

May/June 2011

Communique

A union is a way of doing something together you can't do alone. Utah Phillips (1935-2008)

Local 1180, Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO



Pages 3-8

ROVING REPORTER ASKS...

How far back do you go with your oldest longtime friend?



Sylvia Graves
Law Department
Legal Secretarial Assistant II

One of my long-time friends passed away. That relationship prior to her demise was a total of 15 years. My present longtime friend and co-worker who calls me "Ma" is 12 years.

I met her in 1984 when I was working with the Division of School Safety. Our friendship grew over those years before she left as a result of an injury. She (Cynthia) taught me a lot of things. She had understanding and patience with me as well as others. She was older than I and when speaking about her I refer to her as my "Mother-Friend." I miss speaking with her, especially when life's issues take hold. During those times I just reach back and pull forward our long conversations and always feel better. An outstanding quality that she had was that when I was "stuck on stupid" (I learned that from her) she never made me feel bad about what I was going through. She'd give me good advice until the next time.



Toan Trinh
Coordinating Manager
Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center

I always keep in touch with my old friends since 1975 because

we went to school together. All of them are in my country (Vietnam). We email each other when we have free time and help each other when it's needed. But everyone is too busy working so this means that I stay in contact with them, but do not expect to get back to them right away.

Raquel Morales is the Roving Reporter.

If you want to change your life you cannot approach it under old terms

By Chude Mondlane

Jerome Barner
Sustainable South Bronx

Jerome Barner works at Sustainable South Bronx (SSBx), a non-profit environmental solutions organization, a part of which is the Bronx Stewardship Training Program (BEST) of which Barner is a graduate. BEST offers counseling and training under SSBx which has been up and running for about 10 years. He says, "They try and get people to get their lives back in order. They send people out for different certifications and different courses. I'm in Long Island City coordinating the asbestos certification class."

Talked himself into shop steward

Born in the Bronx in 1967, Barner says, "Although those were volatile times, the Bronx was, and is, a serious melting pot of various races and culture, but everybody gets along." His father worked at a button factory and "did what he had to do to take care of the family." His mother retired in 2010 from the Transit Authority where she worked for 30 years. She was an active union member.

It was during one union meeting back in November that he found that he had volunteered to run for shop steward: "The question was asked, 'Does anybody here know what a shop steward is?' I ran down a list of things that a shop steward was required to do and before I knew what was coming I had talked myself into the job."

After graduating from JFK High School, many odd jobs and an Associate Degree later, Barner went back to college "for real. I got my bachelors degree in Behavioral Science at Mercy College because I was trying to delve into the counseling world." He was also in an apprenticeship program for sheet rocking and taping and from that point on "I began to learn the various aspects of the construction world and started making good money." It was during that time that he learned about unions.

People often get themselves stuck because we are creatures of habit.

When construction jobs started to dry up he was offered a job by SSBx. He says "Even though a load of kids will drive you crazy sometimes, I enjoy working with them and my colleagues. They are of all ages

UNION PROUD

including volunteers from senior citizen homes and some are young interns going through college. I would say there were about twenty-

through the program myself and I understand it whole heartedly, but at the same time if you want to change your life you cannot approach it under old terms.

Barner is focused on learning all he can about grant writing because he sees a need that isn't being filled by these programs. He says, "I have seen an opportunity to do much more beyond what my organization covers. I am interested in finding ways to fill that gap. For example,



Migdalia Taveras, Jerome Barner, and Maria Thermidor.

eight personnel on the payroll. The people we serve are anywhere from 18 years old up."

Preparing people for life

Barner says that the most difficult aspect of the job is to prepare these folks to join the work force when many have "all kinds of dissociative related problems. They want to do the right thing and turn their lives around. I think the biggest challenge is that people often get themselves stuck because we are creatures of habit. They turn back to the things they are used to doing and are comfortable doing. The great challenge is to break through that barrier and set up new standards, guidelines and restructure the way they resolve problems. I have gone

through the program they receive qualification in asbestos removal but then, if they're lucky, they get a job as a maintenance worker. I would like to see some type of certification in plumbing, boiler licensing, or carpentry work which would make them more marketable to the work place."

It is a better world that Barner wants for the future and he feels that he must contribute to making that a reality. "I really believe in helping people outside of my own circle. I believe that if people are working and the economy is growing my children will be in a better place. They will feel better about life, better about themselves and the world. So, if I can help somebody today, I'm all for it."

LOBBY DAY 2010

Albany, hard to believe, is where the action is

150 PLUS Local 1180 members took the bus(es) to Albany on March 15 with an uncertain future on their minds. The deadline for the state budget was two weeks away and the new governor, Andrew Cuomo, who promised no new taxes, meant for it to be met.

The Assembly wanted an extension of the tax surcharge on

people with incomes over \$200,000 for singles and \$300,000 for families, the top three percent of New York's earners. So did 1180's members, so did just about everyone in the state except the Republican-controlled Senate, some, not all, of those affected by the surcharge, and the governor who must have been seeing a tax extension as a new tax.

The big argument is that if they pay a one percent surcharge they will leave the state. There are two answers to that: "And go where?" and "Let them leave." To cut programs that deliver health care, that feed children in schools, that subsidize senior centers and day care facilities seems to be a way to exacerbate the problems already in existence.

The other issue for 1180 members was to preserve affordable housing by ending vacancy decontrol, the process by which rent stabilized apartments renting for \$2,000 and up can be taken out of the program and market rents can be charged. 300,000 stabilized apartments have been lost in the last 15 years. There was talk of including this in the budget bill but Republicans in the Senate, friends of the landlord industry, refused to agree.

The number of members was more than double that of previous lobby days. The issues are that important. Everyone asked said they would be back.



A conversation with Senator Ruben Diaz in the Legislative Office Building.



