

UNIONED

Newsletter of Local 983

union

Temporarily Moving to 200 Vesey St.



DC 37 plans to start renovations on its 125 Barclay Street headquarters in the immediate future, meaning all locals residing in that location will need to temporarily relocate. While a majority of the locals, as well as DC 37 itself, will be moving to 55 Water Street until the renovations are complete, Local 983 will be taking up residence at 200 Vesey Street in lower Manhattan.

“We thought it was in the best interest of our membership to have more space and privacy than we would have been allotted at 55 Water Street,” said Local 983 President Joe Puleo. “All the offices from 125 Barclay are going to be located on just two floors at 55 Water Street, which means everyone will be on top of each other. When our members come to the union to discuss personal issues or problems they are having on the job, we want them to be able to have the privacy they need and are entitled to. Moving to Vesey Street during the renovation will be more advantageous for our membership.”

The union is expected to start moving around May 1. The new office will be on the 24th floor of the new building. Puleo said the renovations at 125 Barclay are expected to take two years.

“The DC 37 building is in great need of renovations, especially after surviving Hurricane Sandy. So many upgrades are needed that it would have been impossible for locals to have lived through that,” Puleo said. “When everything is done, we will have a great, new home to move back into, which is something we are all looking forward to.”

The union’s new address will be: Local 983, 200 Vesey Street, 24th Floor, New York, NY 10281. Members can continue to call the current phone number and you will either be transferred or provided with the new temporary number.

“We encourage members to visit us at our temporary location the same as they would have when we were in the DC 37 building,” Puleo said. “If members are unsure as to whether they should visit a DC 37 office or the Local 983 office, they should call and inquire before coming down so as not to have to make trips to two different places.”



Message



From President Joe Puleo

Welcome to the start of another new year. I know it's been a while since we have published a newsletter, but we are working to get it back on track. As you will notice, starting with this issue, we will be including our own newsletter inside the

DC 37 newsletter as this is a way for our local to save money. By the way, I'm assuming you noticed the new design of the PEP Talk newsletter. It was time for DC 37 to work its way into the current era and I'm proud to say I had a hand in getting them to redo their design. The difference is staggering and quite an improvement.

One of the advantages of this new arrangement is that many of our stories are included in the PEP Talk, which frees up space for us to write about different issues. One important Local 983 story that you should be sure to read about in the PEP Talk, however, is about our fight to support a Parks Department budget increase. We participated with many other locals at a rally at City Hall Park in Manhattan on February 28 to demand \$100 million in funding for public parks maintenance and safety in the FY 2020 city budget. Budget cuts over the years have decimated the Parks' unionized workforce and it's time we remedy that problem.

The additional funding we are pushing for would, amongst other things, create 80 additional Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) Officers for safer parks, public pools, and beaches; allow 48 of the largest parks to have dedicated crews to maintain, beautify, and ensure safer parks; guarantee crews at smaller neighborhood parks to clean parks and relief stations; and create 50 new Urban Park Rangers for educational tours and safety patrols.

Ever since the Supreme Court decision in the *Janus vs AFSCME* case, unions have had to rethink the way we've done business in the past. As an organized labor movement in general, we have typically not been so quick to implement new strategies, new ways of thinking, better means of outreach. Now we do. Labor has a new face. We have stayed strong. Our members have continued to support us by recommitting as dues-payers.

This determination has sent a strong message to those who tried to take us down that those efforts were in vain.

As of now, Local 983 has a 99 percent member retention rate. That's right — almost every person in a title we represent has remained a dues-payer. Rumors that unions would go under after the *Janus* decision were just that — rumors spread by the right-wingers meant to cause angst in the labor world. In the end, it didn't work. We are doing a whole lot better than people would have given us credit for this same time last year.

But we can't stop now. Unions must continue to push forward with the momentum we've had up until now. We need more of our members to get involved. That's why we are creating the position of activist and asking members to sign up. Our activists will act as liaisons to members out in the field, very different from our Shop Stewards who are responsible for grievances. Our activists will be reaching out to non-dues-paying workers and our seasonals in hopes of getting them to sign up. You can read more about our activist training in this newsletter. Local 983, as with all unions, must represent everyone in a title under our bargaining contract and should therefore be paying their fair share.

In the not-too-distant future, DC 37 is going to close at its current location at 125 Barclay Street in order to renovate the building, and will temporarily relocate to 55 Water Street for about two years. While it is expected that DC 37 will take two entire floors, that will be significantly less room than we have at our current building. Local 983 officers decided against moving to 55 Water Street with the rest of the locals because we believe it will not be in the best interest of our membership. Each union will have limited space, thereby allowing for little privacy. We have been looking for separate temporary space in the meantime and will obviously notify all members once we know where and when we will be moving. Once 125 Barclay is fully renovated and reopens, Local 983 will move back into the building.

We've got a lot to look forward to in 2019. The year started off busy and by all accounts looks like it won't slow down anytime soon. There's no better time for our members to get involved, so come to a membership meeting, sign up to be an activist (and get a free jacket), join us at a rally. We look forward to seeing you all.

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That's why we are creating the position of activist and asking members to sign up.

TEA Harassed in Borough Park for Simply Doing His Job

While doing his job in Borough Park, Brooklyn, and trying to tow a car that was illegally parked, Traffic Enforcement Agent (TEA) Officer Emmanuel Ford was harassed by an angry crowd of Brooklynites.



The confrontation in Borough Park was caught on camera by numerous bystanders and immediately made the rounds on social media. The video shows a handful of men free someone's minivan from Ford's tow truck as it was about to be taken away. The incident occurred on Thursday, January 10, at 44th Street and 15th Avenue in the morning, where signs in the area clearly indicate no parking on Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Ford had written a summons and then proceeded to unlock the door, put it in neutral, and begin to hook up the tow truck to tow the vehicle. A group of angry residents quickly swarmed the location and began removing the van from the hitch, according to both police reports and Local 983 representatives.

