



## A Toast to Our Retirees and to Social Security



Speakers and panelists for the morning program on Social Security pose for a group portrait.

New York Congressman Jerrold Nadler addresses the audience as President Gregory Floyd looks on.



Defying torrential rains, Local 237 retirees attended the Annual Founder's Day Luncheon at the Hilton Hotel on June 7 to chart a course to preserve and protect Social Security.

Hosted by the Retiree Division under the direction of Nancy B. True, the event began with a panel discussion on Social Security featuring Jasmine V. Tucker, National Academy of Social Insurance; Eric Kingson, co-director, Social Security Works, and professor of Social Work at Syracuse University; and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, portrayed by actor John Jiler.

"Social Security is under attack," said True, introducing the panel discussion. "These are stealth attacks; they stopped mailing the annual letter; field reps stopped coming to meetings, and now they are proposing the chained CPI."

Kingson noted that "there is a retirement income crisis."

Tucker, the lead author of a study entitled "Strengthening Social Security: What Do Americans Want? What do Americans Need," reported that the study found that Americans are willing to increase the tax rate and eliminate the cap on earnings taxed for Social Security in order to preserve the program.

"During the Depression," said John Jiler as FDR, "when uncertainty became the real

enemy, I began Social Security to say 'Folks, we got your back.' Someone paid for us, we will pay for others. It's one big family. It's spiritual."

Retirees Doris Welch, Jack Jolly and Robert Camacho shared their personal experiences as Social Security beneficiaries. Ca-

macho, who retired on disability at 52 years old, said, "If it wasn't for Social Security, I think I would be homeless." Welch, who retired with 30 years of service at NYCHA, said, "I worked for it. Pass it on." Jolly recalled receiving Social Security when he was 6 years old, after his father died.

At the luncheon, New York Congressman Jerrold Nadler proposed a solution to the projected Social Security shortfall: more jobs and higher salaries. Instead, he noted, "There's been a 30-year campaign to 'starve the beast' by cutting taxes." Where corporations once paid 30 percent in taxes they now pay 6 percent, said Nadler, who also decried the proposed chained CPI. "Nasty people say CPI is overstating inflation because it doesn't account for substitution. Never mind that the standard of living has gone down."

President Gregory Floyd thanked retirees for their continued involvement in the fight for a better quality of life and urged them to write, call, and e-mail Congress, and, most importantly, to vote in the upcoming elections.

Keeping with tradition, the Retiree Division's Sunshine Club, which raises funds for worthy causes, presented a \$3,000 check to City Harvest. The food-rescue organization serves about 400,000 of the city's most disadvantaged population.

### Protesting Cuts to COLA

The Retiree Division, led by Nancy B. True, director, and Luz Carty, retiree assistance counselor, joined with members of the Alliance for Retired Americans and other activists to form a human chain in protest against the proposed "chained CPI" (Consumer Price Index) that would cut Social Security and veterans' benefits by lowering annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA).

On July 2, a National Day of Action, the human chain formed in New York City outside the offices of U.S. Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand. Such protests were held in as many as 50 cities nationwide. More than 2000 activists participated, thousands of phone calls were generated, and 100,000 or more e-mails were sent, asking members of Congress to oppose the chained CPI and take it off the table.

The chained CPI would change the statistical formula that the government uses to calculate the rate of inflation by assuming that a lower COLA is acceptable because consumers substitute cheaper products when prices go up. If it is adopted, an average earner retiring at age 65 would lose more than \$6,000 over 15 years.

Rising health-care costs, especially for seniors, cannot be substituted with a cheaper version. The chained CPI would be an immediate benefit cut at a time when we need a higher COLA, not a lower one.

An alternative to the chained CPI is a bill sponsored by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), the Rebuild America Act, which would require establishing a price index that accurately reflects costs for Social Security beneficiaries.



## A Message From the President

Gregory Floyd

### Let's Put Public Housing on Solid Ground

While our rents continue to rise, chronic underfunding and mismanagement threaten the very future of New York's public housing. Between 2002 and 2008, the city lost nearly 200,000 affordable rental housing units, according to the public advocate's office. The National Low-Income Housing Coalition reported that 60 percent of all renters in the city cannot afford the market rate for a typical two-bedroom apartment.

This makes no sense. How can the city turn its back on its public housing, where a half million of New York City's hardest-working residents, the majority of whom are retirees or workers, live and raise their families?

