



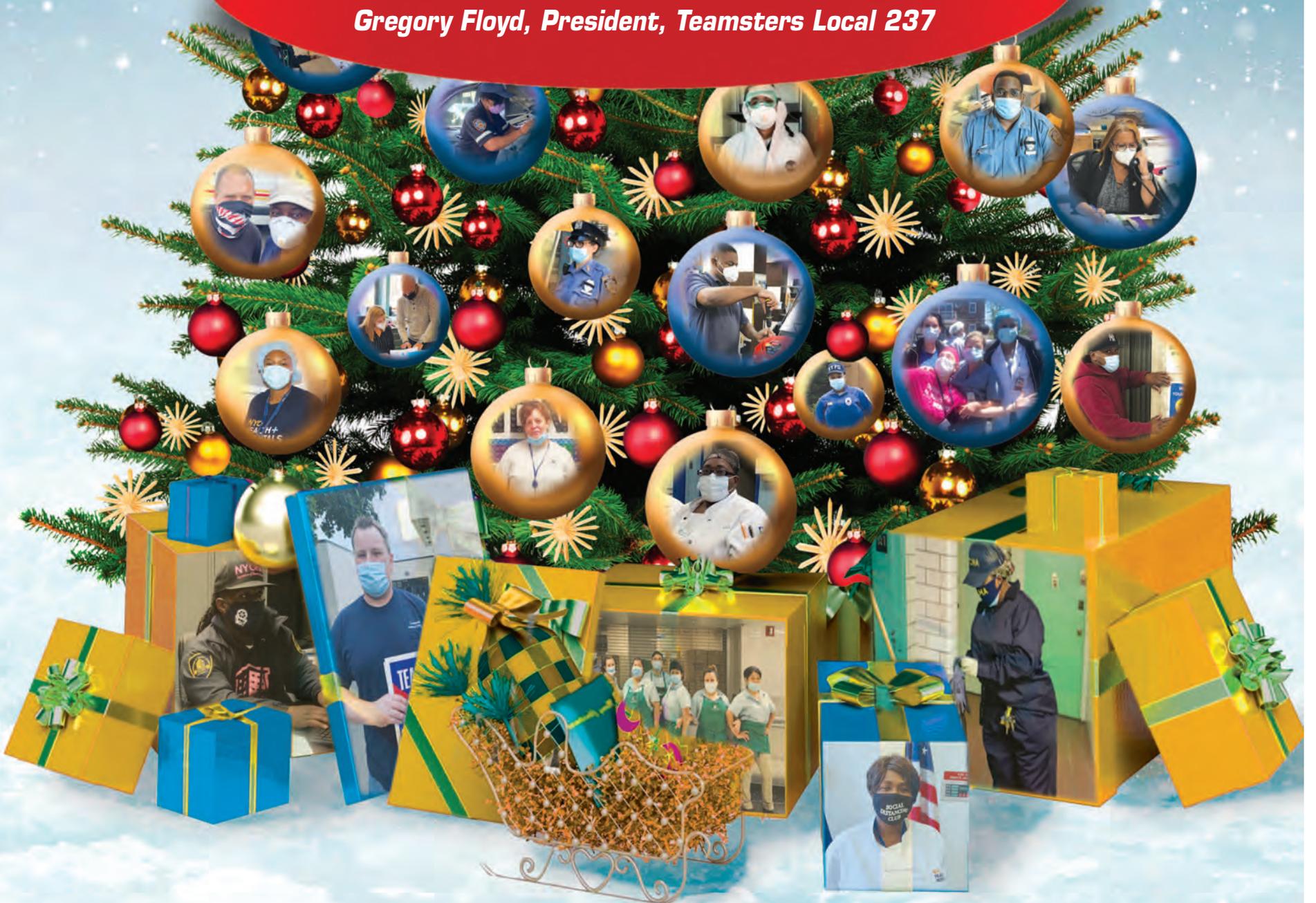
LOCAL 237 NEWSLINE

Vol. 54, No. 4

Winter 2020

This year, as the holidays near, the big question is not “have you been naughty or nice?” but rather, how you are coping with the attack of an enemy so destructive that its impact for many is a devastating blow to the body, soul and spirit. We, at Local 237, have certainly felt the horrors of this viral war. We’ve been on the frontline and paid the price. We applaud and thank our members, who continue to give dignity and honor to the title: “Public employee”.

Gregory Floyd, President, Teamsters Local 237



Local 237 Member Services

UNION HEADQUARTERS

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

LOCAL 237 DIVISIONS

CITYWIDE, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director

LAW ENFORCEMENT, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Derek Jackson, Director

HOUSING, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Carl Giles, Housing Director

SPECIAL PROJECTS, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Debbie Coleman, Esq., Special Projects Director

LONG ISLAND
631-851-9800
100 West Main Street, Babylon,
New York 11702
Benedict Carenza, Director
Long Island Welfare Fund:
For information on the various
funds call 800-962-1145

RETIREE, 8th Fl.
212-807-0555
Provides a variety of pre- and post-
retirement services, including
pension and health insurance
counseling to members. (Pension
counseling by appointment, Thurs-
days only). General retirement
counseling and retirement plan-
ning series during spring and fall.
Julie Kobi & Susan Milisits,
Co-Directors

LOCAL 237 DEPARTMENTS (Citywide and Housing)

SKILLED TRADES, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director

HEALTH AND SAFETY, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director
Susan McQuade, Coordinator

MEMBERS HEALTH, 2nd Fl.
212-924-2000
Susan McQuade, Director
smcquade@local237.org

MEMBERSHIP, 3rd Fl.
212-924-2000
Provides membership services and
records, including address changes.

WELFARE FUND, 3rd Fl.
212-924-7220
The Fund administers the eligibility,
enrollment, disability, optical and
death benefits directly by the Fund's
in-house staff, as well as prescription
and dental programs indirectly.
Mitchell Goldberg, Director

SOCIAL SERVICES, 3rd Fl.
212-924-7220 ext.7562
Living and working in New York can
be challenging and our members
work extremely hard. Social workers
also work hard by connecting peo-
ple to much needed assistance and
resources. With this in mind, Local 237
has introduced a new Social Ser-
vices Department featuring free
social work services that are available
to all members. The union knows
that its members have tough jobs
and that when encountering tough
personal challenges, learning about
possible solutions to those challenges
would make things that much easier.
Contact us to learn about the many
service we can provide.
Ayana Ali, Director

LEGAL SERVICES, 4th Fl.
212-924-1220
Lawyers advise and represent
members on covered personal
legal problems, including
domestic relations (family court
proceedings, divorce and separa-
tion), purchase and sale of a pri-
mary residence, wills, adoptions,
credit and consumer problems,
tenant rights and bankruptcies.
Mary Sheridan, Esq., Director
Kenneth Perry, Esq., Deputy Director

EXECUTIVE OFFICES, 5th Fl.
212-924-2000
Gregory Floyd, President
Ruben Torres,
Vice President
Donald Arnold,
Secretary-Treasurer

PERSONNEL, 5th Fl.
212-924-2000
Donald Arnold, Director and
Chief Negotiator

**POLITICAL ACTION &
LEGISLATION**, 5th Fl.
646-638-8501
Local 237 protects members'
rights by helping to sponsor
legislation that is important
to members, and by opposing
initiatives that would hurt
members.
Phyllis S. Shafran, Coordinator

**GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINARY
PROBLEMS**, 7th Fl.
212-924-2000

For grievances and job related
problems, first contact your
shop steward and/or grievance
representative. If they can't
resolve the issue, contact your
business agent.
Mal Patterson, Director of
Grievances and Hearings
Diana Doss, Esq.
Grievance Coordinator