"Before the tow driver could raise the vehicle so the motorist couldn't leave the scene, people from the community got in the car and drove off," said Local 983 First Vice President Marvin Robbins. "They were harassing our TEA, taunting him, and causing a huge scene, allowing the minivan to escape."

Robbins said TEA Ford kept his cool under the circumstances, and attempted to reason with the van's driver before he drove off. The jeering was caught on camera.

"This is so great," one guy sneered. "What a loser... This guy worked his a-- off for like a half hour." Another man can be heard yelling at Ford, who is black, "You're in the wrong precinct... you should work in Harlem! They'll kill him over there." An NYPD spokesman is quoted as saying, "the attack against the traffic agent was unacceptable. We will not tolerate our traffic agents being subject to abuse in any form, not the least of which is the ugly example we see in this video."

As the Borough Park men swarmed the agent, demanding his badge number and threatening to post the video to YouTube, one could be heard saying, "This is my place, this is not your place." No threat was actually needed, however, as many residents posted the now-viral video.

Robbins said that the TEA responded to the area at the request of community members and local representatives who are concerned about illegal parking conditions that impede the flow of traffic, including emergency vehicles. "This is outlandish behavior against a traffic enforcement agent who was just doing his job to keep New Yorkers safe. He exhibited unbelievable restraint and professionalism in what was definitely a heated moment. We give a lot of credit to TEA Ford as this whole incident could have turned out very differently," Robbins said.

Ford has more than 20 years experience as a tow driver, and although was shaken by the event, returned to work the next day. "This is what our TEAs encounter on a daily basis out here in the City of New York; no one respects the tow truck operators," Robbins said. "You try to remain as professional as possible but their backs are against the wall."

Ford eventually got into his tow truck and drove away. Yisroel Friedlander, the driver of the minivan, surrendered to police at the 66th Precinct stationhouse shortly thereafter. He was charged with obstructing government administration and criminal mischief for breaking his Honda Odyssey free from a set of NYPD tow bars, or claws. His vehicle was subsequently impounded at the BKNY Tow Pound.

Robbins said the union is following up on the case and encourages all TEAs to consider their actions when facing a similar predicament. "Remember that these days everyone has a cell phone camera and will start recording anything. We highly recommend that everyone remain calm and professional," he said.

Photo from Twitter showing Borough Park residents blocking TEA Ford from towing the illegally-parked vehicles.



Contracts

Union & City In Negotiations For All Outstanding Contracts

With the Citywide contract between DC 37 and the City settled, individual municipal unions are headed to the bargaining table with the City in order to negotiate their unit contracts.

Most DC 37 members are covered by three principal contracts — the Citywide contract, the economic contract, and the unit contract. The Citywide contract addresses general working conditions and other non-wage matters, such as time and leave, eligibility for health insurance coverage, personnel and pay practices, and overtime. The Citywide contract is called non-economic because it doesn't establish wages, but it does have an impact on members' pockets because it sets holidays, annual leave, overtime rules, meal and car allowances, and shift differentials.

The Economic Agreement determines the overall general wage increases for the majority of DC 37 members. It also includes provisions for job security, annuities, and privatization. The unit contract is what Local 983 negotiates with the City for all members in titles covered by the bargaining unit. Local 983 President Joe Puleo said the union currently has three open contracts covering Urban Park Rangers (UPR) and Associate Urban Park Rangers (AUPR), TEA 3s and TEA 4s, and High Pressure Plant Tenders (HPPT).

"We are meeting with the City on a regular basis in order to resolve these outstanding contracts as quickly as possible," Puleo said. "We have had multiple bargaining sessions already for each contract as we work toward the best outcomes that meet the specific needs of our members in each title."

Puleo said the HPPT contract is more complicated as the union is trying to get salaries closer to a 220 trades prevailing rate.

"The problem is that there is not a direct match to an outside title so we have to look at creative ways of bringing us closer to industry standards," Puleo said. "While our HPPT title is a prevailing rate title, historically it's just been very difficult to achieve a good match."

Puleo said there are not many HPPT positions left in the City as technology is leaning more toward smaller boilers and an increasing amount of HPPT work is now refrigeration based. He said City agencies require two years of high pressure time and since HPPTs do not have as much opportunity to get that experience on the job, it's becoming more difficult to fill the positions. "The bottom line is that we are trying to get this group as close to industry standards as we can through collective bargaining because finding a prevailing rate could take years. It's a very lengthy process."

Puleo said the union is continuing negotiations for all titles and will notify members as soon as an agreement has been reached as members will need to vote on and approve the terms.

Members Covered by the 2017-2021 Citywide Economic Agreement Saw 2% in September 2017 and 2.25% Raises in October 2018: Paychecks reflected a 2% and a 2.25% compounded increase on base salaries and Recurring Increment Payments for most employees. MVOs, CSAs, APSWs and ACHRs will get an additional 3% in October 2019 with additions to gross.

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Meet Local 983's New Recording Secretary Donald Chapman

Donald Chapman, Motor Vehicle Operator for NYPD Fleet Services Division, is Local 983's new Recording Secretary.

Chapman began his career as a tow operator in the private industry, where he worked for 14 years. His work involved mostly towing on the highways, which allowed him to develop a good relationship with the NYPD. He took the MVO test and got hired by NYPD Fleet Services on November 14, 2014. In his current position, Chapman transports NYPD vehicles, crime scene vehicles, and vehicles from accidents involving fatalities.