1180 listened as State Senator Gustavo Rivera who defeated Pedro Espada told them that affordable housing was a priority.

First timers

Manuelita Frederick, 25 years working for the City, is an Administrative Manager at the New York City Housing Authority. This was her first Lobby Day in Albany. "I've always encouraged other workers to attend union events and decided it was time to set an example even though I'm not sure what showing up accomplishes. These are big issues.

"For my generation voting is empowering. For my son and his generation, they have given up in terms of voting. It's discouraging to youth, to the community when their elected representative is a disappointment; when he takes advantage of his power, his authority, to make a mockery of the system; when he doesn't pay taxes.

"I came because I would be disappointed in myself if I didn't. We have these freedoms. We should use them."



Miguelita Frederick

23 year city employee and new shop steward **Zenola Fields** is a Principal Administrative Associate at the Department of Finance. "This is exciting. It's my first time lobbying in Albany. Seeing how young some of these legislators and staff are helped me to see that they are just like me seeking to create change in a positive way. I wanted to see who the politicians are and what they do, seeing them face to face to tell them what I need and what my community needs in my own words. This is exciting."



Zenola Fields

MORTGAGE WOES

Under the thumb of the banks

By Lorraine Gamble-Lofton

On a blustery and cold winter day, Saturday, January 19, 1950, my mom arrived at LaGuardia Airport from Limon, Costa Rica. She was twenty-two years old and had come on the heels of her big sister, Nez, at the behest of the family matriarch, Aunt Marie. Aunt Marie lived in Harlem in a huge apartment with about eight rooms; she also owned property in Brooklyn. By September, my mom and her sister were the proud owners of a three story brick house in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. In 1957, we moved from Decatur Street to a four story brownstone on Putnam Avenue, a few short blocks away, so that we would be able to accommodate our family who would be coming to the "States" very soon.

Home ownership has, for as long as I can remember, been the portion of the American Dream to which most Black Caribbean people have aspired. In our neighborhoods we are often the landlords. Well, family came, lived, grew, and since the sign said "stop," not "stay," they went on to prosper in homes of their own.

\$100 a month was a lot

My mom, who has since retired, was what in the factories they call a piece worker. This meant that she got paid for the quantity of items she produced in the leather factories where she worked, and she worked in a few. If you ticked her off, she'd pick up her scissors and walk. She had her pride. She would call the union to tell them that she was no longer there. Then she would call me and say, "Peaches, don't call the number that you have. Mommy will call you when she gets to the next job." She was better than most. She was the gold standard, a sample maker. The season ran from let's say April to October. The rest of the year she was on unemployment.

To most of us, having difficulty paying a mortgage of \$100 sounds totally ridiculous. However, when you consider that people sometimes grossed \$40 per week, and my mom was a single parent, and even if she were eligible, would have died and burned before accepting public assistance, et cetera, you realize that it is not as ridiculous as it sounds.

With the help of her sister, Florence, she got a more stable job at Chemical Bank which morphed into of all things, J.P. Morgan Chase, the banking bane of my existence. After my dad's death in 1994, and my mom's retirement shortly there-

Times about a program created by the federal government and named after our new president to help struggling homeowners come out from under the weight of mortgages that were sucking the life out of middle class Americans, and me.

Learning about banks

You begin to learn a lot about banks when it impacts your life. I learned that between 2006 and 2009 the number of foreclosure filings in New York City rose by 31.7 percent to 22,886. Queens had the largest number of foreclosure filings (8,964), followed by Brooklyn (7,108), the Bronx (3,000), Staten

There was always a check mark or an x missing from somewhere. There was always some reason to say "No."

after, it seemed only logical that I would take over all of the financial issues of our home.

There are good tenants, there are not so good tenants, and then there are tenants who come from the bowels of hell. Our tenant, Bob, was like a can of machine oil, three-in-one, and all it takes is one like him to jam your life. Bob declared to me on my mother's birthday in February, 2008, that he wasn't paying any more rent and was taking me to court. Six months down the road, by the time that everything, including his eviction, was said and done, I was left with an apartment that he had totally destroyed and a mountain of debt accrued as I tried to stay afloat. I had to find a way out. Refinancing seemed to be the thing to do. So I did.

The new mortgage was \$900 more a month than the former one. I had to gut rehab the apartment so that it would be marketable, and play 'catch up' with everything else. It was rough, but I was handling it. In March 2009, a good friend told me about an article in the *New York*

Island (2,646), and Manhattan (1,168). The borough of Queens accounted for eight of the ten neighborhoods in New York City (of the 55 City neighborhoods defined by the U.S. Census Bureau) with the largest increase in foreclosure filing rates from 2006 to 2009, including the top six.

There were sub-prime and balloon and interest only and only God knows what other kinds of mortgages, but they were there and closing in on people everyday. They also came from all kinds of lenders: obvious dishonorable thieves like Countrywide and those like J.P. Morgan Chase whose integrity we thought was unquestionable. When you get to the bottom line of it all there is just one money root knotted together with snakes guarding it.

Tightening the screws

Eternally hopeful, I submitted my application on April 7, 2009 and waited. While I waited I continued to make my regular monthly payments until a representative told me somewhat on the 'down

Puerto Rican Day Parade

The Puerto Rican Day parade is Sunday, June 12.

Please join members of Local 1180 in celebrating the rich and varied heritage of Puerto Rico, "La Isla del encanto." For more information call Venus Williams at 212-226-6565.

35th Annual Retired Members Chapter Luncheon

Hold the date: Thursday, May 26, 2011 at The Ketch Restaurant, 181 Pearl Street at noon.

Members pay \$20 and guests \$30.

