

QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD

LOCAL 1321 NEWS

DISTRICT COUNCIL 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO,
125 Barclay Street New York, NY 10007 • 212.815.1188 • Winter 2011 Vol. 8, No. 1

Queens Library Guild Local 1321

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Local 1321

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DC 37 Office:
Local 1321

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(212) 815-1188

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President

John Hyslop

Executive Vice President

Margaret Gibson

Vice President Clerical

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Vice President Blue Collar

Danny Messina

Vice President Librarians

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DC 37 Delegates

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Chinyu Lin, Deborah Wynn

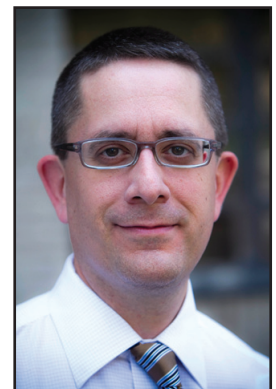
Trustees

Roslyn Lesser, Kerline Piedra
Linda Bannerman-Martin

President's Message—

Fighting for What the City Needs: Excellent Libraries & Staff

THE YEAR 2010 was a very difficult one for Queens Library Guild members. In the spring of this year, the threat of layoffs affected everyone at the Library when the administration sent layoff notification letters to hundreds of employees. The City Council and Mayor restored much of the Library's budget, and all but 44 layoff notifications were rescinded. Throughout the summer we struggled to negotiate concessions that would save the 44, but in the end the administration's demands were too onerous for members to accept. On September 3, 2010, the Administration laid off 44 of our brothers and sisters. To round off this difficult year, Mayor Bloomberg announced a \$4.6 million cut in this year's budget and another \$5.3 million cut to next year's budget. For this mid-year's budget modification, the administration chose to not to lay off any more staff in 2010, but to freeze the purchase of new material.



John Hyslop
President

The year 2010 was also one in which each of us should be proud of how we empowered this Union. When the administration announced layoffs, staff throughout the system became proactive and mobilized to fight the budget cuts. We held rallies, read-a-thons, postcard campaigns, leafleting campaigns and more. We raised over \$4,000 in support of our laid off members.

Mayor Bloomberg's cuts to the Library's budget do not bode well for 2011. We still face massive cuts to Library services and the possibility of layoffs. But we will continue to engage our elected officials and the public to make sure the Mayor doesn't cut New York City's great public libraries. We will fight for what this city needs – excellent public libraries with an excellent staff.

In solidarity,
John Hyslop
President

Dues Increase

I KNOW THIS is not the best time, but unfortunately the Local finds it necessary to raise its dues to members. Fortunately, the increase is only \$0.28 per paycheck.

In 2009, AFSCME and DC 37 raised the per capita dues they charge their locals \$0.60 per member per month. This per capita increase follows a formula that is outlined in AFSCME's constitution found here, <http://www.afscme.org/publications/1920.cfm>, Article IX Subordinate Bodies Sections 5, 6, 7 and 11. In 2009, the Local's Executive Board agreed that the local would fund the increase for as long as possible. Now that time is up.

In 2011, we will earn approximately \$497,000 in dues.

Our budgeted expenses will be \$512,890.42. This will give us a net income of approximately -\$15,890.42. We will eventually run out of money if we do not pass along the AFSCME and DC 37 per capita increase. This increase will happen in early 2011.

To help with this issue, we have had to make some unpopular choices including canceling the holiday party and the discontinuing the calendar/date book. Hopefully, we will be financially stable in 2011 and we will be able to afford the calendar/date book and holiday party.

At our general membership meetings you can get more information about our income and expenses. Thank you for your understanding with this.

Keep in Touch

By Kacper J. Jarecki, *VP of Librarians*

Did you recently move to a different address? Did you get a promotion or title change? Do you never get union mailings like this newsletter for example? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then it's time for you to get back in touch with Local 1321!

Your Union works for you so be informed of what the Union does! Staying in touch with the Union is very important! This way you can get Union mailings like postcards informing you of upcoming Union meetings! I remember my experience when I got promoted to Senior Librarian 1. I was so happy to get promoted but I was so sad because after every promotion, you have to fill out a Union slip, or you get kicked off the Union mailing list!

