

# Local 237 NEWSLINE



Vol. 44, No. 9

November 2010

## Keeping the Faith

# U.S. Workers Stand In Solidarity, Call for Greater Good

**One Nation, Under God, Indivisible,  
With Liberty and Justice for All.**

## AT THE NATION'S CAPITAL

## Bring It On: The Fight for Workers' Rights

Hundreds of thousands of people from across the nation, including hundreds of Teamsters and Local 237's contingent, converged on the National Mall Oct. 2 to rally for jobs, justice, education, equality, and other threatened progressive causes. The march, sponsored by One Nation Working Together, included more than 300 organizations: unions, human rights groups, civil rights groups, environmentalists and religious groups. The mighty gathering sought to energize and educate voters before Election Day.

*Continued on page 5*



Photos by Calvin Sewer



**LOUIS SYKES**, Superintendent  
Howard Consolidated, Brooklyn

*"I had to be here. As union workers we have to make a difference."*



**SHERRY POWELL**, School Safety Agent L3  
St. George School, Staten Island

*"I am here because of jobs and my retirement. I need to make that money now so I can retire."*



**ZELLA KYSER FERGUSON**, Supervisor of  
Caretakers, Latimer Consolidated, Flushing

*"I need my job and my benefits to survive living in this economy. The union has done great things for me. We have to think of the future."*



**MAUREEN RENWICK**, School Safety Agent  
Queens South Payroll, Jamaica

*"We need to save jobs and the union needs to keep fighting to keep members gainfully employed. I'm living paycheck to paycheck to rear three grandchildren and a nine-year old son."*

## Election Results, page 5



## Local 237 Member Services

### UNION HEADQUARTERS

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

### LOCAL 237 DIVISIONS

#### CITYWIDE DIVISION, 2nd Fl.

Donald Arnold, Director  
Peter Gutierrez, Deputy Director  
Al Soto, Law Enforcement  
Director  
Randy Klein, Assistant Director

#### HOUSING DIVISION, 2nd Fl.

Remilda Ferguson, Director  
**Brooklyn, Queens & Staten Island**  
James Giocastro,  
Deputy Director

#### LONG ISLAND DIVISION

1727 Veterans Memorial  
Highway  
Suite 308  
Islandia, NY 11749  
631-851-9800  
John Burns, Director  
Benedict Carenza,  
Deputy Director  
John Sepulveda,  
Assistant Director  
Long Island Welfare Fund:  
For information on the various  
funds call 800-962-1145

#### RETIREE DIVISION, 8th Fl.

Provides a variety of pre- and post-retirement services, including pension and health insurance counseling to members. (Pension counseling by appointment, Thursdays only). General retirement counseling and retirement planning series during spring and fall.  
212-807-0555  
Nancy B. True, Director

### LOCAL 237 DEPARTMENTS

#### (Citywide and Housing)

#### SKILLED TRADES, 2nd Fl.

Donald Arnold, Director

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY, 2nd Fl.

Donald Arnold, Director  
Diane Stein, Coordinator

#### MEMBERSHIP, 2nd Fl.

Provides membership services and records, including address changes.

Laverne White,  
Administrative Manager

#### WELFARE FUND, 3rd Fl.

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.  
212-924-7220  
Carnell Joyner Jr., Director

#### LEGAL SERVICES, 4th Fl.

Lawyers advise and represent members on covered personal legal problems, including domestic relations (family court proceedings, divorce and separation), purchase and sale of a primary residence, wills, adoptions, credit and consumer problems, tenant rights and bankruptcies.  
212-924-1220  
Office Hours:

Mon.- Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Mary Sheridan Esq., Director  
Kenneth Perry Esq.,  
Deputy Director

### EXECUTIVE OFFICES, 5th Fl.

Gregory Floyd, President  
Richard Hendershot,  
Vice President  
Ruben Torres,  
Secretary-Treasurer

### PERSONNEL, 5th Fl.

Edmund Kane, Director and  
Chief Negotiator

### POLITICAL ACTION & LEGISLATION, 5th Fl.

Local 237 protects members' rights by helping to sponsor legislation that is important to members, and by opposing initiatives that would hurt members.  
Patricia Stryker, Director

### GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS, 6th Fl.

For grievances and job related problems, first contact your shop steward and/or grievance representative. If they cannot resolve the issue, they or you should contact your business agent.  
Mal Patterson, Director of  
Grievances and Hearings  
Todd Rubinstein, Esq.  
Grievance Coordinator  
Debbie Coleman, Esq.  
Grievance Coordinator

### CIVIL SERVICE BAR ASSOCIATION, 6th Fl.

212-675-0519  
Gloria Johnson, Esq., President  
Aldona Vaiciunas,  
Office Administrator and  
Grievance Coordinator  
John Picucci, Esq.,  
Grievance Representative  
CSBA Welfare Fund  
Alicare 212-539-5117

### COMMUNICATIONS, 8th Fl.

Tania M. Lambert, Editor  
Local 237 Newsline  
Website: [www.local237.org](http://www.local237.org)

### EDUCATION, 8th Fl.

Provides a variety of training and educational advancement opportunities for members.  
212-807-0550  
Frederick Dunn, Director

### USEFUL NUMBERS FOR PRE-RETIRES

### NYCERS (New York City Employees Retirement System)

By Mail: 335 Adams St., Suite 2300, Brooklyn, NY 11201-3751  
In Person: 340 Jay Street, Mezzanine, Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Gen'l Information: 347-643-3000  
Outside NYC toll-free: 877-6NYCERS

### NYCERS Internet

[www.nyclink.org/html/nycers](http://www.nyclink.org/html/nycers)

### NYC Department of Education Retirement System

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

### Social Security Administration

800-772-1213

### NY State and Local Retirement Systems

518-474-7736



## A Message From The President

# Going Forward with Strength Amid Setbacks

Call it a tidal wave, call it a revolution, but there's no doubt the Republicans stormed back into power in Congress and the national stage on Nov. 2. U.S. Voters, upset about the economy and the bickering in Washington, took their anxiety and frustration out on incumbents by handing the House to Republicans, as well as several seats in the Senate.