For further information, call Marlene V. Ramsey at 212-368-3195 or email her at marl67@yahoo.com.

low' that I had a better chance of getting into the program if I fell behind. I was so grateful for this inside information from someone who sounded like I looked, that I fell right in step with what she said. I received a response in a few weeks and was elated that the terms were something I could live with. They wanted to see if I would make timely payments for six months before making a final decision about giving me an Obama Plan Modification. I wasn't worried; I knew that I could do it. The first payment was due on July 8th. The six months passed quickly, with little incident. However, I did become annoyed with never being able to speak to the same person twice. I thought that I had made it. Operative word, "thought." My fear level grew daily.

At the same time, unbeknownst to me, I had a mild stroke. A couple of months later I had a few heavy nose-bleeds; one was so heavy that I called an ambulance. By the time they arrived my third nosebleed had stopped. They suggested, strongly, that I stay home for the rest of the day but when you know what you are up against at work, you push forward and go anyhow. I should have listened. Coming out of the train station at noon I was mugged.

And tighter still

No matter how painstakingly meticulous I was in sending in my documents, according to Chase, there was always a check mark or an x missing from somewhere. There was always some reason to say "No." By now the fees and interest are mounting exponentially and I am always praying and sometimes crying. Through the summer everything is status quo. One part of Chase is saying "just wait," another wants me to start the process again, and another is saying you are not poor enough to be a part of the program and often nastily, and usually uninformed because they lost it, "we are missing your tax request form 5604T."

At the end of August Chase sent out the package to finalize the modification. I was so excited I could hardly breathe. I opened the package expecting new life only to find that things were now worse than before. The monthly payment had increased by \$500 plus, the interest rate was still the same, and because

of their games meant to anger and frustrate you into quitting and giving up your home, I now owed almost \$20,000 more than I did when I started out two years prior. I was certain that it would be stupid to sign this agreement that stated that my signature meant that I agreed with the terms. I was afraid of what would happen if I did not sign, but I was so ticked off at the manipulation that I just had to take the chance. I didn't sign and I stopped paying. For now, it was quiet.

Around the same time, my pastor introduced me to an attorney well versed in foreclosure. We talked and determined that I needed to write a letter to Chase and another

to the State Attorney General's Office. She helped me to frame it and I got them written. It seemed that as soon as the A.G.'s office got in contact with Chase, Chase got in contact with me. They were so apologetic that it was almost funny. They made all kinds of arrangements to have me come to different briefings and classes and sessions. They even connected me with an executive facilitator and so on.

Our health began to suffer

By now it's December. My mom gave me my usual wake up call one morning, and as usual I begged off for more sleep. She was supposed to call me back in 15 minutes. I got

up in 10. I didn't think much about her not having called back. When the phone rang a couple of minutes later, I grabbed it and jokingly said, "You're late!" She replied almost in tears, "Rainey, Mommy don't feel well." I dashed downstairs with some juice, in case her sugar levels had dropped. She was clutching her chest. I ran back up, threw on some clothes and called for an ambulance. The paramedics did their thing and determined that she was, in fact, having a heart attack and whisked her off to the hospital. Thank God she survived. Following her discharge, as I took her to different doctors' appointments I would ask them to check me as well. Apparently the stress of the house and my mother's worry about me and my worry about my job, because by then they were constantly on my case, and our collective worry about what was going to happen to us and our home just became too much. Mom and I had stress testing done together. Her's came out ok. Mine did not. On this past February 4th the doctors said that I was a heart attack waiting to happen and placed a stent in my heart.

Once again, they have sent a package to start trial payments, still with more loopholes than you can imagine. The loopholes simply say "We are just doing what we have to because we got caught and both you and your mother can drop right where you are."

Why is Jamie Dimon not in jail?

According to Bloomberg News, JP Morgan Chase president and CEO Jamie Dimon received a 51 percent raise in 2010 as the bank resumed paying cash bonuses following two years of pressure from the regulators and lawmakers to curb compensation. Dimon's \$23 million compensation package makes him the highest-paid chief executive among the top six U.S. banks.

People like my mom and I and others who struggle daily to put food on the table, educate their children, and care for their aging parents, who worry daily about their fate and that of their family, see people like him getting paid for screwing people like me.

I don't see him as any different than Bernie Madoff, who is in jail. Why is Jamie Dimon walking free? I wonder what would Angela Davis do?



Lorraine Gamble Lofton emerging from the belly of the beast.

GARY SCHUCHET

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: THE ASSAULT ON DEMOCRACY

Making war on public sector

By Gary Schoichet

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23

First they came for the blue collar unions shipping their jobs to Mexico and China and India and other countries where labor is cheap. "Help us," they cried and some tried but to little avail. And the people liked the less expensive goods that were imported and oh so shiny.

Besides, "my job is safe because I work at a desk." Next they came for the white collar jobs and a telephone call to the credit card company was answered in India and the person doing the company's books was in China and the guy editing the daily newspaper was somewhere tens of thousands of miles away.

They let the waiters and store clerks and laundry workers and others you have to see, in person, keep their jobs but with a lot more competition for lower wages than ever before.

Finally, they came for the public sector workers who still had jobs that paid well, not extravagantly, had affordable, and sometimes free, health benefits, and guaranteed pensions that are actually deferred wages.

Years of progress reversed

When they came for the public sector a lot of those people already come for said, "Why should they have it so good, when I've got so much less?" That is the haunting response created by a lack of solidarity over the last 30 years.

In the 2010 midterm elections that so many sat out, the country was rearranged. Republicans and the Tea Party took over the reins of state governments and rode roughshod over the collective bargaining rights of state workers. Wisconsin, the first state to have public sector unions

became the first state to essentially get rid of them. Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Florida, Oklahoma, Maine, and do not leave out New York with its Democratic governor, have all jumped on board to herd public sector workers and their unions into the slaughterhouse pushed by Tea Party crazies, Wall Street banks, and corporations whose only purpose is to make more.