CIVIL SERVICE BAR ASSN
7th Fl., 212-675-0519

Saul Fishman, President
Aldona Vaiciunas,
Office Administrator and
Grievance Coordinator
Abbott Gorin, Esq.,
Business Representative
CSBA Welfare Fund
Alicare 866-647-4617

COMMUNICATIONS, 5th Fl.
646-638-8501
Phyllis S. Shafran, Director
Local 237 Newsline and
Retiree News & Views, Editor
Website: www.local237.org

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
8th Fl.
212-807-0550
Provides a variety of training
and educational advancement
opportunities for members.
Bertha Aiken, 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

**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

By Gregory Floyd

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

AS LONG AS WE HAVE WE

In 1974, during the Watergate scandal, renowned children's book writer, Dr. Seuss, sent a copy of his book, "Marvin K. Mooney" to newspaper columnist Art Buchwald, in which "Marvin K. Mooney" had been crossed out and replaced with "Richard M. Nixon." In the book, Mooney had been asked repeatedly to leave—possibly by his father or granddad. He was given many ways to go, such as leaving by boat, balloon, bike or elephant. He chose none of them. The exasperated narrator tells Marvin: "You can go by foot. You can go by cow. Marvin K. Mooney, will you please go now!" Finally, he just went. And just like Mooney, after Buchwald used the altered version for his column on July 30, President Nixon resigned on August 9th.

Current political frustrations in America are not so much about one individual, but about the collective identity of the American people: Our values, our traditions, things we thought mattered and the things we thought were a given. Of course, the devastating impact of the Coronavirus has ripped our senses raw and shattered our sensitivities. But through it all — the injustices the pandemic revealed, the lack of preparedness and leadership — the American flag, albeit at half mast, still flew over every government building throughout the nation.

After President Clinton took the oath of office, waiting for him on his desk at the Oval Office was a letter from the outgoing President George H. W. Bush, which read in part: "You will be our President when you read this note. I wish you well. I wish your family well. Your success now is our country's success. I am rooting hard for you. Good Luck, George." From a Republican President, to a Democratic one, one could ask, is this a remarkable gesture? In light of the fact that a recent Politico/Morning Consult poll, which indicated that 70% of Republicans do not believe that the Presidential election was fair — which is a slightly better finding than another poll taken shortly after the official count that was called in Joe Biden's favor, in which 77% of Republicans surveyed disputed the results,

and claimed Donald Trump was actually the winner—it's not so much a remarkable gesture, as it is a sign of the times. Now, we wonder, what kind of note, if any, will be left for President-elect Biden?

More important than a Presidential note, is the assault on our time-honored practices and policies that we are experiencing. Adding insult to injury: Where is the commitment to ensure that our democratic way of life continues with a smooth transition from one administration to the next? — a transition that should have no political party, just government staffers at work for the good of all Americans. A cornerstone of our democracy has always been the peaceful transfer of power. No chaos, just continuity. Where is the outrage from our leaders who should decry placing party over people — especially as this nation is in the grip of a pandemic? Has our international role as the leader of the free world become a mockery... an outdated standard we no longer strive to uphold? Worse yet is that perhaps some might question, despite the current administration's campaign to "Make American Great Again", was America ever really that great?

Back to Dr. Seuss, he may have some answers. In his famous book, "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas", the last several lines spoken by the Grinch at a Christmas gathering — the first one he ever attended after years of hating the holiday because he was deprived of them as a young man — he declares: "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas means a little more... Christmas Day will always be as long as we have we." The principles of the American democracy may derive from documents like the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but the values of the American people derive from a much deeper source. 73 million Americans voted for Donald Trump. 79 million voted for Joe Biden. The key word here is: Voted. 152 million people felt the duty, the obligation, the right to make their opinion known. No, democracy is not a glitz gift. It's not an empty promise to be ignored nor is it a sign on a bumper sticker that peels off in time. It's much more. It will live on as long as we have we. ■

KIDS OFTEN ASK



Are we there yet?



**But the road to a
more perfect union
has many twists and
turns. That's why a
good navigator is key
to getting us there.**

During this time of national crisis, our members served Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

So many of our members go above and beyond the call of duty, performing acts of heroism, ingenuity, kindness and generosity that demonstrate their professionalism and heart. They were willing to go that extra mile, and by so doing, made a difference in someone's life. Here are some of the pictures they want to share:



Our Members Support October As Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Wearing Pink Makes You Think: Early Detection Saves Lives

Despite the ravishes of Covid-19, it is also important to get breast cancer screenings—and our members are doing their part to get out the word. Their message is simple: Early detection is key to diminishing the death rate, which is especially high for Black women... and men can get breast cancer too.



School Safety Agents in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn showed their support of breast cancer awareness with a timely, Covid-19-inspired way.

Woodhull Police Officers are wearing pink shirts in support of October Breast Cancer Awareness Month and to honor one of their own who died of the disease, PO Kelly Walsh.

SSD Patrol Borough S.I. wore PINK to show support and awareness of breast cancer.

New ACS Peace Officers Sworn In



Law Enforcement Business Agent **Charlie Cotto** (left) with retiree **HPO Jesus Rosario** from Jacobi Hospital who retired on 11-30-20 after 18 years of service.



On November 20, Commissioner David Hansell (5th from left) attended the swearing in ceremony for the new Peace Officer (PO) cadet class held at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center. Assistant Commissioner André Brown (next to the Commissioner) officiated at the ceremony for **PO Junior Coicou**, **PO Karon Davis**, **PO Latrell Dickerson**, **PO Frank Esposito**, **PO Manuel Jackson**, **PO Luquan Loyd**, and **PO Sonjoy Mojumder**. Deputy Commissioner Winette Saunders, Division of Administration and Children's Center Operations (4th from left), and Jenifer Guillaume, Chief of Staff for Operations, Division of Administration (5th from right), received Acknowledgment of Peace Officer Certification Status for completing the Peace Officer training. These ACS Peace Officers and Senior ACS Officials were sworn in after completing the required 142 hours of training at the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Peace Officer training academy at the City University of New York.

Local 237 NEWSLINE

216 West 14th St., New York, NY 10011
646-638-8501
Website: www.local237.org
e-mail Newsline: pshafran@local237.org

Local 237 Newsline (USPS 700-000 ISSN 1083-3536) is published quarterly by Local 237, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 216 West 14 Street, New York, NY 10011. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY. Postmaster: Send address changes to Local 237 Newsline, 216 West 14th Street, New York, NY 10011.

Executive Board

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Gregory Floyd President | Ruben Torres Vice President | Donald Arnold Secretary-Treasurer | Jeanette Taveras Recording Secretary |
| Curtis Scott Trustee | Benedict Carenza, Jr. Trustee | Catherine Rice Trustee | |

Phyllis S. Shafran
Editor

Special thanks in the preparation of Newsline to:
Gisela (GiGi) Reyes, Executive Administrative Assistant

IF YOU MOVE – Please send your change of address in writing to **Membership** to insure that you continue receiving your newspaper.



