

RETIREE

news & views



A PUBLICATION OF LOCAL 237 RETIREE DIVISION

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Tutti Italiani! We are all Italian!

In keeping with the tradition of Local 237, the Retiree Division celebrates cultural diversity as a great asset. We agree with former Mayor David Dinkins who said at his 1990 inauguration: "I see New York as a gorgeous mosaic of race and religious faith, of national origin and sexual orientation." While some, such as former New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, describe America as a "melting pot" the concept of a "salad bowl" might provide a better description. We are all proud Americans, but we also retain pride in our individual cultural heritage. And, we want others to know about it. We want to share the richness of our native lands. In America, that "gorgeous mosaic"

should be thought of as a tapestry of multi-colored threads, varying in strength and length, that woven together, form an interdependent, indestructible, and unique fabric, a thing of beauty.

On October 18, the Italian Heritage Committee of the Retiree Division celebrated the Italian heritage with a special program. The Committee is chaired by **Anthony Cottone** and consisting of: **Frank Aiello, Vincent Aquilino, Rocco Brienza, Paul DeRosa, Richard Fischetti, Rosario Lamberti, Linda Tavolaro** and **Amadeo Torelli**. The program included a musical performance entitled: "Mulberry Street,"

written by Jerry Strivelli, with words and music by Jerry and Olga Asphan; Directed by Cory Herman and produced by Rocco and Denise Iacovone. Mari Hwang provided the musical accompaniment on the piano. The program also included memories of Little Italy by Vincent Aquilino. ■



Recounting Their Own Years of Service Our Veterans Pay Homage to All Veterans



Veteran's committee and Retirees with Local 237 President, Gregory Floyd.



Veteran's Committee with Retiree Raymond Valentine who is also a veteran. Left to right: Richard Fischetti, Angel Sanchez, Raymond Valentine, Anthony Cottone, Amadeo Torelli, Betty Willis Harris.

In honor of Veterans' Day, the Retiree Division presented an informative and inspiring program that included a presentation by educator Elisse Acevedo of the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum and a discussion on veteran benefits by Lyn Johnson, MSW, VA Outreach Specialist, VA NY Harbor Health Care System. Perhaps the most poignant part of the program was the personal remembrances of military service by members of the Retiree Division's Veterans' Committee consisting of: **Rocco Brienza**, Army; **Anthony Cottone**, Navy; **Richard Fischetti**, Air Force; **Betty Willis-Harris**, Navy; **Angel Sanchez**, Army; **Amadeo Torelli**, Army and **Wilfredo Velez**, Army. Through a power point presentation and the recounting of their own experiences, our veteran retirees painted a vivid picture of what it means to be a member of the military as a young adult: The sacrifices, the fear, the challenges and the pride that was felt—which despite the years — are etched into their memories forever. ■



Veteran's Committee member Betty Willis-Harris served in the United States Navy.



Left to Right: Wilfredo Velez, Rocco Brienza, Anthony Cottone, James Spicer. *Mr. Spicer died in 2018. He played an instrumental role in the development of the Veterans' committee.*



Left to Right: Angel Sanchez, Rocco Brienza, Anthony Cottone, Betty Willis-Harris, Amadeo Torelli, Julie Kobi Asst. Director/Retiree Division.



Veteran's Committee members with Lyn Johnson, Veteran Administration Outreach Specialist. Left to right: Amadeo Torelli, Anthony Cottone, Angel Sanchez, Betty Willis Harris, Richard Fischetti, Lyn Johnson with the VA.



Rocco Brienza, Army



Anthony Cottone, Navy



Richard Fischetti, Air Force



Betty Willis-Harris, Navy



Angel Sanchez, Army



Wilfredo Velez, Army



by **Gregory Floyd**

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

Has the American Dream become just a mall in New Jersey? Right now, this \$6 billion version, just 6 miles from Manhattan, in East Rutherford, is where private developers were able to leverage a stake in property abandoned by previous developers, along with the sale of \$1.1 billion in tax-exempt bonds and \$390 million in tax concessions. With \$3 million-plus square feet that include a Nickelodeon Theme park, a DreamWorks water park, ice skating rink, ski slope, movie theaters, a live performance theater, high-end retail shopping stores and destination restaurants, this American Dream—which already employs 1,200 people directly with an additional 17,000 jobs expected to come—may actually come closer to embodying the concept of the “American Dream”, a term originally coined in 1931.

In his Depression era best-selling novel, “Epic of America,” writer and historian James Truslow Adams described America as a land where “each man and woman shall be able to attain to the fullest

a message from the president

WHEN THE AMERICAN DREAM BECOMES A MALL IN NEW JERSEY

stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of fortuitous circumstance of birth or position.” Simply: America is a land of opportunity where even if you are born poor, through hard work, you don’t have to remain that way.