But now I'm older and smarter and I fill out a Union slip after every promotion or a change of address form every time I move and so should you! If you need any of these forms contact me, Kacper J. Jarecki at Long Island City. Send the completed forms to John Hyslop, President Local 1321, Queens Library Guild, 54-22 Skillman Avenue, Woodside, New York 11373.

Be sure to stay updated by visiting the Local 1321 website at <http://www.local1321.org/> and signing up for the Local 1321 mailing list. Also join Local 1321 on Facebook and get involved with the discussions! Your opinions matter to us. Without you, there is no Union!

Help Your Own Fund

Through the generosity of Queens Library employees, we were able to raise \$4,529.09 for Local 1321's Help Our Own Fund to pay COBRA payments for DC 37's Welfare Fund benefits for our 44 laid off brothers and sisters. \$2,044.48 was the final bill. The remaining \$2484.61 will be kept in reserve in case of future layoffs.



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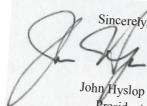
Thomas Galante, CEO
Queens Library
89-11 Merrick Boulevard
Jamaica, New York 11432

Dear Tom,

For the blizzard of Monday December 27, 2010, Local 1321 agrees with your decision to close the Library. The snow storm was so severe that traveling by public and private transportation would have put the staff in harms way. Closing the Library ensured that staff would not take unnecessary and dangerous risks to get to work.

However, Local 1321 respectfully disagrees with your decision to charge people who were out sick or on vacation their respective leave banks on the day you granted excused time for everyone else. In the spirit of fairness and improving staff cohesion morale, we strongly suggest that you give every Queens Library employee excused time.

January 18, 2011

Sincerely,

John Hyslop
President
Local 1321
Queens Library Guild

Working Conditions Contract

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the Local 1321 Executive Board is updating our Local's Working Conditions contract. We were hoping to have a final draft ready for administration's approval by the end of the year. Unfortunately, the Mayor's mid-year budget modification delayed that deadline. A number of meetings the Local scheduled with our DC 37 negotiator were cancelled because our negotiator was trying to prevent the layoffs of thousands of DC 37 members. We will schedule more meetings in January to get this contract updated.

Library Laughs

By Kacper J. Jarecki, VP of Librarians

WITH LAYOFFS CONTINUOUSLY on the horizon, a lot of library staff feel bad. So as VP of Librarians in the Union, I wanted to cheer up my Union colleagues! I made these jokes a long time ago and some of them were published in a past NYLA newsletter, but fortunately I kept the copyright so I can still share them with you now:

What do librarians have for breakfast?
Serials.

How do you repair titles that have ripped pages?
With books on tape.

What do you call a bunch of crazy librarians?
An OPAC of wolves.

What kinds of books do dogs like?
Eat-books.

What kind of books do cats like?
Any book that you're reading at the moment.

What kind of books do unicorns like?
Quantum theory books because quantum theory states that anything is possible!

What kind of books do hamsters like?
Hamsters are nocturnal so they enjoy glow-in-the-dark books, obviously.

What kind of books do horses like?
Horses actually hate books, and they hate libraries because there's no running allowed at the library.

What kind of books do apples like?
Apples like romance books, especially the fresh ones.

What kind of books do witches like?
Spelling books.

What's the best part about being a librarian?
The title.

Why did the job candidate wear a suit to the library?
He was going for a reference interview.

What kind of books will you find at a good restaurant?
Reference books – there's no takeout!

Why are librarians so patient when they go to the DMV?
They read between the lines.

What do librarians dance to at parties?
Audio books.

What kind of books are best for falling asleep on?
Soft-cover books.

Why did the librarian give the student philosophy books?
Because the student was looking to get a 100.

Knock, knock
-Who's there?
Dewey.
-Dewey who?
Dewey go to the library now or later?