He started getting involved with the Union when his former Shop Steward retired. Chapman was constantly inquiring about safety and health issues with management, which led to his coworkers encouraging him to become their next Shop Steward. He took the training class, but then left in June 2016 to start at the Department of Correction officer training academy. He graduated the academy on November 7, 2016 and began working on Rikers' Island, where he stayed until December 27, 2016. "I was working in the AMKC facility when I realized that Correction was not for me, so I went back to NYPD headquarters at 1 Po-

lice Plaza and got reinstated as a Motor Vehicle Operator," Chapman said.

Once he was back on the job, Chapman's coworkers again approached him about becoming their Shop Steward. He started attending all Local 983 meetings to learn as much as he could about the union and important issues so he could pass along that information to everyone he worked with. President Joe Puleo asked Chapman if he was interested in becoming a Grievance Representative two days a week — and the union bug bit.

Chapman held that position for a year when the Local 983 Executive Board asked him to become the new Recording Secretary, and was voted on in February. "I am happy and greatly appreciate the opportunities the union and members have provided me," he said. "I also get a lot of support from my family."

Chapman is the proud father of three boys — Louis, 17; Donald Jr. (aka DJ), 11; and Justin, born on March 19, 2019, and is engaged to School Safety Agent Linda Essex.



Fair Labor Standards Act Overtime Lawsuit

Local 983 member Robert Lewis and Local 1503 member Anthony Drayton have started a class action lawsuit under the Fair Labor Standards Act to recover overtime underpayments for themselves and other New York City employees.

The lawsuit claims that the City fails to include workers' differential rates when calculating overtime as required by law. For example, if your base rate is \$20 per hour, you should receive time-and-a-half overtime at \$30 per hour. However, if you receive a \$2 per hour night shift differential, the lawsuit claims that you should be paid an additional \$3.00 per hour (\$33.00) for overtime instead. Or, if you receive \$24 per day assignment differential for an eight-hour day, that assignment differential would work out to \$3 per hour, so your overtime rate should be increased by \$4.50 per hour. Shift differentials, longevity differentials, hazardous work

differentials, assignment differentials, driving differentials, and other differentials are covered within the lawsuit. Workers who want to participate in the lawsuit **must** file a consent form with the court in order to be a part of the case. A worker's claim extends back three years from the date the claim form is filed with the court. A worker who fails to file a consent form may not participate in any settlement or judgment.

The lawsuit is *Drayton v. The City of New York*, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, Index Number 18-cv-10138. If you want more information about the lawsuit, please contact the workers' attorneys, Lloyd Ambinder (Lambinder@vandallp.com) and James Murphy (Jmurphy@vandallp.com) from Virginia & Ambinder, LLP, at 212.943.9080.

Civilian Workers Struggling with 9/11-Related Illnesses



Get Unlimited Sick Time

Local 983 was one of dozens of civilian worker unions fighting for unlimited sick time for search and recovery workers on duty in lower Manhattan for 9/11. After all, they were exposed to the same chemical hazards as first responders, yet lacked the same benefits.

No one would know that better than TEA Linda Mercer, who after the terrorist attacks helped emergency vehicles get in and out of the World Trade Center site. Mercer now has breast cancer, which has spread to her liver, an illness that could be the result of the toxic air she breathed in the days after the Twin Towers collapsed.

While more than 2,600 people died when hijackers flew two planes into the Trade Center, upward of 10,000 people now have a 9/11-related cancer — and the red tape for health care continues to grow. A growing number of 9/11 first responders and survivors continue to fall

ill and die from diseases that could be caused by contact with the poisonous dust and air, which contained asbestos, benzene, PCBs, and more than 400 chemicals.

District Council 37 negotiated the new sick leave policy with the City. It will affect about 2,000 of its members, and will be retroactive to September 11, 2001. Studies show 9/11 attacks continue to

In a previously published article, Mercer said, “I never would worry about getting sick. “I was doing my job that I was hired to do.”

But after all her surgeries and treatment, she’s running out of sick days, a problem shared by other civilian municipal employees who also are wrestling with 9/11-related diseases. The number of people getting sick continues to climb, almost 18 years after the attacks.

Puleo said the toxic environment did not discriminate, and neither should the City, which is why unions pushed so hard for equality in the amount of sick time. Gov. Cuomo previously signed a bill granting unlimited paid sick leave to state employees with a 9/11-related illness outside of New York City.

Mercer, like many City employees, is entitled to 12 sick days a year — one for each month — and 2½ weeks of vacation days. While there are always a handful who would abuse the unlimited sick leave policy, in Mercer’s case, and for so many others, unlimited sick time is a huge benefit.

Mercer became a traffic enforcement agent in 1982, about 14 years before her agency merged with the NYPD. Since 1999, she’s been assigned to truck enforcement, where she weighs and checks large vehicles

for violations. When the twin towers were destroyed, she and her team were asked to weigh and secure the dust-covered trucks carrying debris out of Ground Zero to the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, where it would be searched for human remains. Her post was just a few feet from Ground Zero so breathing in the poisonous smoke was a given. With no mask to help protect her, Mercer did the best she could to cover her mouth with her hand — to no avail.

While Mercer isn’t alone, that comes as no comfort to the hardworking mother and grandmother. The federal World Trade Center Health Program reports the number of first responders and survivors who are enrolled for monitoring or treatment has climbed to more than 89,000.

Despite feeling nauseous from chemotherapy, Mercer always went back to work the next day. If not, she would have been taken off the books — and that would have meant no paycheck.