Some believe that the election was a referendum on the President. No doubt, many of the nation's problems were beyond President Obama's control — especially two wars and a trillion dollar deficit, courtesy of the Bush administration. Add to this the conservatives' blockade of everything put forth by Obama and the Congress — even legislation that they themselves had earlier advocated! Their aim was, and is, to bring Obama down, regardless of the cost to the American people.

Some voters felt that the President had lost touch with the people, especially working-class people anxious about their jobs and mortgages. Congress was unable to unify and make their case to the public.

We must not forget that while Obama may not have succeeded in solving all our problems, he is not the cause of them. The current economic crisis was caused by uncontrolled Wall Street speculation, resulting in the collapse of the banks and the housing market. Obama actually followed through on his campaign promises to fix health care, reform the banking industry and provide federal assistance to kick-start the economy. Sometimes there is a political price to pay for doing the right thing, and Obama and Congress paid dearly.

The surge of corporate-backed candidates was a major blow to Obama and the labor movement. The Teamsters were the first of many unions that campaigned strongly both for Obama's agenda and pro-worker candidates. Unions all over the country spent heavily. Unfortunately, the national climate this year was too strong for us to stop the political tide. The new Republican leadership in the House has already vowed to take every opportunity to damage the labor movement in order to protect their own political interests in the next election cycle. We must be prepared to stand up and defend the rights of workers to unionize, to fight for policies that favor working families, and to have access to good health care and education.

### Unions Not to Blame

Union workers should not shoulder the blame for the situation that America finds itself in today. Hard-working Americans are the backbone that keeps this

country strong, and we deserve to be treated fairly by our employers and our government officials. We are the ones that this economic collapse affects most, not the people responsible for it.

Business interests continue to blame financial shortfalls on the influence of unions on the government. Unions like Local 237 fought long and hard for the basic rights given to them under the state constitution, and the loss of tax revenue has led to proposals to reduce public workers' pay and benefits. But that does not mean the unions should take sole responsibility for the sacrifices needed to fix our state. We are willing to participate in discussions with city and state officials and the public to find a solution that will work for all New Yorkers, but we will fight against any proposals that single out public employees.

### Better News in New York

Here in New York, the election news was somewhat better. Many pro-worker candidates endorsed by our union were elected. Workers had major victories in two key statewide elections: attorney general and comptroller, proving that in New York, at least, organized labor has significant power.

On a more troubling note, Governor-elect Cuomo has used combative language when talking about dramatic changes he plans to bring to labor relations in the state. He says he wants to bring back government to the people, but he must realize that union workers are mostly the very people he is talking about. I hope our new leaders can pursue their reform plans while maintaining a sense of balance and fairness. We are reasonable people, but we are not afraid to fight for what is right.

The voters spoke this month. In the coming months, it will be the unions' time to have our voices heard. Together, we can bring New York and all of America to a better and brighter future.



"The test of our progress is not whether we add to those who have much. It is whether we provide enough to those who have little."  
— Franklin D. Roosevelt



## SSA Team Thwarts Shooters



From left, School Safety Agents Lucinda James, Roslyn Glover and Debra Hamilton make a great team at I.S. 22 in the Bronx West Command.

School Safety Agent Lucinda Jones was patrolling the perimeter of I.S. 22 in the Bronx West Command just before 8 a.m. on Sept. 22 when she saw four unknown men. Jones also overheard them speaking about “getting someone,” so she informed SSA Debra Hamilton, who observed the four men walking away.

Soon after, Jones informed Hamilton that the men had returned. This time, Hamilton saw three of the four go across the street and one remained on the perimeter of the school, communicating with the others by phone. Hamilton took a detailed description of them and called 911. She also called the Bor-

ough Office and the principal.

As Hamilton approached the nearest man, she heard shots fired from across the street. Hamilton alerted all units, the administration, and Central Command and joined with Jones and Glover to usher students and staff into the building and out of harm’s way.

When the officers from the 44th Precinct arrived, Hamilton helped identify two of the perpetrators, who were found three blocks away. She later identified the other two at the precinct where she gave a statement. All four men were arrested for trespassing. All of them have previous records.

## Credit Union That Serves Queens Public Housing

President Gregory Floyd joined New York Housing Authority Chairman John Rhea and a group including elected officials recently at the ERDA Federal Credit Union (FCU), which serves the Queensbridge and Ravenswood Houses in Long Island City. ERDA stands for the East River Development Alliance, a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve and transform New York City public housing neighborhoods.

The credit union, which opened in April, offers affordable financial services in a neighborhood where three in 10 residents lack bank accounts, and the majority of residents use check cashers for most of their financial transactions.

The ERDA FCU helps empower public housing residents to use bank services, access capital and save money. It encourages a culture of ownership and savings.

Located across from Queensbridge Houses, the nation’s largest public housing development, and down the street from Ravenswood Houses, ERDA FCU serves as an economic anchor for the continued growth of western Queens by helping to keep neighborhood assets locally owned and controlled.

To learn more about ERDA FCU, call 718-784-5050.



Outside the Credit Union are, from left, President Gregory Floyd; John Rhea, chairman, New York City Housing Authority; Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney; Bishop Mitchell Taylor, East River Development Alliance president and founder, and Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan.

