

RETIREE news & views

A PUBLICATION OF LOCAL 237 RETIREE DIVISION

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42ND ANNIVERSARY

Retiree Division turns 42 and counting

We are delighted to extend congratulations to all of you on your 42nd anniversary. As pictured, throughout the years, we've had memorable celebrations and events. We enter this year with hopes of getting together for more events. Maya Angelou said it best: "The area where we are the greatest is the area in which we inspire, encourage and connect with another human being."

We're Back

Our union and fund offices are open to retirees for unscheduled appointments. For your safety, located throughout the building, you will find hand sanitizer stations, signage, and a touchless thermometer as you enter the building. If you plan to visit the union hall, we suggest wearing a mask. For the safety of our staff and members, retiree meetings and/or workshops will continue to be held virtually or via conference call. You can still contact the Retiree Division by phone at **212-807-0555** or via email at **retirees2@local237.org**



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by Gregory Floyd

President, Teamsters Local 237
and Vice President-at-Large on the
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The recent shooting of 13 innocent victims in Buffalo demands reflection and reaction, cries out for mourning and a search for meaning. Although the racist motive seems abundantly clear, the fact that a crazed gunman was on a killing spree in a neighborhood supermarket on an otherwise lazy Saturday afternoon, and that he live-streamed his venomous crime, actually watched by so many, makes the heartlessness and culpability of his actions unfathomably sickening, and not his alone.

As the well-respected civil rights attorney Ben Crump sees it: "Politicians who are trying to use fear to stimulate their base...to help get cable news ratings...(are) accomplices to this mass murder...even though they did not pull the trigger, they loaded the gun." Yet, there is still more guilt to go around. It seems that it's not enough to just do the killing. No, the message here is that a hate-filled rampage like this must also serve to motivate others—to glorify, to justify and to make

A Message From The President

Loading the Gun

noble their deranged cause. And as the killer your public demeanor is also very important: Show no signs of regret or remorse. Own the moment and hope others will want to adopt the same bloodlust hatred.

New York State has some of the toughest gun laws in the nation, including the controversial "red flag law" enacted in 2019 to prevent persons considered dangerous to themselves and to others as unfit to legally purchase guns. But guns are purchased outside of this state and brought here. Without stricter national gun laws, and the elimination of various loopholes in existing laws, it will be impossible to control guns; they still will get into the wrong hands.

Although this latest killing spree was done with a legally purchased rifle — an AR-15 known to be used by soldiers at war, like those currently fighting in Ukraine—the rise in illegal "ghost" guns also presents a huge threat to innocent bystanders.

The number of shootings has nearly doubled in New York City since before the pandemic. Read the headlines: Students walking and talking on their way home from school; children watching a video and eating their chicken dinner in the back of their aunt's car; an infant in a car seat next to her mother while dad stops at a bodega for milk and a Chinese food deliveryman shot

because he didn't bring enough duck sauce. These are among the many innocent people recently killed or injured in our city, their dreams tattered, their families destroyed. Ghost guns were the weapons involved, but they are not the only factor that caused the pain. "Not the intended target" is the usual defense, but even if this is true, the questions remain: Why were you carrying a weapon designed to inflict deadly destruction not just retribution? And, when you pulled the trigger, did you think about possibly hitting the wrong person? Feel any pain? Have empathy for hitting the wrong person?

A last question should be asked, this directed to our lawmakers, as the essence of Ben Crumb's position on culpability: Did the perpetrator fear the consequences if they were to be apprehended and tried for their actions?

As a legislator, you didn't instigate the gunman with coded rhetoric or encourage the use of social media as a provocative means of gaining followers. But without enacting laws in which the punishment truly fits the crime, such as in the case of possessing a ghost gun, that result in mandatory incarceration — even while taking into consideration the perpetrator's age — guns, whether legally or illegally obtained, will be loaded by accomplices who did something worse than pulling the trigger. They did nothing! ■

A Message From The Director

A celebration of 42 years

Founders' Day has always been a magical time for the Retiree Division. It was not only to commemorate the beautiful fabrics of union history, but it also allowed us to catch up with longtime friends who share an unbreakable bond and similar backgrounds. As the Director of the Retiree Division, I am truly delighted to extend my congratulations to all of you on your 42nd anniversary. I would also like to welcome Local 237 new retirees and would like to provide a brief overview — Local 237 is the largest public

sector local in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters with over 11,500 retirees strong, our local represents the largest number of retirees in one Teamster Local. At Local 237, we truly believe that membership is lifelong. Forty-two years ago the Executive Board of this Local made it clear by establishing a division for retired members. President Floyd and his executive staff continue the tradition of "Retired from work, not from the union."

