


2010-2013 Executive Board Contact Information

Queens Library Guild Local 1321

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 Queens Library Guild
 Local 1321 News
 DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
 125 Barclay Street, New York, NY 10007

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Local 1321 News

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Chinyu Lin, Deborah Wynn

Trustees
Roslyn Lesser, Kerline Piedra
Linda Bannerman-Martin

President's Message—

We Showed Unity at a Difficult Time

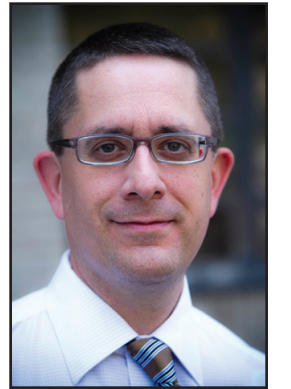
I HAVE BEEN struggling with my first message to the membership, trying to write something that truly expresses my sadness about the layoffs and subsequent fallout from them, which is hard to put into words.

This past spring, library workers' advocacy convinced all the politicians that libraries are vital to the functioning of this city. We held rallies, protests, read-ins and more. We convinced our public to sign posters, postcards and petitions. We got everyone to call our elected officials to save our libraries. All of that gave us a budget that spread relief throughout the staff.

The feeling of relief suddenly changed to anger and disappointment when we learned that not every Queens Library employees' job was saved when the library administration contended the library had a \$2.4 million budget gap. The library's administration and the Union's Negotiating Team met a number of times to negotiate cost savings, culminating in a set of permanent concessions that would not solve our budget gap and may only save jobs for a few months. The Union's membership rejected these concessions. The vast majority expressed disappointment in the outcome, because they wanted to help the 44 but could not accept it because these were permanent concessions without a guarantee of no layoffs. The outcome would have been a permanent sacrifice of our hard earned benefits with the strong possibility of layoffs in a few months.

To add to our pain, even though the City Council and mayor gave enough funding for five-day service throughout NYC, the administration decided to keep 19 branches open six days a week. This required them to declare "surplus" staff throughout the system, move people around at administration's discretion and uproot the staff. This staff movement upset everyone.

Now staff morale is abysmal due to layoffs, transfers, poor communication, all at a frenetic pace. Most of us do not know what is happening at this library. For the past month or two I have asked Human Resources to address the issue of low morale.



John Hyslop
President

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44 Library Workers Lost Jobs at Queens Library on September 3, 2010

Despite Union Members willingness to make concessions, Queens Library administration not willing to meet members' demands

ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, Queens Library's administration laid off 44 library workers. In spring of 2010, after a successful Union and Queens Library campaign to restore funding to the Queens Library, the Queens Library administration declared it still has a \$2.4 million budget gap that would only be solved by the layoff of 44 Union members or deep concessions made by Union members. Of New York City's three library systems, Queens Library is the only one to have significant layoffs despite being given \$500,000 more than Brooklyn Public Library.

In an effort to avoid layoffs, the Union sat down to negotiate with the library's administration to save these jobs. Asking for proof that the library was in the red, the Union requested the library open its books while also guaranteeing that any concession the Union made be only temporary and that no workers would be laid off. The administration would not agree.

In late August, the Union asked the library's administration to use its corporate funds to fund an early retirement incentive that would allow it to achieve significant cost savings by reducing its workforce through voluntary separation. Brooklyn Public Library and New York Pub-

lic Library offered such an incentive to their employees. Queens Library refused.

Now, the administration continues to keep 19 branches open six days a week, even though the City Council and Mayor restored funding for five-day service. This will force staff to do more work with less. The administration has also instituted transfers that uproot staff, many of whom have developed strong ties by working in the same community library for years.

For library workers like Selina Sharmin, a Queens Children's Librarian who ran the library's first picture book project in Bengali last year, the Friday, September 3 layoff will be devastating. "I am really feeling bad because I love the library and really enjoyed helping my community," she said.

President John Hyslop stated, "The Union is devastated by this loss. These 44 staff are hard-working library employees that provide excellent customer service to the more than 2 million people in Queens, the most diverse county in the United States. No one can offer the type of service they provide. The administration of the Queens Library has been unresponsive to both the needs of the workers and the community they serve. Morale is abysmal, and Queens residents will suffer. This is such a sad situation."

