastating consequences to this day. Twenty-three years later, it is still imperative to prioritize meeting the needs of those affected by this tragedy. One way to ensure this is by funding the WTC Health Program, a federal healthcare program that provides medical monitoring and treatment of WTC-related health conditions for 9/11 responders and survivors. Unfortunately, the number of first responders, volunteers, and community members who suffer from 9/11-related health issues only continues to rise, and the funding for this critical program continues to dwindle. Advocates say an additional \$3 billion is needed to sustain the program. If the funding is not approved, treatments may be cut as soon as 2028.

Several New York lawmakers are spearheading the effort to ensure the program stays afloat. This July, Senator Gillibrand, and Representative Garbarino introduced bipartisan-backed legislation that would guarantee the program to be funded through 2090.

Recent State Legislation: As nearly 500 bills from this year's state legislative session head to the Governor's desk this fall, there is one that is particularly relevant to Local 237 members. A3866B, sponsored by State Senator Myrie and Assemblymember Jackson, is an act that would amend public housing law to require the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to coordinate with agencies and gas corporations to restore gas service as expeditiously as possible when service is interrupted. The bill would also require NYCHA to notify residents of the plan and timeline to restore service through regular meetings and posted notices in the affected buildings.

At the time of this column's writing, this bill has passed both the Senate and the Assembly but has not yet been acted on by the Governor. ■



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 Giomo LLC.



Nov. 14th Date for New Rates at CUNY Sr. Colleges, Retro to Follow

Local 237 members working at CUNY 4-year colleges are scheduled to begin receiving their new pay rate on November 14th, followed by retroactive pay. The Union has been working with CUNY to ensure that Local 237 members receive the new wage rates and retro payments negotiated in the current contract and continues to work with CUNY and City Payroll for a pay date for the negotiated wage increases and retroactive payment for CUNY's 2-year Community Colleges. All CUNY members received their signing bonuses over the summer. ■



Seasons Change But CSBA Remains Here for You

By Saul Fishman

President, Civil Service Bar Association (CSBA)

It's Autumn 2024. A bunch of us recently participated in the Labor Day Parade (see photos in this Newsline edition as well as on our CSBA (Attorney's Facebook page). It's now prime time for apple-picking, apple cinnamon donuts (sorry dieters) and pumpkin spice coffee. The leaves will be turning brilliant orange, red and yellow, and soon will be under foot. Maybe deep postseason baseball will return to New York (let's hope).

What remains the same is the dedication of the CSBA staff to assist you however and whenever we can. We are here for consultation and advice on your contractual rights, and collectively have a lot of experience and a fair amount of contacts. Members can always email us at csbainfo@local237.org or call us at (212) 675-0519, and we will gladly respond quickly (reliably within one business day, usually sooner).

The benefit of an email to csbainfo@local237.org is that there are only four of us, all of whom are knowledgeable and discrete. Lee Gordon is our Grievance Advocate/ Business Agent, and was a CSBA officer and member from ACS for many years. Aldona Vaiciunas has been the CSBA Grievance Coordinator and Office Administrator for well over twenty years, and is at least as knowledgeable as anyone here. Devin Rohena, our Receptionist/ Secretary, is our latest addition. He's very polite, efficient, a quick learner and has a great attitude. Whatever he doesn't know, he'll find out and get back to you, or alternatively have the best available person contact you as soon as possible. And I'm Saul Fishman, trying to earn your trust each day for the past dozen years as CSBA President (and as CSBA Business Agent and Officer for a bunch of years before that).

Regardless of day of the week, time of day or night, grievance or arbitration schedule, vacation, illness, etc., one of us will read your message relatively soon and make sure that you are responded to courteously and professionally. Yes, the volume of emails, calls, consultations and grievances picks up from mid-September forward. Fear not. We are here for you!

P.S. Kindly advise us if there is an issue of concern in your shop. With approximately 40 agencies and 60 locations, we need your timely input. In addition to grievance and contract-related matters (referred to above), we take Health & Safety concerns very seriously.