### Local 237 NEWSLINE

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212-924-2000

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#### Executive Board

**Gregory Floyd** President  
**Richard Hendershot** Vice President  
**Ruben Torres** Secretary-Treasurer  
**Patricia Stryker** Recording Secretary

**Edmund Kane** Trustee  
**Steven Gordon** Trustee  
**Curtis Scott** Trustee

#### Newsline and [www.local237.org](http://www.local237.org)

**Tania M. Lambert**  
Editor

#### Local 237 Telephone Numbers

Citywide Division .....	212-924-2000	Health & Safety .....	212-924-2000
Housing Division.....	212-924-2000	Retiree Division/	
Long Island Division .....	631-851-9800	Pension Counseling .....	212-807-0555
Welfare Funds .....	212-924-7220	Membership.....	212-924-2000
Education Department.....	212-807-0550	CSBA.....	212-675-0519
Legal Department.....	212-924-1220		

#### If you move...

Please send your change of address in writing to Membership to insure that you continue receiving your newspaper.



## Officer Assaulted Over Ticket

Parking control specialists for the New York City Police Department encounter angry motorists routinely when they issue summonses for violations. To assault a parking control specialist for doing his or her job, however, is a felony, punishable by seven years in jail. On Sept. 28, Edgar Saeteros was kicked and punched by a motorist who abandoned his car and ran from the scene leaving the peace officer on the ground with a fractured skull.

Saeteros had issued a \$115 ticket to a red Mercury illegally double-parked in the Parkchester neighborhood of the Bronx about 9 a.m. when the sudden attack took place. “I wrote the vehicle a ticket,” Saeteros was quoted as saying in the Daily News. “I went back to the police car and that’s when he kicked me from behind,” said the 35-year-old traffic agent, who has two daughters — an 11-year-old and another several months old. He was taken to Jacobi

Medical Center where he was listed in serious but stable condition.

President Gregory Floyd and Citywide Division Business Agent George Serrano were on the scene and talked to reporters.



**Edgar Saeteros**

“It’s really tragic when an individual assaults one of the officials of New York City in the performance of their duty,” Floyd told Fox News, stating that it’s a dangerous job. “Tempers are short when it comes to tickets.” (See the Fox News video online at [www.local237.org](http://www.local237.org).)

Serrano told the Daily News that Saeteros, who has seven years of service, was hit in the head, punched twice, and knocked to the ground. He also noted that Saeteros “tried to arrest the guy, but the guy got away.”

Saeteros is home recovering and his attacker, Derrick Jordan, 30, was charged with second-degree assault. He surrendered the day after the incident on the urging of friends.



# Teamster Women Build On Union Strength

More than 750 Teamster women from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico gathered in Minneapolis for the International Union's 2010 annual Women's Conference, Sept. 16-18. Local 237's contingent was led by Remilda Ferguson, director, Housing Division, and chair of the local's Women's Committee.

The convention provided the opportunity for Teamster women to share ideas and strategies for winning strong contracts, building solidarity, handling workplace issues and many other topics crucial to maintaining a strong and forceful union.

Among the conference highlights was a powerful rally where Teamster women called out their theme "Workers 'Yes,' Wall Street 'No,'" as they marched through the streets of Minneapolis demanding

jobs and justice as solutions to the economic crisis.

Notable speakers at the closing event included Arianna Huffington, editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post, who focused on activism, saying, "We need to move from anger and despair to action, because action is the greatest antidote to despair."

Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), the first woman to represent Minnesota in the U.S. Senate, spoke about the progress women have made," Klobuchar said. "Less than a century ago, women didn't even have the right to vote. Now, women are sitting on the Supreme Court, orbiting the Earth and they are in the United States Senate. We've passed the Lily Led-better Fair Pay Act, but now we have to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act."



Local 237's contingent poses at the Teamsters Women's Conference.

## Welcome Caretakers



Local 237 held an orientation last month to introduce a group of caretakers to the wide variety of services the union has to offer. Several union officials were on hand, including Curtis Scott, Local 237 Trustee; Remilda Ferguson, director, Housing Division; Nancy B. True, director, Retiree Division; and Cheryl Hart, business agent. Officials spoke with caretakers about services and benefits available to members, including the Welfare Fund, Legal Services, Retiree Division, Grievances, and Education.



Trustee Curtis Scott, third from right, joins a group of caretakers for this group photo in the conference room at the October orientation.

## Attorney Honored by the ACS

Jeffrey G. Jackson, an attorney for the Department of Corrections (DOC), was one of seven participants honored by the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) for their hard work and dedication to the Children of Incarcerated Parents Program (CHIPP). The awards ceremony was held last month at the Brooklyn Marriott to commemorate the 10th anniversary of CHIPP.

Jackson, a Local 237 member with about 20 years of service, has been DOT's program coordinator for



Jeffrey G. Jackson

the ACS Visitation Program since its inception. Jackson makes it possible for children to visit their parents at Rikers Island by processing the required documents, forwarding them to the warden, and making sure the inmates are available.

CHIPP is a collaboration between ACS and DOC to unite families involved in child welfare and criminal justice systems. It offers weekly transportation and support services for child-parent and sibling visits, and case conferences at Rikers Island.

## ON AIR

### Reaching Out With Greg Floyd

This month and next on "Reaching Out With Greg Floyd" — Local 237's public affairs radio program on WWRL AM 1600 which airs the 2nd and 3rd Saturday of each month at 3 p.m. — President Floyd's guests include:

**Congressmen José Serrano, Jerry Nadler and Anthony Weiner; New York State Senator-Elect Gustavo Rivera and NBA All-Star James Donaldson.**

If you miss a program, you can see video excerpts on Local 237's website at [www.local237.org](http://www.local237.org).