Help-Your-Own Fund Director Tom Galante's Memorandum and E-mail of September 1, 2010

The following was sent to the entire Queens Library Board of Trustees by Help-Your-Own Fund Director Tom Galante:

ON WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2010 the Library's Director sent out an e-mail to all the staff. I strongly disagree with the contentions made in the e-mail.

Throughout the negotiations Union members have been included in the discussion. The membership formulated the Union's demands. The membership voted down the library administration's proposal in July. In the last round of negotiations, the administration's proposal was only slightly different from the one in July. It still never met Union members' demands that the concessions be temporary and guarantee no layoffs in the fiscal year.

The Union's Negotiating Team put the latest proposal

on the Local's Facebook page asking for members' opinions. Within hours, the same proportion that rejected the administration's demands in July said they would not vote for this one. Therefore, the members rejected the proposal, not some undefined "Union leadership." This was a grass-roots effort, and library workers were given an opportunity to voice their opinion. The members were willing to sacrifice, but the administration refused to accept anything the workers offered.

The 44 union members that administration is laying off on Friday September 3, 2010 are our co-workers and friends. We feel their pain. Every member of Local 1321 is extremely sad about what is happening to their brothers and sisters.

Executive Board Members (continued from page 3)

board member subjects me to be in the (SMACK) of decisions that can continue to make us strong as a unit, our knowledge of policy, contract, and our right to know is something I enjoy informing our members, and not having them be taken advantage of, but letting them know that we are there for them. Adding to that, I enjoy politics and information.

Name: Kyle Douglas

Position on Executive Board: Vice President Non Librarian Professional and Technical

[We will find out more about Kyle in the next issue.]

Name: Dorrett Hextall

Position on Executive Board: Delegate to DC 37

How long have you been involved with the Union: 10 years

Position in Library: Customer Service Supervisor

Work location: Business, Science and Technology/Central

How long have you worked at the Library: 22 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I want to ensure my brothers and sisters work in a safe environment; that they are treated fairly by management; and I will support them in anyway that I can.

Name: Chinyu Lin

Position on Executive Board: Delegate to DC 37

How long have you been involved with the Union: 1 1/2 years

Position in Library: Senior Librarian

Work location: Catalog Division

How long have you worked at the Library: 23 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: Serving on the Executive Board will help me to better understand the Union policies and procedures, so I can better serve the Union members.

Name: Deborah Wynn

Position on Executive Board: Delegate to DC 37/Chief Steward

How long have you been involved with the Union: 14 years

Position in Library: Custodian

Work location: Bay Terrace

How long have you worked at the Library: 16 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I like to think that I can make a difference and that I have made a difference with some of the issues that I have fought for.

Name: Cathy Cox

Position on Executive Board: Delegate to DC 37

How long have you been involved with the Union: 1 year

Position in Library: Customer Service Representative

Work location: Far Rockaway

How long have you worked at the Library: 4 1/2 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I want to be on the Executive Board so that I can be the voice, eyes and ears of my fellow co-workers. Every organization needs someone who is willing to resolve a problem with a great solution.

Name: Roslyn Lesser

Position on Executive Board: Local 1321 Trustee

How long have you been involved with the Union: 15 years

Position in Library: Customer Service Supervisor II

Work location: Sunnyside

How long have you worked at the Library: 18 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I like to be involved with my local so I'm aware of things as they come up.

Name: Kerline Piedra

Position on Executive Board: Local 1321 Trustee

How long have you been involved with the Union: 8 years

Position in Library: General Librarian/Adult and YA

Work location: South Hollis

How long have you worked at the Library: 17 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: The reason why I want to be on the Executive Board is to keep abreast of Union matters.

Name: Linda Bannerman-Martin

Position on Executive Board: Trustee

[We will find out more about Linda in the next issue.]

We Will Not Be Shushed: (Continued from page 4)

quickly netted an overwhelming deluge of requests to read and volunteer. The reading list filled up quickly, but we tried to give everyone the ability to participate by volunteering for the event. Over 100 library workers and supporters came together to fight the budget cuts by reading, getting the word out, timing readers, soliciting postcards and signatures, donating food and craft supplies, and providing IT support.