“Civilian workers who answered the call and did their jobs after 9/11 should never have been put in the position of having to choose between a paycheck and their health,” Puleo said. “This legislation is a milestone for unions fighting to take care of their members. It doesn’t matter whether you were a police officer, a fire fighter, an auto mechanic, or a traffic enforcement agent; every single person who was impacted by the devastating attacks is a true hero and we should be honored to be in a position to take care of them.”

“Civilian workers answered the call during and after 9/11 just like our police and fire department did. Everyone who could be of some service was there and everyone now deserves the same treatment,”

take their toll on those who were involved in the rescue, recovery, and clean up. Leave taken since the day of the attack that has been verified as a certified 9/11-related illness will be restored.

“Civilian workers answered the call during and after 9/11 just like our police and fire department did. Everyone who could be of some service was there and everyone now deserves the same treatment,” said Local 983 President Joe Puleo.

While those first responders who became ill after 9/11 were entitled to unlimited sick leave that provided financial stability, civilian members like Mercer were not.





Balancing Work & Family? Federal FMLA Could Help

The recently ratified new DC 37 economic agreement includes paid family leave for employees at mayoral agencies, the Department of Education, NYC Health & Hospitals, and the New York City Housing Authority. But what about those City union members not working in one of the included locations? With most families needing two incomes to survive, paid family leave seems more like a necessity than an option.

For many working families, difficult choices arise too often, as balancing a work schedule and family life are not easy for anyone. When one or both breadwinners in a family can take time off from their jobs to assist other family members who need care, whether in the short term or on a regular basis, everyone wins.

As of January 2019, the new paid family leave benefit is open for application in most agencies. The benefit, which was won through negotiations for the 2017-21 economic agreement, is now available to nearly 100,000 DC 37 members who are covered by the contract and work at a qualifying location. During contract negotiations last year, DC 37 and the City agreed to arrange for coverage through the New York State Paid Family Benefit. Local 983 is now negotiating to win the benefit for members covered by other contracts, including TEA 3s and TEA 4s, UPRs and AUPRs, and HPPTs under their respective contracts.

Starting in January, employees in titles covered by the DC 37 economic agreement began making an income-scaled small bi-weekly contribution — ranging from 77 cents to \$3.39 per pay period — into an insurance fund through a payroll deduction. The maximum annual deduction per year caps at \$107.97. The Paid Family Leave program entitles workers to take up to 10 weeks off in 2019 to care for a new baby or an ill family member, including a spouse, child, or parent. Even if your baby was born in 2018, you will be able to use this leave for bonding purposes within one year of the birth of the child. With this new benefit, city employees will re-

ceive between \$200 and \$746 per week through an insurance benefit, depending on their income.

The paid family leave plan is more comprehensive than a paid parental leave benefit, which is only for the birth or adoption of a child.

Like the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), workers will continue to be covered by their health insurance, and they will have the right to take the time off and the right to get their job back. The federal FMLA does not, however, provide participants with pay, unless they have time in the bank.

While employers generally offer workers some form of sick leave that they can use in case of their own illness, what can you do if a close family member is having health difficulties? This is the purpose behind the Family and Medical Leave Act, passed in 1993, to help employees balance their work responsibilities with family demands. FMLA provides certain employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year, and requires that their group health benefits be maintained during the leave. While employers must offer those on FMLA a job upon returning, they do not have to offer the exact job you left.

FMLA applies to all public agencies, all public and private elementary and secondary schools, and companies with 50 or more employees. These employers must provide an eligible employee with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year for any of the following reasons:

- for the birth and care of the newborn child of an employee;
- for placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care;
- to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or

“For many working families, difficult choices arise too often, as balancing a work schedule and family life are not easy for anyone. When one or both breadwinners in a family can take time off from their jobs to assist other family members who need care, whether in the short term or on a regular basis, everyone wins.”

- to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

Local 983 President Joe Puleo said the United States is decades behind the world on paid leave. “Compared to many European countries’ family-friendly plans, this country’s unpaid leave policy seems draconian,” he said.

Countries like Sweden, Germany, and France provide many months — even years — of paid maternity leave, child care options, and other supportive policies. “Studies from countries like these show why it’s important to bring the United States up to speed: Paid leave is associated with reduced infant mortality, improved child and maternal health, and higher labor force participation for women, which equates to high family incomes and growth in the economy as a whole,” according to one report.

The U.S.’s FMLA only provides unpaid leave, only covers an estimated 60 percent of the workforce, and disproportionately excludes working parents, particularly Latinos. The lack of family-friendly policies impedes women’s equality, strains the health and finances of working families, and holds back the U.S. economy.

Puleo said he hopes all City workers will soon be entitled to paid parental leave, thereby making it easier for all parents to care for newborns or sick family members.

on the Job

Members at Work

Local 983 has more than 3,000 full-time and seasonal members in nine different titles, all of whom help make New York City run smoothly in more than 28 different agencies. This section of the newsletter spotlights some of our members on the job.



Pounding the Pavement



Sharon Massa works the pounder as a Department of Transportation Assistant City Highway Repairer at Kew Loop Yard in Queens. The post pounder is used to remove and install posts that hold up highway guardrails. Massa is one of the less than 5% of women who operate this machine.

HPPTs Provide Unique Services in NYC



HPPTs Charles Picciotto (left) and Anthony Barile are both busy at their respective jobs as High Pressure Plant Tenders. Picciotto was working on a boiler, punching tubes, in Coney Island, while Barile repairs a boiler in East New York that required him to climb into the mud drum to reach the turbinng tubes.