Reserve the Date: the next CSBA General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday October 30th at 6PM. Kindly contact us a few days to a week ahead of time for member log-in information. ■

POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS

UNION STRONG!

New York State AFL-CIO Holds The 34th Constitutional Convention

In August, the NYS AFL-CIO hosted its Constitutional Convention at the Sheraton Times Square Hotel, the first in-person gathering in 8 years. Delegates from throughout the state met to vote on the election of executive officers and vice presidents (all of whom were re-elected) as well as to make endorsements for Congress and state legislature. The Convention was a time to hear from our political and labor leaders about their stance on issues that matter most to working families. It was also a time for us to re-energize, reaffirm and reassert labor's voice and labor's vote. While union activity is surging nationwide, nowhere is this more event than in New York, where we have always been, and continue to be, UNION STRONG! ■



NYS AFL CIO President Mario Cilento at the podium.



Governor Hochul at podium; Terrence L. Melvin, Secretary Treasurer (l); Mario Cilento, President, (r).



(l-r) Lawrence M. Bosley; Ken Roper; Christopher Taylor; Martha Bodhnarain; Phyllis Shafran; Derek Jackson; Charlie Cotto; Diana Doss; and Ruben Torres.



Liz Shuler, President, National AFL CIO.



NYS Senator and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins.



NYS Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.



NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli.



NYS AG Letitia "Tish" James.



NYS US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand.

Mario Cilento and Vincent Alvarez Honored at Labor Breakfast

The Amsterdam News, America's oldest and largest Black-owned newspaper hosted its annual salute to labor on September 30 at the headquarters of 1199SEIU, which in addition to Teamsters Local 237, was a primary sponsor of the event. Now in its 10th year, the theme of this event was "Union Politics & Power". New York State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento and New York City Central Labor Council AFL-CIO President Vincent Alvarez were the honorees, receiving awards for their "exceptional electoral organizing and impact." US Senator Chuck Schumer gave a video presentation to commence the proceedings. In addition to Elinor Tatum, CEO and Publisher of the paper, US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, NYS Governor Kathy Hochul, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke and George Gresham, President, 1199 SEIU participated in the event.

Gregory Floyd, President of Teamsters Local 237 and Vice President-at Large in the Executive Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters had suggested Cilento and Alvarez as recipients of the high honor. In bestowing their awards, he said: "It's said all too often that an upcoming election is the most important one ever. How many times have we heard that? But pay attention now! This one really is. It's not just about the next four years. It's more about the next forty—and the generation to come.

The burning question is: what can we do today to help assure that there's the kind of America we want tomorrow for our children and grandchildren?

That's where unions come in. Union members are from every dividing line imaginable. Yet, we are united. We're united by our love of country and commitment to fair play. Equality, justice, and dignity are not just bumper sticker slogans we drag out and print every four years. That's what we fight for every day. That's the nature of our business. We represent many voices and also, many votes. We can make a major difference in an election outcome. And its labor leaders like Mario Cilento and Vinnie Alvarez who know that. They have both worked decades to protect, preserve, and provide working families with that equality, justice and dignity — they help give workers hope and a future.

In so doing, they are really deserving of the "Exceptional Electoral Organizing and Impact Award" to be bestowed upon them today." ■



(l-r) Gregory Floyd, President of Teamsters Local 237 and George Gresham, President of 1199SEIU.



Elinor Tatum; Vincent Alvarez; Mario Cilento; Gregory Floyd; George Gresham.

Photos by: Amsterdam News / Governor Hochul Office



You Have Been Served

By Mary E. Sheridan, Esq.

Director of Local 237 Legal Services Plan

So, You've Been Served with Court Papers

Did you know that you have your own law firm here at Local 237? As a Local 237 Member, you have access to lawyers who can represent you in a wide array of legal matters. One of the great things about this benefit is that if you are served with court papers, unlike most people, you do not need to wonder what they mean, or what you should do. You can call the advice line: (212) 924-1220, the minute you get served with court papers and an attorney will call you back and discuss what your next steps should be.