Under Mayor Bloomberg, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is on the verge of financial collapse. Currently operating with a \$60 million deficit and a \$6 billion backlog in major capital improvements, the once well-respected, shining example of civic responsibility that received national acclaim has been neglected by an administration committed to private, for-profit interests at the expense of public services.

NYCHA's mismanagement is even worse, as residents and workers face deplorable conditions. Last summer, the Daily News uncovered a huge backlog of needed repairs. There were 10,000 requests that weren't scheduled until 2014. This situation is unacceptable. Are we really telling these people they must live in unsafe and unsanitary conditions for two years?

As president of Local 237, I'm proud to represent more than 8,000 NYCHA employees, and I'm also concerned about every person who calls the city's public housing home. With a population larger

than Atlanta, Cleveland or Miami, NYCHA's residents represent a formidable force in this city. Our union is committed to finding solutions to preserve public housing, not only because NYCHA residents and employees are blue-collar workers who drive our city's economy, but because it's the right thing to do for our fellow New Yorkers.

To advance our mission, we hosted a mayoral forum in April to see what type of commitment the leading Democratic candidates were willing to make to improving NYCHA. Overall, the candidates agreed that the next mayor should aggressively pursue government funding for NYCHA, monitor its spending, stop payments for police and sanitation services, restructure the board to include residents, stop warehousing apartments, cancel plans to sell property to luxury developers, hire more local workers, and maintain control.

However, only one candidate has demonstrated that he is a true champion of public housing: former City Comptroller Bill Thompson. Last month, Thompson demanded the firing of NYCHA Chairman John Rhea, saying that "City leaders shouldn't sit silently while the authority's mismanagement and incompetence hits thousands of working families." He recently called for building middle- and low-income housing on unused housing authority property that Rhea has earmarked for luxury developments.

We believe Thompson has the chops and the history of getting things done in government. That's why Local 237 endorsed Thompson for mayor. When he is elected, we look forward to working with him to reform NYCHA and make it a safe and reliable haven for New York's hard-working families again.



## Register Now to Vote Later

By Nancy B. True, Director, Retiree Division

The mayoral race is heating up, and Primary Day is just around the corner — on Sept. 10. This election season is critical to the future of New York City. With more than 30,000 active members and retirees, our votes can help

determine the outcome of elections.

But before you can vote in either the primaries or the General Election, on Nov. 5, you must be registered. Those who registered years ago don't have to do it again, unless you changed your name, address or party affiliation. Retirees have an excellent track record as voters, but it's easy to forget to re-register when it's required.

We must do everything in our power to elect a mayor and City Council that will treat public employees and retirees with fairness and respect, and who will value the services we provide and the contributions we have made to this city over the years.

President Gregory Floyd has called for a boots-on-the-ground approach to voter registration this election season. In addition to setting up voter-registration tables managed by tenant association leaders at community centers throughout New York City housing developments, Floyd urges all our members to make every effort to ensure that they, their family, and friends are registered in time to vote.

In order to vote in the September primaries, you must be registered by Aug. 16. To vote in the General Election, you must be registered by October 11. Local 237 makes it easy to register online. [See "Register to Vote" on page 4.] There is no reason to pass up this chance to exercise this hard-won civil right. The right to vote did not come easily, especially to African Americans and women. When the United States was founded, only white men with property or wealth were permitted to vote in most states. By the time of the Civil War, most white men could vote whether or not they owned property. This left much more than half the population still struggling for this crucial right. There were marches, rallies, sit-ins and even acts of civil disobedience.

Advances came in 1870, when the 15th Amendment to the Constitution declared that voting rights could not be denied due to race, color, or previous condition of servitude. In 1920, the 19th Amendment declared that the right to vote could not be denied on the basis of sex.

With these triumphs came more challenges. Some states imposed literacy tests, poll taxes, and other voter-suppression tactics to block certain populations from voting. Such obstacles persist today. In a major setback to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a recent Supreme Court ruling, by a 5-4 conservative majority, removed important legal protections for minority voters that had been a key achievement of the civil rights movement.

You have the chance to vote for change and to encourage everyone you know who is eligible to vote to exercise their priceless right. Don't miss this opportunity to make a difference in the direction of our city, state and country. Get registered, get set, go vote!