New Jersey’s American Dream took 15 years to produce. The American Dream that Adams envisioned went on to produce programs during that same period of time that included a national infrastructure system for highways and utilities as well as a master plan for affordable housing like NYCHA. Indeed, perhaps the most significant feature of the 1931 American Dream was that it triggered a public consciousness which acknowledged gross inequality in America and resulted in an outcry for the Federal government to take action to remedy it.

Some might say that the American Dream mall is the exact opposite of Adams’ idea and that it’s actually a perversion of his concept—an ideal run amuck. To some, this high-end, high-cost American Dream is the embodiment of opulent entertainment and other over-the-top self-indulgences that are certainly not available and affordable for all. Now, nothing is intrinsically wrong with a place for Americans to have fun. But in the current political landscape, where Progressives and Social Democrats are critical of the great divide between the “haves” and “have nots” in our society, and lambaste as ineffectual, those who have historically led the fight to level the

playing field—members of the Democratic Party and unions — it leaves us to wonder how, if and by whom, will economic equality ever come about? There are many who think that they have the answer: Just complain about it and you’ve done something.” Even today’s Democratic presidential candidates have adopted a “woke” element to their campaigns. The strategy seems to be: Say it out loud. Then apologize for past offenses or actions that should have been taken and absolution is on the way.

Recently, former President Obama hosted a summit that challenged the “woke culture” for precisely that—complaining without activism. He told the audience: “There is this sense sometimes of: ‘the way of me making change is to be as judgmental as possible...if I tweet or hashtag about how you didn’t do something right... I can sit back and feel pretty good about myself... Man, you see how woke I was, I called you out. That’s not activism... That’s not enough.”

We’ve come to accept the importance of “See something; say something.” But that is only the start. “Doing something” really makes the difference. The American Dream is an evolving concept. It is mired in a time of great desperation; it held the promise of hope and the encouragement to accomplish. Today the phrase may be used to symbolize the fruits of our labor...proof positive that the American Dream is obtainable, with tangible results. But for those who are still feeling that the dream is still not theirs, being “woke” is not enough. To awake requires action. ■

Farewell but not goodbye



by **Nancy B. True**
Director of the
Retiree Division



Photo by Jerry Lacay

As many of you know, I will be retiring at the end of December. I will be joining your ranks as someone who is “Retired from Work, Not from the Union!” After 33+ years on the job it is time to start the next phase of my life. I plan to “take a page” from all of your books and travel, spend more time with family and friends and, in general, be on the lookout for adventure.

I have spent many happy years working at Local 237. I can’t think of one day that I woke up

not wanting to go to work. Each day brought challenges and opportunities. I have had the pleasure to get to know you. You bring me inspiration and provide solid role models for my own retirement.

Over the years I have worked with many talented, creative and very smart staff who have been part of a strong team in the Retiree Division. As some have said, “it takes a village” to get things done and our village of staff and retirees have transformed the Retiree Division into a force. We march in parades, we have phone banks during presidential elections, and our committees plan important cultural events and celebrate our Teamster Veterans. The Division provides confidential social work services and benefits education to retired members, we have an outstanding Oral History Project that is well on the way to publishing its second book. Retiree Division staff sit on the NYCERS Board representing President Floyd. We help disabled members get retired and so much more! I am very proud of all we have accomplished. We have built the Retiree Division on the shoulders of those who came before us. It was a lucky day when Maggie Feinstein, our founding director, offered me a job in 1986. Fredda Vladeck made her contributions to the development

of the Division in the short time she worked with us. In 1993, (while marching in the Labor Day Parade), I learned that the Executive Board had appointed me Director of the Retiree Division. Every day, since June 2, 1986, I have felt proud to be a Teamster.

I am pleased to tell you that starting January 1, 2020, Julie Kobi and Susan Milisits will be co-directing the Retiree Division. I couldn’t be more pleased. They are extremely talented women with complementary skills. Retiree Division programs and services won’t skip a beat under their leadership. Please join me in congratulating them on their promotion.

Although you won’t see me every day, you will see me now and then. I am already marking my calendar for Founders Day. It will be wonderful to be in the audience with all of you and watch the Retiree Division staff and retirees shine. In 2020, the Retiree Division will be celebrating its 40th anniversary. I wouldn’t miss the celebration for anything!

I come from a very small family. When I came to Teamsters Local 237 my family grew exponentially. Immediately I had 11,000 more siblings! I am proud to call you brother and sister. We are family. Somos familia. ■

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National Family Caregivers Month

Julie, Kobi, LMSW

Assistant Director
Teamsters Local 237 Retiree Division

November was National Family Caregivers Month. The Local 237 Retiree Division wants to take a moment to recognize and honor family caregivers. You are not alone. We stand with you!