A busy day at the office for President Floyd

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NYCHA workers in their own words



As a supervisor, I am often expected to have all of the answers. The pandemic forced me to navigate during a time where everyone and everything was unsure. Having Local 237 and my union rep available to provide information and answer questions that my staff and I had, helped us feel more equipped.
Mike Clee, SOC, Baruch Houses



During the pandemic, PPE was very hard to get throughout New York City. No matter how scarce things were, my union made sure that I was provided PPE. I am proud to be a part of Local 237. My union rep cares about the safety of the members.
Edward Lopez, Plasterer, Borough of Manhattan



Throughout Covid19, NYCHA workers never stopped working. It has been difficult at times, but having my Local 237 rep come out, visit and show support, has been extremely helpful to me and my co-workers.
Wilson Day, Maintenance Worker, Taft Houses



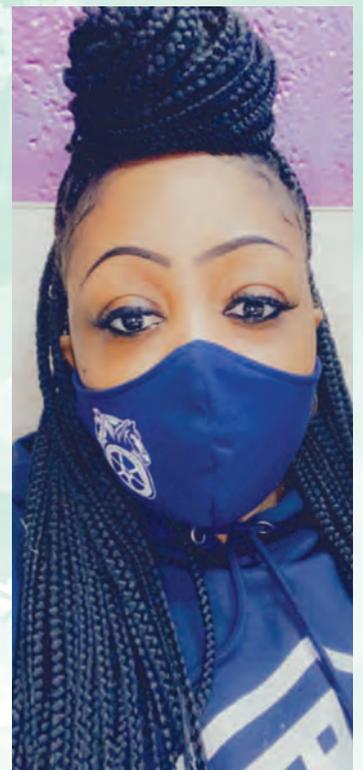
Managing employees and servicing residents during Covid19 has been an experience like no other. There have been new challenges, new issues, and new questions that I am facing for the very first time. However, I am able to confidently face each day at work with pride and determination because I have a great staff and a great union who help and encourage me.
Maria Sanchez, Manager, Harlem River Houses



This year was a tough one. While going through some of the hardest situations, I felt so alone. The only person I had was my union rep, **Mr. Roper**, from being supportive to helping me during a very dark space in my life. And today I can honestly say I'm blessed, I'm grateful and honored to have a team such as Local 237 to help me get back on my feet!
Shatora Franklin, Caretaker J, Rangel Houses



Teamsters 237 has been very intricate on meticulously navigating all team members throughout this catastrophic pandemic by taking extreme measures day in and day out. Conspicuously on various job sites facilitating PPE in addition to sharing significant information to keep all members safe.
SOG DAVIS, Brevoort Houses



Local 237 has been very helpful and supportive with facilitating important information towards a swift solution in respect to the stress of child care issues while weathering the trepidations of COVID-19.
SOC Lewis, Howard Houses

During this time of national crisis, our members served Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

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DCAS workers helping to keep us safe



School Food Services

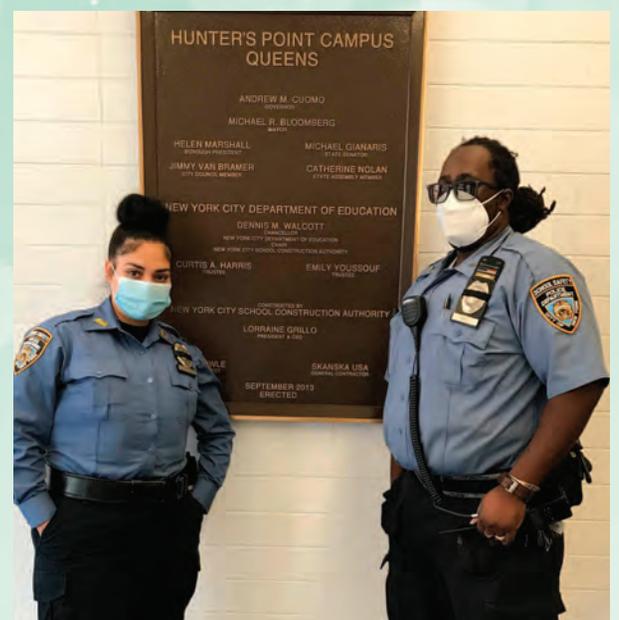


PS 21 School Food Services manager, **Vicky Manolatos**.



Manager **Cherise Neal** (center) and her staff at PS 308.

Queens North Task Force



Thank you for the assistance of Hunters Point Campus **Agent Ince** and **Agent Rodriguez** of Queens North Task Force.

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SI School Safety Agents lend a helping hand to the most vulnerable

Halloween Cheer

Port Richmond HS agents along with **Xo Torlone**, **SSA Lighty**, **SSA Miller** and several other SSA's coordinated a Halloween bag donations and giveaway for all Staten Island agents who had children under 12. Bags were made up and distributed by MTF.



SSA Gattas (PS 29)



SSA Valentino (PS 13)



SSA Meyer (IS 49)



SSA Schettino (PS 31)



SSA Murphy (PS 19)

For the Homeless



Port Richmond HS SSA **Lighty**, and **SSA Miller** organized a drive to help homeless and were distributed at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal.



Thanks to Sector Administrators **SSA Abraham** and **SSA Bellia** for transport and assistance. **HUGE SUCCESS** in helping to feed the homeless and those in need! Thanks SCA Moran - McKee HS.

Project Hospitality



Agents of SSD/PBSI did a food drive for Project Hospitality and delivered all these donations. Staten Island strong!!



Coat Drive

Staten Island Command coat drive donations at MJP. 2nd Annual Coat Drive, any new or slightly used coats are being taken for donations at the command.

Toy Drive



SSA **Lighty** and **SSA Miller** - the coordinators of the toy drive.



Keeping you in the know

COVID 19

return to normality. But, while it is emotionally exhausting, we will protect ourselves, our loved ones and those in our community by continuing to take precautions until we reach the end of this turbulent period.

With that in mind, here are some reminders of best practices to follow as we wait for the vaccine:

1. Wear a mask!

A simple, yet highly effective way to stay safe and keep others safe is to wear a mask. Forget the politics — masks slow the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the mask-wearer's exposure to the virus while dramatically reducing the likelihood of spreading the virus to others. It is important to remember that you may not be able to identify if you or anyone around you has contracted the virus. You could have a great immune system and be completely asymptomatic, so it's always better to be careful, and to prevent the spread to someone who might become seriously ill.

2. Wash your hands and keep your space clean.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap to remove germs from your hands. We are constantly touching surfaces as well our face, eyes, nose and mouth. Many people touch their faces thousands of times each day. Washing your hands frequently can

prevent the spread of germs. Additionally, it is important to keep the spaces you come in contact with clean so any lingering germs are eliminated. Remember that your cellphone has lots of germs and you hold it in your hands all day long — you might want to clean it frequently.

3. Practice social distancing.

Try to maintain at least six feet between yourself and others to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. As social beings, it has been difficult for us to completely socially distance during the entirety of this pandemic. We have missed birthdays, sporting events and family gatherings. Besides the horrible loss of loved ones, isolation has been one of the biggest downsides of COVID-19. However, your friends and family are not immune from contracting the virus from you. And you are in fact more likely to get the virus by socializing with family or friends. The best way to show your love and protect each other is to limit your contact with others as much as possible. For the next few months, Zoom, Skype and socially distanced in-person conversations will have to do.

While we all wait in anticipation of the new life-saving vaccine, let's continue to be vigilant until the deadly threat of the virus has passed. And, as we look past this difficult year, let's remember all of the first responders and emergency workers who have continued to serve throughout this crisis, many sacrificing their lives to help others. ■

As Pfizer and Moderna deliver promising news about the recent development of COVID-19 vaccines, we begin to see a light at the end of this tunnel. It appears that there will soon be more than one safe and highly effective vaccine available. Vulnerable groups such as essential workers, older adults and those with underlying conditions will be the first to receive the vaccination. However, it is projected that the general population in the U.S. will gain access to the vaccine beginning in mid-2021.