The Retiree Division has grown tremendously over the last 42 years. Even more so in the last two years due to the pandemic, where retiree division and retirees have navigated the world of technology via conference call or webinars. We are truly honored and proud of all the accomplishments over the years. Our division continues to provide guidance with retirement planning, pension counseling to aid transition from work to retirement, community meetings, educational programs, benefits education and assistance, cultural activities and committees, telephone support group, online pre-retirement seminars, and an oral history project.

by Julie Kobi LMSW
Director of the
Retiree Division



Our staff of professionals continues to provide assistance to retirees and their family members with personal matters, benefits education and much more. The Retiree News and Views continues to reach retirees all over the United States to provide the information. Many retirees have provided positive feedback on content area whether it was regarding caregiver support, VA benefits or perhaps a benefit that was underutilized, or simply putting a staff member's name to a face.

We are looking to all of you to continue patching together pieces to the fabric of Local 237 union history. I encourage all of you to join a telephone class or workshop as well as participate in our Oral History Project. We truly enjoy learning about your interests and hearing your story. Cheers to many more years of growing and learning from each other! ■

RETIREE news & views

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Who are Your Eligible Dependents?

by **Mitch Goldberg**

Director of the Retiree Benefit Fund

Your dependents are eligible for certain benefits if they meet one of the following requirements and you have enrolled them. Eligible dependents are your:

Spouse, including a same sex spouse legally married to you under state or foreign law, unless you are divorced or legally separated.

Domestic partner, provided you are registered with the New York City Clerk's Office under the rules of Executive Order No. 48, and you provide the Fund Office with an approved copy of your Domestic Partnership Registration Certificate and a Certification letter from the City Health Benefits Program. If you and your domestic partner are not residents of New York City and you are not registered under Executive Order No. 48, you may apply for and execute an Alternative Affidavit of Domestic Partnership in lieu of registration. A copy may be obtained by calling the City's Health Benefits Program Retiree Department (212) 513-0470.

To enroll your domestic partner for Fund coverage, you must obtain coverage under the basic health plan of the City, or other contributing employer. Once your application for this status is approved, you will receive a Certification Letter. You must submit a copy of either the Domestic Partnership Registration Certificate or the Alternative Affidavit of Domestic Partnership, *and* a copy of the Certification Letter to the Fund Office to obtain Fund coverage. As used in this handbook, the term "spouse" includes a properly en-

rolled and eligible domestic partner.

Unmarried children until the end of the month in which they reach age 19, including natural, legally adopted, and stepchildren, whom you support and who permanently live with you, children for whom you are a permanent legal guardian and children for whom a court has found you to be the father or has ordered you to provide health insurance coverage. DNA or other lab tests are insufficient to prove paternity for coverage purposes. If your children are full-time day students enrolled in an accredited college, vocational school or high school, their eligibility continues until the end of the month in which they reach age 23 or are no longer eligible students, whichever is first. You must provide certification from the registrar's office of your child's school each year to continue eligibility beyond age 19; and

Unmarried dependent children 19 years and older, if they cannot support themselves because of mental or physical disability. Their eligibility continues for as long as their disability continues, provided you show proof of the continued disability at least once every five years. The disability must have started before age 19 (or age 23 if an eligible student). For coverage for your disabled child to continue beyond the maximum age, you



must notify the Fund Office in writing and provide satisfactory proof of the date the disability commenced. If you provide the notice within 30 days of your child having reached age 19 (or age 23, if applicable), benefit coverage will continue without interruption for as long as you are covered, and your child remains disabled. If you provide notice to the Fund Office more than 30 days but less than one year after your child reaches age 19 (or age 23, if applicable), your dependent child will not be covered for any benefits on account of claims incurred after the applicable age but prior to the date of notice, but coverage will be restored for the period following notice and continue for as long as you are covered and your child remains disabled. If you do not inform the Fund Office of the disability within one year of the applicable age, coverage for your dependent child will terminate permanently.