It has been heartening to see worker and community responses to the attacks, teachers and students, fire fighters and police, and people just pissed at the overuse and abuse

of power by the newly elected state officials. The newly-electeds are paying back the bankrollers of their campaigns [See the interview with Piven on this page.] while doing a great deal of damage to the offices they won and the states they live in.

The attack on the public sector is about ideology, not economy. There are no real savings. There is no urgency to raise revenues; in fact, many of the newly elected governors, et al., are calling for tax cuts

Wisconsin, the first state to have public sector unions became the first state to essentially get rid of them.

that will starve states even more. In one of those news stories that can only make you shake your head in

wonder, it was reported that General Electric earned \$14.2 billion in 2010, paid no taxes, and is owed a refund.

Following is a compendium of what the states are doing. Since they add new stuff every day this will be necessarily incomplete and not up to date.

Wisconsin: The Republican legislature and the Republican governor, Scott Walker, enacted into law, legislation that limits public sector union bargaining to wages, and only up to the rate of inflation. Dues check-off is abolished, union members must vote each year to stay in the union, and public workers would pay more for health insurance and pension plans. Local police, fire, and state patrol would be exempted from the changes.

State by state it goes

Idaho: The Idaho state legislature has approved a bill to limit collective bargaining by public school teachers. The measure restricts collective bargaining to salaries

FRANCES FOX PIVEN

We have a scary and uncertain future

In 1966, Frances Fox Piven and her lifelong collaborator Richard Cloward published a piece in The Nation magazine titled The Weight of the Poor: A Strategy to End Poverty that called for people to apply for social welfare programs so as to increase enrollment and overload and collapse the system in order to force reforms and lead to a guaranteed annual income. It never happened.

Beginning in the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, right wing radio and television personality Glen Beck has been demonizing Fox Piven and Cloward because they were the "masterminds of an overarching left-wing plot called 'the Cloward-Piven strategy,' which supposedly engineered the financial crisis of 2008, Health care reform, Obama's election and massive voter fraud, among other world-historical events

[The Nation, 2/7/11].

Piven is currently teaching at the CUNY (City University of New York) Graduate Center. This conversation took place on March 24.

There are enormous risks being taken by the ruling classes with our futures, our international system, and with our planet. The scale of the risks are so high that we have used up all of the margin we have. We have a scary and uncertain future.

We cannot rely on old theories to tell us what's happening and how to deal with it. It's step by step and we have to be sure that the poor, immigrants, African-Americans, and other minorities not be marginalized by the economic conditions. We have to stand with the groups most at risk and cultivate the intelligence that comes with empathy. [That includes] students who are demanding free higher education, the elderly who we must not let go down, and single mothers at the mercy of the welfare system.

The Tea Party is a classical reactive movement. The adherents are old, white, without economic stresses, comfortable, but seem to be people anxious about changes in the country's demographic - Obama and the darkening of the population; immigration - Latinos in Arizona; the new sexual and family norms; and the fact that the United States is losing its number one position in the world.

It's a well funded movement. The right wing tapped into those anxieties which look a little crazy to union



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unions

and benefits, removing from negotiations such provisions as class sizes, teacher workload and promotions.

Michigan: Both chambers of the Michigan legislature have approved measures to give the state emergency powers to break union contracts. The governor can remove elected officials of “failed” cities and towns and replace them with people or companies of his choosing.

Iowa: The state House of Representatives is debating a bill curbing collective bargaining rights for public workers that was passed by the labor committee. The bill would exclude health insurance from the scope of collective bargaining, along with other changes.

Indiana: When Governor Mitch Daniels took office in 2005, on his first day he ended collective bargaining rights for thousands of state workers. He told National Public Radio that “the most powerful spe-

cial interests in America today are the government unions.

Kansas: The Kansas House has passed a bill that would outlaw employee payroll deductions for union dues and political action committees.

Tennessee: A Republican-backed state bill would end teachers’ rights to negotiate their working conditions with boards of education through collective bargaining.

Removing restraints on child labor

Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Nebraska, Nevada, New

Mexico, Oklahoma, and Washington have all introduced legislation curbing public sector negotiating rights. Probably many more will have followed suit by the time this is published

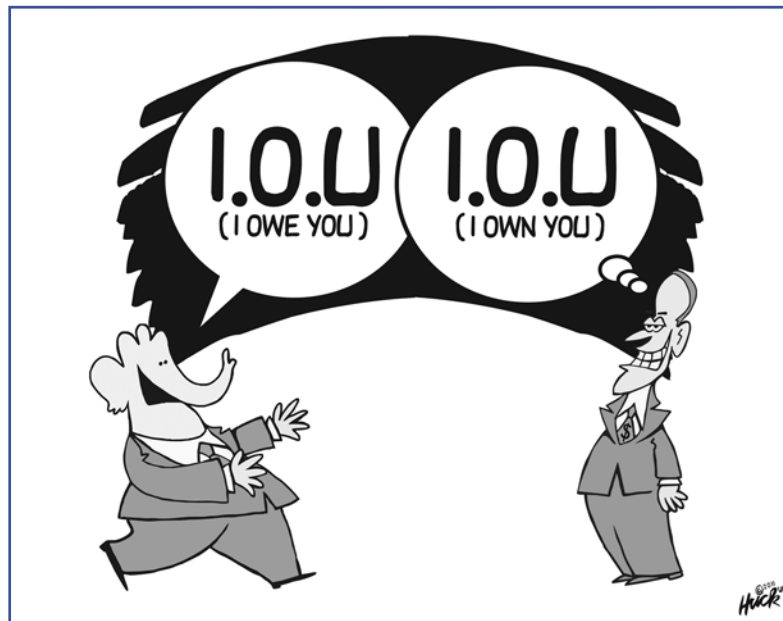
In order to help the recovery Maine, like Missouri, is trying to loosen child labor laws by eliminating the number of hours a minor can work on school days.