While prospects of life-saving vaccines are worthy cause for celebration, the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise sharply in New York City and throughout the U.S. As we inch closer to the end of this pandemic, we need to remain cautious, following the safety measures necessary to reduce the number of cases. This is especially difficult now, as many people experience "COVID fatigue." There is a collective desire to

Wear A Mask!

With an anticipated second wave of the Coronavirus, wearing a mask is essential to fighting the spread of this deadly disease. With City supplies diminishing, Local 237 is partnering with BTZ Medsolution and Konye Medical Supplies to provide medical grade face masks to Teamster members. On hand to thank Konye CEO Wayne Chu and BTZ CEO Sam Teng and to receive the shipment of 12,000 masks was President Floyd, and Local 237 staff, members, and Executive Board representatives.



Among those pictured are: Left to right: Jeanette Taveras, Local 237's Recording Secretary on the Executive Board; Wayne Chu, CEO of Konye Medical Supplies; President Gregory Floyd; Sam Teng, CEO OF BTZ Medsolution; Virzinja Kotkas, Founding Partner of BTZ Medsolution; Steve Yang, Founding Partner of BTZ Medsolution; Austin Shafran; Donald Arnold, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 237's Executive Board, and Ted Teng, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility of BTZ Medsolution.

New Year's Resolutions

As a new year approaches, it is traditional to make resolutions, predictions, and wishes for the oncoming year. Lose weight, stop smoking, save money and be kinder to your spouse usually top the list. But we also know that 88% of all resolutions fail, with 80% of them abandoned by March. The New Year is also the time many of us evaluate the past year — what went right, what went wrong and devise a plan to have more of the former and less of the latter going forward. There is no doubt that the devastating impact of the Coronavirus on lives and livelihoods is featured in everyone's list of what went wrong in 2020. The handling of the virus showed how so many of our government institutions and leaders were ill-prepared for the pandemic. It also highlighted the systemic racial and economic divides in this country — which some of us thought were history — only to realize they are still in the present and possibly, in the future. To the question: Could this crisis have had any "silver lining", most would respond with a deafening "NO!" But perhaps we can be thankful for the fact that many family members are riding out the pandemic storm together, in an intergenerational pod — although with fewer friends and colleagues as part of our in-person lives, and technology such as ZOOM to help keep us connected, productive, entertained and better able to cope. So, while few would argue that 2020 will not be missed, so let's look forward with predictions, resolutions and prayers for 2021.

IN THEIR OWN



Let Us Dream

Surely, this is a year no one is sad to see end. Just to think that last year, at this time, so many of us were going to holiday celebrations, buying gifts, and packing for family getaways. Right now, it's hard to envision a time that things will get back to normal: No masks, no 6-feet apart and being able to greet others with handshakes, hugs and kisses. To think about what the future could hold, I take inspiration from the writings of Pope Francis in his recent book, "Let Us Dream: The Path to A Better Future". In it, he writes: "To come out of this crisis better, we have to recover the knowledge that as a people we have a shared destination. The pandemic has reminded us that no one is saved alone. What ties us to one another is what we commonly call solidarity. Solidarity is more than acts of generosity, important as they are. It is the call to embrace the reality that we are bound by bonds of reciprocity. On this solid foundation, we can build a better human future." The Pope may not have unions specifically in mind, but surely his sentiments clearly define our mission: unions unite workers. And the old adage "Strength in unity" has been experienced by our members — many of whom have felt that government institutions and our elected leaders let us down. In this leadership void, we have worked on behalf of our members to secure PPE, fighting for Covid workplace safety health conditions and benefits for sick and deceased members. Our members went to work every day of this crisis, providing proud, heroic service to the citizens of New York. Now, with the City's economy taking a nosedive, they are threatened with layoffs and furloughs. The Administration views these essential workers as expendable. We will fight on. And, among my hopes and prayers for 2021, is the resurgence of unions to resume their rightful place as guardians of the middle class.

Gregory Floyd

*President, Teamsters Local 237 and
Vice President-at-Large on the General Board of the IBT*



My New Year's Resolution

My New Year's resolution is that we come to an end of 2020 and believe me it can't come fast enough. We are living through trying times from Covid-19, and the sadness it brought with the countless deaths and those who are unemployed to the non-believers that wearing a mask can save lives; so to 2020 we say goodbye and good riddance. As for 2021 bringing better times, we are in the process of a vaccine for Covid-19, and an end to a crazy election for the President of the United States. Thank god the outcome was a good one! I believe that 2021 will bring us a year of healing and bringing people together, helping each other and always being there for each other, as well as bringing families together during the holidays, and bringing laughter and love into our homes. I must be a little selfish. My son is getting married in March, bringing to us in the near future I hope, little ones. I am so looking forward to being a grandma. I wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Holiday.

Jeanette I. Taveras

*Recording Secretary for
Local 237's Executive Board and
Law Enforcement Business Agent*

OWN WORDS

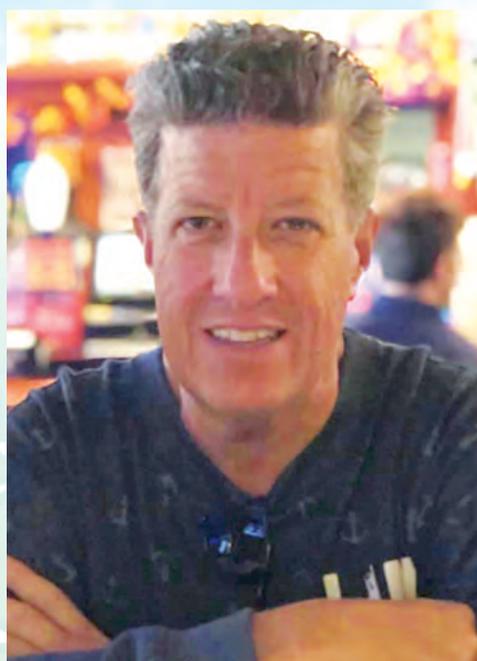


A Better Tomorrow

I remember writing for a previous Newsline year-end resolution column, how sad it made me to take our little grandson, Mason, to see the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree and have to navigate police barricades, bomb-sniffing dogs and armed militia. But, this year, things are worse! Due to Covid-19, Mason will only get to see the tree, the Rockettes and Santa on TV. Certainly, with so much heartache suffered by so many, the challenge of keeping the magic and message of giving as epitomized by Santa, is vitally important whether you're 4 or 104 years-old. The kindness, sacrifice and heroism shown by health care workers, first responders, and our own essential workers, demonstrate and reaffirm the basic goodness of fellow New Yorkers. Also, the recent Presidential election, with a record number of voters deciding that the pandemic would not disenfranchise them — and with nearly 80 million people voting for a team that emphasized the need to use both the head and heart to govern, gives me hope for the future. I remember working on the Mondale-Ferraro election so many years ago. Geri Ferraro was a historic candidate who constantly fought smears against her husband. This year, Mason got to see and hear the acceptance speeches of President-elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. While Mason may not get to tell Santa what he wants for Christmas, having a woman of color as VP and a president who values empathy, makes me know that tomorrow will be better than today.

Phyllis Shafran

Director of Communications and Political Liaison for Local 237



Nothing Can Stop Us!