### Local 237: On the Air

Our Cable TV series airs weekly on several NYC cable TV systems. This month's schedule for your borough follows:

### Staten Island Community Television (CTV):

Time Warner Ch. 57 & Verizon Ch. 37  
Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.  
Fridays at 6 p.m.

### Bronxnet:

Cablevision Ch. 67 & Verizon Ch. 33  
Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

### Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN):

Time Warner Ch. 34, RCN Ch. 82 and Verizon Ch. 33  
Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m.

### Brooklyn Community Access (BCAT):

Time Warner Ch. 35, Cablevision Ch. 68, Verizon Ch. 43 and RCN Ch. 83  
Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m.

### Queens Public Television (QPTV):

Time Warner Ch. 35, Verizon Ch. 35 and RCN Ch. 83  
Friday, Nov. 19 at noon  
Thursday, Nov. 25 at 7 p.m.



## The Political Scene

# ELECTIONS 2010 Work on the Dream Lies Ahead

### Across the Nation

Anger and frustration with the sagging economy and lack of jobs fueled voters to back “change” in the nation’s capital again, this time shifting control of the House of Representatives back to the Republicans, with 239 seats to 186. Republicans also increased their seats in the Senate to 46. The Democrats are still in control of the Senate, however, with 52 seats. The likely House Speaker will be John Boehner (R-Ohio), who will succeed Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

As a result of the Republican Party’s re-taking of the House, U.S. Rep. Peter T. King of Long Island, a ranking member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, will likely become chairman of the committee. As the only Republican from the New York delegation with significant seniority, King has gained influence and agreement from the Obama administration for his plan to expanding the committee’s role in overseeing the broad Department of Homeland Security.

The shifting balance of power in Washington was a wake-up call for Democrats in general and President Obama, in particular, who described the election results as “a shellacking,” and took “full responsibility” for the losses.

With Republicans dominating the House, Democrats may be forced to compromise on their mission to kill the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy.

### In Albany

Unlike results in most of the nation, Democrats swept statewide offices, confirming Local 237 endorsements overall and winning by wide margins. Andrew Cuomo defeated Carl Paladino

with 62 percent of the vote; Eric Schneiderman succeeded Cuomo as attorney general, and U.S. Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand won by more than 60 percent each. Gillibrand, appointed in 2009, ran for the two years remaining in the term won in 2006 by Hillary Clinton, who is now Secretary of State.

Among the closest races was the state comptroller’s, which Thomas DiNapoli, the incumbent, won late on election night over former hedge-fund manager Harry Wilson. The New

York State comptroller alone determines how to invest the state’s pension plan, the third largest in the nation. [See sidebar “Braced for War on Public Pensions.”]

Control of the New York State Senate was still undecided at press time.



Tom DiNapoli



Eric Schneiderman



Charles Schumer



Kirsten Gillibrand



President Floyd presents Rep. Peter King (R-Nassau/Suffolk) with Local 237’s endorsement on the front page of last month’s Newsline.

### Braced for War on Public Pensions

In the aftermath of the financial crisis that left huge holes in city budgets, elected officials, including Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Governor-Elect Andrew Cuomo, are calling for cutting public employee pensions to close the budget gap.

As current members of NYCERS, Local 237 public employees’ have a pension system that provides defined benefits that can’t be cut under guarantees in the state constitution. However, the constitution does permit new benefit tiers to be created, offering less expensive pensions for future employees.

In the wake of the fiscal crisis, state lawmakers are seeking ways to reduce pension benefits that are protected by state constitutions and already promised to current and future retirees.

States without constitutional guarantees, including Colorado, Minnesota and South Dakota, have approved laws to reduce cost-of-living increases, which will cost retirees more than \$165,000 over 20 years, retirees say in a suit filed against these states.

Referring to New York lawmakers, President Gregory Floyd has said, “They’re watching those court battles in Minnesota very closely...They’re starting to attack us now; the steady drumbeat. Municipal workers making too much money, costing too much.” Floyd said that Wall Street is to blame for the budget gaps and should pay the price. “Municipal workers are not the cause of this crisis and cutting their pensions is not the solution.”

## U.S. Workers Stand in Solidarity; Call for Greater Good

*Continued from page 1*

“This is our generation’s fight,” said President Gregory Floyd in his address to members gathered in the Union Hall at dawn before boarding buses bound for Washington, D.C. “We want to go. We have to go,” said Floyd. “The rich have declared war on workers, especially public employees’ pensions and benefits. We must defend our right to work for living wages and to retire with dignity.”

Now that the voters have spoken and new balances are struck in our nation and state capitals, fresh battles will follow. Facts are our best ammunition. Below are those included in a recent article by Bill Quigley, legal director, Center for Constitutional Rights and law professor at Loyola University, New Orleans:

- The 14.3 percent poverty rate is at its highest point in 51 years.
- The 9.6 percent national unemployment rate (14.8 million people “officially” unemployed) does not



Members surround President Gregory Floyd at a rest stop en route to the capital. Citywide Division Director Donald Arnold is second from left, and Trustee Steven Gordon is on the right.

include underemployed part-time workers, full-time workers on furlough, nor discouraged workers who stopped seeking jobs.

- A record 2.8 million homes received foreclosure notices and 11 million more are “under water,” owing more on mortgages than their homes are worth.
- The wealth of the richest 400 people in the nation grew by 8 per-

cent last year.