Despite the limited preparation time, the actual event was wildly successful. Over 1,200 people attended, over 1,000 postcards were collected, and the Read-In was covered by an astonishing array of news outlets including Library Journal, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the BBC, WNYC, School Library Journal, and countless bloggers. Overnight, New York City public library funding became a national issue. While the Read-In benefited from strong political and library support, it was the tireless work of individual volunteers that made the event a success. Library staff, particularly Queens Library staff, formed a dedicated corps that ensured the event ran smoothly and provided a human face for the issue to attendees and bystanders.

In the weeks following the Read-In, we kept the pres-

sure on by continuing the postcard campaign, conducting media interviews, and organizing a 311 Call-In Day of Action. The high pressure tactics paid off. On June 30, the City Council voted for a historic \$66.7 million restoration to NYC public libraries: 80% of the proposed cuts had been averted. Staff-driven activism had changed the entire conversation and funding process surrounding NYC public libraries, hopefully for good.

But while sufficient funding was restored to ensure five-day service, the outcome was bittersweet. While 95% of the proposed layoffs were averted, Queens Library persisted in laying off 44 of our union brothers and sisters. With November quickly approaching, and mid-year budget modifications predicted by library administrations, it is imperative that public library workers maintain a constant level of advocacy in order to prevent additional budget cuts, restore six-day service, and ensure the speedy return of our laid-off colleagues. While we have proved that we can succeed with hard work and solidarity, the fight continues, and we can only depend upon each other to exert the kind of public political pressure necessary to keep our libraries open and fully staffed.

We Will Not Be Shushed:

The 2010 Campaign to Save NYC Public Libraries

EARLIER THIS YEAR, members of Urban Librarians Unite (ULU), an affinity group of New York City librarians largely based in Queens Library, initiated a series of activist efforts including a postcard campaign, rallies, online outreach, and a 24-hour Read-In that focused national attention on the issue of public library funding and culminated in a historic budget restoration by the City Council.

ULU's "Save NYC Libraries" postcard campaign was initiated in the wake of the devastating budget proposal by the mayor's office in January 2010 that called for a \$77 million cut to the city's three public library systems that would result in the closure of 40 libraries and the layoff of 1,400 library workers. The postcard campaign required members and supporters to solicit signed postcards in support of public libraries, and Queens Library workers went above and beyond in collecting hundreds of cards from their neighborhoods and community libraries. Local 1321 leadership was instrumental in expanding the scope and effectiveness of the postcard campaign by purchasing 4,000 postcards, and by connecting us with City Council member Jimmy Van Bramer's office as a collection point for the cards.

The postcard campaign had been quietly chugging along for a couple of months when Queens Library issued 350 Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act 90-day layoff notices the week of May 15. Workers were stunned and devastated. As the first public library workers to receive the notices, the feeling of isolation was profound. Many of us began reaching out to Brooklyn Public Library staffers as it became apparent that they would be



next. Two weeks later, Brooklyn Public issued their notices. During the initial planning meeting for the postcard campaign, ULU members had discussed the idea of a Read-In (inspired by a South African school library's fight against budget cuts), but the idea seemed overly ambitious given the logistical challenges and perceived public apathy. With very little media coverage of the mass layoffs, it was clear that library staff and supporters were responsible for getting the word out and making public library budget cuts part of public discourse. The Read-In was an ideal vehicle for this.

Time was an issue. With only a month until the City Council's final budget decision, the Read-In had to come together quickly. June 12 was chosen, and preparations began in earnest. Within the space of two weeks, press releases had to be written, flyers designed, volunteers and participants solicited, a location secured, and key players alerted. We were lucky that the administrations of Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library were immediately receptive to the idea. Brooklyn Public graciously allowed us to use the steps in front of their Central Library, and both systems were unflinching in helping us get the word out to staff, authors, and other potential supporters. In conjunction with our outreach via professional and social networks, we

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President's Message *(continues from page 1)*

This newsletter also contains information about your representatives, a write up of this year's AFSCME convention and information about a dues increase.

I am ambivalent about what transpired this summer. I believe this Union should be proud of the unity we have shown. You have helped guide this Local through difficult times by providing your representatives with good advice, strategy and useful proposals. However, I am extremely angry and sad that the library's administration did not agree to the Union's demand and laid off 44 of our brothers and sisters.

I am sorry for getting this out late, but we've had a difficult summer.

In solidarity,
John Hyslop
President

Executive Board Members

On June 17, 2010 Local 1321's new Executive Board was sworn in for a three-year term. These are your representatives. Some of their bios appear below. Others will be included in the next newsletter. We look forward to working for you to ensure your voice is heard.