As the Long Island Director, I am extremely proud of each and every Local 237 member. The members not only work for the School Districts, Towns, Villages and Libraries, they are the heart and soul of these areas. Without their hard work, these places would not function on a daily basis. Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, these members stood tall, dedicated themselves and did an unbelievable job for all. That being said, I am also very proud of the leaders in these divisions, including the Business Agents, Liaisons, Shop Stewards and Chapter Officers. They dedicate themselves to improving the lives of all members by spending their time helping all. That's what a real union does for its members on a daily basis. We don't punch a time clock. We are on duty 24-7, as it should be. Local 237 was out front during the pandemic, protecting its members by supplying masks, gloves, sanitizers and more. Real unions take care of their members through the good and bad days. I am proud to be the Director of the Long Island Division. We prove every day that nothing can stop us from representing our members, no matter what we confront. Happy holidays to all. Ben

Benedict Carenza, Jr.

Director of the Long Island Division for Local 237 and Trustee on the Executive Board



Wishes for 2021

As the miserable, pandemic-dominated year that 2020 was is approaching its end (and not a moment too soon), I am looking forward to a better year ahead, especially for CSBA members and our families, and also for middle class and working class families now that we will finally have a more labor-friendly administration in Washington. Until COVID 19 is just a bad memory, which may be on the near horizon with the announcement of at least three vaccines believed to be over 90% effective, we will continue our fight to be afforded the opportunity to work as safely as possible. The vast majority of us can effectively perform our work remotely, and we will do everything in our power to amplify that message.

I am optimistic that we can avert the layoff of any CSBA member due to the City's fiscal crisis, although this will probably not be an easy negotiation. And speaking of negotiations, our contract expires in April. Whereas this is not by any means an ideal time to be negotiating a new agreement, I nonetheless see opportunities for improvements. The same crisis which hurt the economy also proved that work can be performed from home, and hence we will be seeking the ability to telecommute, where it makes sense, on an ongoing basis. And since traditional commuting to work will be needed less frequently, we will seek to finally end residency requirements for all members of our bargaining unit.

As always, your ideas are welcome. Kindly keep us informed about what is happening in your shop. The best way to do that is by email:

csbainfo@local237.org.

Thanks as always. Stay safe and well!

Best regards,

Saul

Saul Fishman

CSBA President



LONG ISLAND REPORT



Congrats to Half Hollow Hills member **Mike Carlucci** on the birth of his daughter Lily!



Brentwood Cook and Shop Steward **Joanne Coppinger** celebrates her birthday with her great crew of hard working Food Service workers! Happy Birthday Joanne!



Benny Carenza with Brentwood School District member **Brittaney Antoine**, who received a donation to her organization Uplift Our Town from Local 237. Very proud of her union and community involvement!

Members across the Island staying safe with Teamster masks!



Members across the Island staying safe with Teamster masks!



POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS



Gregory Floyd and President-elect Joe Biden

Congratulations Mr. President

Fighting to Keep Members Safe

Saul Fishman, the President of the Civil Service Bar Association, (CSBA) has been fighting to keep his members as safe as possible from needless exposure to COVID-19. Theoretically, CSBA members, the Attorneys for almost every city mayoral agency as well as for the Housing Authority and the Transit Authority, should be among the safest of city employees, as their legal work can almost always be performed via telecommuting, the procedure recommended by every guidance ranging from DCAS to the City and State Departments of Health to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Virtually all courts and tribunals are continuing to function remotely.

Recently, several agencies have begun pressuring members to come back to the office, on a part-time basis, to perform the exact same work in person as can be done equally effectively from home. That fight isn't over, especially with the second wave crashing hard over our city and nation. But when Saul heard that the Fire Department's Bureau of Investigations and Trials ("BITS") unit was being ordered to conduct *in-person* investigations and Step I hearings, many of which involved respondents and witnesses who as Emergency Medical Technicians are at the very highest risk of COVID exposure and infection, he hit the roof. Under a "return to work plan" written specifically to endanger the workers in this unit, when any one party requests an in-person hearing, they must be given one, without regard for the safety or objections of other participants.

When a Labor-Management meeting, involving not only Saul but also Susan McQuade, Local 237's Health & Safety Coordinator, went nowhere, he filed a group grievance at Step III seeking to stop this dangerous practice before someone gets seriously ill (or worse). He pressed for a follow-up meeting not only with the Fire Department but also involving the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations. Unfortunately, OLR refused to stop this insanity.

Distress calls understandably poured in, as the unit supervisor was not only demanding that members start coming in the following week but that they also immediately schedule in-person hearings. With the Step III hearing date still almost a month away, and given the track record of OLR siding almost exclusively with the agency, Saul insisted on skipping Step III and demanded Step IV arbitration ASAP. And when he heard that the New York City Council's Civil Service and Labor Committee was having a hearing on a couple of proposals related to making city employees safer from COVID, he instantly involved Susan McQuade, and they both testified at the hearing on Friday November 20th. Here are excerpts from their testimony.

Testimony of Saul Fishman, President of the Civil Service Bar Association.

...The Civil Service Bar Association ("CSBA"), which represents the attorneys who work hard and smart each day for virtually every city agency, as in more than 40 mayoral agencies large and small, as well as attorneys working for the Housing Authority and the Transit Authority. We have a touch over 1,000 members, and are proudly affiliated with Teamsters Local 237.

...Recommend the passage of Intro 2162-2020, the bill before this committee sponsored by its Chair, the Honorable Daneek Miller and co-sponsored by Councilmember Ampry Samuel.

... This bill would amend the Administrative Code to require the Citywide Office of Occupational Safety and Health ("COSH") to monitor the guidance published by the various Federal, State and City agencies that issue such guidance, forward it to each city agency's health & safety coordinator within 24 hours, who would then be required to send a summary to each employee tailored to what is relevant to that employee based upon the risks posed by that person's job title.

Good as this bill is, and the Civil Service Bar Association and Teamsters Local 237 support it, there is more to be done, more unnecessary risk being inflicted upon city workers that needs exposure and prompt intervention. As we testify safely, remotely today, several CSBA members in the Fire Department are being forced to participate in-person in meetings and hearings with extremely high-risk respondents and witnesses, including Emergency Medical Technicians ("EMTs"). Indeed, the FDNY's own Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Present, conducted a study concluding that EMTs are about 15 times more likely to be COVID-infected than the average New Yorker. These meetings and hearings can, should, and in fact have heretofore been conducted safely and effectively remotely by teleconference.

I am specifically referring to the FDNY Bureau of Investigations and Trials unit ("the BITS unit"), where dedicated attorneys act as prosecutors enforcing rules against employee misconduct. These are folks who believe in following the rules, but who are being forced to either follow the brand-new, arbitrary, reckless rules written specifically for their unit,

which forces them to appear in person wherever any one party wants an in-person hearing, or to be considered insubordinate for not putting their health and indeed their lives and the lives of their families at risk.

By contrast, and ironically, the Mayor's Office of Labor Relations, which handles Step III disciplinary grievances, is only meeting remotely. We met remotely with them and the Fire Department to try to resolve this issue, but they failed to intervene to have these city workers be kept as safe as OLR is keeping itself. Arbitrators handling the final step, Step IV disciplinarys, via the Office of Collective Bargaining, are also meeting exclusively online. Indeed, all responsible entities are following guidances for remote hearings. The Family Court, which handles important abuse and neglect cases involving children, meets remotely. I know, because we represent approximately 200 members who handle far too many cases for the NYC Administration for Children's Services ("ACS") Family Court Legal Services, many of whom have contacted me about the challenges presented by remote hearings. And you may have heard the news that New York courts have once again stopped having jury trials out of safety concerns during this second wave of the pandemic.

So I am respectfully requesting that this committee investigate and act to stop this city agency's shortsightedness and hypocrisy, while supporting the good work advanced by the bill being considered by this committee.