According to the American Society on Aging more than 65 million people in the United States provide care for chronically ill, disabled or aged family members or friends during any given year. Those 65 million people spend 20 hours a week providing that care. Their care is valued at \$375 billion a year, which is almost twice as much as is spent on homecare and nursing home services combined. This really speaks to the high level of involvement and commitment that caregivers are faced with on a day to day basis. The Caregiver Action Network has provided 10 tips for family caregivers below:

- 1) Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
- 2) Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- 3) Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- 4) Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- 5) Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
- 6) Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
- 7) Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
- 8) Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- 9) Make sure legal documents are in order.
- 10) Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

If you are caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or any type of memory impairment. The Caring Kind is a wonderful organization with an array of resources for example: 24/7 days a week hotline for information and support, social work services, links to community resources and more. The Caring Kind is a New York based organization, however caregivers receiving support call from all over the United States. I would like to highlight a special program the Caring Kind offers called the Wanderer's Safety program. I used this program very often as a former hospital Social Worker. In Brief the Wanderer's Safety program provides protection through a national emergency response service for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia who wander or have a medical emergency. The program provides a medical alert bracelet with specialized Identification number and a few medical conditions in the event your loved one is found wandering in the community or is in a medical crisis. The Wanderer's Safety program maintains a profile of the memory impaired person which includes pictures and a list emergency contacts to help reunify the memory impaired person and their loved ones. This is one of many service the Caring Kind offers.

For Retirees residing outside of the New York area the Alzheimer's Association also provides an array of services as well. You can call 1-800-272-3900 for a local chapter near you.

For more information regarding this article:

<https://caregiveraction.org/resources/10-tips-family-caregivers>

Resources: <https://www.caringkindnyc.org>; <https://www.alz.org>

<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>

(This website provides great information/ resources based on your zip code)

As always the Retiree Division is here to help if you have any questions. If you should have any questions please feel free to call the Retiree Division at **212-807-0555**. ■



Being Alone During the Holidays

by Susan Milisits

Deputy Director, Retiree Division

It's the most wonderful time of the year... or is it?

Loneliness is very common during the holidays. It is the time of the year when expectations are high and there is a prevailing sense that everyone has an ideal family and perfect celebrations. However, that is not true for many people. The elderly may be vulnerable to feelings of loneliness. Thoughts go to those who are no longer with us. And this can trigger feelings of isolation. But there are healthy ways of coping with these feelings.

Seek company.

Try to override your instinct to isolate. Perhaps you can call a friend and go for coffee. Or, you may find comfort in visiting your church, synagogue or mosque and be with others with the same beliefs. Perhaps volunteering might help you. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or participate in helping organizations such as Toys for Tots.

Share your feelings

Be honest with people you trust, and tell them that you are feeling lonely. Divulging these feelings is a vulnerable and daring act which most people will appreciate. They will want to help. (Ross Rosenberg, Coping with Loneliness during the Holidays).

Ask for what you need

Sometimes we hope others are clairvoyant and become disappointed and feel disconnected and lonely when our needs are not met. (Marter, Urban Balance). It is important to clearly communicate your needs to others.

Honor your feelings

It is important to honor your feelings. Your feelings are responses to what you have been through in life and you have to honor them. Seek support and be kind to yourself.

Take care of yourself

It is essential that you take good care of yourself. Engage in activities you enjoy and get enough rest.

Have realistic expectations

Be realistic about the holidays. Try to avoid the expectation that things will be good or bad. Try to accept things as they come during these days. There is nothing wrong with not feeling jolly during the holidays.

Seek therapy

When you are experiencing profound loneliness, therapy can help. Holiday blues are usually temporary and mild, but depression is more serious and can linger unless you get help. Depression is treatable. If you have sadness that won't lift, loss of interest or pleasure in doing things, changes in appetite, frequent crying, sleeping too much or too little or trouble concentrating get professional help. ■



Pets are the "Best" friends

by Luz Nieves-Carty, MPA

Assistant to the Director, Retiree Division

Older adults who are living alone can sometimes feel isolated and lonely. They can feel cut off from the world. Fortunately, studies have shown that there is someone who can help. Your friendly, cuddly pet! Dogs, cats, birds and fish are common pets kept indoors. They provide attention, and will listen to you. However, a dog is truly man or woman's best pal. Okay, I may be a little biased for I have had my dog for 7 years.

A study at the University of Rochester Medical Center with a group of seniors determined that pets help improve lives overall. Pet ownership can

help seniors live a healthier and more fulfilling life. Building a relationship with a four legged friend can also have additional benefits.

An article on the AARP website lists "10 Reasons to Get a Dog When You're Over 50". Dogs keep you fit. They need walks and love to play indoors and outdoors. A good game of Frisbee is sure to get your heart pumping. Older adults report at least 30 extra minutes a day of activity with their dogs. They just want to have fun! It's been reported dog ownership can help lower blood pressure and risk of a heart attack. Dogs also connect you to others humans.

Walking the pooch can open up conversations with strangers, neighbors and other dog lovers. Look around, dog parks are everywhere!