What Does It Mean to Be "Served"?

We might think of being served court papers as a dramatic event, where some person hands us a large, fancy envelope and proclaims, with a dramatic flourish "You have been served". While it might happen this way, it can also happen when someone posts something to your door while you are out and mails it to you. Or, when someone hands something to your roommate, and mails it to you. If any of those things happen, you have been served. Even if someone tosses documents at your feet when you open the door, you have been served, and YOU NEED TO ACT.

What To Do When You Have Been Served

When you receive court papers, by any method at all, you should take note of exactly how you received the papers, and exactly when you received the papers. Write this information down on a piece of paper somewhere and keep it with the papers themselves. The next thing you should do is see where you need to go to respond to the papers. The papers themselves should tell you what you need to do, and if you have any questions at all you should call your Local 237 Legal Services to find out what your next steps should be.

The other crucial thing to know when you are served court papers of any kind, is that YOU MUST TAKE ACTION RIGHT AWAY. This is not the time to set it on the counter or in the mail basket and figure it out later. If you do that, by the time you take the time to figure it out, the case might be over, and you might have lost the case, simply because you did not respond in time. You can have as little as 14 days to respond to some court papers, and if you respond, even if you don't do it perfectly, your union lawyer can very likely help you fix it, but it is much harder to fix if you do not respond.

If you have been served with court papers, it means someone is suing you – your credit card company, your landlord, your spouse, the parent of your child, your doctor, whomever it is, and whether or not they have a winning case, once you receive court papers, you must respond. In most of these situations, your Local 237 Legal Services can represent you for free, so please reach out to us as soon as you get served! (212) 924-1220.

What You Should NEVER Do When You Have Been Served

- 1) Ignore it
- 2) Wait to deal with it



Who do I call when I have questions about my benefits?

By Diana Nappi

Director of the Welfare Fund

The Welfare Fund office is always available to help our members with questions and concerns regarding their ancillary benefits. However, in many instances if a member call one of our benefit providers or creates an online account with the carrier they can quickly download provider listings or obtain a copy of their card or even view their claims history. When you need to get timely benefits information often it is best to go directly to the carrier for specific information, although staff are always available to help.

Health Insurance

Office of Labor Relations/Employee Benefits Office, 22 Cortlandt St., NY, NY 10006

212-513-0470 – Call them if you plan to change your health insurance plan or any issue regarding your Health Insurance Coverage.

Prescription Drugs

Aetna, if you have any questions call Aetna at 1-855-352-1599 or visit the website at www.Aetna.com. Registering on the website will allow you to set up your secure account which will provide you with information and tools regarding your prescription drug coverage. You will be able to download forms and research drugs, look at your Rx history for drugs you may be taking to name a few.

Dental

United Healthcare's Customer Service Department is available Monday through Friday for any eligibility, claims or provider availability questions, call 1-877-591-1789. You can also visit the MYUHC website at www.myuhc.com view your account. Once your account is set up, you can look at your group number, order cards or print one out instantly and review your claims history, plus much more information regarding your plan. Searching for a provider, especially for a specialist, is one of the most helpful tools provided on the website.

Vision Coverage

CPS, to find a network provider, go to the CPS website. This can be accessed either directly at www.cpsoptical.com/FindProvider.aspx or through the Local 237 website local237.org. If using the Local's website, under the **Benefits tab**, select **NYC Agencies**. Then scroll down and click the link for **Welfare Fund Optical Plan**. After that, select the **Search for a Provider near You** link. Once on the CPS site, under **Select Your Plan**, choose the option for **Local 237**. Then complete the Zip and Search Radius fields. You may wish to search near your home or work location. If you do not have internet access or want to speak to a CPS representative to find a location, call CPS at (212) 675-5745.

The Importance of Naming a Beneficiary for Your Life Insurance

There are certain important topics that people feel uncomfortable discussing. At the top of this list is Life Insurance. The Welfare Fund provides for a Group Term Policy with Met Life. Life sometimes brings unexpected changes. Your personal situation may have changed due to divorce, death of your original beneficiary or you may simply want to name a new beneficiary. If you are unsure of who is listed as your beneficiary, we suggest you complete a new enrollment form or register on the Met Life website.