“I made him an offer he couldn’t refuse,” is the philosophy behind Ohio’s union busting bill passed by the legislature in early April. It takes negotiations off the table by allowing the state, cities, and towns to make an offer and then impose it if the unions find it unacceptable. Ohio’s law includes uniformed employees. Health care benefits are non-negotiable and union members are no longer required to pay union dues.

Waking a dormant movement

New Hampshire: Republicans introduced a bill that attempts to force public employees to make major concessions at the bargaining table before their contracts expire or become at-will employees, whose wages and benefits can be changed by employers. Subsequent to this, recognizing a mistake, New Hampshire House Finance Committee Republican Lee Quandt of Exeter said, “We started a war we don’t belong in. No company or government lasts long when you go to war with your own employees.”

Mr. Quandt has a point. Pushback is everywhere. It would seem as if the Republican governors and senators and representatives have enacted programs that have resulted in the re-energizing of a moribund labor movement, and the commitment to work in coalition to create a movement for all.



Koch brothers products: Who needs them?

The following is a list of the products made by the Koch brothers, polluters of the highest order, Tea Party funders, right wing think tank founders, and corrupters of the democratic process. There is really no reason to buy any of their products.

Angel Soft toilet paper
Brawny paper towels
Dixie plates, bowls, napkins and cups
Mardi Gras napkins and towels
Quilted Northern toilet paper
Soft 'n Gentle toilet paper
Sparkle napkins
Vanity fair napkins
Zee napkins
Georgia-Pacific paper products and envelopes

All Georgia-Pacific lumber and building products, including:
Dense Armor Drywall and Decking
ToughArmor Gypsum board
Georgia pacific Plytanium Plywood
Flexrock
Densglass sheathing
G/P Industrial plasters (some products used by a lot of crafters)
FibreStrong Rim board
G/P Lam board
Blue Ribbon OSB Rated Sheathing
Blue Ribbon Sub-floor
DryGuard Enhanced OSB
Nautilus Wall Sheathing
Thermostat OSB Radiant Barrier Sheathing
Broadspan Engineered Wood Products
XJ 85 I-Joists
FireDefender Banded Cores
FireDefender FS
FireDefender Mineral Core
Hardboard and Thin MDF including Auto Hardboard,
Perforated Hardboard and Thin MDF
Wood Fiberboard
Commercial Roof Fiberboard
Hushboard Sound Deadening Board
Regular Fiberboard Sheathing
Structural Fiberboard Sheathing
INVISTA Products:
COMFOREL® fiberfill
COOLMAX® fabric
CORDURA® fabric
DACRON® fiber
POLYSHIELD® resin
SOLARMAX® fabric
SOMERELLE® bedding products
STAINMASTER® carpet
SUPPLEX® fabric
TACTEL® fiber
TACTESSE® carpet fiber
TERATE® polyols
TERATHANE® polyether glycol
THERMOLITE® fabric
PHENREZ® resin
POLARGUARD® fiber and LYCRA® fiber

ertain future



GARY SCHOICHER

...and power and they think there are no consequences.”

...people like the “keep the government out of Medicare” statements.

...effect in the mainstream press that the Tea Party is bigger than it would be.

The rise of the business political right was a plan. The development of large scale lobbying and think tanks to supplant universities began in the 1970s as the social movements of labor and black militancy began to decline and competition from West Germany and Japan created pressure on U.S. profit margins. Business leaders turned to politics to recoup lost monies.

The business interests moved their public relations efforts to Washington. They lobbied for better tax policies for themselves, deregulation policies, and the end of progressive taxation. They lobbied to cut social programs which are paid by tax revenues and to take the floor from under wages. They used to give money to both parties. Then they shifted to the Republicans.

The political mobilization used corporate money to advance the corporate agenda that included ending regulations in safety and health, the environment, and the enforcement of civil rights laws.

There is a psychological dimension to this: capitalists have to make money. It’s about money and power and they think there are no consequences. Their grandchildren may not survive what they do. The planet cannot sustain this forever.

APRIL 4

Memphis 1968, The U.S.A. 2011

Collective bargaining rights have been stripped and dues check off revoked.

On April 4, 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. At the time he was engaged in an exercise in economic democracy: the right of sanitation workers to be represented by a union and to collectively bargain for wages, benefits, and safety conditions. Carrying signs that proclaimed, "I AM A MAN," 1,100 black sanitation workers walked off the job when during a rain storm they were sent home without pay while white workers were kept on at full pay. It was for them the final insult in a work atmosphere fraught with insult and danger.

The strike lasted two months accompanied by beatings and mace

attacks by the police. In the end, the strike was settled due to the assassination and the country-wide uprisings that followed.

43 years later many states have taken on the aspect of pre-1968 Memphis. Unions are being demonized and attacked by newly elected Republicans, and at least one Democrat in New York, governors. Collective bargaining rights have been stripped and dues check off revoked.

On April 4, labor demonstrations took place in cities throughout the land. In New York about 3,000 people were at the southern end of City Hall Park. There were other rallies in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens.



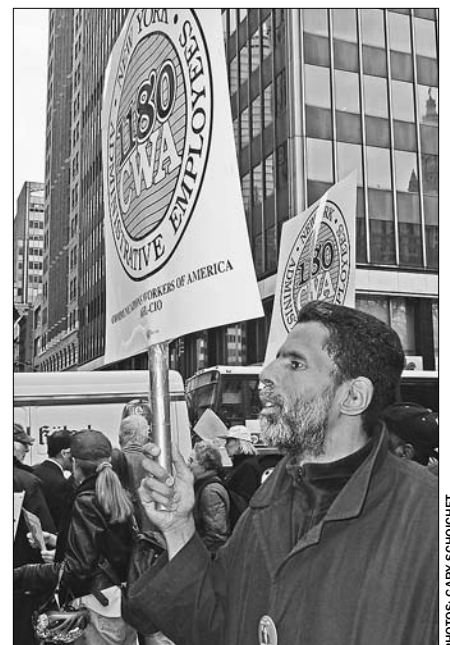
Carmen Carter (front) and Floretta Sage



Zenola Fields (front) and Catherine Alves.