Coverage for your dependents starts when your coverage starts, or when they become your dependents, whichever is later, provided you have filed an enrollment card with the Fund Office. ■



The Rent Is Too Darn High!

by **Sara Wagner, Esq.**

Assistant Director of Local 237, Legal Services Plan

If you live in a Rent Stabilized Apartment, you know that your rent usually goes up when you sign a new lease. The Rent Guidelines Board, or "RGB," is a group appointed by the Mayor that decides how much to adjust that rent. Depending on the month and year you sign your lease, and whether you choose to agree to a one or two year term, your landlord can only raise your rent by the amount voted on by the RGB.

For leases starting between October 1, 2021 and September 31, 2022: For a one year lease, the increase is 0% for the first 6 months, and 1.5% for the next 6 months. For a two year lease, the increase is 2.5%.

You might say, I want a one year lease! That increase is not a lot. But WAIT: The RGB is meeting now to decide rent increases on leases that begin October 1, 2022 to September 31, 2023, and their first vote is Too Darn High! In their final vote at the end of June, the RGB will probably vote to raise rent in one year leases by 2-4%, and rent in

two year leases by 4-6%.

So if you sign a lease before October, consider opting for two years at 2.5%, which is much lower than signing a one year lease for 0-1.5% and being stuck with a 6% increase next year.

There are other things you can do as a retiree to stop your rent from going up. NYC will FREEZE YOUR RENT right where it is if you qualify for SCRIE or DRIE.

New Yorkers with a disability or over the age of 62 may be eligible for the NYC Rent Freeze Program, which includes the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) Program to help tenants stay in affordable housing by freezing their rent.

To be eligible, individuals must:

- Be 62 years old OR at least 18 years old and disabled



- Be the primary tenant named on the lease/rent order or have been granted succession rights in a rent controlled, rent stabilized or a rent regulated hotel apartment;
- Have a combined household income for all members of the household that is \$50,000 or less; and
- Spend more than one-third of your monthly household income on rent.

Visit this link to learn more and to apply: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/index.page>

Or call the rent freeze and homeowner tax exemption hotline at (929) 252-7242. The sooner you apply, the sooner your rent can be frozen! ■

Augusto Alejandro Coen Colon y el Rosario a la Santa Cruz (Fiesta de Cruz) en Nueva York

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I — El músico

Augusto Alejandro Coen Colon, conocido artísticamente como Augusto (Alex) Coen. Fue compositor, director de orquesta y trompetista. Nació en la calle Aurora de Ponce el 8 de diciembre de 1895 y falleció el 7 de mayo de 1970. Está enterrado en el *Puerto Rico National Cemetery* en Bayamón. Era hijo del comerciante Alejandro Augusto Coen Barnes, natural de San Tomas y de Teresa Colón de San Juan. Sus abuelos paternos eran Enrique Coen de Inglaterra y Margarita Barnes de San Tomás. Tuvo dos hijos: Edward Coen y Augustus Coen.

De acuerdo a Modesto Neco Quiñones y Alfredo Romero Bravo, Augusto, estudió en Ponce con Juan Ríos Ovalle y fue miembro de la Banda Municipal de Bomberos bajo la dirección de Domingo Cruz Gutiérrez (Cocolía). (1)

Su vida - según el folclorólogo y musicólogo chileno Pablo Garrido-fue un ejemplo del espíritu progresista. En 1919, ya licenciado como teniente del ejército de los EE.UU. se radicó en Nueva York. En la Ciudad de los Rascacielos, formó parte de la orquesta de fama universal del gran Duke Ellington; estuvo junto al genio de la escena Lew Sydney Bechet; Art Tatum, Alberto Socarras, Fletcher Henderson y George Gershwin; como también junto a cien artistas del mundo exótico donde el ritmo nutre y el sonido es trepadora de tonos en rebelión. Allí, en Nueva York, y buscando siempre mayores conocimientos, fue alumno del Dr. Ángel del Busto, reconocido contrapuntista puertorriqueño, considerado, además, como uno de los primeros ejecutantes del fagot en el mundo. Organizó en la urbe neoyorquina la primera orquesta integrada por músicos puertorriqueños. (2)