The article points out that dog owners may be more structured. Pets require schedules and consistency. It's also mentioned how "dogs get you". Dogs can pick up on your sad emotions and offer comfort. They can also pick up when you're feeling happy, and want to PLAY! Dogs are known for helping people with disabilities have a better quality of life. Dogs are ears for the deaf, eyes for the blind, and security alarms for many individuals.

It is recommended to adopt older dogs. They usually are calmer and housebroken. Having a dog can inspire seniors to volunteer. Understanding how great it is to be cared for, some seniors may pay it forward. In short, pets just make you a better person. They see you as their hero. There are many dogs in shelters in need of a loving home.

You can reach out to the resources listed or call 311 to connect with an adoption shelter near you.

Sometimes there are housing situations that may prohibit pets. According to the NYC Commission of Human Rights, if a mental health professional deems your pet necessary to your mental well, it is considered an Emotional Support Animal. Your pet doesn't require any special training. Landlords, merchants and airlines are required to allow pets on the premises. You need to provide the documents from your mental specialist. For further information, contact 311 or visit www.nyc.gov. If you live in the New York City Housing Authority buildings, please check with management for their rules on pets.

Pets and seniors can have beautiful, loving relationships. Call 311 for your nearest animal rescue center, ASPCA or animal shelter. There may be different adoption processes, but it's so worth it! ■

La importancia de un Centro y Archivo de investigación de la historia oral sindical.

Primera parte

Por Néstor Murray-Irizarry
historiador y gestor cultural



Néstor Murray-Irizarry
Photo by George Malave

Teamsters Local 237 Oral History Project

Nora Davila

Asst. Housing Manager
Retirement date: 8/10/2014



Nora Davila

In her words...

My perception about the better quality of life that local 237 has provided its members is tied at first instance to my father's impressions. He came to 237 through NYCHA as a caretaker J in 1956. He worked at Johnson Houses and we lived a few avenues over at Jefferson.

I'd hear my Mom talking to the neighborhood women and they sounded amazed that we could be treated by the doctor and pick up medicine for small fees.

My father spoke often of feeling grateful to his shop foreman who took time with him to explain that taking a reduced pension would assure his widow benefits if he should die.

I started my adult work life in NYCHA too. I've never considered myself good with numbers and much less, especially at that time or at negotiating for what an employer can give me.

It has struck me over and over how lucky it is to have someone who knows the ropes looking out for you when you don't.

At the job out in the field, in this mundane example, I was grateful nevertheless that the union made management / maintenance properly clean our floors after an overnight sewage back-up. We were being required to work and see tenants despite waste encrusted floors until they could get to us.

With the turning of time now the Union's power is being attacked. Looking at the brief news story of agreements to be voted on by NYCHA members (12/12/18) I'd like to think that The Union still got the best possible deal.

Now retired for a little bit, I'm enjoying all the benefits the union got us in the 70's - the pension, of course, a supplemental plan, medicine, glasses and it goes on. Good support!

The most fun was sharing art, music and the cultural committee programs with other retirees.

Nancy True, our director, gave me (and did similar for others) what was a personal challenge-to write and give a short talk on The Vote at The Founder's Luncheon. It felt good to have done it.

So I'm thinking that the Union impacts and has impacted its members quality of life on very many levels. ■

¿Qué hemos realizado? ¿Como?

Una misión consecutiva durante más de 25 años /Teamsters Local 237

Los grandes esfuerzos, de la creación de un **Centro y archivo de Historia Oral**, que hace más **25 años** que está llevando a cabo la **División de Jubilados de los Teamsters Local 237, City Employees Union, New York City**, bajo el liderazgo de Nancy B. True, con el apoyo de la presidencia y vicepresidencia de la Unión, es digna de encomio, respeto y **duplicación**. Es posible que la **Teamsters Local 237** sea el único Local de la **International Brotherhood of Teamsters of Washington, DC** que mantiene, por tantos años, un espacio o área especial para un **Centro y Archivo de Historia Oral de sus miembros jubilados**. Es una manera elegante, científica, objetiva y estimulante, de la local 237, para enaltecer y dignificar la autoestima de cada uno de los unionados, que se ven reflejados en el espejo de cada uno de los testimonios de sus pares, en las entrevistas abiertas que realizan lo(a)s investigador(a)s.

La Local 237 lo hace y lo realiza bien: **1)** Continúa realizando las entrevistas abiertas, en español y en inglés, a sus miembros; **2)** publicó un libro innovador, en español, que contiene las entrevistas que este servidor realizó (y fui su editor); **3)** mantiene una columna, de publicación irregular, en el Boletín oficial de la División de Jubilados de la Local 237. Columna que recibió dos premios "First Place" de Metro Labor Press Además, se ofrecen informes o conferencias sobre este tema ante la matrícula de los jubilados reunidos, ocasionalmente, en Puerto Rico. Próximamente saldrá a la luz pública un nuevo libro de entrevistas en inglés, de otra cantidad de jubilados, editado por Marian D. Bach, archivera y trabajadora social y Donna Ristorucci, periodista y editora jubilada del Retiree News and Views de la División de Jubilados de la Local 237. Reconocemos que en el pasado Erika Gottfried trabajó incansablemente este gran proyecto de Historia Oral. Las ediciones más importantes de este proyecto de Historia Oral están digitalizadas y se aspira a digitalizar todos los documentos y entrevistas de esta valiosa colección. Esto no es un sueño, aunque debemos aprender a soñar.