Robert Daniely and Maudy Abdul



Abdullah Nazeer

Progressive government is the foundation of democracy

Progressive government is the foundation required for commerce, industry, and civil society to exist. The essential services provided by progressive government organize our society under the rule of law and does such things as allow the creation of corporations to facilitate capital formation, facilitates the registration and protection of patents to promote and reward innovation, provides for the adjudication of disputes and the regulation of markets to control those who would defraud others. Progressive government ensures the water we drink is clean, the food we eat pure. It ensures that our children are educated, that our citizens have health care, and that we will be safe in our homes.

Progressive government is being sabotaged by men in Armani suits and Gucci loafers carrying attaché cases filled with the anti-democratic philosophies of the rich elites who have bankrolled them into elective office. Others, our mayor



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Arthur Cheliotis acheliotis@cwa1180.org

The burden of taxation, once carried by the rich, shifted to the middle class and working poor.

comes to mind, bought elective office outright.

Begun by Ronald Reagan

They all promise to lower taxes, which they do but only for their masters. It started 30 years ago with Ronald Reagan's reductive tax cut from 70% to 28% for those at the top bracket. This single act began the starvation of progressive government and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. Our democracy is in danger because of it.

Federal funding for affordable housing became a trickle. Revenue sharing to the states was reduced. Unlike the federal government,

states can't print money or run deficits. Property taxes increased, as well as transit fares, public college tuition, and tolls and other fees so that the burden of taxation, once carried by the rich, shifted to the middle class and working poor. The middle class started down the path to extinction as the rich accumulated an even greater share of the nation's wealth.

Which side are you on?

Progressive government needs progressive taxation. In the 1950s, when the middle class began to grow, the top tax rate was over 90%. The government had the funds to invest in infrastructure, education,

housing, and health that built the economy for all Americans. By cutting taxes for the rich they have taken money out of the system that was used to sustain the economy.

The game plan is obvious to anyone paying attention to Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Maine, and New York. First, they slash taxes for the rich who bankrolled their elections and then they declare a budget crisis. The tax burden is shifted to the middle class and services are cut. They repeat the absurd proposition that our neighbors and fellow tax payers who are teachers, police officers, nurses, and social workers are the enemy and that their layoffs will save the state. Then eliminate the right to join a union and engage in collective bargaining and that will improve the standard of living in our nation.

The lies are wearing thin. That is why people are in the streets rallying in support of Wisconsin's public workers, collective bargaining, and unions. Which side are you on and what are you going to do?

Jury duty is direct participation in democracy

I recently completed jury duty in federal court. At first I was more than a little annoyed when I received the jury notice. Especially since I was called to serve in a federal court in Central Islip, over fifty miles from my home, and I live about twelve blocks from the federal court in Brooklyn. I hoped to get out of it, but wouldn't you know I was picked to serve on a jury.

A service to society

The judge who impaneled the trial jury spoke to over 150 potential jurors about the obligation to serve. He said that jury duty might be an inconvenience but it was one of the only two times a citizen got to directly participate in our democracy, the other being through elections. He spoke of jury service not only as a duty that all of us as citizens are required to fulfill when called, but also as one of the most important services to society



1ST VICE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Linda Jenkins ljenkins@cwa1180.org

Having access to jury service and failing to participate is as unacceptable as not voting.

that any of us will have the opportunity to perform. He pointed out that jurors are a vital part of our judicial system and that the impact of our vote in a case is important and real.

I had never thought about jury duty as another opportunity to exercise my political power. Of course, I would never fail to vote in an election knowing the struggles for African Americans and women to gain the right to vote. Similarly, it wasn't so long ago that African Americans and women struggled to be equally included as jurors. For years the pool of jurors called

did not reflect their communities, and prospective jurors were routinely dismissed from jury service because of their race or gender. As I thought about it I realized that having access to jury service and failing to participate is as unacceptable as not voting.

A humbling experience

Most trials are not as dramatic as those you read about or see on TV. The case I was on was pretty interesting involving international drug trafficking, but the testimony was often tedious and there were many times that the jurors were

sent out of the courtroom while the judge and lawyers did whatever they had to do out of our earshot. While we waited in the jury room we couldn't talk about the only thing we had in common, the trial. But ultimately, once all the testimony was given, closing arguments made by the lawyers, and instructions given by the judge it was up to us jurors to decide on a verdict. It was serious work. We had to weigh the testimony of sixteen witnesses and the evidence presented, keeping in mind the judge's instructions about "presumption of innocence," "reasonable doubt," "burden of proof," and the law. After much discussion we reached a verdict.

It was a humbling experience. It is not easy to take someone's freedom into your own hands. I learned a lot about how the court works and found the experience to be rewarding. So the next time that jury summons arrives in the mail, just do it.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 10, 2011

Present: Arthur Cheliotes, Linda Jenkins, Gloria Middleton, Gwen Richardson, Charles Garcia, Alan Goldblatt, Michael Lamb, Harlan Reid, Lenora Smith, Gina Strickland

Absent: Bill Henning, Clarona Williams, Hazel Worley, Gerald Brown (change of date caused absences).

Guest: Kathy Lonergan Pappas, NILICO

Call to order: 6:10pm

Ms. Pappas, an agent for the National Income Life Insurance Company (NILICO), spoke about the many benefits NILICO has to offer our members. A letter, under the president's signature, will be sent to all active members and retirees with

information about these benefits and instructions on how to contact an agent.