Union to City: Allocate More Funding for Parks



Local 983 members and officers had a chance to meet with NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver after a City Council hearing on increasing funding in the budget for Parks. Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation is Barry Grodenchik, who stood with unions at a rally outside City Hall recently to encourage the increase. Silver was testifying at the Council hearing in favor of restorations and additions to the budget. Local 983 President Joe Puleo said by increasing Parks funding, it will allow City workers like APSWs to do more of the work that is currently outsourced at a higher cost, such as working on construction projects and helping operate machinery. “Our guys are more than capable and it just makes sense financially for the City, which is now overpaying private contractors to do the work we can do ourselves.” Pictured from left: Steve Raphael, Thomas DiNardo, Gary Lewis, Marlena Giga, Joyce Wakefield, Joe Puleo, Carlos Cedeno, and Walter Odom.

Union Offers Members **FREE** Life Insurance

No one actually wants to think about dying, but as the saying goes, “Nothing is certain except for death and taxes.”

Everyone knows that life insurance is important. However, too many Americans ignore the reality of what can happen if we die without leaving protection. The results could be devastating for surviving family members, leaving them with astronomical expenses, or even worse, loss of the family home because they can no longer cover the mortgage.

One of the benefits of being a DC 37 member is the \$10,000 free life insurance policy. But Local 983 knows that \$10,000 probably won’t go far enough so the union is adding another \$10,000 free policy for full-time, dues-paying members, and \$5,000 for part-time, dues-paying members.

“We are doubling what members get for their families in the event that there is a death,” said Local 983 President Joe Puleo. “While death is not a comfortable conversation, it’s definitely an important one. Since most families require two salaries to make ends meet, the loss of one of those incomes could be devastating.”

According to Life Insurance Statistics and Facts, a report put out by the life insurance industry, approximately 43% of the population doesn’t own a life insurance policy in any amount.

Both the DC 37 life insurance policy benefit and the Local 983 benefit do require dues-paying members to sign up, however. To receive the DC 37 benefit, dues-paying members need to fill out an enrollment form.

In order to receive the Local 983 benefit, dues-paying members need to visit www.myVIPbenefits.com or call 800.347.6071. Voluntary Insurance Program (VIP) is a national, full service benefits solution company with more than 25 years of experience and expertise in the supplemental benefits marketplace. When members call to sign up for the free insurance, counselors will be available to address all questions.

“There is absolutely no cost to our members for this additional life insurance, but you must be a dues-paying union member and you must call to sign up. This benefit is not automatic,” Puleo said.

He said that this is also a good time to update the beneficiary card you have on file with DC 37 to make sure your correct next of kin receive the life insurance payout. “Too many times we have had to deal with out-of-date beneficiary cards that listed a former spouse as the beneficiary. There is nothing we can do to remedy that unfortunate situation. It only takes a few minutes to verify what beneficiaries you have listed and to update the card if you need to.

“We are always looking at ways of giving our members extra benefits whenever we can,” Puleo said. “This additional life insurance benefit was just another way that Local 983 gives back to those we represent who continue to support the union by paying their annual dues.”

About Our Members



Congratulations to three Local 983 members from the Mann Tow Pound who were honored for 31 years of service each. From top: Faris Coley, Roy Charles, and Timothy Aikins. They are all pictured with NYPD Chief of Transportation Thomas Chan receiving their awards.



Congratulations to the graduating class of Local 983 TEA 4 Peace Officers from the NYPD Special Patrol Training program. They will now have the ability to write criminal summonses and make arrests.



Congratulations to TEA 3 William Strickland on 29 years of service. He is pictured with Local 983 First Vice President Marvin Robbins (left) and President Joe Puleo (right).



Local 983 Encouraging Members to Become **ACTIVISTS**



The 2018 Supreme Court decision in *Janus vs AFSCME* was an all-out attempt not to preserve First Amendment rights, but a way to dismantle organized labor and take away the strong, unified voice that speaks for and protects workers.



That attempt failed, however. Unions are stronger than ever, especially in New York City. In order to keep that momentum, Local 983 is creating a new title of activist, and is encouraging members to take the plunge and get involved.

“The great majority of our membership remained as dues-paying members after the Janus case, but we need to do more to reach out to new hires and seasonal workers,” Puleo said. “Since our membership is so spread out in the five boroughs, we are encouraging everyone to speak on behalf of the union and talk to their co-workers about the value of organized labor, the importance of joining and becoming a dues-paying members, and how important it is to get involved.”

In order to accomplish this goal, the union is holding its first activist meeting on April 6 at DC 37 headquarters. Puleo said the objective is to bring together members who want to get involved for this one-day training that will teach out organizing and how to talk to unaffiliated workers and new hires. The event is being run in conjunction with the DC 37 Education Fund and will include members who have attended previous trainings.

“The best way we know of to advance labor’s objective is to have members teach members, and members talk to member. It’s all about the one-on-one, personal connection,” Puleo said. The union is hoping for a turnout of at least 50 members who want to become activists, who will be easily spotted wearing their new (and free) activist jackets.

“This is a chance for anyone who wants to do more to get involved and show they are a proud union member. Activists are not shop stewards and will not be responsible for writing grievances. Activists will act more as liaisons between the union and members, and will help promote union events, like meetings and rallies, so we get larger turnouts,” Puleo said.

Anyone who would like to get involved and become an activist but was unable to attend the training, should contact the Local 983 office.

WANT TO BE A LOCAL 983 ACTIVIST?

Local 983 is looking for members to become Union Activists and get more involved. We provide the training and the free Activist jacket. You provide a few hours of your time to help us sign up new members. Fill out the coupon below and return it to Local 983, 200 Vesey Street, 24th Floor, New York, NY 10281.