Name: John Hyslop

Position on Executive Board: President

How long have you been involved with the Union: 12 years

Position in Library: President

Work location: Woodside

How long have you worked at the Library: 13 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I became involved with Local 1321 because I want a strong union that fights for all its members with integrity, honesty and openness. I want every member to enjoy the benefits we have worked very hard to obtain – a living wage, paid sick leave and annual leave, decent healthcare, a 35 hour work week, fair representation and more. Together we can make this happen.

Name: Margaret Gibson

Position on Executive Board: Executive Vice President

How long have you been involved with the Union: 7 years

Position in Library: Assistant Community Library Manager/
YA Librarian

Work location: East Elmhurst

How long have you worked at the Library: Almost 15 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I grew up in a home where my father was very involved with the Barbados Workers' Union. I have fond memories of the Christmas parties, and May Day picnics that were held for union families. In addition, I remember standing on the street to watch the rally of union employees when they close down the entire country because of failed talks between government and the union. My desire to be on the Executive Board is to act as a united voice who will directly represent all union employees by offering my support, and helping resolve issues affecting them.

Name: Conrad Stogel

Position on Executive Board: Secretary-Treasurer

[We will find out more about Conrad in the next issue.]

Name: Danny Messina

Position on Executive Board: Vice President Blue Collar

How long have you been involved with the Union?: 17 ½ years

Position in Library: Custodian

Work location: Maspeth

How long have you worked at the Library: 17 ½ years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: To help members with their problems; To ensure members retain their rights as union members; and to make the library a better place to work.

Name: Michael Nooney

Position on Executive Board: Blue Collar Representative

[We will find out more about Mike in the next issue.]

Name: Kacper Jarecki

Position on Executive Board: Vice President Librarians

How long have you been involved with the Union: Almost 3 years

Position in Library: Assistant Community Library Manager

Work location: Long Island City

How long have you worked at the Library: Almost 3 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I love Queens Library and I love all my colleagues at the library! It's a wonderful experience working with such a beautiful bunch of people who only give and give to make Queens a better place. Being Vice President of Librarians, helps me to give back. Together we can accomplish ANYTHING! We can accomplish EVERYTHING!

Name: Michael Wong

Position on Executive Board: Representative - Librarian

How long have you been involved with the Union: 10 years

Position in Library: Senior Librarian: Senior Librarian

Work location: Fine Arts & Recreation Division/Central

How long have you worked at the Library: 10 years plus 6 with NYPL

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I felt like this was a critical time to get involved with the impending budget cuts and layoffs. I want to do something to help fight management's policies and improve our lives in the workplace.

Name: Roma Ramdhan

Position on Executive Board: Vice President Clerical

How long have you been involved with the Union: 10 years

(I have been a union activist way before I became an Executive Board member.)

Position in Library: Office Associate I

Work location: Catalog Division

How long have you worked at the Library: 18 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I want to be on the Executive Board so that I can have an input in decisions being made on behalf of members. I also inform members of their rights and guide them.

Name: Barbara Halloway

Position on Executive Board: Clerical Representative

How long have you been involved with the Union: 13 years

Position in Library: Customer Service Representative

Work location: Queens Village

How long have you worked at the Library: 17 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I have served on the Executive Board (local 1321) for 9 years, serving as a Delegate and now as a Clerical Rep. I believe in my board and the members that so gladly serve on it. I wanted to stay involved in the decision making and helping to make differences that will make me proud and to share that with our members. Being a

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Help-Your-Own Fund

Local 1321 is raising funds for our Help-Your-Own Fund to extend DC 37's Health and Security Plan benefits to the 44 Queens Library Union members who are laid off. You have two ways to contribute. You can send a check made payable to Local 1321 to the Local's office at Woodside. Or your agency can participate as a group. To do that, you need to do the following:

Designate someone to be the person responsible for collecting the contributions, then:

- Give your contribution to this person.
- Write your information on the "Donation Sheet."
- Get a receipt from this person.
- Once all the contributions are collected, send them to the Local's office at Woodside.

Once the Local collects all the contributions, we will transfer the funds to DC 37's Health and Security Plan. If you have questions please contact John Hyslop at 718-779-0787 or local1321@gmail.com.