A su regreso a Puerto Rico en 1948 fue cofundador, de acuerdo a los autores, Quiñones y Romero, de la Sociedad Puertorriqueña de Autores; Compositores y Editores de Música (SPACEM); fundó y fue el primer director de la banda de música de la Administración de Parques y Recreo de Puerto Rico. (3)

Entre las composiciones más destacadas y grabadas de este gran músico ponceño se destacan: Conga, Cantando y riendo, Hechicera, Vuelve mi negra, Mujer sensual, No cola, Rumba hawaiana, Broca en Harlem, Cobarde, Ponme a Gozar, Vacilando con Coen, Don Q, El chivo, El Santo, Nostalgia tropical, Sly moongoo, Tamarindo, Cambia la aguja, Hazme feliz, Dame tu cariño, Saca la manguera, Vivo muriendo, Reminiscencias y No me atormentes. (4)

II — Organizó la Fiesta de Cruz en Nueva York

Además, animó en Nueva York a que el Club Perla del Sur organizara, en la década de 1950 y por muchos años la Fiesta o Promesa a la Santa Cruz, en la Avenida Madison, entre las calles 112 y 113. (5)

En 1951 publicó, con una introducción de Pablo Garrido y dibujos del acuarelista español Guillermo Sureda, la recolección que hiciera Coen de las melodías de la Fiesta de Cruz que él escuchó en Ponce. Coen hizo el acopio, transcribió su música y publicó 5,000 ejemplares en su primera edición y 3,000 en una segunda edición de 1960. El estudioso del folclor Pedro Carlos Escabi Agostini incluye en el estudio del Rosario: vista parcial del folclor de Puerto Rico, el Ritual de Rosario rezado a la Virgen y Gozos cantados a la Santa Cruz que Coen había grabado en Nueva York.

II — El Rosario y los Gozos a la Santa Cruz; el Rosario de Promesa a la Virgen y a los Santos y el Rosario de Animas o Difuntos

En 1969 se organizó el Estudio etnográfico de la cultura popular de Puerto Rico en el Centro de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, recinto de Río Piedras. Bajo la dirección de Pedro C. Escabi Agostini, un grupo de investigadores, destacándose Elsa Escabi Agostini, se dieron a la tarea de preparar un esquema y un cuestionario, como instrumentos de trabajo de campo, para realizar la investigación más profunda y abarcadora de materiales folclóricos que hasta el presente se halla recopilado en Puerto Rico. El novel Estudio llegó a publicar dos libros: *Morovis: vista parcial del folclor de Puerto Rico (1970)* y *La Décima: vista parcial del folclor de Puerto Rico (1976)*. El tercer Estudio también re-

alizado por Pedro Carlos y su hermana Elsa Escabi Agostini: *El Rosario: vista parcial del folclor de Puerto Rico*: fue publicado, en 2020 por el Centro de Investigaciones Folclóricas de Puerto Rico, Inc. (CIFPR-Casa Paoli), con la autorización de la UPR. Está disponible en la página virtual oficial del CIFPR: www.casapaolipr.com.

Esta tercera publicación, basada en los materiales recopilados esporádicamente, presenta materiales recogidos y analizados de una cantidad impresionante de Rosarios recogidos durante catorce años de estudio en 31 municipios de Puerto Rico desde 1969 hasta el 1990. Los autores teniendo a la vista la importancia, calidad y cantidad de estos materiales, decidieron trabajar con ese tema su tercera publicación que también incluye formas poéticas y musicales. Pedro C. Escabi define la música folclórica como "...el resultado de una transición musical que fue desarrollada por un proceso de transmisión oral. Los factores que forman la tradición son: Continuidad, que enlaza el presente con el pasado; la Variación, que nace del impulso creador del individuo o del grupo; y, Selección es la comunidad que determina la forma en que la música sobre vive." (6)