YES! I want to become a Local 983 Activist. My contact information is below.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Number _____

Work Location _____ Title _____

Grievance Corner



UNION HIRES LAWYER FOR APSW WHEN CITY REFUSES TO REPRESENT HIM

An APSW was on the job driving a pickup truck when he accidentally struck a pedestrian in a crosswalk. The pedestrian was seriously injured and the APSW was arrested for failing to yield to a pedestrian. He had already let one pedestrian cross, but did not see the second one. The APSW did stay on the scene and spoke with the police, but the City refused to represent him even though he was on the job at the time. The union hired a lawyer to represent him and passed a resolution that any member who has pending criminal charges, excluding DWI, will be represented on a case-by-case basis.

GEOTRACKERS IN CITY VEHICLES LEAD UNION TO FILE IMPROPER PRACTICE

The City of New York began installing Geo Trackers and Canceiver tracking devices in all City-owned vehicles in 2016. At the time, the City stated that they would not use these devices to initiate discipline. However, in January 2019, two Local 983 members faced pending charges based on a Supervisor who randomly checked to see where those employees were in their City-owned vehicles. That led to Local 983 filing an improper practice against the City. The tracking devices allow supervisors and liaisons to monitor all aspects of a vehicle, including the way it is being driven, speed, time on the road, and routes taken.

“Many of our members are under extreme pressure to get to multiple locations in a short amount of time,” said Local 983 Treasurer Marlene Giga. “Now they are being scrutinized by supervisors asking why they were driving so slow or so fast, or why they took a particular route. Our members are trying to get so much more accomplished in a shorter period of time and now they are being chastised for everything they do and are constantly worrying about the security of their jobs.”

Giga, who is also a Grievance Representative, worked with Onya Brison of the DC 37 Legal Department to file the improper practice against the City. “Local 983 is dedicated to protecting our members and wants a policy in place that does not discipline employees regarding the Canceivers and Geo Tracking,” she said.

LOCAL 983 WINS UNEMPLOYMENT PAY FOR TERMINATED MEMBER

When a Local 983 City Seasonal Aide (CSA) was wrongfully terminated for being absent without leave, the union immediately stepped up to defend him — and won unemployment pay.

DC 37’s legal team took on the case of the CSA working security for park enforcement in Manhattan’s Madison Square Park on Madison Avenue and 23rd Street. The problem arose when the CSA’s boss looked for him in the park and couldn’t find him; however, a torrential down-pour sent the CSA to seek cover until the storm had passed.

Local 983 President Joe Puleo said members fired for cause are not eligible for unemployment, which is why the union and DC 37 represented the CSA at the unemployment hearing, at which the City did not even show up. They did send records, but with no representative at the hearing, there was nobody for the union to question about the incident.

“We represent our members in all these cases, even when it comes to being terminated from an agency, and even when the member is a seasonal worker,” Puleo said. “A member is a member, and all our members are part of the Local 983 family.”

UNION INVESTIGATING UNSAFE WORK CONDITIONS AT DHS 300 SKILLMAN

It would be a gross understatement to say that conditions at the Department of Homeless Services 300 Skillman are less than admirable. They are, in fact, outright dangerous.

Almost two dozen Motor Vehicle Operators (MVOs) working at the Barbara Kleiman Shelter in Brooklyn are being forced to take their



breaks, eat their meals, change their clothes, and standby in one cramped room. And to make matters even worse, this room is in extremely close proximity to an area cordoned off because of asbestos.

According to Local 983’s First Vice President Marvin Robbins, management there wants all the drivers in one room at all times that they aren’t driving. In addition to being crowded, it’s unsafe and unhealthy for people to be eating and changing clothing in the same confined space, he said.

These MVOs, who transport families to and from shelters, contacting the union about the situation. DC 37’s Safety and Health team will be heading to the facility for a walk through.



Robbins said another issue with the MVOs is that management is instructing the drivers to load the transport buses with all a family’s belongings, even if that means blocking the emergency exits on the bus.

“When drivers are being order to jam too much stuff into the vehicles, it causes a concern that in case of an emergency, no one can access the emergency exit. That means both the family and the driver are at risk and that is unacceptable,” Robbins said.



PARKS WORKERS BEING PASSED OVER FOR PROMOTIONS

APSWs are being passed over for promotion to Park Supervisor and Principal Park Supervisor during the summer season, and Local 983 is not happy about it.

Park Supervisor/Principal Park Supervisor are seasonal positions that run basically from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Local 983 President Joe Puleo said that since the City's parks are utilized so much more in the spring and summer, the Parks Department needs additional manpower, but they are allocating promotions to members who hold a lower rank than Local 983 members.

The problem stems from the fact that Local 983's roughly 350 APSWs hold a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) that enables them to drive heavy vehicles like garbage trucks and buses. Other members are not required to hold a CDL. If the Parks Department promotes APSWs, then they are left without enough drivers with CDLs. However, Puleo said since APSWs hold a higher rank, they should be given preference for the jobs since this is the official line of promotion in Civil Service.

"We wouldn't have a problem if lower ranked City Park Workers were bumped into our titles and then our members were bumped up," Puleo said. "They are saying the summer seasonal jobs are provisional positions so the rules aren't the same. The problem is that the same people our members supervise during the year now end of supervising our members during the summer. Under the civil service law, our members would be the only qualified candidates. The City has been getting away with this for two years. We want to make sure our members have the right promotional opportunities."

Puleo said the Parks Department is claiming that Local 983 members did not score well enough during the interview and that's why they weren't promoted, but the information the union received was arbitrary. Parks officials say they just want the most qualified candidates but Puleo said the union is arguing that if workers in a lower rank are more qualified, then they should have been promoted to APSWs previously.

It's not just a matter of the title. Puleo said the promotion comes with a large salary increase and double time for weekend shifts. Local 983 has filed a grievance on behalf of APSWs.