- You can name a beneficiary by registering on the MetLife website at www.metlife.com/mybenefits or by contact the Fund Office (212) 924-7220 and request a new enrollment form and complete the beneficiary designation portion of the enrollment form.
- This benefit is paid to your designated beneficiary at the time of your death.
- The beneficiary may be any person of your choice.
- To be in effect, your designation must be on file in the Fund office or with Met Life.
- If there is no designated beneficiary living at the time of your death, the Death Benefit will be paid to your estate. *This creates a delay in payment and can be time-consuming for the executor of your estate who must go to Surrogates Court to obtain the proper papers needed by Met Life before payment can be made.*



(Financial) Times, They Are A-Changin'

By David Bonington, CFP®

Financial Planner, Stacey Braun Associates, Inc.

I'm not sure I should admit this, but I recently went to a multi-class reunion with attendees who graduated from high school 50 and as many as 60 years ago – and, yes, it took a bit of effort to attend, but being at the low end of the age range gave me just enough courage.

It was actually great to see people, and see what they did or were still doing with their lives. The conversations were ranging, and reminiscing topics included novelties, objects, and events unique to earlier times (pranks played on classmates, tie-dyed shirts, Woodstock, pet rocks, TV sitcoms, sports moments, and the like).

One of the topics was music. In one serious discussion, people talked about how certain musicians chronicled both the times they lived in as well as change – and not only the change around them, but the change they introduced. Whether the songwriter was Pete Seeger, John Lennon, Bob Dylan (I borrowed from one of his songs to shape this title), Janis Joplin, Richie Havens, or Marvin Gaye, a message of its time was being memorialized.

Afterwards, I wondered whether and how some things I pay attention to for a living – broadly speaking, financial markets and investing principles – have changed over the years. Certainly, in this time of multi-channel, light-speed communication there is a blizzard of information to be received, sifted, and processed by any active investor. Bond and Stock prices react immediately, often forcefully, to almost any news. Although this was always the case, things seemed to change much more slowly while I was growing up. In these times, the upswings and (more scarily, the downturns) seem more sudden and unpredictable – with the downturns more unnerving and anxiety-producing than ever.

If this is not a new financial environment, it at least sure feels like one – and the apprehension that uncertain or changing financial times can cause for a retiree can be considerable. However, it's worthwhile keeping in mind things that are unlikely to change – such as your pension, which sets a "floor" of lifetime income, or the fact that Social Security has a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) feature to help keep pace with inflation.

Savings accounts are likewise secure and Federally insured. As I pointed out in an article a few issues back, it is also possible to earn meaningful interest on deposits. (Although rates might start to fall in the coming months, they continue to be at their highest levels in roughly 40 years.) Depending upon how it is invested, the thing at most risk is likely that deferred compensation retirement account – and with some information and attention even that can be properly managed.

So (as with the songwriters above) whether it is financial change you want to keep up with or change you want to create, remember that you have up to six (6) hours of annual benefit time with a Stacey Braun professional financial counselor. ■