With that, I am requesting that my colleague from Local 237, Health & Safety Coordinator Susan McQuade, briefly address this committee.

Testimony of Susan McQuade, Health and Safety Coordinator for Teamsters Local 237.

... Intro 1797, which would create a public informational campaign concerning workers' rights under the earned safe and sick time act, is an important initiative to ensure that all workers in our city know what time they can be paid when they are out sick. Posting information at public places, especially in multiple languages, is a great way to reach those who may not be informed of these rights. Our union received many calls from members about sick time during this pandemic, and giving that information to all workers will help to protect others from undue illness and will allow them to stay home if they are sick.

Likewise, the Council's efforts to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the dissemination of occupational safety and health information to city employees during a public health emergency, would be a great step in the right direction. This rapid dissemination of information, within 24 hours of receipt of such guidance from various agencies, and requiring that this latest information be posted in workplaces, and emailed to employees of the agency, with information shortened with the information most relevant to their job title concerns, would be an effective public health intervention – getting up-to-date information in a concise fashion is a much needed element, as we have seen during this pandemic, and would keep us all focused on the present issues of concern. We are supportive of any measures that can better inform people on how to best protect themselves, and with so much information coming at them in these past months, more targeted messaging is essential if we wish to get workers up to speed on the most current concerns. Having these health and safety bulletins could also take a prominent place on the agency's webpage, as workers could check that on a regular basis to see what information is new. In addition, training for employees is a key component that has often been overlooked/not conducted, and that also needs to be central to any plan to best protect employees during these times of national emergencies.

Finally, establishing a board to review workplace health and safety guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic would be a welcome addition, as it will allow a review to ensure that employers are adhering to the protocols. As with most occupational safety and health issues and protocols, oversight of some sort is needed to ensure best compliance, as employers can interpret such guidances that favor their interpretation of an issue over the intent of the guidance, which is to protect workers from undue exposure. All proceedings of the board should be made public, we would suggest that hearings should be held to address major concerns. There should be union representation on this board, and input should be sought from the employees and their organizations at these early stages, to ensure that all issues are being addressed with an eye towards best protecting New York City workers for unsafe conditions. Please consider that the board would remain in place not for a fixed time period of 180 days, but for the length of the health emergency at hand. As we are now entering our tenth month COVID, it is clear that continued involvement of the Board as new issues arise will be most beneficial. ▮

Election 2020 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

By Vito R. Pitta, Esq. Member, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno, LLC

During the last several weeks, many Americans have been on edge, waiting for results of not only the Presidential and Congressional elections, but also for the results of many state and local elections. Although it had been anticipated for months that the results of many elections would not be known after the polls closed on election day, given the large amounts of absentee and mail-in ballots occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, the uncertainty still was unsettling. But the process of counting every ballot is one demanded by democracy, and one that is certainly worth the wait.

While President Trump, as of the date of this writing, still has not conceded his defeat and continues to insist that he will pursue legal options to challenge the results of the election, on November 23, 2020, he finally allowed the formal transition process to the Biden Administration to begin. By publicly recommending to the administrator of the General Services Administration that the transition to the Biden Administration commence, he ended a standoff that had prevented the President-Elect from accessing federal funding and resources designed to ensure the incoming administration is prepared to assume all responsibilities of the Office of the President on inauguration day.

In the days leading up to the formal commencement of the transition process, President-Elect Biden had begun announcing his selections for members of his cabinet. The Biden-Harris Administration has promised to be one of the most pro-worker and pro-union in modern history. While President-elect Biden's picks for the Department of Labor, National Labor Relations Board, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other worker and union-related offices have not yet been announced, we hope that those forthcoming selections will help the Biden-Harris Administration to fulfill its pro-worker and pro-union promise. To date, the following individuals have been named by President-elect Biden to serve in senior White House and Cabinet positions:

Senior Staff (no Senate confirmation needed)

- Ron Klain, Chief of Staff
- Jen O'Malley Dillon, Deputy Chief of Staff
- Steve Richetti, Counselor to the President
- Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor
- John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate
- Linda Thomas-Greenfield, UN Ambassador
- Cedric Richmond, Director of the Office of Public Engagement
- Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Mike Donilon, Senior Advisor to the President
- Louisa Terrell, Director of the Office of Legislative Affairs
- Cathy Russell, Director of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel
- Dana Remus, Counsel to the President
- Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon, Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Cabinet (Senate confirmation needed)

- Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence
 - Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
 - Janet Yellen, Secretary of the Department of the Treasury
 - Antony Blinken, Secretary of the Department of State
- President-Elect Biden is expected to continue rolling out the names of other senior staff officials and Cabinet nominees over the coming weeks.

Closer to home, elections for every member of the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly were also held on November 3, 2020. With these state legislative races too, there had been initial uncertainty about the results, due to the enormous volume of mail-in ballots that had to be counted. Although some races still are undecided, it is now apparent that the Democratic leadership of the New York State Senate has increased its majority to a supermajority of the chamber. Based upon preliminary results on election night, this appeared to have been very unlikely, as Senate Democrats were trailing behind in numerous key races. On November 23, 2020, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins announced that her conference had secured 42 of the Chamber's 63 seats. While results for three Senate seats are continued to be counted, by November 28, 2020, all of the county boards of elections must certify and transmit the canvass of general election returns to the New York State Board of Elections. On December 7, 2020, the New York State Board of Canvassers will then meet to certify the final results of all races of the November 3, 2020 General Election.

Election 2021

No sooner did we complete one election cycle, however, than did focus turn to another. On the local level, next year is a Citywide election cycle, where all local New York City elective offices are up for election. New York City voters will be voting for the offices of Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, and City Council. The current Mayor, Comptroller, four of the five Borough Presidents, and a supermajority of City Council Members are all term-limited. While Citywide elections occur in New York City every four years, this election cycle is unprecedented in the number of term-limited elected officials all leaving at the same time. Additionally, it is anticipated that the primary election process will be different than normal.

During the November 2019 General Election, New York City voters approved a ballot referendum to authorize and implement a voting method known as ranked-choice voting for primary and special elections for New York City offices of Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, and City Council Member beginning in 2021. Under ranked-choice voting, voters in a primary or special election

will rank up to five candidates in their order of preference. Voting preferences are then tabulated to determine which candidate receives the most first choice preferences. If no candidate receives a majority of the vote based on first choice preferences, the candidate with least number of first choice preferences is eliminated from the tabulation, and then the second choice preferences of the voters that selected the eliminated candidate are redistributed. This process continues until a candidate obtains more than 50% of tabulated votes. This is markedly different than the current system. Current law provides that for the offices of Borough President and City Council Member, it is a winner-take-all system, where the candidate that receives the most number of total votes is the winner. Current law also provides that for the offices of Mayor, Public Advocate, and Comptroller, if no candidate receives more than 40% of the votes cast in a primary election, then the top two vote getters will compete in a run-off election, and the winner of the run-off will be selected as the nominee.

Because of a lack of voter education efforts surrounding the new ranked-choice system, the difficulty of implementing such a wide scale change during the COVID-19 pandemic, and potential threatened lawsuits, there are rumors of delaying the implementation of the new system. However, no formal efforts have begun to effect such a delay, and ranked-choice voting remains the law unless otherwise changed. In advance of the June 2021 primary elections, Local 237 has begun its screening and endorsement process for candidates for office. Particularly given the current budget deficits that the City is facing, it is crucial that we elect as many Local 237-endorsed candidates as possible. Over the coming weeks and months, Local 237 will continue to keep you apprised of the screening and endorsement process to ensure that you will be armed with the knowledge to make informed choices on election day. ■



Vito R. Pitta is a partner at Pitta LLP, a firm whose practice consists primarily of traditional union-side labor law, employment law, employee benefits law, and campaign finance compliance law. The firm counts more than forty local and international labor unions as its clients. Mr. Pitta's practice consists of counseling the firm's clients on traditional labor and employment matters, as well as advising the firm's political campaign and political action committee clients with respect to federal, state, and local campaign finance laws. Mr. Pitta is also a Partner in Pitta LLP's affiliated personal injury firm, Pitta & Baione LLP, which represents victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks; and a member of Pitta LLP's affiliated lobbying firm, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC.