- In 1973, the average CEO was paid \$27 for every dollar paid to a typical worker. By 2007 the ratio was \$275 to \$1.
- Since 1992, the average tax rate on the richest 400 taxpayers dropped from 26.8 percent to 16.6 percent. (Internal Revenue Service)
- The U.S. has the greatest inequality between rich and poor

among all Western industrialized nations.

“We bailed out the banks and the insurance companies,” said the Rev. Al Sharpton to a cheering crowd at the National Mall. “Now it’s time to bail out the American people.”

MSNBC talk-show host Ed Schultz, one of the speakers, said, “This march is about the people standing up to the corporations.”

It’s no coincidence that corporate profits are rising along with unemployment and poverty rates. When employers cut payrolls, profits rise. Just the threat of layoffs is enough to push remaining workers to accept abusive cutback and conditions.

If these facts make you angry, you are in the right place. As a public employee union member, you represent the last stronghold in the fight to preserve workers’ rights in this nation. Armed with facts and solidarity, we shall overcome.





Marcos Martinez Jr., maintenance mechanic II for the Brentwood School District on Long Island poses with his President's Award and loving family.

Poet Tato Laviera is joined, from left, by his sister, Ruth Sanchez, and Maria Cruz, executive director, Taino Towers in Manhattan.



President Gregory Floyd is flanked by President's Award recipients Carmen Burgos, a caretaker J at O'Dwyer Gardens in Brooklyn, left, and Agnes Cruz, a plasterer in Manhattan, both Housing Division members.

Members of the NuyoRican School Poetry Jazz Ensemble perform with the island's traditional instruments.



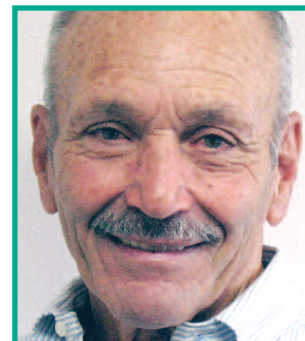
## Local Latino Heri

Our annual Latino Heritage Month celebration brought together the best of this vibrant culture and its contributions. Great music, food and entertainment provided a fitting tribute for top performing members who were honored by President Gregory Floyd, including Secretary-Treasurer Ruben Torres who received the Award of Excellence.

Other honorees included George Torres, retired Housing Division director and trustee, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award. Agnes Cruz, Housing Division; Marcos Martinez Jr., Long Island Divi-



A guest is set for the heat.



George Torres, retired trustee and Housing Division director, greeted members by video.

Nancy B. True, who coordinated the Latino Heritage event and deputy director, Retiree Division; Ruben Torres, secretary-tr







Photos by Pat Arnow

# 237's Stage Month

sion; George Ortega, Citywide Division; and Carmen Burgos, Housing Division, each received a President's Award.

Nice surprises colored the evening, including visits by poet Tato Laviera and New York City Comptroller John Liu.

The house came down, however, when State Senator Elect Gustavo Rivera from the 33 SD in the Bronx, sang a romantic ballad en español, after delivering the keynote address. President Floyd presented Rivera with a Golden Teamster Award. His next award may be a Grammy!



A member flashes her best smile.



There's a fashionista in every crowd.

and directs the Retiree Division, poses with Winston George, Treasurer, gratefully accepts his Award of Excellence.



John Liu, New York City comptroller, greets guests in Spanish as Local 237 officials look on.



It's a safe bet that this couple are enjoying the festivities.

Gustavo Rivera, state senator-elect from the 33rd District in the Bronx, surprises the audience with a beautiful rendition of "Dos Gardenias."



Grupo Caribe keeps guests on their toes with great salsa music.





# LONG ISLAND REPORT

## Local 237 Fights Contract Violation

Local 237's Long Island Division held a rally to protest a contract violation committed by the Brentwood School District. The protest, held at the Brentwood Administration Building during the School Board meeting Thursday evening, October 21, brought together Local 237 officials, blue collar and food service workers in the Brentwood School District, union supporters, community residents, and the infamous giant inflatable rat.

The protesters, led by John Burns, director, Long Island Division, demanded that Brentwood reinstate 10 members of the union with back pay, whose jobs were eliminated in violation of the Suffolk County Civil Service Rule XXI as stated in their contract. The rule protects members' with seniority. The 10 positions cut included 6 full-time guards, 3 maintenance mechanic IIIs, and one maintenance mechanic II.

Local 237 filed charges with P.E.R.B. along with 10 grievances stating that the lay-off did not follow the seniority rule and four of the members hold union officer titles in the Brentwood Chapter.

Inside the School Board meeting, Richard Hendershot, vice president of Local 237, addressed the group and accused George Talley, board president, of being dishonest regarding his position on Rule XXI. He also said that Local 237 would try to expedite the arbitration procedure, which routinely takes



**THE YEAR OF THE RAT** – Although it can't be seen too clearly, there's a huge rat behind these Long Island Division protesters outside the Brentwood Board meeting.

months.

"One member out of work is one too many," said Burns, who was joined at the rally by business agents Richard Salvatore

and Andrew Viegas. Waving posters and shouting slogans outside, the protesters reminded the board inside that "Employees Vote;" and "It's Time for a Change."



## Teamsters Helping Teamsters

Teamsters solidarity extends well beyond the workplace, as Loretta McCullough, a former supervisory teacher aide in the Lawrence School District, can testify. When word got around that McCullough was ill and out of work the "Teamsters Helping Teamsters" team in the Long Island Division came to her aid.

Local 237 officials, business agents and shop stewards sold raffle tickets with a range of cash prizes throughout their communities. The generous donations made it possible for the Teamsters to give McCullough more than \$1,500, for which she expressed her heartfelt gratitude.