¿Por qué? ¿Cómo?

Así que, se hace un buen trabajo, con un presupuesto mínimo asignado; uno o dos investigadores; un limitado grupo de voluntarios, con grabadoras en mano y sus respectivas baterías; un celular como cámara y claro el **preguntario o cuestionario** científicamente preparado para cada proyecto.

También es muy bueno añadirle, a la **mochila de trabajo una Libreta de Campo** en donde se anoten las experiencias, anécdotas y sugerencias que ocurrieron en el proceso de entrevista y que en el futuro puedan servir, como una de las **herramientas** para la **evaluación** final de cada proyecto. Cada testimonio o narración que heredamos de cada sindicalista, además, de enriquecer los archivos de la Unión, también sirven para **tejer** o escribir la historia del Sindicato desde una perspectiva de la historia oral de sus miembros más humildes, que al fin de cuentas son el corazón mas importante de la vida día a día de la Unión. La historia oral o las experiencias de los individuos que integran un sindicato forman parte de la real y verdadera historia de un Sindicato. No importa el idioma en que se expresen.

¿Que tenemos que hacer?

Muy pocos sindicatos, han separado una partida de su presupuesto para apoyar distintas iniciativas que estimulen, la participación de sus miembros en proyectos de Historia Oral. El acopio, análisis y publicación del patrimonio oral de los miembros del sindicato, o sea la creación y establecimiento de un **Centro y archivo de investigación de la historia oral sindical, de cada capítulo o Local**, está basado en una serie de premisas que deben formar parte de la visión y misión de cada entidad obrera: tiene como objetivo el diseñar y elaborar proyectos interdisciplinarios; captar y conservar documentación y testimonios personales de sus integrantes; proceder al tratamiento archivístico de las fuentes para facilitar su consulta y publicar el material documental relacionado con la información obtenida. Además, se recomienda que el sindicato mantenga, un **Seminario Permanente de Fuentes orales** que facilite el adiestramiento de sindicalistas y miembros voluntarios que así deseen colaborar graciosamente con el equipo de investigadores profesionales a cargo del **Seminario y del Centro**.

Continuara...



Flu vaccine

by Dr. Amy Reyes

Geriatrician, Mt. Sinai,
Martha Stewart Center for Living

It's flu season and we oftentimes hear truths and myths about the Influenza vaccine. We reached out to Geriatrician Dr. Amy Reyes with Mount Sinai/ Martha Stewart Center for Living to share information with the Local 237 Retiree's about the Flu Vaccine. Thank you Dr. Reyes for sharing this wonderful information with us!

Questions and answers with a geriatrician

1. Why get vaccinated?

Flu is a contagious disease which can be dangerous for some people. It can cause fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue and cough.

Patients older than 65, infants, and pregnant women are at greatest risk for flu complications. Pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus infections are some of the complications. Influenza vaccine can prevent the flu. Each year thousands of people in the United States die from the flu and many are hospitalized.

2. What is the flu vaccine?

Vaccines can prevent certain serious or deadly infections. The flu vaccine can keep you from getting sick with the flu.

3. Who should get the flu vaccine and when?

All people age 6 months or older should get the

flu vaccine every year. In the United States is best to get the vaccine by October, before the winter season begins. It takes about 2 weeks before for protection to develop after vaccination.

4. Can the influenza vaccine cause the flu?

Influenza vaccine does not cause flu.

5. Why should I get the flu vaccine?

Getting the flu vaccine can keep you from getting sick. Also, it helps does around you not to get sick. If you have been vaccinated but got the flu, the vaccine can also keep you from getting severely ill or even dying.

6. What side effects does the flu vaccine cause?

Often the flu vaccine does not cause side effects. Some people can report mild swelling or soreness where you got the shot, mild fever, and mild rash.

7. What If I have an egg allergy?

The flu vaccine has a small amount of egg but the amount is so small that does not cause an allergic reaction.

8. What else can I do to prevent the flu?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Stay home if you get the flu. Do not go to work until your fever has been gone for 24 hours.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow when you cough or sneeze. ■

Vacuna contra la gripe (influenza)

Preguntas y respuestas con un geriatra

¿Por qué vacunarse?

La gripe es una enfermedad contagiosa que puede ser peligrosa para ciertas personas. Puede causar fiebre, escalofríos, dolor de garganta, tos y fatiga en el cuerpo.