## RETIREE news&views

Published bi-monthly by the Retiree Division of Local 237, International Brotherhood of Teamsters (USPS 013028). Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.  
Postmaster: Send address changes to: RETIREE News & Views, 216 West 14 Street, New York, NY 10011 212-807-0555, retirees@local237.org, www.local237.org

GREGORY FLOYD  
President

PATRICIA STRYKER  
Recording Secretary

RICHARD HENDERSHOT  
Vice President

NANCY B. TRUE  
Managing Editor

RUBEN TORRES  
Secretary-Treasurer

TANIA M. LAMBERT  
Editor



## RALLIES FOR JUSTICE

Retiree Division members joined Local 237's active members at two important rallies:

### Rally for Fair Contracts, City Hall Park, June 12

Thousands of the city's unionized workers packed the streets by City Hall Park to demand fair contracts from the Bloomberg administration. Sponsored by the Municipal Labor Council, the rally brought together the city's mightiest labor union leaders, including Local 237's President Gregory Floyd, who decried the mayor's bad faith. Bloomberg has provided zero funds for public-employee raises in his final budget proposal for 2014, and has insisted he will not settle any deal that includes retroactive pay. About 300,000 city employees are currently working under expired contracts.



NYCHA retiree Angel Sanchez, far right, joins active members at the protest.

### Rally to Preserve Public Housing Jobs, Services, City Hall Park, July 2

Led by Local 237 President Gregory Floyd, protesters called for ending cuts to the New York City Housing Authority budget and reforming its questionable policies. About 600,000 New Yorkers live in public housing, and 9,000 Local 237 members work for NYCHA. Of these workers, 3,000 are also residents. Conditions are deplorable in many developments with backlogs of repairs, while management sits on capital funds of more than \$1 billion.



Local 237 members stand with NYCHA residents and community activists at the rally to preserve public housing. Floyd emphasized that the large number of workers and residents represent a formidable voice for change in the city, especially in the upcoming elections. "Enough is enough," said Floyd, who called for change through voter participation and launched a massive voter-registration campaign throughout NYCHA's developments.

## 237 Endorses Thompson for Mayor



Mayoral Candidate Bill Thompson speaks at the podium and is flanked, from left, by Pete Gutierrez, deputy director; President Gregory Floyd; and Ruben Torres, secretary-treasurer.

President Gregory Floyd announced Local 237's endorsement of Bill Thompson for mayor of New York City at a press conference June 20 at the entrance to the union's headquarters.

Flanked by a crowd of union officials and members, Floyd stood shoulder to shoulder with Thompson, a Democrat and former city comptroller, while itemizing the mayoral candidate's qualities.

"I have long admired the work of Bill Thompson," Floyd said. "In everything he does, he shows level-headedness and an even keel to his judgment. Watching him, I always get the impression that there's a real commitment behind his policies and that they are not just the result of the latest polls. Bill gets it. And that's why he gets our support!"

Thompson announced "a new era of cooperation," starting in January if he is elected mayor. "I promise you to work together and serve New York City in the way it should be served," and noted that the city is not doing its job. He added that as mayor he would build middle- and low-income housing on properties that the New York City Housing Authority Chairman John Rhea has earmarked for luxury housing. "I'm counting on you and your votes," Thompson said. "Let's turn this city around and make it for working people again."

## Viva Puerto Rico and the Annual Parade

Members of the Retiree Division marched with Local 237's contingent along Fifth Avenue for the National Puerto Rican Day Parade on June 9. We marched with pride in the contributions of our brothers and sisters who have roots in the island, as did the 80,000 marchers and more than one million spectators who turned out on a bright sunny day.

"I was delighted to have so many of our Local 237 members and retirees join me at the parade," said President Gregory Floyd, who led the contingent. "We marched in pride and with great appreciation of the richness of the Puerto Rican culture and their contributions to this union and this city."

New York is home to the largest Puerto Rican community in the nation. According to the 2010 Census, there are more than 4 million Puerto Rican Americans across the United States.



Retirees join Retiree Division staffers Luz Carty, retiree assistance counselor, in sunglasses; Susan Milisits, assistant director, behind Carty, Winston George, deputy director, kneeling in front, and Nancy B. True, director, waving la bandera.

## El Comité Latino Reconvenes

The Retiree Division's Latino Committee resumed its round of meetings to begin planning the upcoming Latino Heritage Celebration scheduled for Friday, September 20. They discussed themes, guest speakers, entertainment and catering. Hosting this annual event is a big job, but El Comité Latino members say they love to do it!