Pictured at P.S. 4 in Lawrence School District are, from left: John Burns, director, Long Island Division; Marilyn Capone, business agent liaison; Obie, the school mascot; Tonine Cannon, school aide; and Dr. Ann Pedersen, principal.



## Added to the Roster of Retirees

### Local 237 and War Veteran



Trustee Edmund Kane presents Raphael Rodriguez with his retirement plaque. A former supervisor of caretakers with New York City Housing Authority's Bronx Management, Rodriguez retired with 22 years of service.

Rodriguez was also in the armed forces, serving time in Iraq. While on duty overseas, he was honored by the New York City Housing Authority's Emerald Society and was featured in a Local 237 Newsline article.

### Blessed Be the Retiree



Sandra Dotson, a former evidence and property control specialist, retired with 30 years of service from the Bronx Property office. Here she is receiving her retirement plaque from Ruben Torres, secretary-treasurer, and Al Soto, director of Law Enforcement, Citywide Division.

Dotson is moving to Roanoke, Va., with her husband, Foster Dotson, who retired from Metro North.

The couple's son and seven grandchildren live in Roanoke, as well as Sandra's mother, who lives nearby. "I am blessed," said Dotson. "I have no bills and I will be able to help my mother."

She also gave a shout out to co-workers and bosses for "the opportunity to work with them," and thanks to the union for all its support over the years.

## Local 237 Notes

Congratulations to...

...**SCHOOL SAFETY AGENT CHARLENE PARKER** at the Staten Island borough office and **NYCHA CARETAKER EARLE LINDSEY** on the birth of their first child, Elijah, on Sept. 12. The baby weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces.

...

...**SSA JASMINE CRUZ**, also at the Staten Island borough office, on the birth of her son, Samuel Jr., on June 3rd. The baby weighed 7 pounds 6 ounces.

...

...**TYRELL CARTER**, a cook at Cross Road Facility in the Brooklyn Department of Juvenile Justice, and his wife, Diane Carter, on the birth of their first babies, twin girls, on Sept. 1. Demi Dior weighed 5 pounds 15 ounces and Olivia Kayreen weighed 6 pounds 9 ounces.

...

A heartfelt thank you from **SSA L3 ROSLYN DOWNING** at Maxwell H.S. in Brooklyn North Command to **LEVEL 3 JOYCE PALMER** and other School Safety Division task force agents who helped locate her grandson, a teenager, who went missing on a cruise ship on which they were all passengers.

*We'd like to hear from you. If you'd like us to report on what's happening in your life, drop a line to Teamster Notes, Newsline, 216 W. 14 Street, NY 10011, or call 646-638-8636, or e-mail Tlambert@local237.org.*

## CONDOLENCES TO...

... the family of **CAPTAIN BENJAMIN RODRIGUEZ**, a Department of Homeless Services special officer who died suddenly at age 35 on Sept. 18. Rodriguez, one of the youngest captains in DHS, is survived by one daughter, his mother, father, and several siblings.

...

...the family of **MICHAEL MILANO**, a maintenance worker with more than 20 years of service at Isaac Homes in Manhattan. Milano tragically took his own life early last month. He is survived by his wife, Paula, three daughters, Chrissy, Kaylene and Nalanie, one granddaughter, and sister, Sabrina.

...

...**SCHOOL SAFETY AGENT L2 BERNARD FORD** at the Community Outreach Unit, on the death of his father, Lonnie Harrison. The funeral service was held October 8, in Jamaica, N.Y.

...

...**SSA CATHERINE IRBY** of P.S. 138 in Brooklyn North Command on the death of her mother, Roberta Louise Syville, on Oct. 20, just before her 76th birthday. She is survived by her husband, Alphonso, three sons: Anthony, Alphonso Jr. and Jerome; five daughters: Catherine, Pamela, Leslie, Sabrina and Michelle, as well as 16 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren.

...

...the family of **RONALD COLEMAN**, a campus peace officer at LaGuardia Community College, who died at age 61 on Oct. 16. Coleman became a CPO six years ago and received numerous commendations and citations. He is survived by his wife, Maria, daughters Lynette and Karen, stepdaughters Helen and Sue Ellen, grandson Kirk Hart Jr., sons Kirk Hart Sr. and Corey LeSane. He is also survived by his brother, Henry Coleman Jr., and sisters, Monique Walker, and Taylor Coleman.

...

...**SSA YOLANDA HUINS** at George Westinghouse H.S. in Brooklyn North Command, on the death of her uncle, Daylea Huins, a retired corrections officer, on July 29. The funeral service was held in Brooklyn.

...

...the family of **WINSTON KHELAWAN**, a school safety agent in Queens South Command, who tragically took his own life on Aug. 29. He is survived by his wife, children, mother, brothers and sisters.

...

...**GUSTAVO BERMUDEZ**, campus peace officer at LaGuardia Community College, whose father, Cristobal, died on Oct. 27 after a 10-year battle with cancer. The late Bermudez was a retired maintenance worker and a member of Local 237's Latino Committee. He is survived by his wife, Beatriz, son, Gustavo, and daughters Beatriz Cristina and Claudia Patricia.



Michael Milano



Ronald Coleman



## SSA Explorers Win Trophy In National Competition



Members of Explorers Post 2436 display their drill competition trophy at Columbus High School in the Bronx.

A dedicated group of high school students, who participate in the Explorers program under the guidance of School Safety Division advisers, won the drill competition at the Nationals Law Enforcement Competition. They prevailed against 148 teams from police precincts across the nation this summer in Atlanta, Georgia.

Law Enforcement Explorers is a program designed to educate young men and women, ages 14-20, about law enforcement. A uniformed member of the service in each precinct, Police Service Area and Transit District acts as the on-site Post Advisor for the Explorer Program. The program focuses on six areas: career, service, leadership, social, fitness and outdoors. There are currently close to 4,000 Explorer posts at the NYPD.