Pacientes mayores de 65 años, infantes y mujeres embarazadas tiene el mayor riesgo de contraer complicaciones asociadas con la gripe. Pneumonia, bronquitis, e infecciones de nariz son algunas de las complicaciones. La vacuna de la gripe (influenza) puede prevenir la gripe. Cada año miles de personas en los Estados Unidos mueren de complicaciones relacionadas a la gripe y muchas otras son hospitalizadas.

¿Qué es la vacuna de la gripe (influenza)?

Las vacunas pueden prevenir ciertas infecciones serias o mortales. La vacuna de la gripe lo puede ayudar a no enfermarse con la gripe.

¿Quién debe vacunarse contra la gripe y cuándo?

Toda persona de 6 meses o mas deben vacunarse contra la gripe todos los años. En los Estados Unidos es mayor vacunarse en Octubre, antes de que comience el invierno. Toma alrededor de 2 semanas para tener protección despues de vacunarse.

¿La vacuna contra la gripe causa la gripe?

La vacuna contra la gripe no causa la gripe.

¿Por qué debo vacunarme contra la gripe?

Vacunarse puede ayudarlo a prevenir enfermedades. También ayuda a las personas alrededor suyo no se enfermen. Si recibió la vacuna pero se enferma con la gripe, la vacuna puede impedir que se enferme gravemente o incluso que muera.

¿Qué efectos secundarios tiene la vacuna contra la gripe?

Con frecuencia la vacuna no tiene efectos secundarios. Algunas personas reportan enrojecimiento, inflamación leve o dolor en el área donde recibió la inyección, fiebre leve, sarpullido leve.

¿Qué sucede si tengo alergia al huevo?

La vacuna contra la gripe contiene una pequeña cantidad de huevo, pero la cantidad es tan pequeña que no produce reacción alérgica.

¿Qué mas puedo hacer para prevenir la gripe?

- Lavarse las manos con agua y jabón
- Mantenerse lejos de la gente enferma
- Quedarse en casa si se enferma de gripe. No ir al trabajo hasta que pasen 24 horas sin fiebre.
- Cubrirse la boca y la nariz con la parte interna del codo al toser o estornudar ■



Dental Network Expansion and Optical Benefit Improvement

by **Mitch Goldberg**
Director of the Retiree Benefit Fund

On July 1, 2018 The Board of Trustees of the Teamsters Local 237 Retirees' Benefit Fund announced the expansion of the dental network for our retirees residing in Florida and Puerto Rico. On July 1, 2018, retirees residing in Florida and Puerto Rico were given access to Healthplex's National Panel. The lack of providers in the Metro Panel outside of the New York Metro area was making it impossible for retirees to receive In-Network services in Florida and Puerto Rico. With this change, we hoped to prevent our retirees from having out of pocket expenses when seeking dental treatment.

On December 5, 2019 the Trustees of the Retirees' Benefit Fund voted to expand this Network for the rest of the United States. If you are a Retiree from outside the New York metro area and travel to the New York metro area, the existing Metro Panel will continue to be the participating network. The expanded National Network will be effective as of March 1, 2020.

When you have a dental appointment, be sure to bring your Healthplex identification card with you. You can use a non-participating dentist for treatment. However, you will be reimbursed according to the existing fee schedule. When you use a non-participating

dentist you will likely have out of pocket expenses.

To locate a participating provider in your area, visit the Healthplex website at www.healthplex.com. At the top of the page choose **Find a provider**, or enter the group number from your Healthplex card. Next choose PPO/EPO panels once you see the list choose Careington PPO Panel (The National Network). Complete the 2 and 3 fields, type of provider and where you live to locate providers in your area. If you don't have access to a computer you can always call Healthplex Customer Service at 1-800-468-0600.

The Healthplex Customer Service Department is available Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to answer any eligibility, claims or provider availability questions. You can also visit the Healthplex, Inc. website at www.healthplex.com to view your account.

At the same Trustees meeting on Dec. 5, 2019 the Board of Trustees also voted to increase the allowance for the Optical Benefit for all Retirees. The allowance will be increased to \$150 once every other year from the current \$100 once every other year.

The \$150 allowance will be effective as of March 1, 2020. Hopefully this will help all retirees eliminate or reduce any out of pocket costs for the purchase of new frames and lenses. While the full cost of some frames (ie. Designer Frames) and lenses (ie. Varilux) will still require a copay, the increase in the benefit should reduce out of pocket expenses.

The Board of Trustees wishes everyone a healthy and happy holiday season. ■



Free up your time by using my Social Security

by **Anny Rosario Diaz**

Assistant District Manager, Social Security in Downtown Manhattan

Time is one of our most valuable commodities. That's why at Social Security, we are constantly improving our online resources to make doing business with us easier and faster.