President's Report:

Arthur reported that the MLC is working on training all unions to debunk the propaganda about our pensions and the civil service merit system.

Dennis Hughes and Arthur are taping a show on RCN.

Next week Arthur will attend the National Labor Management Conference in Florida where he expects to engage in debate with other participants about the attack on workers. Members of the building trades unions will be there. Arthur will speak with them.

In April, Arthur will attend the 16th World Federation of Trade Unionists Congress

in Athens. The world economy will be discussed.

Arthur explained that the continuation of the stimulus package that extended the tax break for those who make more than \$200,000 dollars also ended the tax break for those who make \$20,000.

Our auditor Steve Schlapp has been invited to next month's meeting.

We will order more cards for the Cuomo Card Campaign. We expect to present them to the governor very soon.

Report accepted.

1st Vice President's Report: OCB

HHC titles – Assistant Director Hospitals and Associate Director Hospitals – The first hearing is scheduled for March 1, 2011.

PERB

Administrative Manager

DOE – We are awaiting sign off by DOE on stipulation of settlement to finalize agreement.

NYCTA – There is a conference scheduled for March 3, 2011.

School Computer Technology Specialist

DOE – a trial date has been set for March 10, 2011.

SCA

The agency has scheduled a civil service exam for the Assistant Finance Specialist A, B, & C title. The exam will be in an Education and Experience (E&E) format. Filing begins February 28, 2011 and ends March 18, 2011. The exam is open to the public.

Education Committee

The Education Committee will present a Black History Month presentation by Cary Barnes at the February membership meeting. The current Book Club selection

is *Desirada* by Maryse Conde. The club will meet on Thursday, February 24, 2011. The next Education Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

Civil Service Committee

The committee will meet on Tuesday, February 15, 2011.



Linda met with our attorney. He needs additional information on the PAA and Administrative Manager lists.

Report accepted

Secretary/ Treasurer's Report:

Gloria distributed both the Transaction Detail & Profit and Loss reports.

As of February 9th the TD checking account has a balance of \$811,644 dollars.

The Smith Barney/ Morgan Stanley account has a balance of \$150,142.41.

In December 2010 we gained nine (9) new members. There were two (2) changed titles and one (1) member retired.

In January 2011 we gained 10 new members, four (4) were terminated, three (3) retired, and one (1) deceased.

Gloria thanked everyone who participated in the Festival of Cultures. Over 200 people attended.

Drupal training – Two new Level 1 classes are set to start. Arthur requested approval to start an additional two new classes at Level 2 for a total of four new classes. His request was approved.

Report accepted

Recording Secretary:

Gwen reported on the January 27th snowstorm. The Office of Labor Relations and DCAS will review denials of excused absence from all agencies to ensure that the process is uniform. OLR was informed that we will file grievances for members who are not approved.

Report accepted

The meeting adjourned at 7:25pm, the next meeting is March 9, 2011

Local 1180 members present papers



Urban Studies graduate students at CUNY's Murphy Institute, Catrina Cavines, a Principal Administrative Associate at the Department of Youth and David Zackin, a Coordinating Manager at Bellevue Hospital, presented their Capstone thesis papers to a research writing class and talked about their processes in researching and writing their papers.

Zackin spoke about his work in developing instructive literature for patients at Bellevue Hospital. Caviness led a compelling and thoughtful discussion on her fieldwork and research on the links between mental illness and young men of color at risk of incarceration and the agency that serves them. Their papers were written under the guidance of Ajamu Sankofa.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Training

Local 1180's Committee on People with Disabilities will conduct a one-day seminar on **Saturday, June 4**, on workers' rights under the 1993 law. The law, signed by President Clinton in 1993, allows eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave from their jobs for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child; to care for a seriously ill family member; or to attend to their own serious health condition.

The interactive workshop will include in-depth information on your legal rights, contract provisions, both public and private sectors, covering sick leave benefits, and the New York City domestic partnership law – all to give you a greater understanding of what you can do to help yourself, your family and your co-workers.

The workshop will take place in the Local 1180 office at 6 Harrison Street from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. To register, submit the attached form by Friday, May 28th.

June 4 FMLA Training

Please return this form to Local 1180, attention: Committee on People with Disabilities, via mail to 6 Harrison Street, 4th floor, New York, NY 10013 or fax to 212-966-6831 by Friday, May 28.

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Agency or shop: _____

Work location: _____

Home phone: _____

Work phone: _____

Email: _____

COMMUNIQUE

Official Publication

New York Administrative Employees Local 1180
 Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO
 6 Harrison Street, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10013-2898
<http://www.cwa1180.org>
 Telephone: 212-226-6565
 Security Benefits: 212-966-5353
 Retiree Benefits: 212-966-5353
 Claim Forms Hotline: 212-925-1091
 Retiree Division: 212-226-5800
 Tape Message: 212-226-1180

For out-of-town retirees:

Retiree Division: 800-801-2882
 Retiree Benefits: 888-966-5353

Executive Board

Arthur Cheliotes, *President*
 Linda Jenkins, *1st Vice President*
 William F. Henning, Jr., *2nd Vice President*
 Gloria Middleton, *Secretary-Treasurer*
 Gwen Richardson, *Recording Secretary*

Members-at-large

Gerald Brown, Charles Garcia, Alan Goldblatt,
 Michael Lamb, Harlan Reid, Georgina Strickland,
 Lenora Smith, Clarona Williams, Hazel Worley

Gary Schoichet, *Editor*
 Margarita Aguilar, *Design*



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SOMETHING NEW, JUST FOR YOU!