The Explorers' program teaches youths about careers in law enforcement and public service. They also participate in community service.

The 15 youths, members of Law Enforcement Explorers Post 2436, hailed from several Bronx schools and attended training sessions at Columbus H.S. on weekends.

The winning team dedicated their trophy to Columbus H.S. Principal Lisa Fuentes for her generous support. Another generous supporter, Gregory Floyd, Local 237 President, contributed to the team's travel expenses.

The advisers, all working in Bronx schools, were SSA Omyra Rodriguez of Evander H.S.; SSA Sheryl Skeete of Columbus H.S.; and SSA L3 Douglas Cruz of the Bronx East Command Outreach unit. Cruz was honored as the Explorer Advisor of the Year and won an Isaac Lieberman Public Service Award this year.

Two former Explorers, Daniel Mejia and Calhoom Sbanmowan, wanted to participate in the nationals and did before joining the Army.

The next competition will be in Colorado in 2012.



## Know Your Rights

By Sanford Rubenstein

Attorney Sanford Rubenstein, who has represented victims in high profile cases in New York for many years, will be writing a column, "Know Your Rights," on a regular basis covering areas of the law that affect our members.

### Benefits for Victims of Auto Accidents

Currently many states, including New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, have adopted a no-fault system for compensating persons injured in an automobile accident for their basic economic losses. There is no showing of fault required to receive benefits for basic economic loss. The injured party is paid basic economic loss directly by his or her own insurance company, irrespective of who is at fault for an accident.

Basic economic loss includes (1) medical expenses, (2) lost earnings, and (3) ancillary expenses resulting from the accident. According to section 5102 of New York insurance law, medical expenses refer to all necessary expenses incurred in the pursuit of physical and mental recovery from the sustained injury. For example, a driver of a vehicle injured in a car accident will be reimbursed by his/her insurance company pursuant to the no-fault statute, for the ambulance services, x-rays, physician's fees, emergency room fees, hospital stay, surgery, prescription drugs, nursing and all other necessary medical attention and procedures.

The second category of economic loss is lost earnings. For example, if as a result of an automobile accident a person is out of work for three weeks that person would be entitled to payment for lost wages for the missed three weeks of work subject to certain deductions. One

such deduction from the allowed loss of wages is a 20 percent deduction from the total amount of lost earnings, since the injured party receives the benefit tax free.

The third category of economic loss is ancillary benefits. Ancillary benefits include all other reasonable and necessary expenses incurred as a result of an accident. Examples of this would be housekeeping expenses and taxi service to and from the hospital or doctor.

In cases of death, the no-fault system provides a death benefit that pays funeral expenses up to a maximum of \$2,000.

No-fault insurance does not apply to damage to vehicles involved in automobile accidents.

It is very important to note that in addition to the benefits obtained for basic economic loss, an injured party has the right to sue for damages for their permanent injuries and pain and suffering, and to get a monetary award for that as well.

If you are hurt in an auto accident, it is wise to consult an attorney to make sure you get all of the benefits to which you are entitled.

*Sanford Rubenstein, Esq. is the senior partner at the Brooklyn law firm of Rubenstein & Rynecki, which handles all types of cases for personal injury, medical malpractice, and cases involving police misconduct. The law firm can be reached at 718-522-1020.*

## Meeting Makers Make It Work

Attending union meetings is a smart move, as the members pictured here will testify. By attending regular union meetings, members stay informed and connected to better respond to developments that impact their lives at work, at home, in the union, and in the world at large.

President Gregory Floyd updated members at two

recent meetings to be aware of growing attacks on public employee pensions and benefits and the urgent need to vote on Election Day. Other Local 237 officials present included Donald Arnold, Citywide Division director; Pete Gutierrez, deputy director; and Randy Klein, assistant director.



Department of Transportation bridge operators surround President Gregory Floyd, center, during a recent meeting at Local 237.



Department of Environmental Protection water use inspectors pose with President Floyd during their recent meeting at union headquarters.



## Resumen en Español

# ¡Adelante! La Lucha Por Los Derechos Del Trabajador

Un millón de personas de todas partes del país, incluyendo a cientos de Teamsters y la delegación del Local 237 se dieron cita en el Paseo Nacional en Washington, DC el 2 de Octubre en reclamo por empleos, justicia educación, igualdad, y otras causas progresivas que están en peligro. La marcha, patrocinada por la organización One Nation Working Together (traducido Una Nación Trabajando Juntos), buscó animar y educar a los votantes antes del Día de Elección, y fue integrado por más de 300 organizaciones, incluyendo sindicatos, agrupaciones pro derechos humanos, agrupaciones pro derechos civiles, ambientalistas y grupos religiosos.

“Esta lucha es de nuestra generación,” dijo el Presidente Gregory Floyd en su discurso a los miembros que a tempranas horas de la madrugada se habían reunido en la sede del sindicato antes de abordar los autobuses rumbo a Washington, DC. “Queremos ir. Tenemos que ir,” dijo Floyd. “Los ricos han declarado guerra en contra de los trabajadores, especialmente las pensiones y los beneficios de jubilación. Tenemos que defender nuestro derecho a tra-

bajar por un sueldo viviente y de jubilarnos con dignidad.”