El termino- continua Escabi- puede aplicarse a la música que se desarrolla desde sus rudimentarios comienzos por una comunidad que no ha sido influenciada por la música artística o popular; y puede ser aplicado ulteriormente integrada a la tradición oral de la comunidad, pues es la recreación y la reforma de la música de la comunidad lo que le da el carácter folclórico. El folclor musical musical tiene dos aspectos: la música cantada y la música instrumental. (7)

Una de las expresiones comunes que tienen el hombre y la mujer del folclor de llamar al ritual del Rosario es llevar las cuentas. El instrumento que llamamos regularmente un rosario es un ábaco o sea o una máquina de contar o narrar. Pero ¿qué se narra? Se cuentan las cuentas del Rosario: tiene dos acepciones el material y la espiritual, que está basada en la narración de la redención de Cristo vista a través de los ojos de la Virgen María, su madre. (8)

El Rosario como parte de la cultura folclórica de Puerto Rico tiene tres manifestaciones: el Rosario y los Gozos a la Santa Cruz; el Rosario de Promesa a la Virgen y a los Santos y el Rosario de Animas o Difuntos: vemos que están compuestos por tres ciclos de Misterios y una serie de oraciones que se han de rezar o cantar cuando se escenifica el ritual.

III — La Fiesta de Cruz

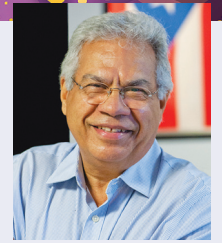
Las fiestas a la Santa Cruz se celebran durante el mes de mayo en diversos países de Hispanoamérica y de maneras muy particulares: en regiones de Venezuela, Guatemala, México, El Salvador, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Perú, Colombia, Trinidad y Tobago. Los nombres varían: *Fiesta de las Cruces*, *Vestir la Cruz*, entre otros. En muchas poblaciones de Puerto Rico todavía se llevan a cabo y constituye el santo patrón de los municipios de Bayamón y Trujillo Alto. En el barrio Tras Talleres de Santurce celebraron este año el cincuentenario de su Fiesta de Cruz. Además, en Loisaida Center en Nueva York también la continúan celebrando.

En Ponce acostumbraban celebrar estas fiestas o promesas en muchos barrios de la Ciudad. Se recuerda con mucho cariño las Fiesta de Cruz que organizaba el *Club Universal* en la calle Vives y otra en la calle El Coto. Según, el profesor Ramon López Crespo, la primera inició los rosarios de cruz en 1951. También la celebraba el club *Los Auténticos Muchachos* en el callejón Las Flores en el Barrio El Coto Laurel. (9)

Seleccionaban los últimos nueve días del mes de mayo. Usaban nueve cajones, uno para cada noche. Los 9 cajones representan los eslabones del niño Jesús. (10) Se coloca una cruz muy grande sobre una mesa y cada cajón, se va colocando en forma de una escalera, pero siempre. Incluidos hacías la cruz; hasta llegar al número 9; donde finaliza la novena. Todo el altar es adornado con flores; sobre la mesa se coloca un mantel blanco y encima se colocan 9 velas y las imágenes de la Virgen o del Gran Poder de Jesús.

IV — Del pasado histórico

El origen de la Fiesta de Cruz se remonta a la y colonización de España en América. Como los misioneros desconocían la lengua de los nativos,



Por Néstor Murray-Irizarry
historiador y gestor cultural

carecían de imágenes y no tenían suficientes predicadores, hicieron uso de la cruz y de personas de la localidad para difundir las nuevas ideas religiosas. La cruz era de fácil construcción y se ubicaba en un sitio visible para la comunidad a evangelizar: cerros, intersecciones de caminos u otros espacios. Todas las tardes, los fieles se congregaban alrededor de la imagen para rendirle culto. En cada casa contaban con su propia cruz y altar y le rezaban el rosario y le cantaban los gozos o letanías. Con el paso de los años las comunidades se hicieron cargo de las fiestas. La residencia de los devotos religiosos sirvió de escenarios para que toda la comunidad participara de la Promesa o Fiesta. (11) (<https://noticiaslourdes.com/dia-de-la-cruz-cuales-son-sus-origenes-en-america-latina/>)