LABOR DAY

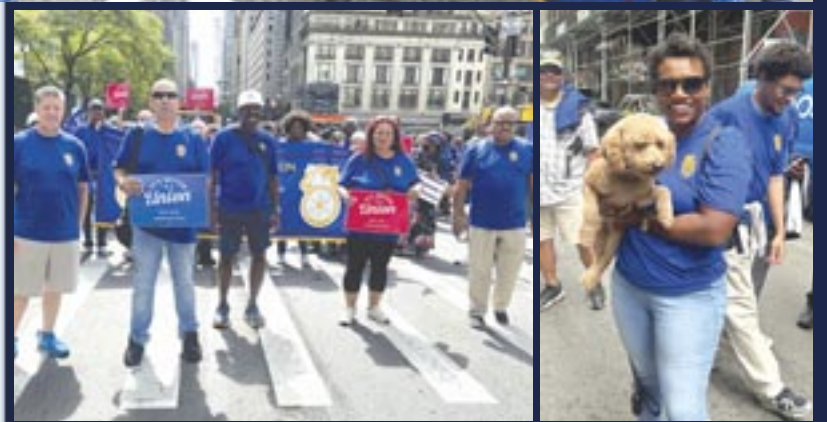
En esta edición de Newsline, marcamos el final del verano y el comienzo del otoño. Para algunos, este cambio se recibe con un poco de tristeza: algunos lamentan ver como el sol se pone tan temprano y como la temporada de béisbol llega a su fin; mientras que, para otros, el otoño es recibido con entusiasmo, desde la emoción de Halloween hasta la planificación del menú de Acción de Gracias y la acumulación de regalos navideños. También es el momento en que celebramos el movimiento laboral, no solo con un día libre del trabajo, sino también con desfiles y homenajes a nuestros hermanos y hermanas sindicalistas, así como a los líderes laborales de todo el país, quienes han luchado por la igualdad y la dignidad en el lugar de trabajo.

El Local 237 desea agradecer a sus miembros por sus incansables esfuerzos en nombre de tantos neoyorquinos, cuyas vidas y medios de subsistencia dependen de que las agencias municipales funcionen sin problemas a pesar de los desafíos. Como dijo el expresidente Barack Obama: "Cuando los tiempos son difíciles, no nos rendimos. Nos levantamos". Eso es precisamente lo que hicieron y continúan haciendo. Ya sea durante el apogeo de la pandemia, un momento de dolor repentino e inimaginable que sacudió al mundo entero y a nuestro propio mundo personal, o en el presente, con desafíos históricos de la Madre Naturaleza y una crisis migratoria fuera de control, los miembros del sindicato —y especialmente los trabajadores del sector público— no se dieron por vencidos; se levantaron y fueron a trabajar. Estos trabajadores municipales esenciales mantienen la Ciudad y el Estado en funcionamiento, y se les debe un gigantesco: "Gracias".

Desafortunadamente, la afiliación sindical en todo el país ha disminuido desde su pico en 1954, cuando era de alrededor del 40%, a solo el 10.7% actualmente. Nueva York se encuentra entre los estados con el mayor número de trabajadores sindicalizados —casi el 24%— y alrededor del 70% de la fuerza laboral sindical está en el sector público. Esto es consistente con el porcentaje nacional de afiliación sindical en el sector público, que es aproximadamente cinco veces mayor que en el sector privado, siendo los afroamericanos el mayor componente de ese grupo. Sin embargo, hoy, después de décadas de decadencia, la afiliación sindical tanto en el sector público como en el privado está aumentando lentamente. La crisis del Covid-19 jugó un papel en este fenómeno, cuando muchos trabajadores, asustados y frustrados por una aparente falta de asistencia por parte de nuestro gobierno e instituciones médicas, recurrieron a sus sindicatos en busca de ayuda. La notable victoria de los trabajadores de Amazon en Staten Island para sindicalizarse es un ejemplo. No fue una hazaña menor: hace solo tres años, este recién formado "Sindicato de Trabajadores de Amazon" no existía. Un trabajador de almacén de Amazon en Staten Island, Christian Smalls, lideró una huelga en protesta por las deplorables condiciones laborales relacionadas con la Covid. Las notas de la reunión del consejero general de Amazon mencionaron a Smalls diciendo: "No es inteligente ni elocuente, y en la medida en que la prensa quiera enfocarse en él en lugar de nosotros, estaremos en una posición de relaciones públicas mucho más fuerte". ¡GUAU! No solo desestimar a Smalls como insignificante, sino que, de manera arrogante, creyeron que un joven negro sin pulir no podría ser utilizado en la sindicalización. Amazon lo despidió, pero su estrategia fracasó, y las repercusiones se han sentido en todo el país.