Ahora que los votantes han hablado y hay un nuevo balance en la política de nuestra nación y en las capitales estatales, por cierto tendremos nuevas luchas. Los hechos son nuestros mejores municiones. Abajo presentamos una lista de hechos incluidos en un artículo reciente de Bill Quigley, director legal, Centro para Derechos Constitucionales y profesor de derecho en la Universidad Loyola en Nueva Orleans:

- El nivel de pobreza de 14.3 por ciento está en su punto más alto en 51 años.
- El nivel nacional de desempleo de 9.6 por ciento (14.8 millones de personas “oficialmente” desempleados) no incluye a los trabajadores de tiempo parcial, los suspendidos de tiempo completo, ni a los trabajadores desanimados que han dejado de buscar empleo.
- Un record de 2.8 millones de dueños de casas recibieron avisos de desalojo hipotecario y 11 millones mas están “debajo del agua,” debiendo más en sus hipotecas que el valor de sus casas.



**Miembros de NYCHA comienzan la march hacia el Paseo Nacional en Washington, DC.**

- La riqueza de las 400 personas más ricas en el país creció un 8 por ciento el año pasado.

- En 1973, el sueldo promedio de un Oficial Ejecutivo Principal era \$27 por cada dólar pagado a un empleado común. Para el 2007, la proporción era \$275 a \$1.

- Desde 1992, el índice de impuestos que pagan los 400 individuos más ricos cayó de 26.8 por ciento a 16.6 por ciento.

- Los Estados Unidos tiene el nivel más grande de inequidad entre ricos y pobres entre todos los países industrializados del Oeste.

“Nosotros rescatamos a los bancos y las compañías de seguro,” dijo el Rdo. Al Sharpton, a una multitud animada en el Paseo Nacional en Washington, DC. “Ahora es el tiempo de rescatar al pueblo Americano.” El locutor de la emisora

MSNBC Ed Schultz, uno de los organizadores, dijo, “Esta marcha es símbolo del pueblo levantándose para enfrentar las corporaciones.”

No es coincidencia que las ganancias corporativas han aumentado en par con los niveles de desempleo y pobreza. Cuando los empleadores cortan sus planillas, las ganancias aumentan. Tan solo la amenaza de ser despedidos es suficiente para empujar a los trabajadores que queden a aceptar condiciones injustas y abusivas.

Si estas estadísticas le provocan enojo, usted se encuentra en el lugar correcto. Como empleado público y miembro del sindicato, usted representa la última barrera en la lucha por preservar los derechos del trabajador en esta nación. Armado con esta información y solidaridad, podremos tener la victoria.

## ¡Que Viva! El Mes de la Herencia Latina en el Local 237

Nuestro programa anual en celebración del Mes de la Herencia Latina atrajo a los mejores protagonistas de esta vibrante cultura y sus contribuciones. La deleitosa música, comida y entretenimiento sirvieron de fondo para los honores presentados a miembros de alto rendimiento por el Presidente Gregory Floyd, incluyendo al Secretario-Tesorero Rubén Torres, quien recibió el Premio por Excelencia.

Otros galardonados incluyeron George Torres, el Director jubilado de la División de Viviendas y Fideicomisario, quien recibió un Reconocimiento por Logros Vitalicios; Agnes Cruz, División de Viviendas; Marcos Martínez Jr., División de Long Island; George Ortéga, División de la Ciudad; y Carmen Burgos, División de Viviendas, los cuales recibieron el Premio Presidencial. Hubo sorpresas placenteras durante el evento,

incluyendo visitas por el Poeta Tato Laviera, y el Contralor de la Ciudad de Nueva York, John Liu. No obstante, la casa se vino abajo cuando el Senador Estatal Electo Gustavo Rivera, del Distrito Senatorial 33 del Bronx, cantó una balada romántica en español, después de su discurso. El Presidente Floyd lo galardonó con el Premio de Teamster de Oro. ¡Su próximo premio quizás será un Grammy!



**A la izquierda final, Agnes Cruz, recipiente del Premio Presidencial y yesera de NYCHA en Manhattan, recibe felicitaciones de sus colegas y familiares.**



**Carmen Burgos, trabajadora de mantenimiento de NYCHA en Brooklyn, esta rodeada de su familia despues de recibir su Premio Presidencial.**



# Saluting School Safety's Special Services



School Safety Agent honorees applaud for a colleague; President Gregory Floyd greets mother-and-daughter School Safety Agents Alta-gracia Ciprian of Queens North, left, and Arlene Mercedes of Central Headquarters.

**K**icking off the fall semester with a show of gratitude, the School Safety Division of the New York City Police Department held a Recognition Day ceremony at Long Island City High School in Queens on Sept. 10 for agents in Support/Special Services and Central Headquarters.

In his address, Assistant Chief Thomas Chan told SSAs he was proud to "celebrate the success you have achieved over the years," adding

that he looked forward to another successful school year. A recent Mayor's Management Report confirmed success, showing a 7 percent drop in the seven major crimes in schools, and a 7 percent drop in other criminal categories during fiscal year 2010.

President Gregory Floyd joined Chan on-stage to congratulate each SSA. "These agents performed above and beyond the call of duty," Floyd said. "I'm glad to see they got their day.

They make our job easy." The awards ranged from Squad Citations, to Director's Awards and Perfect Attendance.

In his remarks, Director Ramon Garcia noted that when the World Trade Center was attacked "Our special services were the first responders, evacuating seven schools safely."

Master of Ceremonies Gary Armstead closed the event, affirming that "We love these children; they're our future."



Another proud mom, SSA Magalis Mercera, has a son who is a senior at Long Island City H.S., where she works and a daughter who graduated from there two years ago.

Al Soto, director, Citywide Division's Law Enforcement Unit, congratulates SSA III Shereice Hunter on her award.



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SSA II Sandra Reid displays her awards and is congratulated by SSA II Talib Mutaw-Akkil and President Floyd.