Local Law 32 Helps Our Members

Local Law 32 of 2020 extends health insurance coverage to surviving family members of deceased municipal employees who died as a natural or proximate result of an accident or injury sustained while performing duties for the city or who died because of a condition related to the World Trade Center. Prior to the enactment of Local Law 32, these survivorship benefits only were provided to the surviving spouses, domestic partners, and children of police officers and firefighters, automatically, and to the surviving spouses, domestic partners, and children of certain other municipal employees at the discretion of the mayor. ■





NEED A LAWYER? LOCAL 237 LEGAL SERVICES PLAN IS HERE TO HELP

By Mary E. Sheridan, Esq.

Director Local 237-Legal Services Plan

Covered members and retirees are eligible for free legal representation on a wide array of legal matters. Not only is an attorney provided at no charge, after paying a \$150 deductible, you are entitled to up to \$500 toward your litigation expenses such as court filing fees and process server charges.

Representation covers 11 New York counties: the five counties of NYC, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Orange and Putnam counties.

Covered matters include:

- Matrimonial actions including divorce actions and separation agreements
- Family Court proceedings including Custody, Visitation, Orders of Protection, Abuse and Neglect, private Adoption and some Child Support matters
- Consumer Matters such as consumer debt actions, foreclosures and personal bankruptcy proceedings

- Preparation of Wills, Health Care Proxies and Powers of Attorney
- Purchase and Sale of a primary residence including coop, condo, one and two family homes
- Eviction and Non-Payment proceedings in Housing Court

Retirees living outside of the covered area may be entitled to reimbursement for a portion of attorney's fees spent for covered matters.

During the COVID pandemic we are providing telephonic appointments for your protection and seamless representation. If you need a lawyer, you can call the union at (212) 924-2000 and request a call back. There are 12 attorneys available for advice and representation. Do not wait if you have a problem or question, we are here for you during these trying times. ■



Managing Stress and Anxiety During the Holidays

By Ayana Ali

Director Local 237- Social Services

Managing stress and anxiety during the holidays has long been difficult for people. 2020 has been particularly stressful due to the ongoing pressures that the pandemic has caused the world to face, economic strain, the political climate, and racial tensions amongst other individual stressors. Are you stressed out? Are you experiencing any of the following? Concern, fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt, a longing for better and less turbulent times or questions about the future and what's to come? No? Ask yourself another question? Are you having trouble sleeping? Are you experiencing an increased/decreased desire to consume news or an increased/decreased desire to participate on social media platforms? Have you been eating irregularly- stress eating or eating restrictively? Have you experienced a relapse in utilization of vices such as drugs, alcohol or other addictions? Maybe you have had an increased irritability and or sadness an exacerbation/onset of mental health symptoms, a desire to isolate/withdraw from the process entirely or an inability to focus. If so, you are likely stressed out not alone.

Holiday stress is typically influenced by setting unrealistic expectations, undue financial pressure, being over extended in commitment and often because of worry about family tensions. Couple that with the question of whether or not to or how to safely see people for gatherings, travel risks, testing concerns, quarantine requirements and you understandably have a great deal of people who are unduly stressed during "the most wonderful time of the year".

What you should know is that anxiety is normal and is okay. Holiday anxiety can be normal also. Here are some ways that may help you to better handle it:

Acknowledge. Don't push your feelings aside. Admit that you are stressed. If you talk about your emotions, they will have less power over you.

Remember. Regardless of beliefs, the holidays are about hope, renewal, gratitude, new possibilities and harvest time. Ask yourself how you can incorporate those values into your thoughts and days. Is there someone who helps to calm or ground you that you can talk to more often? Can you practice meditation or exercise more often? Can you donate time, food, gifts, or money to charity?

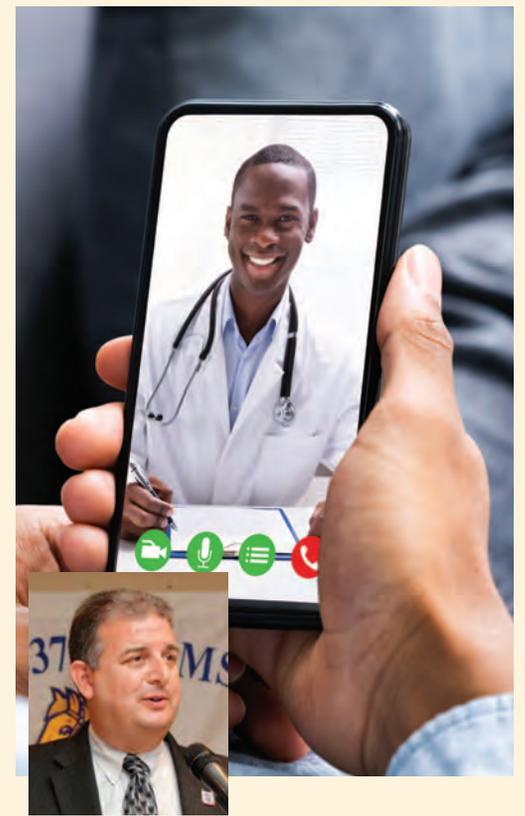
Determine. Decide where you will spend the holidays. Make a plan for the holiday and decide if you will stay home or if you will spend special days with family or friends. Will your celebration be limited to your household members? Make a decision and then determine how you can best be safe in that decision.

Be Realistic. Nothing is perfect, but you can plan ahead by doing things like creating and sticking to a budget, setting aside days and times for certain things, spacing stressful activities out over days if you can and not leaving everything to the last minute of you can avoid it.

Set Boundaries. Learn to say no to requests, invitations or other things that will increase your stress levels. No is a full sentence and you don't always have to explain why the answer is no. Remember, being at peace is a value of the holiday season. Honor it. Honor yourself by knowing what is too much.

Set Aside Differences. If you have a family member of friend that you typically argue with or engage in hot topic discussions of politics or other issues, maybe decide not to engage them in this way for this season. Give yourself a break and just enjoy.

Seek help. As always if the season and its stressors are causing you to feel burdened, sad, overly anxious or otherwise uncomfortable, reach out for help by talking to a therapist. If you are unsure how to access one, call the Social Services Department at 212-924-7220 for further information. ■



By Mitch Goldberg

Director of the Welfare Fund

24/7 Telemedicine Program with Teladoc

For several years now the MLC and OLR have jointly offered telemedicine to city employees. With the Covid-19 pandemic upon us it has become an increasingly useful alternative to visiting a doctor in an office setting. Teladoc is a telehealth company which uses technology that allows you to access remote clinical health care via online video interaction or telephone. This service is not a substitute for visiting your PCP, but rather an alternative method for receiving care for minor, everyday ailments which may not require a visit to your doctor.