Hay que tener en cuenta que de acuerdo a la tradición los ritos de mayo giran alrededor de la vegetación y de las flores. Es la época, en algunas poblaciones de Europa, de recolectar y plantar el mayo. La noche del 30 de abril se organizan, en la mayoría de las poblaciones alemanas, unas fiestas con el lema "empezar mayo bailando". Se trata de continuar la tradición que saluda la llegada del quinto mes del año y con él la plena primavera. El Árbol de Mayo es un árbol o más bien un tronco de árbol adornado. Este Árbol es una antigua tradición que representa originalmente el símbolo de la fertilidad de la primavera. En la parte superior del árbol o tronco se coloca una corona y en la mera punta se coloca un abedul recién cortado. (12) (<https://noticiaslourdes.com/dia-de-la-cruz-cuales-son-sus-origenes-en-america-latina/>)

En Puerto Rico, tan temprano como en 1690, indica el historiador español Ángel López Cantos los naturales eran muy dados a las diversiones y a holgar. Poseían un vocabulario festivo muy extenso, con 78 jornadas de asueto entre los domingos y fiestas conmemorativas. (13)

El escritor español Manuel Fernández Juncos, cuenta que el 2 de mayo de 1787, hubo un gran temblor de tierra que lleno de consternación a todos los habitantes de Puerto Rico. Narra la tradición oral que fue el temblor mas violento y prolongado de cuantos, se registraron, hasta esa época en nuestro país. (14) Tuvo lugar en la víspera en que la Iglesia Católica celebra la invención de la Santa Cruz. En la zona urbana hubo grandes fiestas. Sin embargo, en la ruralia, imposibilitados sus habitantes, se dieron a la tarea de crear su propia y singular fiesta o promesa a la Santa Cruz y así rogarle a Dios que no se repitieran los temblores. Fernández Juncos publica unas coplas que todavía se cantan en algunos lugares del país y de Nueva York:

"¡Qué bonita esta la cruz
Con su vestido amarillo,
Que se lo dio el buen Jesús,
Corona, clavo y martillo ¡
Las cuentas de mi rosario
Son balas de artillería, que todo infierno tiembla
En diciendo-Ave María." (15)

Por su parte López Cantos en su libro *La religiosidad popular en Puerto Rico (siglo XVII)* explica:

"Solían los puertorriqueños celebrar el día tres de mayo, que conmemora la Iglesia católica la Exaltación de la Cruz. Para ello en algunas calles o plazas de las poblaciones o en domicilios particulares levantaban una especie de altar que remataban en una gran cruz. En realidad, el altar quedaba reducido a la mínima expresión. [...] Un ejemplo que cita el historiador: Puesta en la plaza de San Juan, una cruz grande de madera con una peana de ladrillo y cal del tamaño de un hombre". Señala López Cantos que debió ser una costumbre muy arraigada en la Isla, ya que, en 181, en el Reglamento de Policía de Puerto Rico, se prohibían los bailes en torno a estas fiestas, por el desorden y el uso abusivo de las bebidas espirituosas. (16) ■



A Few Tips to Stay Safe During the Summer

by Edith Johnston, LCSW
Deputy Director, Retiree Division

The summer is always a lot of fun. There are lots of activities that can be done outdoors, such as going to the park or the beach, gardening, picnics, and many others. One of my favorite childhood memories is going swimming with my siblings and spending many hours outdoors in the sun. Many years have passed since those days, and during my many years working with older adults I have learned a few things that are very important to remember to be safe while enjoying outdoor activities.

Reduce Strenuous Activities With high temperatures, seniors should stay in air-conditioned or cool places and out of the sun. It's important to reduce any strenuous or physical activities as the more movement, the higher the body temperature.

Keep Hydrated Drink plenty of water, even if you're not thirsty! As you increase your intake of water, minimize your intake of caffeinated or alcoholic drinks, as these dehydrate your body. Fresh fruits and vegetables are also recommended to help keep you hydrated.