With a *my Social Security* account, those receiving benefits can change their address and direct deposit information; get proof of their benefits; and request replacement documents, like a Medicare card. If you aren't currently getting benefits, you can check your earnings record, get estimates of your future benefits, and view your *Social Security Statement*. In many states, you can even request a replacement Social Security card online. See everything you can do with a *my Social Security* account and open one today at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

You don't need a *my Social Security* account to:

- Select or change the way you receive information from Social Security if you are blind or visually impaired at www.socialsecurity.gov/people/blind
- Block electronic and automated telephone access to your personal information at www.socialsecurity.gov/blockaccess
- Apply for extra help with your Medicare prescription drug plan costs at socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp

Be sure to share *my Social Security* with friends and family. By freeing up their time, they may plan on spending more of their valuable time with the people they love. ■



BANKRUPTCY MYTHS AND FACTS

by **Ken Perry, Esq.**
Deputy Director,
Legal Service Plan

Bankruptcy is a legal process which allows a consumer or business to eliminate, reduce, or reschedule their debts. The "Automatic Stay," which you get when you file a bankruptcy case, temporarily prevents nearly all creditors from taking further actions to collect your debts. The "Discharge" permanently prevents nearly all creditors from taking any action to collect debts. There are some debts, such as student loans, which generally cannot be eliminated or reduced by bankruptcy.

There are a lot of "Myths" (lies) out there surrounding the concept of bankruptcy. Most of these criticisms are just NOT TRUE and are designed to scare people from getting help by getting rid of their debt. Bankruptcy can help solve your debt problems and more importantly get you and your family a fresh start. If you are considering a bankruptcy but are afraid about what you have read or heard others say, take a look at this list of Bankruptcy Myths:

Myth: People who file bankruptcy lose all their property.
Fact: Most debtors do not lose any property. Debtors are allowed to "exempt" (keep) certain property up to a certain value. For example, if you own a house, you can keep it if the equity in your house is less than \$170,825.00. If the equity in your house is higher, you can still keep your house, but you may have to pay back a portion of your other debts. If you don't own a house, you can keep up to \$13,900.00 in cash or cash equivalents like tax refunds. If you have a secured debt (like a car loan or a mortgage), you can usually keep the collateral (your car or your house), as long as you keep up with the payments. The vast majority of all cases are administered as "No Asset" cases, meaning there are no assets that are worth more than what you can exempt and nothing has to be paid to your creditors.

Myth: People who file bankruptcy never get credit again.

Fact: Many debtors receive offers for credit before their bankruptcy is even finished! Bad credit (such as paying late or not paying a debt in full) is reported on your credit history for 7 years. Bankruptcy is reported on your credit report for 10 years, but after a successful bankruptcy you don't owe any debt (except for certain debts like student loans and child support). We have had many clients purchase homes within a few years of their bankruptcy, so credit is certainly available.

Myth: You can't get rid of back taxes through Bankruptcy.

Fact: Bankruptcy can eliminate back income taxes that are more than 3 years old. There are a few additional qualifications, including that there was no fraud involved, but once these are met in bankruptcy those back income taxes are gone.

Myth: There is a minimum amount of debt required to file Bankruptcy.

Fact: Theoretically you could file Bankruptcy even if you only have \$500 in debt; although, it's not a very good idea since you can only file a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy once every 8 years. But we have had clients with little or no income who have filed for amounts that would be very manageable for those with higher income. There is no minimum.

Myth: I only have to list the debt I want to get rid of in my Bankruptcy.

Fact: All debt must be listed, but this is actually better for you. For example, without Bankruptcy, if you stop paying a car loan, your car will be repossessed and you will have to pay the lender whatever is left on the car loan. When you file Bankruptcy and you stop paying your car loan, the only thing you'll lose is the car; you won't owe any money on the deficiency.

If you owe debts to friends or relatives, you must include them in your Bankruptcy. If you repay any debts to friends or relatives before you file for Bankruptcy, they will be forced to turnover every dollar you repaid them for the benefit of your creditors. When you include debts to friends or relatives in your Bankruptcy, then you can voluntarily repay them after your Bankruptcy case is over without doing them any harm. ■



Seasonal Work While Getting Social Security

by **Anny Rosario Diaz**

Assistant District Manager, Social Security in Downtown Manhattan

Many people pick up side jobs when the holiday shopping season comes around. It's a good way to make some extra income during the busy season or to ease back into work if you have been out of the labor force for a while. We're here to help you navigate seasonal employment if you get Social Security.

You can get Social Security retirement or survivors benefits and work at the same time. But if you're younger than full retirement age and earn more than certain amounts, your benefits will be reduced, although not dollar for dollar. Your benefits could increase when you reach full retirement age. You can read more about employment while retired at www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/whileworking.html.

Special rules make it possible for people that receive Social Security disability benefits to work and still receive benefits. The same goes for or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If you want to try working again, seasonal work could help you ease back into the work force. Read *Working While Disabled* at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10095.pdf or visit our Ticket to Work website at choosework.ssa.gov for more information.