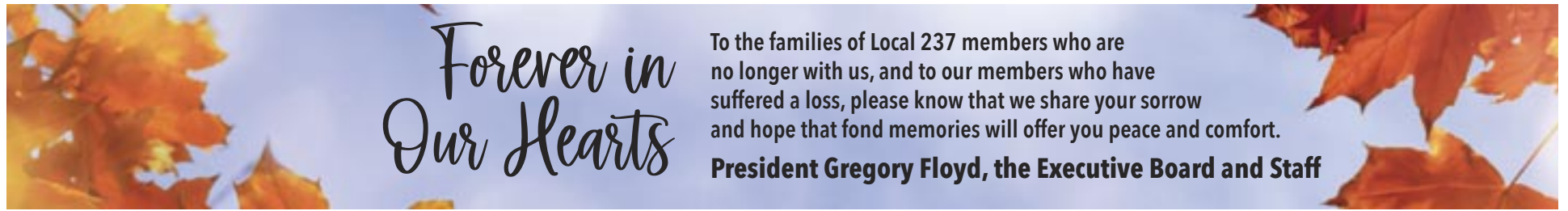
Aunque Ralph Chaplin escribió la canción "Solidaridad para siempre" en 1915 para los Trabajadores Industriales de la Primera Guerra Mundial, su estribillo sigue siendo tan relevante e importante hoy como lo fue hace más de 100 años: "Cuando la inspiración del sindicato corra por la sangre del trabajador, no habrá poder más grande en ningún lugar bajo el sol, sin embargo, ¿qué 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 el sindicato nos hace fuertes".

Así que, mientras guardas la pelota de playa y el traje de baño y comienzas a pensar en tu disfraz de Halloween, no olvidemos que en el otoño tradicionalmente reconocemos el trabajo del trabajador... especialmente de aquellos en el sector público. Y, cuando veas las palabras "Hecho por el Sindicato", eso significa "Sindicato Fuerte". Somos un movimiento, no solo un momento pasajero. ■



VEA EL DESPLEGABLE PARA FOTOS ADICIONALES





To the families of Local 237 members who are no longer with us, and to our members who have suffered a loss, please know that we share your sorrow and hope that fond memories will offer you peace and comfort.
President Gregory Floyd, the Executive Board and Staff



Suicide Prevention Month

By Karla Steinberg, LMSW
 Membership Social Worker

September was Suicide Prevention Month and as your social worker, I wanted to provide some statistics about this topic. Your mental health is equally as important as your physical health. In fact, studies show that people with mental health issues are more likely to suffer from cardiovascular and metabolic illnesses than those without mental illness (nami.org).

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14 (NAMI.ORG)

In 2022, more than 49,000 Americans died by suicide (samhsa.org.), with millions more attempting suicide. Suicide is an international public health issue, and while many people will experience helplessness and depression, not all of these people will become suicidal. There are some populations which tend to have higher risk rates associated with suicidality. These include people who have experienced violence: bullying, domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault or abuse. The effects of suicide are far-reaching. "When people die by suicide, their surviving family and friends may experience prolonged grief, shock, anger, guilt, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and even thoughts of suicide themselves (cdc.gov)."

If you or someone you know has been affected by suicide or thoughts of suicide, please get help. **Help is available, for free, by calling 988**, any time, any day of the year. You don't have to suffer alone. If you are actively entertaining thoughts of killing yourself and you have a plan to do so, you should call 911 as **this is an emergency**. If you know someone feeling this way or threatening to harm themselves with the intention of taking their own lives, you should feel empowered to call 911 on their behalf. "But what if I don't know if they're being serious or not?" This is a great question and one I have fielded many times. You should take people's comments about suicidality seriously and calling a professional is the best way to ensure that the person is properly assessed as to the potential danger involved.

You can be a support to someone going through mental health challenges by being a good friend to them. Just listening to someone having a problem or going through a hard time often helps the person in need feel heard and supported. You can help by encouraging them to seek treatment and/or helping them do so.