Protect Yourself In The Sun Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher when going outside, even on cloudy or overcast days. Be sure the sunscreen blocks both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply sunscreen after any water activities. Discard expired sunscreen as the ingredients deteriorate over time and may no longer be effective in protecting you. Hats are also a great idea for protecting against the sun. When possible, stay in shaded areas like covered patios or shady trees.

Wear Light Clothing Stock your wardrobe with light-colored and loose-fitting clothes to keep cool and stay comfortable. Natural fabrics such as cotton also help to keep you cool as opposed to synthetic fibers.

Be An Early Bird or Night Owl If you must be outside during a summer heat wave, limit your outdoor activities to the morning and evenings since the sun is the strongest between 10 am and 4 pm.

Watch For Heat Stroke It's important to be mindful of signs of a heat stroke, which include confusion, disorientation, dry skin, excessive tiredness, headache, lethargy, nausea, and rapid pulse. Make sure you seek medical attention immediately if you or someone you know experiences these symptoms.

Review Your Medications Many seniors take medication daily. Some medications are known to cause side effects such as increased sensitivity to ultraviolet rays. Be sure to review with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any concerns.

Protect Your Eyes Too much exposure to the sun can irritate and cause damage to your eyes. When outside, wear sunglasses that protect from UV rays.

Eat Some Ice Cream! Treat yourself to ice cream, a popsicle or frozen yogurt to keep cool over the summer!

Schedule a Check-up No matter the season, remember to schedule regular check-ups with a primary care provider to maintain optimal health, prevent illness and monitor chronic health issues. ■



NYC Summer Fun

by Luz Nieves-Carty MPA
Assistant to the Director, Retiree Division

Can you believe the summertime is here? How will you enjoy the warm weather (taking Covid -19 precautions, of course)? People are packing their bags and heading on vacations as depicted by full airports. Others are jumping in cars and driving out to fun places. Due to a variety of reasons, going away may not be an option for older adults. Well, you are in luck. New York City offers numerous resources to enjoy the summer and beyond! The following are a few resources to help you have summer fun without leaving the Big Apple.

The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation offers a variety of programs for older adults to keep active, healthy, social, and engaged in their community. From sports to nature walks, from dancing under the stars to laps in the pool, older adults can continue to lead physically active lives through sports, fitness, and outdoor adventure. Many activities are accessible year-round. Parks and Recreation offers older adults a great deal on their memberships. If you are between 25-61 years old, memberships will range from \$100-\$150 a year. **However, for adults 61 and older, the membership is only \$25 a year!** This discount also applies to veterans and individuals with disabilities. Youth up to 25 is free! So, grab the grandkids and head over to any parks recreation center to join. You can also go online to www.nycgov.parks.org/seniors for more information or contact 311.

Another great resource is the IDNYC card for all New Yorkers, from all backgrounds, and from all five boroughs. IDNYC provides the peace of mind that comes from having a broadly accepted government-issued photo identification. It is a recognized ID for interacting with the New York Police Department (NYPD), gaining access to all City buildings that provide services to the public, qualifying for affordable housing through NYC Housing Connect, proving identity for employment, and health benefits. The free, municipal identification card comes with great benefits. IDNYC cardholders can enjoy benefits such as discounts and free memberships to many institutions such as The Bronx Zoo, The Aquarium, The Bronx Museum, NY Ballet, MoMa, St. George Theater and so much more! To apply, please visit <https://www.nyc.gov/idnyc>, locate an enrollment center and make an appointment. You can also locate an enrollment center in your borough by calling 311.

The final great resource to find activities is the New York Public Library and the Brooklyn Public Library. Go online www.nypl.org to learn about many events, classes, and activities for the entire family. You can also just walk into your nearest library or call 311 to find one. ■

The Retiree Division wishes you a safe, fun, and memorable summer.



June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

by Elaine Williams, LMSW
Assistant Director, Retiree Division

The emphasis of memory and our brain's ability to keep healthy has become a matter of constant concern as we age; yes, as we age, our mental capabilities start to slow down, we may take a little longer to come up with words that came easily in our vocabulary, and this is natural—just like how our physical abilities decline. We may also have a harder time multitasking. Many of us have heard the “use it or lose it” theory about preventing cognitive decline and how engaging ourselves in activities such as brain games or word puzzles helps to keep our brain busy and running at peak performance. However:

More than **6 million** Americans are living with Alzheimer's. By 2050, this number is projected to rise to nearly 13 million.