(For Those Covered Under the EmblemHealth GHI-CBP, GHI HMO, HIP HMO, HIP POS, and VYTRA plans)

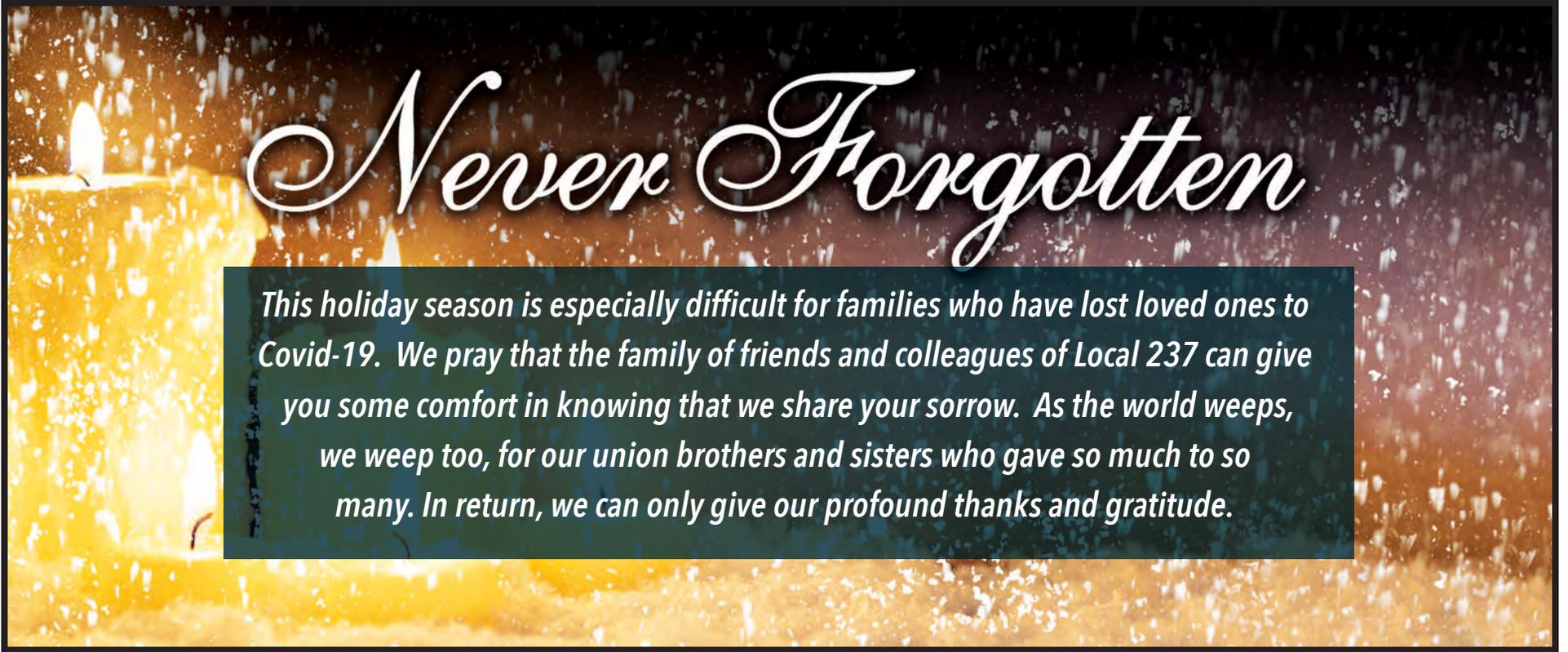
With Teladoc, you can talk with a doctor within minutes rather than days or hours. Teladoc doctors can diagnose, treat and prescribe medication (when medically necessary) for non-emergency medications. This includes treatments for the flu, sore throat, allergies, stomach aches, eye infections, bronchitis, and much more. Co-pays are waived during the COVID outbreak. To set up your account now so you can talk with one of Teladoc's board-certified doctors anytime when you don't feel well, call 1-800-Teladoc (1-800-835-2362) or visit [Teladoc.com/emblemhealth](https://www.teladoc.com/emblemhealth).

View the Teladoc Registration Guide for instructions on setting up your account on Teladoc's website or mobile app. ■

Este año, al acercarse las festividades navideñas, la gran pregunta no es "¿Ha sido malo o bueno"? sino más bien, cómo está enfrentando el ataque de un enemigo tan destructivo que su impacto para muchos es un golpe devastador para el cuerpo, alma y espíritu. Nosotros, en Local 237, ciertamente hemos sentido los horrores de esta guerra viral. Hemos estado al frente y hemos pagado el precio. Aplaudimos y agradecemos a nuestros miembros, que continúan dando dignidad y honor al título de "Empleado Público".

Gregory Floyd, Presidente de Teamsters Local 237





Never Forgotten

This holiday season is especially difficult for families who have lost loved ones to Covid-19. We pray that the family of friends and colleagues of Local 237 can give you some comfort in knowing that we share your sorrow. As the world weeps, we weep too, for our union brothers and sisters who gave so much to so many. In return, we can only give our profound thanks and gratitude.



By Anny Rosario Diaz
Assistant District Manager, Social Security in Downtown Manhattan

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS INCREASE IN 2021

Nearly 70 million Americans will see a 1.3 percent increase in their Social Security benefits and SSI payments in 2021. Federal benefit rates increase when the cost-of-living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W).

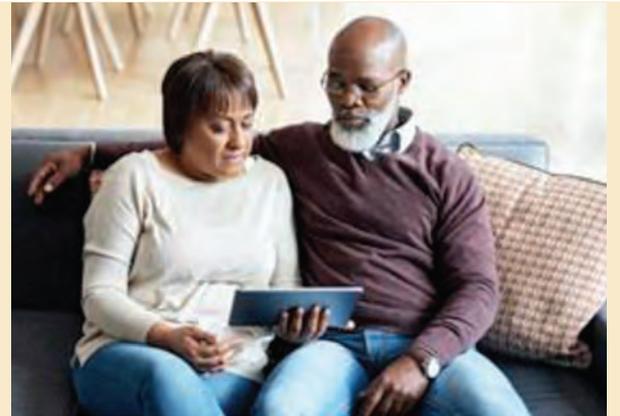
The CPI-W rises when inflation increases, leading to a higher cost-of-living. This change means prices for goods and services, on average, are a little more expensive, so the COLA helps to offset these costs.

January 2021 marks other changes that will happen based on the increase in the national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax in 2021 will be higher. The retirement earnings test exempt

amount will also change in 2021. You can read our press release for more information at www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2021.pdf.

We will mail COLA notices throughout the month of December to retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees. Want to know your new benefit amount sooner? You can securely view and save the Social Security COLA notice online via the Message Center inside *my Social Security* in early December without waiting for the mailed notice.

If you don't have an account yet, you will have had to create your account by November 18, 2020 to receive the COLA notice online this year. *my Social*



Security account holders can opt out of receiving a mailed COLA notice and other paper notices that are available online. You can choose text or email alerts when there is a notice in Message Center by updating your Preferences at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/opt-out.html so you always know when we have something important for you.

Be the first to know! Sign up for or log into your personal account today at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Choose email or text under "Message Center Preferences" to receive courtesy notifications. This way you won't miss your online COLA notice!

You can find more information about the 2021 COLA at www.ssa.gov/cola.

PERIODICALS
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NEWSLINE
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 New York, NY 10011

DATED MATERIAL WINTER 2020

Are you moving?

To change your address, fill in the form below, cut it out, and mail it back to Newsline at the above address.

Name _____
 New Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Happy Holidays

Wishing you and those you hold dear health, prosperity and peace for the New Year. Let us give thanks for what we have and remain hopeful for what lies ahead.

*From President Gregory Floyd,
 the Executive Board and the staff of Local 237*