New York City's Revenue Generation

NEW YORK CITY is not generating its legally obligated income. Since Mayor Bloomberg took office, the number of tax assessors and auditors has *decreased* considerably even though the amount of work *increased* considerably. DC 37 realized that this conflict is a big reason the city continues to have chronic budget deficits. DC 37 discovered that the city is not collecting approximately \$215 million in tax revenue. The following are the findings and recommendations DC 37 proposed to the city's elected officials:

1. **Collection of Tax Revenue for Billboards** – The Union estimates the city could generate over **\$22 million in additional revenue** by collecting the proper fees on billboards both in Transit Authority parcels, which are sub-licensed to third parties, as well as under-assessed or unreported billboards.
2. **Increased Collection of Tax Revenue for Cell Phone Antennas** – Throughout the city there are approximately 9,000 cell sites. According to the New York City Tax roll for FY 2009, the Department of Finance collected taxes for only 3,300 antennas. DC 37 estimates that more than 30% of the cell phone antennas are not being taxed. Each antenna could bring to the city between \$7,000 and \$10,000 per year. The union estimates that this would generate **between \$19 - \$27 million** in additional taxes and fees.
3. **Reduction of Improper Property Tax Exemptions** – The assessed value of property tax exemptions has more than doubled since FY 2001, zooming from \$18

(Continued on page 4)

Lobby Day in Albany

A FSCME NEW YORK is sponsoring a Lobby Day in Albany on **Tuesday, March 1, 2011**, which will include its six New York State Affiliates (CSEA - Local 1000, Councils 35, 66, 82, 1707, and DC 37). You can be one of our hard working activists to be chosen to help advance AFSCME's political and legislative agenda for the current year.

Buses will leave from Union Headquarters (140 Park Place entrance) promptly at 7:30 a.m. and will return to the same location at approximately 7:00 p.m.

If you would like to participate, **return the coupon by February 18, 2011**. You can fax it to (212) 815-1553 or mail it to the Political Action Department, District Council 37, AFSCME, 125 Barclay Street, New York, NY 10007.



Lobby Day in Albany March 1, 2011

Please register me for AFSCME New York Lobby Day in Albany on **Tuesday, March 1, 2011**. If you would like to participate, **return this coupon by February 18, 2011**. You can fax it to (212) 815-1553 or mail it to:

Political Action Department
DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
125 Barclay Street, Room 408
New York, New York 10007

Last Name _____

First Name _____ Local _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

Revenue Generation *(continued from page 3)*

1. billion to \$39 billion. Yet, during that same period, the number of property parcels remained relatively flat (14,024 to 15,393). The largest increase in the number of tax-exempt properties is in the category of charitable organizations, many of which continue to be mislabeled even though for-profit institutions purchased these properties. One reason for the decrease in tax collection is because the city laid off the seven city tax assessors responsible for monitoring and verifying the accuracy of the exemptions. Corrections in this exemption process could generate **over \$173 million** in property tax revenue for the city.
2. **Voluntary Contract-Rate Reduction Program** – The sharpest increase in the contracting out of city services is in the area of personnel, professional and consultant services. Between FY 2005 and FY 2010 the rates for this category of contracts increased by an average of 79% (or 15% per year.) “It is a matter

of fairness and equity that the private contractors, who have often received no-bid contracts from the city and who have profited enormously over the last five years, now share the pain,” DC 37 Executive Director Lillian Roberts said, explaining the union’s proposal that the city implement a 15% voluntary contract rate reduction similar to one implemented in Chicago and Los Angeles. More shockingly, many of these contractors get an automatic Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

The city must improve its tax collection services because these revenues would go a long way to repair the city’s budget. This is not necessarily a popular statement to make. However, why should some landlord who is renting out space for a billboard get free money and use the city’s libraries, garbage collection and clean drinking water without having to pay for them? Instead of a Queens Library office aide getting laid off, the city should legally tax landlords on their rental income they are making from cell phone towers and billboards. Let’s collect this money and use it to retain the city’s workforce.

How Budget Cuts Are Hurting Staff and Customer Service

AS WE ALL KNOW, this budget crisis has affected all the services we provide to all of our customers, the most visible being the Library administration's decision to lay off 44 of our members and recently their decision not to purchase material. However, another consequence of this budget crisis is the impact on the workload of the Library's custodial staff, which affects everyone affiliated with the Library.