1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.

In 2020, COVID-19 contributed to a **17% increase** in Alzheimer's and dementia deaths.

Here are some warning signs of Alzheimer's outlined by the CDC:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life: forgetting events, repeating yourself or relying on more aides like sticky notes for reminders.
- Challenges in planning or solving problems: Having trouble paying bills or cooking recipes you have used for years.
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or leisure: Having problems cooking, driving, using a cell phone, or shopping.
- Confusion with time or place: Having trouble understanding an event that is happening later or losing track of dates.
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relations: Having more difficulty with balance or judging distance, tripping over things at home, or spilling or dropping things more often.

If you or someone you know is exhibiting one of these signs, act quickly and seek medical help. There are several benefits to early detection and access to targeted medical treatments, with the possibility of participating in clinical trials. There are many free services available to support someone dealing with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementias. There are a variety of educational programs to assist in increasing knowledge, and support groups to give caregivers an opportunity to develop a support system. The Alzheimer's Association is available for round-the-clock support from their 24/7 helpline at 800-272-3900. Remember overall, people can and should remain at a stable level of cognitive abilities well into their golden age. ■

For more information on Alzheimer's Disease and other related dementias, visit the Alzheimer Association at www.alz.org or the Center for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/aging/aginginfo/alzheimers.html

on a personal note... In Memoriam



To the Family of **Elsa Ortiz**, we extend our deepest sympathy. Ms. Ortiz retired from School Safety, passed away on 4/17/2022. She was a union activist for many years and contributed to our Oral History Project. Ms. Ortiz was also a member of the Latino Heritage Committee and the Sunshine Club. She will be profoundly missed.



PLEASE BE SURE TO CALL 212-807-0555 IF YOUR PHONE NUMBER OR ADDRESS HAS CHANGED.

In addition to notifying the union, please contact the Social Security Administration, your pension system, and the Office of Labor Relations. You do not want to miss out on important information.

RETIREE CORNER

Congratulations



Congratulations to new retiree **Melvin Thomas**, retired from NYCHA on 11/1/21.

RETIREE news & views

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MAY/JUNE 2022

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is **an intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult**. An older adult is someone age 60 or older. The abuse may occur at the hands of a caregiver or a person the elder trusts.

The National Center on Elder Abuse distinguishes between seven different types of elder

abuse. These include **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, financial/material exploitation, neglect, abandonment, and self-neglect**.

If you or someone you love is suffering from any type of abuse and neglect, please report it by calling 844-697-3505.



Five Social Security Resources That Can Protect Elders From Scams



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is on June 15. On this day, communities, seniors, caregivers, governments, organizations, and the private sector unite to prevent the mistreatment of and violence against older people.

Social Security scams are widespread across the United States. Scammers use sophisticated tactics to deceive you into providing sensitive information or money. They target everyone – especially the elderly – and their tactics continue to evolve.

Here are five easy-to-use resources to prevent Social Security fraud:

- 1 Check out our Fraud Prevention and Reporting page to learn about Social Security fraud – and how we fight scammers at www.ssa.gov/fraud.
- 2 Read our *Scam Alert* fact sheet to learn what tactics scammers use and how to protect yourself at www.ssa.gov/fraud/assets/materials/EN-05-10597.pdf.
- 3 Create your own personal *my Social Security* account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to stay one step ahead of scammers. Please read our blog post at blog.ssa.gov/my-social-security-what-to-know-about-signing-up-or-signing-in for more information about creating or signing in to your personal *my Social Security* account.
- 4 Learn about other types of fraud on our Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) Scam Awareness page at oig.ssa.gov/scam-awareness/scam-alert. You'll also see how to report these scams to our OIG and other government agencies.
- 5 Read our blog post to learn how to guard your Social Security card – and protect your personal information at blog.ssa.gov/guard-your-card-protect-whats-important-to-you/.

Please share this information with your friends and family to help spread awareness about Social Security imposter scams. ■