We also have an easy-to-share video introducing people to Ticket to Work at choosework.ssa.gov/library/meet-ben-an-introduction-to-ticket-to-work.

Keep in mind that you must report all earnings, including your seasonal earnings, to Social Security. Your earnings also count toward your future benefits. You earn Social Security credits when you work in a job and pay Social Security taxes. We use your total yearly earnings to figure your Social Security credits. You can learn more at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10072.pdf

Employment can bring positive change to your life in many ways, providing independence and community involvement. Social Security is here to help. Please share this information with friends and family. ■

on a personal note...

Condolences...

To the family of **Anthony Messineo**, 25-year member working at NYCHA who retired in 1979. He passed away on October 31st at the age 91. Anthony started his career as a Maintenance worker and worked his way up to a position that he proudly held — Superintendent at Bayview Houses in Canarise. He is survived by his devoted daughter, Josephine, her husband, two grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

To the family of Lisa Carrasquillo, the cherished wife of retired **SSA Angel Carrasquillo** formerly of the Staten Island Command.

To the family of **Gaetano Guy Cappiello**. His title in the MMS was Water-Use-Associate for the Department of Environmental Protection. Guy passed away on Nov. 11th.

To the family of Felicita Cadabice, beloved wife of retired Shop Steward and Assistant Superintendent, **Frank Cadabice**, who resides in Port St. Lucie, Florida.

Happy Birthday

To retired **Special Officer Joseph Hayes**, whose birthday was on November 26.

To **Lucille Vanterpool**, retired Institutional Seamstress, who celebrated her 105th birthday on December 8th.

Queens Retiree Group



Retirees donated toys to the Toys for Tots campaign, giving them and socks and gloves to the childcare center affiliated with their meeting place at the South Jamaica houses.



To: Local 237, Retiree Division,
Having relocated to Braselton, GA,
I see how fortunate my wife and I are,
with the health benefits following us
here. Your benefit plans are all that!
Thanks for all that you do.



Jeffrey Lemon
NYCHA Maint. Worker
Manh. Borough South
31 Years of Service,
Retired 2/2011

PS. I enjoy wearing the Local 237
t-shirt/hat with pride and honor
to be a part of a great union.

RETIREE news & views

216 West 14th Street
New York, NY 10011



Affiliate of



PERIODICALS
POSTAGE
PAID AT
NEW YORK,
NY

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

The Go-to Guy Ed Kane retires

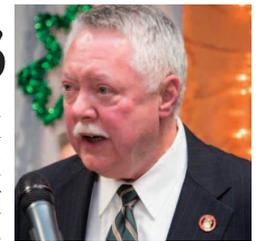
In describing Edmund Kane, one would never use words like “reserved,” “reticent” or “retiring”. So to say that he is retiring, clearly, that’s a verb, not an adjective suited to his personality traits.

Ed has been a Teamster for 44 years, 25 of those years at Local 237—10 years on the Executive Board, and now its Secretary-Treasurer. Previously, he was a member working at NYCHA as a Manager and twice elected as Chairman of the Housing Managers Association. Ed is known for his quick wit, endless reservoir of jokes and inspired recipes — the results of which often made their way to the office to be shared with his colleagues.

Ed is also a human encyclopedia on Local 237 history, public housing and City politics. No need to look

something up: Just ask Ed and he can speak volumes about a long-past contract negotiation, why and when a policy procedure was implemented—or changed—by NYCHA, how various Mayoral administrations treated public employees and identifying people in an old photo. Ed knows it; lived it and of course, has an opinion on all of it. Ed is also the “go-to guy” if you’re trying to recall the name of an old movie or a line of a song, want a recommendation on red wine, looking for where to get a good buy on almost any item or if you need some advice on a job-related issue or a personal matter. There are countless members, staff and union leaders who have benefitted from his wisdom, empathy and willingness not just to listen, but to work on coming up with a solution.

Ed Kane is the consummate professional whose demeanor is more than just friendly. He has been a true friend to Local 237 members, its leaders and retirees. Now that he has joined the ranks of retirees, he will certainly personify the slogan of the Retiree Division: “Retired from Work, Not the union.” And in doing so, we’re confident that even though Ed may not be at his usual desk each morning, he’ll always be our “go-to guy.”



Best Wishes for the New Year from the Retiree Division

Nancy B. True, Director
Susan Militsits, Deputy Director
Julie Kobi, Assistant Director
Luz Carty, Assistant to the Director
Shavon Banks, Secretary
Noelia Quiñones, Assistant Secretary

Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon



Keeping up the tradition, retirees gathered for their annual Thanksgiving luncheon in Staten Island, organized by Anthony Cottone. Good food and a good time to catch up with long-time friends and colleagues, made the occasion extra special.

2020 Pension Payment Calendar

NYCERS NYC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

January							February							March										
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