Since the budget crisis, the Library has been short of custodians, with many branches down to one custodian from two or more. The standard practice was and is, when a custodian is out (i.e., sick, vacation, jury duty, etc.) another custodian leaves his/her home branch to cover the vacant branch. In the past few months this has been more of a problem because the Library does not have the custodial staff to easily cover these vacant branches. This coverage issue has been compounded by the Library director's insistence that 19 branches remain open on Saturday. Now custodians are regularly responsible for the cleanliness of two branches. Another problem is the Library administration's attempts to incorporate special projects into the custodian's normal work week. Before this budget crisis, the custodian cleaned the branch during open hours and did special projects on weekends. One example is the maintenance of the branches' floors. On a weekend, with assistance from another custodian, the custodian stripped and waxed the floor. This setup allowed the branch to be clean when the staff and customers were in the building. Now the custodian, with help from someone, has to strip and wax the

floor in the morning before the branch is open and hope that the floor dries before the staff and customers come in.

This custodial shortage and too-generous branch hours have led to a disgruntled and overworked custodial staff. Many feel that their home branches are not going to meet their and the staff's expectations for cleanliness because they are not around long enough to keep them clean. Everyone wants their workplace to be clean and safe. We need to have a clean and safe facility for our customers. This budget crisis will impact the branches' cleanliness and safety.

Local 1321's Budget Action Committee

Local 1321 invites members to join the newly created Budget Action Committee. The committee will create an activist strategy for the upcoming campaign against Library budget cuts, plan events and coordinate with the other public library locals, library-related groups in NYC, unions, local politicians and media. Our goal is to build a voice and presence in the budget fight that reflects the dignity and priorities of Local 1321 members and other NYC public library workers.

We welcome your participation, ideas and feedback. Email local1321@gmail.com or call 718-779-0787 to get involved, and look out for notice of upcoming meetings.

A Healthy Union

By **Kacper J. Jarecki**, *VP of Librarians*

DID YOU KNOW that being fit is healthy? And being healthy means being happy! I, myself, love to exercise! I like bicycling, table tennis, basketball, and walking. It helps burn off the calories from all the chocolate bars, potato chips, french fries, and nachos I eat. On the Blue Sky panel, I shared my suggestion that every Library get a table tennis set! Although it may be some time before management does this, it doesn't matter because we can exercise right now! As a Union representative, I love to share my love of exercise with my co-workers. In 2009, we did the Whiffle Ball League, which was a home run! We had a wonderful and healthy time playing outdoors and breathing in the fresh park air. In 2010, 100% of our Union energy was spent trying to avert layoffs, but we still managed to get out and go bowling at

Whitestone Lanes! It was the most fun ever! It was so educational being there with John Hyslop, our President, and other Union members! We all talked, played, and got healthy! I lost every game but I really won because I got to spend time with my brilliant Union colleagues from Queens Library. United through our Union, we can accomplish anything!

We are also planning to go bowling again in February 2011! So mark your calendar, get set and go! We will go bowling on Thursday, February 17th, from 9-11pm at 34th Avenue Lanes Bowling Center in Woodside, NY. It's only \$10 for unlimited bowling and shoes! Come join us, you'll be glad you did! And special thanks to our Library Rep Mike Wong for suggesting this location!

Remember to be healthy and exercise! Never give up!

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 appeared in the last issue of the newsletter. Below are two additional bios.; remaining bios will appear in a future newsletter. We look forward to working for you to ensure your voice is heard.

Name: **Conrad Stogel**

Position on the Executive Board: Secretary-Treasurer

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

Position in Library: Customer Service Rep. III

Work Location: Jackson Heights

How long have you worked at the Library: 11 years

Why do you want to be on the Executive Board: I joined Local 1321 because before I was eligible to be a member, I had a problem and no advocate to advise me. So I called the then Local President John Socha and he said, "Because you are not a member that does not mean the Local is not interested in your problem(s)." I promised myself that when pass-

ing probation I would attempt to give service to our Union. I feel I am useful on the Executive Board as many co-workers from all over the system contact me, and I can represent their voices at the Board's monthly meetings if not sooner.

Name: **Kyle Douglas**

Position on the Executive Board: Vice President of Technical and Non-librarian Professional Employees

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

Position in Library: PC Technician

Work Location: Central

How long have you worked at the Library: 13 years

Name: **Michael Nooney**

Position on Executive Board: Blue Collar Rep.

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

Name: **Linda Bannerman-Martin**

Position on Executive Board: Trustee

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



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