Queens Library Guild Local 1321

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A Message from Our New President—

Knowledge is Power



Margalit Susser President

Knowledge is the power to be informed, and this article is aimed at promoting your awareness of some Local 1321 Union information that is pertinent to you. Our Local 1321 Union-Management agreement (the working conditions Contract) details the rules and responsibilities that apply to virtually every action that our Union might take, as the representative of employees, in dealing with the Queens Library — from negotiation of the terms of time balances to handling of grievances arising under the agreement.

One way of obtaining knowledge and staying informed is being vigilant and understanding what's transpiring in the library system. Questions you should ponder:

- Do you understand the general content of our Union Contract?
- Are you aware that every Community Library, as well as Central, should have a copy of our Contract and all Library staff should have access to it?
- Are you familiar with our Local's Constitution? Again, this document is available to every Union member.
- What issues is our Local concerned about?

Please look often at both the DC 37 website at www.dc37.net and Local 1321 website at www.local1321.org. On the DC 37 website you can find information on your benefits such as a listing of participating optical and dentist providers; member services, such as the DC 37 Municipal Employees Housing Program; and discount offers available to our members. Our Local's website, maintained by Jane Jacobs, Vice-President of Librarians, provides information on upcoming meetings, information relevant to our members, and clarifications of issues our members have raised. Included in our website is my contact information. We will shortly distribute to all members an updated hard copy of Local 1321 representatives' contact numbers.

Attending general membership meetings is another important way of acquiring information as well as airing and discussing work-related problems. At many of these meetings, guest speakers from DC 37 will discuss members' benefits and entitlements. To maximize our members' participation in these general membership meetings, we are attempting to schedule most Union meetings on Wednesday evenings.

Being informed makes us strong. Knowledge is indeed power. We can and will speak up loudly and clearly. Let me end by saying:

LET OUR MANY VOICES BE HEARD BY MANAGEMENT!

In Solidarity, Margalit Susser President

Security at Ravenswood

In May 2006 the Ravenswood staff complained to the Union that they were having very serious security problems with teens. The Union requested a meeting with the Library administration, the staff and the Union. On June 13, the Union and Ravenswood Community Library staff met with representatives from the Director's Office, ISD, CLS and HRD to discuss the ongoing security problems.

At that meeting, staff related the constant security issues, detailing a number of shockingly violent incidents that have occurred at the library. These incidents demoralized the staff and made them concerned about their safety. Staff noted that the library's use was being affected as customers did not feel safe coming into the library. Customers especially avoided using the library in the afternoon. Students couldn't use the library's resources. Librarians couldn't provide reference services as they needed to maintain order in the library. They also said that staff from other Community Libraries was refusing to cover the library.

The staff proposed a number of solutions to try and solve the security problems. First and foremost an afternoon security officer on duty would greatly improve the security issues at Ravenswood. The library already had one for only a few weeks this past winter and it was considerably helpful. Second, a new activities assistant had to be hired with additional hiring of teen net mentors. Third, the staff needs to provide more programs, but could not do so due to the out-of-control teenagers.

The Ravenswood staff reports that, since the meeting, they have gotten considerable support from administration. They now have a youth counselor and have hired an activities assistant. Security



talked to the parents of the disruptive teens, and they are now less of a problem. They also got a lot of programs this past summer, and their Summer Reading statistics increased. The staff is feeling better about the library's security and appreciates the attention paid to it.

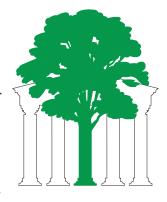
The Union will continue to have these types of meetings when needed. Obviously not every problem is worthy of a call to ISD. However, the Queens library system does have security issues. What we have seen of the library's actions at Far Rockaway and Ravenswood are great. The staff needs secure Community Libraries so they can serve customers better and so the public can take advantage of our outstanding services.