Annual Picnic 2011 ● Saturday, August 20, 2011



CWA Local 1180's Annual Picnic will take place this year on
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2011
 12:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.
LIBERTY LAKE, BORDENTOWN, NEW JERSEY



60 Scenic Acres, Shaded Campus, Lakeside Dining, 7 Acre Lake, 2 Olympic Pools, Row Boats and Paddle Boats, 18 Hole Professional Miniature Golf Course, Outdoor Laser Tag, 24 Foot Rock Climbing Wall, Professional Games Staff, Soccer, Football, Softball Fields, New Basketball Courts, Sand Volleyball, Hiking Trails, Horseshoe Pits, Towel Service at the Pools, Water Trampoline, 2 Pool Water Slides, Pony Rides, Face Painter, Professional D.J. and more. (Please bring your own swimsuits for swimming).

N.J. STATE HEALTH LAW PROHIBITS
 REMOVAL OF FOOD FROM FACILITY.
 VIOLATORS MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE
 FACILITY NON-REFUNDED.

RAIN OR SHINE - SORRY, NO REFUNDS!
CASH & MONEY ORDERS ONLY!
(NO CHECKS).....NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

Bus Deadline: Monday, August 15, 2011
Ticket Deadline: Friday, August 19, 2011

<p style="text-align: center;">Included Buffet</p> <p>FROM THE GRILL 1/3 lb. Hamburgers and Cheeseburgers All-Beef Hotdogs Grilled Chicken Breast Italian Sweet Sausage Veggie Burgers upon request</p> <p>HOT BUFFET Italian Meatball Subs Fried Chicken BBQ Spare Ribs Baked Ziti Baked Beans Fresh Jersey Corn on the Cob</p> <p>SIDES Fresh Sliced Jersey Tomatoes and Onions Sauteed Peppers and Onions Sauerkraut, NY Deli-Style Pickles Potato Chips & Pretzels</p> <p>DESSERTS Assorted Cookies – Watermelon – Ice Cream Sodas – Lemonade – Ice Tea</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BUSES ARE AVAILABLE @ LOCATIONS BELOW FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE @ \$21.00 PER SEAT</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Location</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Bus #</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Pick-up Stop</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Brooklyn</td> <td>1</td> <td>Downtown (L.I.U.) (Flatbush Av. Ext. @ Dekalb)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Queens</td> <td>2</td> <td>Rochdale Village</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td>179th St./IND Subway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manhattan</td> <td>4</td> <td>Lenox Av. & 125th St.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bronx</td> <td>5</td> <td>Co-op City @ Bay Plaza Shopping Ctr.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>6</td> <td>Yankee Stadium</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">(BUSES DEPART PROMPTLY AT 10:00 A.M.)</p>	Location	Bus #	Pick-up Stop	Brooklyn	1	Downtown (L.I.U.) (Flatbush Av. Ext. @ Dekalb)	Queens	2	Rochdale Village		3	179 th St./IND Subway	Manhattan	4	Lenox Av. & 125 th St.	Bronx	5	Co-op City @ Bay Plaza Shopping Ctr.		6	Yankee Stadium
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Please complete and enclose payment/money order payable to CWA Local 1180
Send To: CWA Local 1180 Picnic 2011, 6 Harrison Street, 4th Floor, New York, New York 10013-2898

NAME: _____ HOME ADDRESS: _____

APT: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE (WORK): _____ (HOME): _____

Picnic Tickets	Quantity	Total
Adult	\$35.00 pp _____	\$ _____
Children (AGE 3-11)	\$22.00 pp _____	\$ _____

Bus Tickets	Quantity	Bus No.	Total
\$21.00 pp	_____	_____	\$ _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Mailed Tickets

Picked Up Tickets

Date / /2011

Receipt No. _____

CALENDAR

All meetings are at 6 PM unless otherwise noted.

- May 3 (Tuesday)**
Arts & Entertainment Committee
(chair: Harlan Reid)
- May 4 (Wednesday)**
People with Disabilities Committee
(chair: Alan Goldblatt)
- May 5 (Thursday)**
Civil Rights and Equity Committee
(chair: Gloria Middleton)
- Community Services Committee**
(chair: Pat Ruffin)
- May 10 (Tuesday)**
Education Committee
(chair: Linda Jenkins)
- Women's Committee**
(chair: Bernice Selman)
- May 17 (Tuesday)**
General Membership Meeting
Local 32BJ, 101 Ave of Americas
- March 19 (Thursday)**
Hispanic Committee
(chair: Venus Williams)
- May 26 (Thursday)**
Caribbean Heritage Committee
(chair: Gina Strickland)
- June 1 (Wednesday)**
People with Disabilities Committee
(chair: Alan Goldblatt)
- June 2 (Thursday)**
Civil Rights and Equity Committee
(chair: Gloria Middleton)
- Community Services Committee**
(chair: Pat Ruffin)
- June 7 (Tuesday)**
Arts & Entertainment Committee
(chair: Harlan Reid)
- June 14 (Tuesday)**
Education Committee
(chair: Linda Jenkins)
- Women's Committee**
(chair: Bernice Selman)
- June 16 (Thursday)**
Hispanic Committee
(chair: Venus Williams)
- June 23 (Thursday)**
Caribbean Heritage Committee
(chair: Gina Strickland)
- No Membership Meetings in June, July, or August.**

PERSONAL NOTES

PASSINGS

Condolences to the family of PAA and retired shop steward **Barbara Linthicum** who passed away on March 28.

Sincere condolences to staff rep **Harlan Reid** whose mother, Cherita, passed on April 13.

CONGRATULATIONS

Marc Slutsky, now in his 23rd year of service the Kings Civil Courts, was named an Unsung Hero of the court system. The honor goes to someone whose name and deeds don't normally make headlines, but whose contribution is significant.



Inside Communique

**ALBANY is
where they pass
the laws**

3

**Mortgage woes:
Under the
thumb of the
banks**

4-5

**April 4: In honor of
Martin Luther
King, Jr.**

8

April 4, 2011

It was all about standing up for the rights of workers and 3,000 people at City Hall Park said they would.



GARY SCHOICHT