UPR GETS PROMOTED TO AUPR BUT THEN DEMOTED DUE TO POLITICS



Urban Park Ranger (UPR) Eloisa Reyes knows what it's like to be discriminated against.

Reyes started working in Parks Enforcement in 2014. She did her job well, and was encouraged by management to take the

AUPR exam. She studied, took the exam, and scored well enough to be put on the list. She was eventually promoted to AUPR in December 2017, but still maintained the provisional title. When Parks had to clear lines for Civil Service titles, Reyes was demoted to UPR in February 2019. She was replaced by someone less qualified, which management claimed was allowed by using the 1-in-3 loophole.

"Parks loves to have provisionals as step ups because there is no commitment to them," said Local 983 Vice President Thomas Testa.

That's why Local 983 is filing an improper practice charge on her behalf, and for 12 eligible candidates on list number 8506 for the Associate Urban Park Ranger (AUPR) title who were passed over in favor of at least eight provisional AUPRs. Local 983's position is that Parks should abide by Civil Service Law and be fair with their promotions.

DCAS established a promotional list for the AUPR title (Exam 8506) in December 2017; 74 individuals passed the exam and 62 were promoted. In January 2019, Parks notified 12 candidates on the list that they were not appointed to the title based on the "1 in 3" rule. Despite passing over the candidates on the list, Parks held over eight provisional AUPRs who either did not take the exam or did not pass it.

DCAS's rules state that a provisional appointment will end within two months following the establishment of an eligible list. However, the agency may not pass over eligible candidates in favor of unlawfully extended provisional appointments. Testa said that the DC 37 legal department concluded that Parks' actions in passing over eligible candidates on the list in favor of provisional AUPR's may be challenged.

"I worked hard to earn my promotion. I was unjustly demoted because of malicious collusion from management to sabotage my career. I was harassed, intimidated, and retaliated against," Reyes said. "Management should be ashamed of themselves for lacking integrity, honesty, and morality."

Reyes was never reprimanded or brought up on any disciplinary charges that could have led to her demotion.

"I had an exciting career to look forward to. Like many young, motivated employees, we take on seasonal promotions to advance our careers. I worked hard to earn my promotion. We should not condone management's style of oppressive totalitarianism. Every single employee has the potential to reach the next level in their careers if they apply themselves, but with management's politics and nepotism, the workers suffer," Reyes said.

SENIORITY COUNTS FOR VACATION PICKS

Many TEA 3s and TEA 4s contacted the union recently to complain about their agency not utilizing rank for vacation picks. After investigating, Local 983 discovered that vacation was not being done based on title in rank. According to First Vice President Marvin Robbins, "this is one of the few times in which your seniority in rank counts for something." The union filed a complaint and received a favorable decision. Managers have now been directed to proceed with vacation picks based on members' seniority in the appointment date to TEA 3 or TEA 4.

TRANSFERRING WITHOUT PROPER NOTICE

Local 983 received calls from three senior TEA 3 members who were randomly transferred to new locations after receiving only one day's notification from their agency. The union reported the incident to the DC 37 legal department, which is looking into the situation for possible improper practice. Local 983 First Vice President Marvin Robbins said the agency is required to give members five days' notice of a transfer. The Local is also investigating why the department didn't request volunteers or use inverse seniority prior to transferring three members all of whom had more than 25 years of service.



Legislative



Update



By Gordon Warnock
Local 983 Political Director

gin, they now control all levels of state government — the Governor, the Senate and Assembly.

In what should normally be a great setting for labor gains, 2019 hit a bump in the road during the budget process. The Governor’s projected budget included a predicted shortfall of more than \$4 billion. More than half of this budget gap is directly due to federal tax law changes eliminating or limiting State and Local Tax (SALT) deductions. President Trump’s changes, specifically capping the deductibility of property taxes at \$10,000, created a double whammy of tax receipt shortages combined with the exodus of the ultra-wealthy from the state tax rolls. The resulting shortfall will complicate labor’s agenda of pension enhancements and the attempt to roll back some of the drastic changes that occurred during the recession approximately 10 years ago.

On a good note involving the budget, the Governor, during his amendment process, proposed changing the Criminal Procedure Law definition of Peace Officer. The changes incorporate the legislative changes we were seeking in stand-alone legislation, granting our Urban Park Rangers Peace Officer status in New York State.

This legislative year started out as a promising one for Local 983 members. After Democrats succeeded in taking control of the State Senate in last November’s election by a very large mar-

Even though New York is now governed by one party, the budget negotiations are complicated. The Senate, fueled by the momentum of the youthful progressive victories in November, has hardened their positions on some issues that conflict with the Governor’s agenda. The irony that this may be the first late budget in Cuomo’s term in office is not lost on Democratic leadership. Yet, they believe their ideology is more important than a record of timely budgets.

This would also throw legislative pay raises into uncharted waters. The contentious battle surrounding pay increase for rank-and-file legislators has lasted more than a decade. The process was sorted out late in 2018, but was met with less than resounding support when the pay raise commission made the raises contingent on giving up outside income and the passage of a timely budget.

In non-budget news, Local 983’s legislative agenda includes several important pieces of legislation, including improvements to line-of-duty disabilities, peace officer status for PEP officers, presumptive disability for heart disease, and binding arbitration extension and expansion.

The legalization of recreational marijuana and Single Payer Health care proposals are both being monitored carefully by Local 983, both for monetary and overall impact on our members’ quality of life.

Just as important, President Puleo has voiced his opposition for several proposed changes in Albany, specifically pension reforms and proposed service cuts on the agenda of certain parties that are not exactly labor friendly.