The Traveling Librarians Show

This past summer the local received a number of complaints that staff were being sent to community libraries outside their cluster. This is a serious matter. People who don't have cars were being asked to go to community libraries not convenient to public transportation; this sometimes adds 1 ½ hours to their commute. The community libraries giving up the staff were left with insufficient staff levels. Staff members were working too many Saturdays in a row.

The local asked CLS to investigate this and, if they found it to be true, to stop the practice. After a number of weeks the local was told that this happened very infrequently and was not normal practice.

We still receive complaints from staff that this is happening, but we cannot prove it. If this is happening in your library and you want the local to do something about it, please let us know. You need to document every time someone from your branch is sent outside your



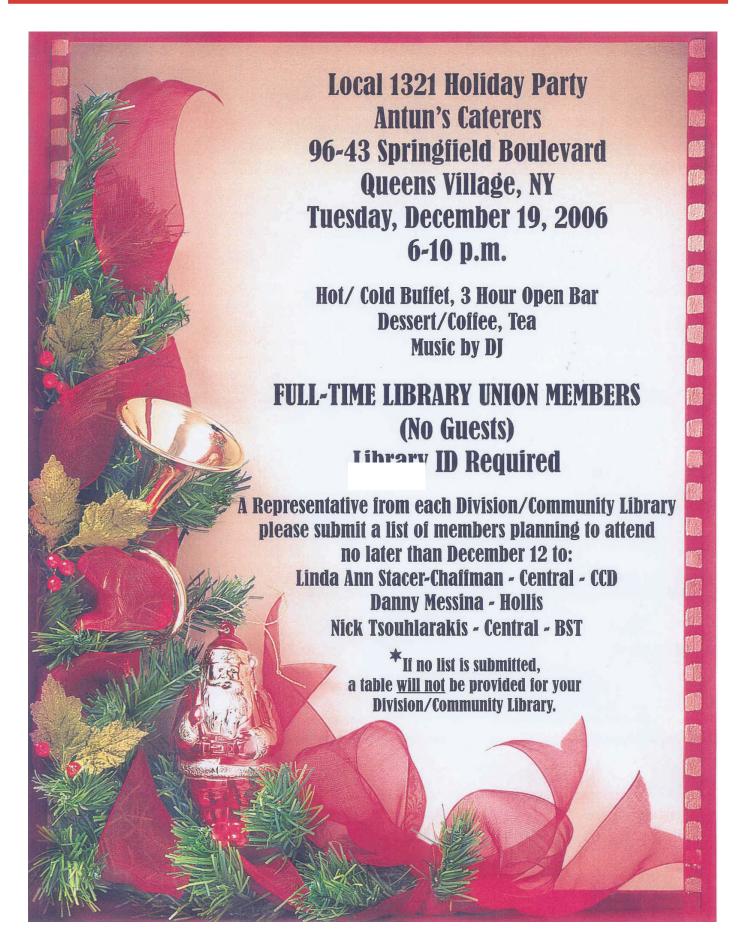
cluster. If a significant pattern arises, then we have a very strong case that the library is abusing their system.



Chipped!

Unbeknownst to many, new staff ID cards contain RFID chips. These chips are similar to those that will be used in customer IDs and those used in EZ-Pass and Speed Pass. They will be used as keys in new door locks and RFID check-out machines. Unlike traditional ID cards, which are read only when slipped through a door release

strip or under a scanner, these devices continually broadcast information. Some states have standards for RFID chips to insure personal security and privacy. We remain concerned about the Library's failure to inform staff about the nature of the cards and to place clear limitations upon their use to track employees.

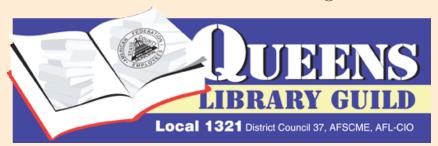


Knowledge is Power

Where to Find It:

Local 1321's Redesigned Website: http://www.local1321.org

Local 1321 has a new e-mail address! local1321@verizon.net



How to contact your local representatives:

Local 1321 Contacts

President Margalit Susser
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