If you know someone who has died by suicide, or contemplated suicide, help is available to you too. You can also call 988, and other organizations across the country for emotional support. I am also available to you and can be reached via email at ksteinberg@local237.org, or by phone at 646.638.8608. ▮



Civil Service Exams: Facts you need to know!

By Shanell Grayson
 Director of Training and Education

It's that time of year again – kids are back in school, college campuses have reopened, and city workers are preparing for this fiscal year's civil service exams which DCAS announced in July. Taking and passing civil service exams is something that nearly all Local 237's members have done or will have to do as a city employee. Passing an exam is already a daunting task, yet it is, surprisingly, the application process where most people make a mistake.

To help our members avoid disqualification this exam season, we have compiled some important facts that all civil service exam applicants should know.

- 1. Always read the Notice of Exam (NOE) in its entirety.** The NOE has detailed information regarding the education and experience requirements, exam format, test date, and scoring metrics. Make sure that you have the required experience by the date listed on the NOE to avoid disqualification.
- 2. Provisional employees must become civil service to retain their title.** If you are a provisional employee: failure to take, pass, and get called from a civil service list will result in a demotion to your lowest permanent title. If you don't have a permanent title, you may be terminated. Provisional employees should regularly check the DCAS website for upcoming exams for which they are responsible.
- 3. You can request an accommodation if you have a disability or need an alternate test date.** DCAS will schedule an alternate test date for APPROVED reasons such as religious observance or temporary illness. In addition, if you have a diagnosed disability that will interfere with your testing, you can request a reasonable accommodation. Common accommodations include extended time, audio or braille exam formats, and a secluded testing space. In all cases, you must show sufficient proof to substantiate your request. Detailed instructions can be found on DCAS' website.
- 4. Triple check that you are applying for the correct exam.** Each title may have 2 or 3 types of exams open simultaneously. Exam types include open and competitive, promotional, and qualified incumbent. A title may also have an exam for only a specific agency such as CUNY or HHC. If you apply to the incorrect exam, DCAS WILL NOT ISSUE A REFUND, nor will they transfer your application to the correct exam.
- 5. When in doubt, ask for help.** Making a mistake when applying for a civil service exam can have unintended yet serious consequences. Even a well-meaning friend or family member may not be equipped to guide you through this process. BEFORE paying for an exam, you should seek assistance at any of DCAS' testing centers or by calling the Education Department.

For more information on civil service exams, please visit nyc.gov/examsforjobs. As always, we look forward to serving you! ▮

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



The HPT Class of 2023 shared their experiences. (l-r): Dimitri Jacques, Ray Matos, Ira Greenbey, George Duncan, Tyrik Lewis, and Christine Elrington.

We would like to highlight and thank the Fundamentals of Heating Plant Operations Class of 2023 for speaking with our current HPT students at their first of three roundtables. At this roundtable, the previous graduates talked about their experience since graduating, gave tips for success, and answered questions.



Students received a childcare voucher presentation from Karla Steinberg, LMSW.

Also present was Karla Steinberg, Local 237 Social Worker, who explained how to obtain a childcare voucher. In addition, members of the Local 237 Housing Division came to give their support and offer words of encouragement. In attendance was Assistant Director, Shavelle Knox, and Business Agents Kenneth Franco and Jaleesa Moye.



Housing Division Assistant Director Shavelle Knox encourages the HPT students as Business Agents Kenneth Franco and Jaleesa Moye look on.

Education Department's FREE Courses

CIVIL SERVICE EXAM PREP CLASSES

- CUNY Campus Peace Officer (October)
- Public Health Educator (October)
- Supervising Special Officer (October)
- Photographer (December)
- School Food Service Manger (January)
- Senior Photographer (January)

For more information on upcoming exams visit: nyc.gov/examsforjobs

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

- Advanced Computer Skills (October)

SCHOLARSHIPS

- Teamsters International Scholarship
 - > High School Seniors
 - > JRHMS.org
- Union Plus Scholarship
 - > Members and their families
 - > Unionplus.org

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

- Defensive Driving NY (November)
 - > 10% off insurance
 - > 4 points off license

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