NYC Civil Service Employees

District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

125 Barclay Street, Room 983
New York, NY 10007
212.815.1983
www.local983.com

Joe Puleo President
Marvin Robbins 1st Vice President
Thomas DiNardo Vice President
Steven Shaw Vice President
Thomas Testa Vice President
Donald Chapman Recording Secretary
Marlena Giga Secretary-Treasurer
Gary Lewis Sergeant-At-Arms

Executive Board

Victor Shannon, Henry Irizaray, Chris Viera,
Charles St. Louis, Farris S. Coley

Trustees

Van Scatliffe, Michael Gorga, Carlos Cedeno

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NEWSLETTER DESIGN/PRODUCTION:
Marci Rosenblum | Tricomm Creative
845.364.0222 | marci@tricommcreative.com



Shop Stewards

SHOP STEWARD AGENCYPHONE EMAIL

SHOP STEWARD	AGENCY	PHONE	EMAIL
Christopher Beatty	Hospital	917.743.4296	bday321319@aol.com
Carlos Cedemo	Parks	646.384.7859	Arojas3366@aol.com
Donald L. Chapman	Police	917.416.1528	DonaldChapman15@gmail.com
Farris S. Coley	Police	917.662.8036	Unitymass@aol.com
Phillip David	Police	917.301.0379	Davidphillip42@aol.com
John Deitz	Parks	845.220.8983	ecss08@aol.com
Arthur W. Elmore	Parks	347.776.4921	Elmore.arthur@yahoo.com
Sylvester Ervin	Parks & Rec	347.272.3977	SylvesterErvin@gmail.com
Mariano Espino	Police	646.824.7362	Mariano.e69@icould.com
Osa E. Eweka	Police	347.774.5501	ewuarethegreat@yahoo.com
Haydee Fajardo	Parks	347.628.5340	fhaydee116@gmail.com
Michael Gorga	DCAS	718.541.0938	MichaelGorga@aol.com
William Hurley	Parks	917.747.1296	
Joe Hylton	Hospital	347.545.6627	Productions682@gmail.com
Henry Irizarry	DCAS	718.344.5086	Pena07@gmail.com
Gary Lewis	Police	347.984.0812	Glewis054@gmail.com
Walter Luciano	Parks	718.812.4402	wlluciano169@aol.com
Aristides Maldonado	Parks	917.213.8981	artiem74@yahoo.com
Wanda Martinez	Transportation	718.674.5675	Martinez_wanda@gmail.com
Sharon Massa	Transportation	929.307.6843	Chweenyc@aol.com
Sean McCann	College	914.260.3901	smccann1092@gmail.com
Medim Mergen	Transportation	646.946.8163	N.Mergan1@gmail.com
Jason B. Oliver	Education	718.864.8341	JasonbOliver@gmail.com
Ronald E. O'Neil	Correction	718.598.2306	Righteouswarrior777@yahoo.com
Woo Sung Park	Parks	917.293.9258	Kobesung@hotmail.com
George Palermo	Education	347.865.9140	gezal@aol.com
Ruthie Perez	Parks	646.542.2966	Pebbles726@gmail.com
Rafael Ramos	H+H	646.298.2696	
Eugene Rodrigue	Police	347.693.0251	rodrigue.eugene@yahoo.com
Mikhail Rudashevskiy	H+H	917.613.8361	Dulo09good@gmail.com
Van Scatliffe	Police	718.659.5423	
Darryl Scott	Transportation	718.866.7924	ScottdScott1@aol.com
Victor Shannon	H+H	646.512.3782	Mephisto_602@msn.com
Teisha Smith	Parks	646.539.1004	Teishasmith655@gmail.com
Christopher J. Viera	Fire	646.963.8760	cjmaniac72@boostmobile.blackberry.com
Drusilla H. Williams	Police	917.568.0813	druluv15@gmail.com



Spot Light

On Our Members

Women's Leadership Academy Helps Train Tomorrow's Leaders



Local 983 Secretary-Treasurer Marlena Giga is a unionist through and through. Now she wants to help make sure that other women are trained and qualified to get more involved in running their unions, which have been historically male dominated positions.

Giga recently participated in the DC 37 Women's Leadership Academy that prepares women for future leadership opportunities. It is a six-month program for women activists or officers at the local level. Participants learn to develop high-level presentations and communication skills, develop strategic planning skills for internal organizing, create a personal five-year plan, establish a mentoring relationship with a seasoned leader, and build capacity in their own local or chapter.

"This is a great opportunity for women who want to gain a deeper understanding of women in the workplace," Giga said. "It taught us how to strengthen our leadership skills, engage politically, and inspire each other to become leaders, especially at a time when unions are under attack. The entire Academy was a real learning experience."

The program featured several influential speakers and a series of webinars. In addition, each participant had to complete a project; Giga's

was called CSA Strong. Her goal was to sign up 50 new CSAs within six months — a goal she exceeded by signing up 60.

"My goal was to educate and advocate for the City Seasonal Aide title, which is the backbone of the Parks Department but the lowest paying title in Parks. I want to make sure all CSAs know they have a union that has their back," Giga said.

She said getting women more involved means having a stronger voice to represent the large percentage of the City workforce that is female. By acquiring the crucial skills needed to run a union, women will have more of a presence. "Our needs and priorities do not always coincide with men's, but we are underrepresented in union leadership positions, which means we have to speak louder to be heard," she said.

A great place for anyone who wants to get more involved is to start by becoming a union activist and learning the ropes from the ground up. Members who are interested in the Local 983 Activist Program should fill out the coupon on page 11 of this newsletter and return it to the Union office.

Department of Citywide Administrative Services' Examination Schedule

Urban Park Ranger Exam #9055 (Open Competitive)

Application Start Date 05/01/19 Application End Date 05/21/19