## Register to Vote

Local 237 urges every eligible member, along with their friends and families, to vote in the upcoming Primary Election (Sept. 10) and General Election (Nov. 5). But before you can vote, you must be registered.

The registration deadline for the September Primary is August 16. The registration deadline for the November General Election is October 11.

Registering to vote is easy when you sign onto Local 237's website at [www.local237.org](http://www.local237.org). At the top of the home page, click on "Register to Vote," then click on the registration form, fill it out and mail it in to become a registered voter.

## Save the Dates:

Latino Heritage Celebration - Sept. 20.  
Italian Heritage Celebration - Oct. 18.  
Events will be held at Local 237 Headquarters.

## RETIREE NEWS & VIEWS

216 West 14 Street  
New York, NY 10011



Affiliate of



JULY/AUGUST 2013

PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE  
PAID AT  
NEW YORK,  
NY

## Faces of Social Security



### LUZ MARINA GARCIA

Retired Caretaker J, Ravenswood Houses,  
Long Island City

**A**widow and retired with more than 11 years of service in 2012, Luz Marina Garcia lives with her adult son and receives her late husband's Social Security. She is in the process of changing over to her own Social Security, which is higher, and will collect her pension. "Life without Social Security would be very hard for me," says Garcia. "I use it for all my necessities."



### DEOWDAT SAMUEL

School Safety Agent  
GED Program, Manhattan

**R**etired after 10 years of service, Deowdat Samuel and his wife both have pensions and Social Security. "It's getting harder every day," says Samuel. "We can't live on just Social Security," he adds. "People depend on that COLA to keep up with inflation." Samuel is also concerned about the next generation. "If grandparents can't help, I don't know how young people are going to make it."

## On a personal note...

Happy 101st birthday to **Anna Morse**, the mother of Kenneth Morse, a retired maintenance worker. Last year, Morse hosted a centennial birthday party for his mother on July 13. She has lived at Amsterdam Houses in Manhattan, where she raised three children, since 1947. This year the family gathered at her house for a smaller celebration. The celebrant's sister, Mary Morse, will celebrate her 103rd birthday in September!

Belated birthday wishes to the **Rev. Robert Forster**. A retired hospital police officer with 25 years of service at Kings County Hospital, Forster celebrated his 70th birthday on May 12. He retired in December 2002 and lives in Augusta, Ga.

Congratulations to **Yetta Grossman**, a retired senior teller at Forest Hill Houses, whose grandson, Matt Grossman, graduated from Stanford University in California in June, with honors and a political science degree. Grossman had also been awarded a \$10,000 James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship four years ago.

Best wishes for recovery to **Calvin Carrington**, a food service worker, who had hip surgery on June 5.

Congratulations to **Dabney Montgomery**, former housing assistant and Tuskegee Airman, on the renaming of the Junior Church at the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to the Dabney N. Montgomery Art Gallery and Exhibition Hall. The Rev. Dr. Gregory Roberson Smith, pastor, dedicated and renamed the former lecture room on June 17 in Harlem.

### We extend our condolences to...

...the family of **Harold Scherch**, former president of IBT Local 707's Retiree Club on Long Island. Scherch died on June 24 after several months of illness.

...the family of **Rudolph Pinzone**, a retired bricklayer with the New York City Housing Authority, who died July 3. Pinzone, who lived in Florida, is survived by his daughters Joanne and Antoinette, grandson Joseph, granddaughter Deedee, brother Salvatore, a former NYCHA worker, and sisters Rosie, Edie, and Antoinette.

## Teamster Tots

### Makeila and Alanna Hayes

Joseph Hayes, a retired hospital police officer, is a veteran Brooklynite, but he left his heart in Maryland with his granddaughters Makeila and Alanna Hayes. The girls' parents are Hayes' son, Keith, and their mother, Rosetta. Makeila is 6 years old and Alanna, who is 1, was born on a milestone date last year.



On June 22 this year, Alanna celebrated her first birthday as well as her grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary. Hayes and his wife, Irma, renewed their vows at Nazarene Church in Brooklyn, where they originally wed. Makeila was a flower girl.

Hayes said he hopes his Teamster Tots will "value education and utilize it to help themselves and others. I hope they will be fine young ladies."